

BISC Grad Caucus Meeting Minutes 30 January 2004

In Attendance: Jeff Ball, Andrea Pomeroy, Joline Widmeyer, Raul Ursic, Brian Ma, Martin Brummell, Allison Henderson, Shelly Hoover, Sandra Webster, Bruce Leighton, Christiana Cheng, Olha Lui (SFSS DSU Organizer)

1. Tuition Overpayment (Joline) – with the change to goSFU, many students on reduced tuition have been charged full tuition fees. Contact Marian McGinn in the Graduate Studies office if this has happened to you.
2. Funding Opportunities for Student Caucuses:
 - Olha Lui, the Departmental Student Union organizer from the SFSS spoke to the caucus about the different funding opportunities available. These are briefly outlined below. For more information, contact Olha or Hattie Aitken.
 - a) Core Funding for general caucus operating expenses (\$200/semester) contingent on submitting minutes from caucus meetings.
 - b) Supplementary Grants are available to assist with the cost of caucus activities that fall outside of the scope of the core funding including special events (seminars, film screenings, career symposium, etc.) or projects (e.g. caucus newsletter or publication). To apply, the caucus must pass a motion and a detailed proposal and budget for the project must be submitted.
 - c) Student Conference and Travel Funding – approximately eleven \$100 awards are available to students for specific conference expenses though a lottery typically held at the March caucus meeting.
 - d) Honorarium for a guest speaker at a caucus-sponsored event as a gift (\$100) or lunch (\$50).
 - e) Capital Funding is available for the maintenance and upgrading of a common room. To apply, the caucus must pass a motion approving the proposal that must be submitted along with a budget with three quotes for the item(s) requested.
 - f) Loans are available to cover the cost of holding fund-raising events or producing merchandise for resale. Information about how to request assistance and repayment terms can be obtained from the SFSS office.
3. Faculty Hiring Committee (Joline):
 - Thirteen candidates are being interviewed for four positions and grad students are encouraged to participate in this process and provide feedback to the two student representatives on the committee – Joline and Katrina Salvante.
 - Each candidate will be on campus for 2 days and there will be plenty of opportunity for grad student interaction.
 - Regular e-mail announcements will keep students informed of the schedule.
 - Also, this Wednesday from 11:30-1:00 in SSB 7172 you can meet with Kat and Joline to review the thirteen candidates CV's and obtain a schedule of the upcoming 6-7 weeks with the interview dates for each candidate. If you are unable to make this time, please contact either Kat or Joline for a schedule or drop by the chair of biology's office to review individual candidates CV's.
4. Departmental Graduate Studies Committee report (Shelly):
 - Proposal to increase student stipend funding to \$18, 000/year will be brought to the Department shortly.
 - Advisor Evaluation Form – did not make it onto the agenda in time to receive complete consideration. Therefore, will be addressed at the next DGSC meeting on 16 February.
 - NSERC Travel Grant Survey – these grants are administered by the Dean of Graduate Studies and presently there are no set (or at least clear) guidelines on how

they are allocated. A survey was circulated to grad students seeking input on how the procedure might be improved. This survey received poor response and there was no consensus among those that took the time. Arne Mooers will draft a proposal seeking a clear outline of judging criteria and deadlines. Contact Arne with any suggestions you would like considered.

5. Research Forest (Bruce):
 - Currently, a piece of the mountain's forest is used as a working forest for research and teaching purposes. Access to this forest is being threatened by ongoing development.
 - Help is being sought to preserve this forest and access to it. No faculty are willing to lobby for the forest so grad students are being encouraged to get involved by conducting a wildlife and vegetation survey similar to the 24 hours of Biodiversity held 2 years ago. In particular, someone with GPS surveying experience is needed to map the extent of the forest.
 - Bruce will circulate a date and proposed plan to tour the forest for all those interested.

6. Graduate Student Symposium (Allison):
 - This year's symposium will consist of a poster reception on the evening of March 5th
 - Students and faculty are asked to prepare poster's outlining the people and work that is being conducted in their labs. Staff and technician are being encouraged to participate.
 - Allison is seeking volunteers to help with setting up and taking down tables and poster boards.

7. Departmental Student Union Days (Olha):
 - Caucuses are encouraged to put on an event to advertise their existence in the department and increase participation in student governance.
 - Funding assistance is available.
 - Brian moved to involve the Biology Student Association (undergrads) to encourage mixing, and to increase participation and funding available. This was passed 6 to 5.
 - Christiana has volunteered to submit a proposal and budget to SFSS by February 13th. Thanks Christiana.

8. BISC Grad Student-Nominated Departmental Speaker for 2004/05 (Andrea):
 - Unfortunately this year's student-nominated speaker, Dr. Paul Sherman, had to cancel his visit. Hopefully he will be able to reschedule for this fall.
 - Students have an additional spot in the upcoming year to invite a speaker of their choosing to visit the department and speak. Watch for the posting to submit your nominations.