



Biology Graduate Caucus Meeting Minutes

Friday September 8th, 2006, 3:30 pm

In attendance: Paul Mages, Sarah Jamieson, Erika Lok, Geoff Bradley, Heather Major, Mike Silvergieter, Simon Goring, Suzanne Tank, Bradley Davis, Craig Losos, Brendan Connors, Mathias Schuetz, Raul Ursic, Rana Marab, Carolina Perez, Dawn Cooper, Keith Tierney, Brad Kennedy, Daniel Duan, Maxence Salomon, Clea Moray, Erica Jeffery, Jason Catterson, Nicole Tunbridge.

1. Welcome
 - Keith Tierney welcomes all.
2. Claim our semester's \$200.

Motioned by Paul Mages, seconded by Raul Ursic.	Carried
---	---------

3. Claiming of meeting expenses.

Motioned by Simon Goring, seconded by Brendan Connors.	Carried
--	---------

4. Logo contest –grad directory update, info
 - Keith gave information for the logo contest. The logo, which will be featured on this year's caucus directory, has to be in two-toned colour. The prize is the prestige of having your art shown.
 - For more information, please contact Theingi Aung (tsa@sfu.ca).
 - Get artistic ☺ !
5. Treasurer's report
 - We have \$1500, plus \$200 for beer and chips for meetings. We are down \$1000 and we still have to host a speaker this year. Should put some thought into fund-raising.
 - Our treasurer, Theingi, sent the information to Keith, which he will report on next meeting.
6. Social coordinator report
 - A social coordinator position was created to help organize the major social events put on by the grad caucus throughout the year (Christmas party, Grad Symposium, and Summer BBQ). Nicole Tunbridge has volunteered for the position.
 - Someone suggested that it might be better to have a small committee in charge of social events in general, or have a committee for each event, as done previously. Each event will have its own adhoc committee, but the social coordinator will act as the leader for all of these committees.

Motion to have Nicole Tunbridge as our new social coordinator. Moved by	
---	--

Keith Tierney, seconded by Jason Catterson.	Carried
---	---------

7. Election of a Forum rep.

- This is the first time that we have had a forum rep. Forum is group that is supposed to advise the Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS) board of directors (BoD) on the concerns of the membership. There is supposed to be reps from all caucuses and departmental student unions. Forum is there to act filter through all of the concerns and bring the important ones to the attention of the BoD. It is a way of communication between the general SFSS membership and the BoD. Grad students historically have communicated to the BoD through the Graduate Issues Committee (GIC). However, with all the upheaval lately, it is advisable to have a rep in all the places that we can. Clea Moray was nominated by Keith to be our forum rep.

Motion to have Clea Moray as our new forum representative. Moved by Nicole Tunbridge, seconded by Sarah Jamieson.	Carried
---	---------

- Clea Moray will represent the BISC grad caucus in forum. If you have any concerns to be brought forward to the SFSS, please contact Clea (cmoray@sfu.ca).

8. Search committee positions

- The department is looking to hire new faculty. We have one student on each search committee:
 1. Dawn Cooper, microbiology
 2. Geoff Bradley, biological control
 3. Mark Warwas, molecular toxicologist
- The searching won't be starting until November. More information will be made available as it becomes known.

9. News from committees

a. Graduate Issues Committee

- Raul Ursic:
- Last GIC meeting, the president of the SFSS was present to answer questions regarding what happened this summer. Overall, it was an unsatisfactory meeting. Everything is still in the dark, and the process itself is messy. As a recap, someone was fired, there is an investigation going on, and basically, a war has started in the middle of it. Most grad caucuses have expressed a vote of non-confidence, and there is movement looking to impeach members of the SFSS BoD. There is a petition going around to hold a special general meeting, in which three sets of resolutions will be voted on. The first deals with the impeachment of members of the BoD, and the other two relate to rules, which will give the GIC more autonomy. If they get enough signatures and are able to get the meeting, they will need a quorum of 500 people. They will need a 3/4 majority to pass the motions. The long-term plan is for grad students to have their own society separate from the SFSS.

- The extended health plan hasn't been touched. A reminder that if you need enrollment forms please contact Raul (rursicbe@sfu.ca). Someone asked if there was a blackout period in the health plan at the beginning of the semester, but someone mentioned that they were able to claim things just fine, although we are not sure if new people will have to wait a bit.
 - Next GIC meeting is on Wednesday, September 13th, and it is open to whoever wants to attend. GIC meetings are normally held the first Wednesday of each month in the grad lounge in the Maggie Benston Center.
- b. Scholarship Committee
- Erica Jeffery and Brandon Connors:
 - Scholarship Day will be held on Thursday, September 14th in the Education Building. You can get information about NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR and MSFHR. Please see the posters located around the department for more details.
 - All NSERC applications are due Tuesday, October 3rd, except for those applying for a post-doc application. We are not sure when those are due, or if they have to go through the school or directly to NSERC, but Erica and Brandon will look into it. Information will be available on Scholarship day in the afternoon. If you need help, contact either Erica (erica_jeffery@sfu.ca) or Brandon (bconnors@sfu.ca).
 - Applications for private scholarships will be due on Saturday, September 30th. More information will follow.
- c. TSSU
- Paul Mages:
 - There are new log books/agendas available for TA's and TM's. They are the same as last year's and there are some available in the mailroom. There is information on your rights as a TSSU member, as well as a way to keep track of your hours. There is a contest at each end of the semester for \$125. All you have to do is to log in your hours and turn in the pink sheet found at the end of the book.
 - There is an idea being passed around to look into bringing the grad students under the wing of the TSSU, to unionize grad students. This is because theoretically grad students might have more grievances, due to issues like working overtime and such. More information will be available as it comes to pass.
 - As far as the SFSS events are concerned, the TSSU is supporting the grad students, as well as the other SFSS workers unions. They are right in the trenches, so to speak.
 - A reminder that if you are a member of the TSSU, you do get your provincial medical service plan covered by 100%. There is a basic medical plan available thorough the TSSU, but most go with the grad health plan. Reminder that if you are TA'ing this semester to make sure you keeping track of your hours. If you have any questions regarding the TSSU, please contact Paul (pmages@sfu.ca).

10. Other business

- Brad Kennedy reported that the mentorship program went well despite delays caused by the fire alarm. Most people got connected with their mentors, and the rest are in the process of contacting each other through e-mail. Everyone was great 😊.
- The second half of the missed orientation might be rescheduled, possibly before the welcome party on September 22nd.
- There will be no NSERC Travel Awards this year. According to the letter sent out by the Dean of Grad Studies, John Driver, the money for these awards comes from the overflow from scholarships of people who finish early. However, there have been less people finishing early in the past years. He suggested that if you need money for travel, to look for other sources.
- The chair of the DGSC, Dr. Larry Dill, will be coming to talk to us all at the next caucus meeting. Please bring any questions that you may have.
- Someone suggested that we should start our own forum. This will involve one person collecting all of the BISC grad e-mails, and take them to Dave Carmean, who will set it up. These forums have been done in the past quite easily, and we have faculty support. If you would like to take part in this forum, please send your e-mail address to Sarah Jamieson (sjamieso@sfu.ca).
- Reminder that there is a social today at the pub, hosted by the TSSU and GIC at 4pm. There will be free pizza and cheap beer. We can also stop by the MBB social, on now 😊.

11. Motion to adjourn meeting.

Motioned by Simon Goring, seconded by Paul Mages.	Carried
---	---------

- Meeting adjourned.