



Biology Graduate Caucus Meeting Minutes

Wednesday February 21st, 2007, 3:30 pm

In attendance: Keith Tierney, Lina Perez, Melanie Hart, Dawn Cooper, Rana Marab, Erin Udal, Geoff Bradley, Clea Moray, Suzanne Tank, Nicole Tunbridge, Heather Major, Raul Ursic, Paul Mages.

1. Welcome

- Keith Tierney welcomes all. Today we have Erin Udal speaking for Cesar Inducil from the Biology Students Union.

2. Claim our meeting expenses

Motion to claim \$50 for our meeting expenses by Clea Moray, seconded by Geoff Bradley.	Carried
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3. Social Coordinator's report

- Nicole Tunbridge passed around the proposed budget for this year's grad symposium, assuming that we get reasonable amounts of funding (see attached). We have obtained \$1900 from the SFSS for food and non-alcoholic beverages. We are still waiting to hear about funding from the Dean of Science and the department.

Motion to accept the proposed budget for the Grad Symposium by Nicole Tunbridge, seconded by Dawn Cooper.	Carried
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- Advertising posters for the symposium will be put together by Melanie Hart.
- We got funding for posters, based on a sizing not to exceed 3 (W) x 4 (H) feet.
- There will be an e-mail sent out regarding a science EXPO at the end of the semester. There will be a mix of different departments present. The get together will be more like a conference with posters, and it's to help facilitate interest in graduate studies in undergrads. It is a great opportunity to show what your lab is doing and maybe to recruit some undergrad help. You can use the posters from the symposium if you'd like.

4. News from other committees

i. Forum rep

- Clea Moray reports that she has been getting emails pointing out incorrect and out of date information in the department's Graduate Student's Survival Guide. If anyone has any information or help regarding things like the application process or anything at all that they feel needs to be updated in the Survival Guide, please e-mail Clea (cmoray@sfu.ca).
- There is a Climate Change Action Group meeting tomorrow at 3pm. It might be something that some people in the department might like to join, but no one is sure about what the group is about. Clea and Suzanne Tank have volunteered to go to the meeting and check the action group out.
- There is a meeting about working out a referendum question for the SFSS withdrawing from the CFS (Canadian Federation of Students) (which was held during the caucus meeting).
- The SFSS elections are coming up. The nomination period is open and will close Monday March 5th. Available positions include the Biology Forum Rep, Science Faculty Rep and the Grad At-Large Rep positions. They are all paid positions starting at \$750 a month for 15h a week. People might want to consider holding one of these positions as an alternative to TA'ing next term. As well, we have the grad autonomy motion coming

up this year and it might be worthwhile to have graduate students in these positions. Clea encourages people to run, and she will be happy to give help to those who do.

ii. GIC rep

- Raul Ursic reports that yes, SFSS election are coming up, and he encourages grad students to run. As Clea mentioned, the motion for grad autonomy will be coming up this year and it would be in our best interest to have a grad friendly board on the SFSS this year.
- GIC passed three motions today on the referendum questions regarding grad autonomy (see attached). They passed unanimously and will be given to the SFSS board today at 4pm. GIC and the Education Grad Rep will be heading a campaign. They will keep us posted.
- If anyone likes to play squash, Ben Milne (the At-Large Grad rep) has started a ladder. Please contact him for more details (atlargegrad@sfss.ca).
- There was a question about the referendum questions and how long it would take. Raul answered that the grad autonomy questions will be on the ballot along with the referendum question about the SFSS separating from the CFS. There are many people and lawyers involved, and as far as separating goes, we have to take it one step at time. However, the people involved say that we may have our own Grad Union by this fall. He specially encourages new grad students to get involved, since many of us will be gone by then. Raul is not part of the independent electoral committee this year, but there is at least another grad student who is.

iii. DGSC rep

- Suzanne Tank reports that the government of BC announced that there will be money for graduate student funding in their budget. It is currently unclear whether this money will only be used to create new grad student positions or if it will also help fund current university grad students.
- There might be a change in the rules for forming a master's supervisory committee, which may allow adjunct professors or research associates to replace one of the biology faculty members currently required on committees. This exception would be decided by the DGSC on a case-by-case basis.
- The Dean's Office has asked all of the departments to put on their websites what their funding guarantee for grad students is by the end of next month. They sent a number of examples. This is supposed to help make things more concrete for anyone who applies. There was talk of maybe having a different guarantee for master's and PhD students due to their different program lengths.
- Clea wanted to know what we could ask the VP of finance when she comes to meet with forum next meeting. This is just a chance to plug in something that we want to say. Suzanne and Jeff Joy suggested asking for money for more GF's and travel awards. Someone else suggested that we ask that the school is more understanding of grad students who can't make the 3 week deadline to pay tuition fees, or at least letting us work out a payment plan. Maybe try to have people with RA-ships also work a payment plan like they do with TA-ships. This may be something that may be under the Faculty of Science because you used to be able to do this with an RA-ship before they changed the whole system. The reason that you can still do this with a TA-ship is because TSSU has it in their collective agreement, which they had to respect. Suzanne says she'll follow up on it.

iv. Scholarship reps

- Not present, but Brendan sent an e-mail:
 1. Departmental Undergrad Research Awards: The department will give \$500 for the top undergraduate in research. Deadline is February 22nd. The award will be given out on March 7th (Major's Day). Contact is Emelia Kirkwood.
 2. Graduate International Travel Awards: This is a new award of \$6000 for travel abroad to undertake research. The department of Biological Sciences can forward two applications to the Dean of Grad Studies. Deadline is March 2nd. Contact Marlene Nguynen.
 3. Graduate Fellowships: The University's allocation has increased by 58 GF's from 5006 to 564. Last year BioSci's allocation was 36. The exact allocation to each department depends on a formula that weights NSERC funding and number of MSc and PhD students, but we can reasonably expect more than 36 this upcoming year. Deadline is mid-April. The liaison might be Debbie Sandher. More updates will be sent out before the deadline.
- We have heard through Geography that the money for the Grad International Travel Award comes from the money that the department gets from application fees, which have been used (in geography) to fund departmental travel awards. Geography is protesting. Keith will ask Brendan for more information on this.

v. TSSU rep

- Paul Mages was unable to attend the steward meeting, but reminds everyone that there is a General Meeting on February 28th at 11am in the Maggie Benston Center. It is worth going to, since they need to make quorum to make decisions and there's a free lunch. It is also a way to see if you might be interested in getting involved.
- Paul is still looking for suggestions of a grass-roots environmental organization that would benefit from a donation. Someone asked if they have to be in Canada, and Paul said that the committee that takes care of this doesn't really have standard guidelines, but they do have to be certified. Someone suggested Urban Agriculture (Cityfarmer.org). Clea will check out the website.
- Paul reminds people that he will not be able to continue to hold his position much longer. If anyone is interested, it's a paid position (minimum \$100/semester), you don't have to be an active TA, only that you have TA'ed during the term, and there is opportunities to get paid more depending on how involved you become. It's a good way to keep on top of what is happening and you get free lunches. Mel Hart said she'd be interested depending on what days the meetings take place.

vi. Search committee reps

- Dawn Cooper reports that the search for the microbiologist position starts next week. The first candidate is here Monday and Tuesday. There will be a practical teaching seminar in the morning, followed by the grad luncheon. The luncheons are an opportunity for grads to meet the candidate and ask questions, like which classes would they teach, how they feel about being in committees etc. This is so they department knows what we think of the candidate. The other two candidates will be here Thursday and Friday, and next Monday and Tuesday. Please try to make it to the grad luncheons. If you are planning on going, please let Dawn know since they need to order food. You don't have to be knowledgeable in the field, it's mostly to get a general impression of the candidate. Please get involved.

- Geoff Bradley mentions that the process that will be involved with the ‘biological control’ candidates will be essentially the same. There are 4 candidates for the position, and their interviews will be the last week of March and the first week of April. Geoff will compile a list of websites with the candidates’ information, which will be sent out closer to the dates.
- The department is looking to hire two people; one for biological control and the other for microbiology. The ‘Molecular Toxicology’ position was put on hold due to budget issues, however Health Sciences is hiring for a similar position.

6. Other business

- Dr. Steve Stearns’ visit: Dr. Stearns is the Grad student sponsored guest speaker this year. He is coming on March 15th. He is giving a seminar on Thursday and staying for dinner, and will be available for meetings on Friday. He will also be giving a talk to the grad students during the luncheon. Thursday’s seminar might be on the evolution of medicine, and Friday’s seminar may be on the evolution of social thought and how it screws us over. He is also able to catch the beginning of the symposium. He is very excited about coming out here and meeting with the graduate students. The seminar on Thursday will take place in the 7th floor room in SSB (the normal place) and the luncheon will be in room B9242. We should put up posters and see if he likes sushi. It would be really nice if lab groups and/or students meet with him on Friday morning, since he is very excited and happy that we have invited him.
- Erin Udal from the Biology Student Union (BSU):
 - The BSU has put up a volunteer (sign up?) board in hopes of getting more undergrads working in grad labs. Forms have been sent out, and if you have a position available, just fill in the form and post it up.
 - The BSU was wondering if they could get ads about conferences or seminars, so that the undergrads also have a chance to attend. As far as the seminars go, Simon Goring says that he is only allowed to send the seminar e-mails to specific lists, but that he will try to put up more posters.
 - Because the BSU conference travel awards don’t get used up, we have asked if we could access them. They are okay with it, but they are going to be given on a case-by-case basis. Caucus nominated candidates may be supplied for this purpose. More information will be exchanged before a decision is made.
 - Erin reminds us that we are invited to the Science Expo, which appears to be like a poster contest. It’s been successful in previous years.
- Reminder that the posters for the symposium are due Friday, March 9th. We still need to get the liquor license for the event. We were also thinking of opening it up to other biofolks from other departments. Posters with more information will be going up soon.
- Keith spoke with Brian Medford about sending out e-mails about school closures and such, and he promises that he will pass those e-mails along to bisc-info and bisc-grads.

6. Adjournment and next meeting

- Next meeting will be sometime near the end of March.

Motion to adjourn by Dawn Cooper, seconded by Paul Mages.	Carried
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Proposed Budget for the Grad Symposium:

Budget

10th Annual Department of Biological Sciences Graduate Research Symposium (2007)

Item

I. Food - SFSS Catering	Quantity	Price/Unit	Projected Cost
Meat and Cheese Platter Tray	1	\$90,00	\$90,00
Cheese Tray	1	\$36,00	\$36,00
Sandwiches (Quartered)	40	\$4,50	\$180,00
Fresh Fruit Tray (Serves 36)	2	\$46,00	\$92,00
Fresh Vegetable Tray (Serves 36)	3	\$41,50	\$124,50
Dessert Bars (Halved)	50	\$1,45	\$72,50
Snacks			
Chips			\$40,00
Crackers			\$20,00
Cookies			\$25,00
Beverages			
Coffee			\$25,00
Tea			\$10,00
Juice/Pop			\$30,00
	Projected Food Sub-total		\$745,00
II. Alcohol			Projected Cost
350 Bottles Beer			\$550,00
60 Bottles Cooler/Cider			\$150,00
2 Bottles White Wine			\$20,00
2 Bottles Red Wine			\$20,00
License			\$25,00
	Projected Drink Sub-total		\$765,00
III. Miscellaneous Supplies			
Napkins, Plates, Wine/Beer Glasses			\$100,00
IV. Door Prizes			\$200,00
V. Vehicle gas/mileage (Supply pick-up)			\$20,00
VI. Poster Subsidies			\$1.200,00
VII. Poster Board Rental (Fac. Man)			\$180,00
VIII. Miscellaneous			\$150,00
	Grand Total		\$3.360,00
	Plus GST		\$3.561,60

GIC motions:

Whereas the issues faced by students undertaking graduate studies are substantively different than those faced by students undertaking undergraduate studies; and

Whereas SFU students undertaking graduate studies desire an autonomous and independent forum through which to discuss and address these issues; and

Whereas SFU students undertaking graduate studies feel that only an autonomous and independent student society, separate of the SFSS, can properly represent their interests and thereby ensure their goals are achieved;

MOTION #1:

Be It Resolved That the SFSS Graduate Issues Committee instructs the SFSS Board of Directors to place the following referendum question, “Do you agree that a separate and independent graduate student society should be created to represent the interests of the graduate students of SFU?” on the ballot for the next regularly scheduled SFSS election.

BIFRT this referendum question be voted on by all members of the SFSS.

MOTION #2:

Be It Resolved That the SFSS Graduate Issues Committee instructs the SFSS Board of Directors to place the following referendum question, “If the graduate student society is created, do you agree that graduate students should no longer be represented by the SFSS?” on the ballot for the next regularly scheduled SFSS election.

BIFRT this referendum question be voted on by all members of the SFSS.

MOTION #3:

Be It Resolved That the SFSS Graduate Issues Committee instructs the SFSS Board of Directors to place the following referendum question, “If the graduate student society is created, do you agree that the unrestricted fee graduate students pay to the SFSS should instead be remitted to the graduate student society once incorporated?” on the ballot for the next regularly scheduled SFSS election.

BIFRT this referendum question be voted on by only graduate student members of the SFSS.

(for a copy of the proposed model and constitutions, please e-mail Raul Ursic (rursicbe@sfu.ca) or Lina Perez (cperezor@sfu.ca))