



Biology Graduate Caucus Meeting Minutes

Friday May 25th, 2007, 3:30 pm

In attendance: Theingi Aung, Erica Jeffery, Dawn Cooper, Lina Perez, Mel Hart, Raul Ursic, Suzanne Tank, Samantha Franks, Alex Chubaty, Jerry Ericsson, Nicole Tunbridge, Rachel Mayberry, Carson Keever, Keith Tierney.

1. Welcome

- Keith Tierney welcomes all to the new semester.

2. Claim our meeting expenses

Motion to claim meeting expenses by Raul Ursic, seconded by Alex Chubaty.	Carried
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Motion to claim \$200 for the semester by Mel Hart, seconded by Dawn Cooper.	Carried
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3. Treasurer's report

- Theingi Aung reports that we are doing okay. We have \$128 in our core account, \$1634 in the trust fund, and \$487.50 in cash.

Motion to claim up to \$1500 for the SFSS Travel Awards this year by Nicole Tunbridge, seconded by Mel Hart.	Carried
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4. Social Coordinator's report

- An update on the BBQ, Raul Ursic mentions that his landlady hasn't bought a new one yet, but said that we can have her old one. Someone asked about the BBQ's that are outside the Côte lab. We will ask John Borden about it. However, there is no real hurry because the enthusiastic Mathias Schuetz has what he needs for the pig roast.
- Summer BBQ:
 - Mel Hart talked to Bruce Leighton and he said that we would not be able to fit the amount of people that we were thinking of for the summer BBQ in the greenhouse open space. We therefore have to figure out a new possible location for the pig roast. Nicole will look into possible venues.
 - Thinking of charging for the BBQ again due to large costs holding a pig roast (maybe around \$5). However, we are looking for cost/recovery. Therefore, it was suggested that we could hold a potluck, with a discount to people who bring food (maybe \$2 instead of \$5).
 - An email will be sent out later to determine when and where the pig roast will be held at this august.

5. News from other committees

i. GIC rep

- Raul Ursic reports that nothing major is happening except for a few things:
 - Negotiations for the renewal of the grad health plan are still going on. Details are confidential, but things appear to be going fine.
 - The new grad student society could use some help. Anyone who is interested in helping out and/or getting involved with the society should contact Clea Moray (cmoray@sfu.ca).

- There will be a grad social in July at the pub, pizza included. More info later this semester.

ii. Scholarship reps

- Erika Jeffery reminds everyone about the email that was sent regarding GF applications. She talked to Ron about some of the questions that we had, and he was thinking of creating an online form so that everyone inputs the same information. However, this has to be discussed with the other committee members. Information on applying for a GF can be found on the Dean's website. Debbie also sends around an email before the due date. We should know who got a GF around mid-June.
- Erica mentions that she will be leaving at the end of this summer, however Brendan Connors will stay on the scholarship committee.

iii. DGSC rep

- Suzanne Tank reports that after last meeting there was a clear consensus that the grads want BISC 800 to be a 3-credit course. However, the faculty is still reluctant to offer it. Because the earliest a course like this can be approved is this fall, Suzanne and Jeff Joy will spend the summer working out a petition that they can present in the fall. One alternative that can be used while the course is being implemented is small workshops that focus on certain aspects through out the semester. The next meeting is next month. It is encouraged that we talk to our supervisors about this and encourage them to go to the meeting and have them support a 3 credit BISC 800.

iv. TSSU rep

- Mel Hart reports that there was a lot of talk at the last TSSU meeting. The major issue that came up was assignment priority: people have had assignments taken away or given to undergrads before grad students. This is happening in multiple departments. At the same time base units are dropping and grads are scrounging for assignments. There have been talks of offering interdisciplinary assignments in order to help. Our department seems to be doing all right.
- Another issue is a decrease in TA/sessional work quality. This is mostly due to a combination of high class enrollment and cutbacks within departments. TA's and sessionals are being asked to cut hours in things like prep time and time spent marking individual assignments. This is why it's important to log your hours. In order to increase awareness about the guidelines for class time and such, there will be an orientation session for sessionals.
- We got a pay increase this year, however, it is not written in your contract. We are getting paid more than what is actually written down. Since this is illegal, the union might take legal action.
- There is a general meeting this Tuesday at 3:30pm. Please come out and get free grilled food and maybe a t-shirt. They need 20 people to reach quorum and to vote in the new people. If you are interested in holding a position in the union, this is your chance. You can go if you are a TA this semester or if you TA'ed the previous 2 semesters.
- The union is trying to revamp the logbook. Suggestions include a small booklet that is not an agenda, or an online version. Support was shown for the online version.
- The Personal Child Care bursary is being offered once again and the deadline is coming up for those interested in applying.
- TSSU member will be coming to talk to the caucus sometime in the fall.

v. Search committee reps

- Dawn Cooper reports that the microbiology position was offered to Dr. Julian Guttman, who accepted the offer. The biocontrol position was offered to Dr. Jenny Cory, who has also accepted. They might be starting at the end of this year and/or the beginning of next year. We are not sure where their labs are going to be.

6. Elections

- A call for people to fill in caucus positions was sent out. No positions were contested.

<p>Motion to acclaim the following people into the following positions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nicole Tunbridge (President) 2. Mathias Schuetz (Social Coordinator) 3. Jerry Ericsson (Forum rep) 4. Samantha Franks (Treasurer) 5. Alex Chubaty (Webmaster) 6. Sarah Jamieson (Scholarship Committee rep) 7. Carson Keever (Faculty Mole) <p>Motioned by Mel Hart, seconded by Suzanne Tank. Unanimous.</p>	<p>Carried</p>
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- The president position begins immediately. Someone for running the Mentorship program will be decided on next meeting.

<p>Motion to ratify the following people to their held positions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raul Ursic (GIC rep) 2. Mel Hart (TSSU rep) 3. Bredan Connors (Scholarship Committee rep) 4. Suzanne Tank (DGSC rep) 5. Jeff Joy (DGSC rep) 6. Danny Duan (International Students rep) 7. Dawn Cooper (Member-at-large) 8. Lina Perez (Secretary) <p>Motion by Nicole Tunbridge, seconded by Alex Chubaty.</p>	<p>Carried</p>
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7. Other business

- The website should be updated to include the position of the international student rep (Danny Duan).
- Lina Perez has volunteered to look into the SFSS travel awards.
- Keith Tierney was given a newsletter by Larry Dill that was put out by another grad caucus. Alex mentions that he'd have no problems putting together one for the department if other people gave regular submissions. Although someone mentioned that we do have a blog and Biobull. The true reason for the newsletter was an article about the biology department at the school getting involved with the carbon credit fund. This is a fund where people donate money for every km they drive to plant trees. Jerry Ericsson has volunteered to look into this further.

8. Adjournment and next meeting

- Next meeting will be held in July 2007. Plans involve the organization of August's pig roast.
- Thanks to Keith and everyone else leaving for all of their hard work and dedication on behalf of the grad caucus. Good luck and we'll miss you!