



## Biology Graduate Caucus

Wednesday September 26th, 2007, 3:30 pm

**In attendance:** Nicole Tunbridge, Raul Ursic, Rachel Mayberry, Emily Darling, Alex Chubaty, Heather Major, Daniel Duan, Lina Perez, Suzanne Tank, Brendan Connors, Jeff Joy, Karen Kelly, Clea Moray, Dawn Cooper, Sudip Ghose, Nell Hamilton, Jerry Ericsson.

### 1. Welcome

- Nicole Tunbridge welcomes all. We have a guest speaker with us today: Karen Kelly.

### 2. Claim \$200 for the semester

Motion by Clea Moray to claim \$200 for the semester. Seconded by Nicole Tunbridge.	Carried.
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### 3. Claim our meeting expenses

Motion by Brendan Connors to claim \$50 for chips and beverages. Seconded by Nell Hamilton.	Carried.
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### 4. Acceptance of the minutes.

Motion by Nicole Tunbridge to accept the minutes from the last caucus meeting. Seconded by Dawn Cooper.	Carried.
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### 5. Guest Speaker

- Karen Kelly is one of the student representatives seating on the Dean of Graduate Studies Search Committee. She has sent an e-mail detailing the job description and is here to get input from grad students on what qualities they would like the new dean of grad studies to have. The search process works similar to the departmental searches that we conduct. Currently, they are looking for internal candidates. Potential candidates should be professors with administrative skills. The job, which lasts for a 5-year term, was currently part of the duties of the VP of research.
- Qualifications that came up were someone who would lobby for more funding, and decreasing the wait time to get scholarship checks at the beginning of the semester. We would also like someone who is approachable and has an active research program.

- Karen will send more information as it becomes available. If you know of a professor who would make a good dean, encourage them to apply. For comments or questions, please e-mail Karen (kakelly@sfu.ca).

#### 6. Social Coordinator's report

- We still need one. If interested, please e-mail Nicole (ntunbri@sfu.ca).
- There is talk of having a Halloween party in October, the week before the Ecology and Evolution retreat. Devin Arbuthnott has acquired a Serving It Right license and Jerry Ericsson has volunteered to talk to MBB about co-hosting the party. Matthias Schuetz is also enthusiastic about doing a deep-fried turkey (with tofurkey as a veg alternative).
- Emily Darling has volunteered to co-organize the Christmas party.
- Volunteers are needed to help with the Ecology and Evolution retreat. It will be held in Squamish this year. Come out and have fun.

#### 7. News from other committees

##### i. Forum rep

- Jerry Ericsson comments that the forum social was okay.
- Majority of the meeting involved planning the SFSS AGM. Please come out and vote on October 10<sup>th</sup> at 2:30pm at Convo Mall. There is an Octoberfest at the pub afterwards for those that participated in the AGM.
- There is a Sustainability Fair on October the 11<sup>th</sup>. There will be a fashion show, various booths, and a microbrewery. For more info visit [sustainabilityfestival.org](http://sustainabilityfestival.org)

##### ii. GIC rep

- Raul Ursic just came from a meeting earlier today. This year the AGM will feature food and heaters. Anyone who wants to volunteer please e-mail Raul (rursicbe@sfu.ca) or Clea Moray (cmoray@sfu.ca).
- There will be a grad social on October 25<sup>th</sup> to mark the one year anniversary of the impeachment.
- Raul reminds people that he will be resigning, but that he has convinced Andy Steimel to be the GIC rep. Andy is currently our Grad Council rep. His duties will be the same as Raul's once the new grad student society is created.

Motion by Nicole Tunbridge to nominate Andy Steimel for the position of	
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GIC rep. Seconded by Raul Ursic.	Carried.
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- The new health plan requires sending in receipts directly to Sunlife. There is a blackout period until November 1<sup>st</sup>. However, you can take your receipts and forms to the office now, and they will send all of the receipts express on the first of November.

iii. DGSC rep

- Suzanne and Jeff passed around the petition that few people signed. They needed at least half of the grad students to sign it, but got 20 out of 152 signatures. They sent an e-mail, but did not go around as to not pressure people into signing it. They will bring it on October 10<sup>th</sup> and try again later.
- The faculty of science is getting \$20 000 per new grad student that they bring in. The students will not be getting the money themselves, but it will be given to the department to use. We have space for around 15-20 students. One of the reasons why we are not getting more people is because most of the labs that get offers are already full. Suggestions were made to use the money to make renovations, however lab spaces can't be converted into office space. Someone suggested to use it to even out the top-up amount for MSc's so that they earn the same as a PhD when TA'ing. However, this is a TSSU issue, and should be brought to our TSSU rep Mel Hart. Some of this money has already been used for the new travel awards.

iv. Scholarship reps

- Brendan Connors reminds everyone that NSERC applications are due this Friday. They will be ranked by the department in the next few weeks and those who go on should hear from the university by early December. The deadline for the travel awards and some private scholarships is October 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Applications for the travel award will be taken 3 times during the year. It is recommended that you apply 2 months before the conference. Awards will be given on a conditional basis until the conference. Everyone should apply, even if you are not presenting a talk.

Motion by Nicole Tunbridge to extend the meeting by 15 minutes. Seconded by Clea Moray.	Carried.
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v. TSSU rep (via e-mail to N. Tunbridge)

- Mel Hart reports the chief steward has quit. The position is currently being filled by Veronica (the right –hand person) until a new steward is found.
- TUG forms were due on Monday. If you have not filled out one talk to your course supervisor ASAP.
- There are plans for a 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary party underway.

vi. Grad Student Council Rep.

- There is a meeting next Friday. Clea Moray reports that the most important thing is the AGM. It is important that we go, as BISC is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest caucus at SFU.
- Andy Steimel reports that there will a vote at the meeting that will involve raising the caucus core amount to \$450 reflecting the number of students we have, but reducing the grant amount from \$15 900 to \$7000.

Motion in favour of supporting the new funding strategy and Andy's vote at the meeting by Nell Hamilton. Seconded by Nicole Tunbridge.	Carried.
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8. Other business

- Tim Caro is not able to make it to SFU and be the Grad caucus hosted speaker this year. However Dr. Kay Holecamp is able to come and will be here for March 13-14<sup>th</sup>, which coincides with the symposium. She mainly does work in Africa with hyenas, but has done a bit of everything (check her website for more information: [hyenas.zoologysu.edu](http://hyenas.zoologysu.edu)).
- Suggestions were made to talk to Kathleen about the departmental seminars and the embarrassingly low turnout. Maybe collaborating with UBC in hosting speakers, or making speakers aware that they will be talking to a broad audience may help. There was a suggestion to invite Kathleen to the next caucus meeting.
- The grad student directory needs to be done. Dawn Cooper and Nicole Tunbridge will talk to Thengi Aung about it.
- The SFSS travel award draw will be held during the next caucus meeting. We have 11 \$100 awards to give. They can be used for any conference attended from May 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 to

April 30<sup>th</sup> 2008. Any one who would like to enter the lottery, please e-mail your name to Lina Perez (cperezor@sfu.ca) before October 25<sup>th</sup>.

9. Adjournment and next meeting

Motion to adjourn by Nicole Tunbridge, seconded by Raul Ursic.	Carried.
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- Next meeting will be on the last Friday of next month 😊.