



Biology Graduate Caucus

Wednesday, October 26, 2008, 3:30 pm

In attendance: Erica Jeffery, Jerry Ericsson, Mike Silvergieter, Alex Chubaty, Suzanne Tank, Aleks Maljkovic, Jenn Sunday, Mel Hart, Emily Darling, Andreas Steimel, Mike Wogin, Janey Lam, Simon Goring, Nicole Tunbridge, Chantale Begin, Samireh Deheshi, Heather Major, Sarah Jamieson, Emily Meuser

1. Welcome

- Erica welcomes everyone to the meeting.
- Any additions to agenda?

2. Claim our meeting expenses.

a) Food

Motion to reimburse Erica Jeffery for \$9.73 for chips by Erica, seconded by Jerry.	Carried
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3. Grad directory/Logo contest

- Darwin logo wins contest.
- Vote to award Andreas Steimel \$25 for submitting winning entry.

Motion to award Andreas \$25 for winning by Erica, seconded by Aleks.	Carried
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4. Events

a) Christmas Party

- Skits—need an idea for theme. Kevin and Janey have volunteered to organize this. Idea for the theme is “america’s next top model”—challenges for best grad student. Panel of judges (students imitating profs) decide whether students move on to the next round or not. Can also incorporate other reality/game shows—eg. So you think you’re smarter than a grad student, etc. Each lab can get together and decide on a challenge to give to the contestants. Separate organizational meeting for this, so if you or others in your lab are interested, get in touch with Kevin (klamf@sfu.ca). Instead of eliminating, can have a vote from the audience at the end. Also, can pull participants out of the audience.

We need an MC for the night. This is usually a faculty member.

- ‘Felix Awards’ volunteer

Everyone sends in funny photos from throughout the year, put in funny categories—eg. Who

looks the most like their study organism. The Christmas party is Dec 12 (Friday).

iii. Food volunteer

iv. Door prizes, gag gifts—suggestions? Another kind of game show?

Deal or no deal? Need ideas of where we can get donated or subsidized door prizes. Email Erica with ideas.

b) Pumpkin carving

i. October 30, 3:15- 5:00 SSB Atrium Bring pumpkins to the departmental seminar (they will be delivered in the morning) Chris Kennedy donated the gift. Barb is going to be our celebrity judge.

ii. Should caucus cover the cost of the pumpkins? (\$35 for 14 pumpkins) Consensus is that people can pay their own way.

5. Reports from committees

a. GSS – Andreas Steimel

i. GSS Travel Grants – review changes (GSS agenda)

Travel grants have been eliminated, and the money has been distributed among all the caucuses. We now have an extra \$650 per year to use for whatever we want. (\$2150 instead of \$1500) We could automatically designate that money as travel grant money within our department. What is a fair amount for a travel grant? We can just decide from year to year what to do with it, but in general, \$100 seems like a good minimum amount. For most people applying for these grants, is this the primary (or a substantial) source of funding? If so, we might want to consider doing fewer, larger chunks. However, we don't have that much money, so it is probably best to give more, smaller amounts. Our travel grants are really just a way to cover some expenses that we can't get covered in other ways. Will still need to get forms from here and submit cheque requisition to GSS office.

Motion to keep things status quo for grant allocation by Jenn, seconded by Erica.	Carried
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We need to decide what amount of our funding to use for travel grants. Allocate \$600 initially, and then if we have money left over in August, we can give out more funding.

Motion to allocate \$600 for travel grants allocation by Sarah, seconded by Mike.	Carried
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ii. Budget Consultation report

There is an \$18 million deficit, university-wide. Our tuition increases with inflation, but government funding does not. SFU approached the BC government and tried to get more money, SFU does not plan to cut across the university any more, so now they have to make targeted budget cuts. Downsizing will likely not affect us, but university plans to cut 30 faculty and 50 staff positions (many of these positions are previously vacant because of hiring freezes). We will see an impact in the form of larger class sizes, and university services may suffer. SFU cannot raise tuition because there is a tuition cap. We don't know precisely where the cuts will be made. BC has increased funding province wide, but we have more students than planned, including a

lot of transfer students from colleges, etc. for whom the university gets no or less funding.

GSS and Caucus constitution revisions

Motion to discuss this at a later date by Erica because of time constraints, seconded by Jerry.	Carried
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iii. Dean of Grad Studies coming to next GSS meeting to talk about how GFs should work. Are we happy with the current system? One suggestion is that there will be incentives for timely completion—can only get GFs for first 2 years of Masters, first 4 years of PhD. But in this case, people who have NSERC funding for first 2 or so years of degree will have a hard time. Also ideas about flexibility within departments to use GF funds in different ways, eg. recruitment. Average completion time for a PhD here is verging on 7 years. We should maybe put together an opinion on this before changes start to happen.

b. TSSU – Melanie Hart

i. Review of TSSU Rep position

1. Attend TSSU, Caucus General Meetings

2. Stipends (\$250/semester)

3. Committee member (\$130/sem), Commissioner (\$450/sem)

ii. Nominations—Mike Wogin

Motion to acclaim Mike Wogin as the TSSU Steward by Erica, seconded by Sarah.	Carried
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c. Faculty mole – Carson Keever

i. Nothing new

d. DGSC – Suzanne Tank, Jeff Joy

i. Review of DGSC Grad Rep position

ii. Nominees

iii. Election

Motion to acclaim Jenn and Emily as new members of DGSC by Suzanne, seconded by Sarah.	Carried
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Jenn will take over from Suzanne now, going until Fall 2010. Emily will start in the spring, and serve until Spring 2011. We can try and switch this so that all elections will be in September so that there will always be a year of overlap—so Jenn will leave position in Sept. 2010, and Emily will stay until Sept. 2011.

Motion to have elections for members of DGSC in September from now on by Emily, seconded by Erica.	Carried
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e. DSC – Sarah Jamieson, Lindsay Farrell

NSERC—Applications were ranked by DSC and forwarded to the university from the department. There weren't many applications for the private scholarships. Quota of number of NSERC applications per department going out from the university is based on previous success.

6. Treasurer's report – Erica Jeffery, Jerry Ericsson acting

f. Should we elect a new Treasurer? Sam is going to be gone for extended periods this year, and was planning on stepping down next summer anyway. We should send out an election notice for treasurer.

g. Motion to buy a cash box-- Simon has a cash box we can borrow and will bring it in tomorrow.

h. Motion to buy a beer cooler, Vote

Motion to buy a new beer cooler by Erica, seconded by Emily.	Carried
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Aleks might be able to get us a free one—will get back to us next week.

7. News

i. Caucus cupboards broken into, and some beer was taken. Locks will be repaired soon, but the cupboards are not very secure.

8. Next Meeting

Friday, November 28 th .	Carried
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Motion to adjourn meeting by Erica, seconded by everyone.	Carried
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9. Meeting adjourned.