



## **Biology Graduate Caucus**

**Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009, 3:30 pm**

**In attendance:** Lindsay Farrell, Clea Moray, Jennifer Trowell, Tim Gray, Erica Jeffery, Samantha Franks, Simon Zappia, Janey Lam, Isabelle Raymond, Juliana Yeung, Nicole Tunbridge, Devin Arbuthnott, Mel Hart, Mathias Schuetz, Simon Goring, Jeff Joy, Jerry Ericsson, Brian LaBore, Andreas Steimel

### 1. Welcome

#### a) Introductions/ Attendance

i) Erica requests all questions to be directed accordingly at the end of the meeting, with the limit of 3 minutes per question.

b) Any additions to agenda? None

### 2. Alton Harestad - "How to Write a Thesis" seminar

Dr. Alton Harestad of the SFU Biology department has offered to give a "Thesis Writing Workshop" to any interested grad students. He has given many seminars and workshops on this topic. The times best for Alton are Mondays (except for 10am-noon), Thursday afternoons, and Fridays

Description of Thesis Writing Workshop (as given for the 10th Annual Spring Semester TA/TM Day, Friday, January 13, 2006):

One of the most difficult tasks facing a graduate student is writing their thesis. The workshop presents a learning tool that acknowledges behaviors of fear, procrastination and guilt that are common among students when writing their thesis. More importantly, this tool offer methods that allow students to plan and move forward. The tool helps restore direction, motivation and excitement to this phase of graduate research. Using a "work matrix", students set a series of small goals that can each be achieved within a few days. Tasks can be matched with available time and state of emotion. Students can set realistic objectives and monitor their progress.

Participants will be asked to break their thesis or other large project of their choice into small tasks and set achievable goals for each task. Issues around other components of writing a thesis will be discussed

### 3. Claim meeting expenses.

Motion to reimburse Erica Jeffery \$ 84.74 (\$71.23 [drinks] + \$13.51 [chips]) from caucus fund made by Jeff, seconded by Isabelle.	Carried
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### 3. Remake motion regarding Travel Grant funds.

Motion to use February minutes to collect the \$100 Travel Grant. Individuals on the A list can be reimbursed for up to \$100 in travel expenses; claimable expenses will also include accommodation. Motion made by Erica, seconded by Isabelle.	Carried
Motion to give the Biology Grad Caucus executives the authority to approve individual(s) on the B list reimbursement for travel expenses totaling up to \$100 in the event that an A list person (or persons) give up the award. Motion made by Erica, seconded by Devon.	Carried

A-list people who have won a travel award:

Corey Watson, Erica Jeffery, Golnar Zandpour, Will Stein, Mathias Schuetz, and Jordy Thomson

B-list people who may get a travel award if an A-list person declines the award, or if more funding becomes available (in the following order):

Michael Silvergieter, Michael Wogin, Jenn Sunday, Rachel Field, Stephanie Green, and Andreas Steimel

Those who have won an award and wish to claim it (to be used for travel between Sept 1, 2008 and August 31, 2009) should go to the GSS website to get the reimbursement form and fill it out. Then the form should be signed by a caucus executive. A copy of the February Biology Grad Caucus minutes and any supporting documents (receipts, etc.) should be attached to the reimbursement form and submitted to the GSS office.

### 4. Events

#### a) SFU-UBC Coffee House

i) ANZA club is booked for Thursday April 16<sup>th</sup>.

- Tickets will be \$5 in advance

- Deadline for performers to register is March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Contact Erica if you are interested in performing.

- Servers are required to have Serving It Right

- Security personnel will be hired at the rate of \$15/hour for 5-6 hours.

#### b) Grad Symposium – March 20, 2009:

(1) Report from the symposium planning committee:

#### i) Funding:

The following sources of funds have been acquired:

- Biology Department: \$600

o The department would contribute more funds if we had talks during the day, something to consider for the future.

- Dean of Science: \$600 for food

- GSS: \$500 for alcohol
- Dean of Graduate Studies: \$250 for prizes

ii) Location: TASC 2 lounge on 7000 level

- Suggestion: MBC grad lounge? This location may require health certificates, liquor licenses, etc. Jenn Sunday will look into the details of potentially using that space.

iii) Food: Costco platters, currently the best deal

- Suggestion: Jayasheree's friend who does homemade Indian food catering is a possible option. Jerry will follow up.

(2) Approve cash advances:

<p>Motion to approve cash advances for the following individuals from Biology Grad Symposium funds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jerry: \$600 for food</li> <li>- Tracey: \$250 for prizes</li> <li>- Brian: \$300 for alcohol</li> </ul> <p>Motion made by Erica, seconded by Janey.</p>	<p>Carried</p>
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(3) Need volunteers to make posters:

- Mel has volunteered to make posters for the event

(4) Submissions: research posters and 'getting to know you' slides/posters

- Research posters: labs will be asked to post a research poster from recent conferences or they can make a new one at each lab's own expense.
- 'Get to know you': Each lab can make 3-4 slides to describe themselves; the presentations will cycle through blank posters on 2-3 projectors. Regular posters that describe each lab will be allowed at the event and will be made at each lab's own expense.

i) Judging/ prizes should be for the 'Get to know you' posters. This will provide an incentive for labs to participate

- Nicole suggests having a questionnaire associated with the posters submitted and the lab that fills out the questionnaire first will get a prize. The labs that submit a poster will also submit a few questions associated with their submission.

c) Grad Hosted Speaker: Locke Rowe (March 18-21<sup>st</sup> 2009)

i) Host/ hostess to set up meetings, breakfasts

ii) Transportation to/ from airport

Erica has currently arranged someone who personally knows Locke to pick him up. Jeff has volunteered to be the alternate pick/ up

drop off person and schedule arranger, and to take Locke out for dinner. The location for dinner is yet to be determined and the expenses for the dinner will be reimbursed.

iii) Friday seminar lunch

- Suggestion: a 'make your own sandwich' platter

5. Treasurer report – Simon Zappia

- The Biology Grad Caucus account received a deposit of \$35 dollars from bottle refund.

- There will be an upcoming meeting on Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009 with University Publishers to renegotiate the \$400 given for printing the Biology Grad Directory.

- If money is needed from the Biology Grad Caucus fund, you will need to talk to Simon and sign a form.

6. Secretary opening; future Chair and Co-chair openings.

a) Juliana has agreed to act as secretary at the next caucus meeting (March)

b) Chair and Co-chair positions will be open at the end of April.

-Duties:

(Chair) Plan Christmas party, welcome party, grad symposium, grad guest speaker; chair meetings; make sure things are running smoothly.

(Co-chair) Assists with all the above duties

7. Reports from committees

a) GSS – Andreas Steimel

i. GSS AGM will be on Friday, February 27, 2009. 100 people are needed to attend the AGM in order to pass two amendments to the current constitution.

ii. Benefit Plan: Benefit plan online referendum will be coming up at the end of March to decide if an increase to the benefit plan fee will be approved by students. The annual contribution to the benefit plan might increase to up to 399 per year in order to keep the same level of service. Emails have been sent around about the referendum. This is part of the annual renegotiation of terms with Sun Life. There are not too many insurance companies to choose from.

b) TSSU – Mike Wogin

i. TSSU elections are coming soon and there will be various positions open, see Mike if you are interested.

ii. Biology TA's are often not getting all 42 hours of prep time allotted per semester, see the TSSU website for the details.

c) Faculty mole – Carson Keever

- i. No news.
- d) DGSC - Jenn Sunday, Jeff Joy
  - i. NSERC is planning to change the funding for Master's students to 1 year and subsequent years will be self-funded (ie. TA-ships). This is proposed to increase the number of available scholarships. The faculty is proposing to oppose the idea.
  - ii. There will no longer be the \$700 available for the external program from the Dean of Grad Studies. The external program was set up to bring external supervisors in for defenses. This decision was made based on the fact that (1) there are funding cut backs from the provincial government and (2) the Dean of Grad Studies doesn't want to take money out of the funds for GFs, etc.
- e) DSC - Sarah Jamieson, Lindsay Farrell
  - i. No news.

8. Questions? None

9. Next meeting - March. 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Erica, seconded by Nicole.	Carried
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