



## Biology Graduate Caucus

Friday, October 30, 2009, 3:30 pm

**In attendance:** Janey Lam, Erica Jeffery, Juliana Yeung, Dhani Kalidasan, Chantale Begin, Jenn Sunday, Alex Chubaty, Grahame Gielens, Sherri Elwell, Matt Huntley, Rian Dickson, Lindsay Farrell, Anna Drake, Thomas Unsoeld, Chris Mull, Muhammad Arashad, Mike Wogin, Brendan Connors, Jennifer Trowell, and HT Law

### 1. Welcome

#### a) Introductions/ Attendance

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

b) Any additions to agenda? No

### 2. Events

#### a) Pumpkin Carving Contest

i) Feedback: There was a good turn out at the event and everyone seemed like they had a great time. Thank you to Jennifer Trowell from the Kennedy Lab for organizing the event.

ii) Finances:

Motion to reimburse Jennifer Trowell \$ 58 [Cost of purchasing the pumpkins] from Bisc Grad Caucus funds. Motion made by Janey, seconded by Alex.	Carried
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#### b) Movie Night

i) Feedback: Attendance was a bit low, only 10 people came, however all those who came thought this was a good idea.

ii) Finances: Bisc caucus will need to reimburse Brendan Connors for the cost of buying the pizza and getting Serving It Right. Approval of the reimbursement will be made during the next caucus meeting.

#### c) Symposium/ Grad- hosted speaker:

i) Top three winners: (1) Olivia Judson - 40.9%, (2) Don Mackay - 27.3%, (3) David Conover - 13.6%

ii) Olivia Judson Invitation: Isabelle has e-mailed Olivia and we are still waiting for a response. If we are able to invite her, UBC is interested in making it a joint event.

iii) Finances: The department in the past has contributed \$700 to the event. The Dean of Science and the Dean of Grad Studies has also given us money in the past. Once we have confirmation from our speaker, a

budget will need to be put together and then we can approach the different sources for funding.

c) X'mas Party

i) Planning: Anna Drake will be coordinating the Bisc Caucus' involvement with the event. She will be sending out an e-mail to ask for volunteers to help at the event.

ii) Status Update:

- The date for the Christmas party is set for Dec 11, 3:30 - 7:30pm and skits will start at 4:30pm.
- The theme will be 'SFU's Got Talent'.
- Brandon Connors and Nicole Tunbridge have volunteered to help serve alcohol.
- Volunteers are needed to help pick up food from Costco

3. Treasurer's Report - Finances:

i) Student Directory: It is almost complete and we should be expecting \$500 from University publishers

ii) Available funds in Core and Trust Accounts: Core - \$717 and Trust - \$3000

iii) Travel Awards: The Bisc Caucus has decided that we should have 3 travel awards per semester and if there is extra money available, then there will be more awards available in the summer. The travel awards remain to be \$100 each. There will be a call for applicants and a draw for the awards in the 3<sup>rd</sup> month of each semester. The winner can claim their award for any conference that they will be attending (or have attended) during the fiscal year (i.e. Sept 1, 2009 - August 31, 2010).

3. Reports from committees

a. GSS - Thomas Unsoeld

- i. Room Booking: If there is a mess left in the room after use, a warning will be issued and subsequent offences will result in not being able to rent the room for 1 year. As well, groups will now be required to leave a small deposit when borrowing the room. The Blue-Ray equipment should be available next year.
- ii. Car Sharing: There was a change in management to the Car Coop and they did not give GSS a discount, therefore the GSS opt-out.
- iii. GSS Benefits: The management of the benefits will not be out-sourced. This should increase the efficiency of questions being answered over the phone. Outsourcing should also reduce the cost of the benefits; however they will now need to be paid in one lump sum during the beginning of the year. More information will be e-mailed.

b. TSSU - Mike Wogin

- i. Contract negotiations: The university wanted to pay TA's

differently, however the TSSU disagreed, therefore there will be no changes.

- ii. Sick Leave: There is 30 days of sick leave available. If you are sick, you will need to contact your supervisor (course head instructor). You will not be responsible for finding a replacement for yourself.
- c. Faculty Mole - Simon Goring
    - i. Not present
  - d. DGSC - Jenn Sunday, Chantale Begin
    - i. Progress Reports: The department will be stricter in ensuring that they are handed in on time. If they are not handed in, then the student will no longer be in 'good standing', which will prevent that student from registering and getting a TAsip.
    - ii. Students need to have a committee meeting before their candidacy exam.
    - iii. Self-funded students: The department is in the process of deciding if they will allow self-funded students in the future. They are thinking of allowing self-funded students on case-by-case basis. A possible problem could be if the student runs out of money part way through their degree and requests for money from the department. There is currently no university wide rule on this issue and all other departments in science stipend their students. The decision for accepting any new grad students will depend on the decision of the DGSC and the supervisor who will be supervising that grad student. Chantel will e-mail the department's grad students for their opinion.
  - e. DSC - Lindsay Farrell, Rian Dickson
    - i. Inigo and Isabelle Cote are new additions to the DSC
    - ii. Private awards will be due in November
  - f. International Students Rep - Muhammad Arashad
    - i. There is a change in rules for applying for work permits. Students will need to contact SFU International for details.
5. Next Meeting: End of November. The specific date will be confirmed via e-mail.
6. Janey motions to adjourn the meeting.
- Seconded by Jenn
  - Motion carried