



Biology Graduate Caucus

Friday, November 27, 2009, 3:30 pm

In attendance: Janey Lam, Juliana Yeung, Dhani Kalidasan, Chantale Begin, Jenn Sunday, Alex Chubaty, Matt Huntley, Anna Drake, Thomas Unsoeld, Mike Wogin, Brendan Connors, Isabelle Raymond, Justin Suraci, Samineh Deheshi and HT Law

1. Welcome

a) Introductions/ Attendance

i) Isabelle 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? (1) Pay Day Coffee recruiter, (2) Christmas hamper, (3) Movember party, (4) Beer Garden organizer

2. Claim meeting expenses:

Motion to reimburse Janey Lam \$12.58 [chips] from Bisc Grad Caucus funds. Motion made by Isabelle, seconded by Mike.	Carried
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3. Events

a) Movie Night

i) Finances:

Motion to reimburse Brendan Connors \$ 152.02 [Cost of getting Serving It Right and purchasing the pizza] from Bisc Grad Caucus core funds. Motion made by Isabelle, seconded by Chantel.	Carried
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b) Symposium/ Grad- hosted speaker:

i) Update on status of Olivia and Don invites: Both Olivia Judson and Don Mackay, the two top voted speakers, are not able to come either due to deadlines or for personal reasons. However, Olivia did sound interested in coming to SFU to speak; she should be approached in the future.

ii) David Conover Invitation: He has agreed to come and he is able to come on March 18th and 19th. He studies the evolution of farmed marine life and he is from the University of New York.

c) X'mas Party

i) Entertainment:

- We need more volunteers for skits! At present there are 6 labs participating.

- As well, one more celebrity judge is needed.

- Julian Christians has agreed to MC the event.

ii) Donations/Gag gifts:

- There is a need for more donations for gag gifts.
- Four biotech companies will be donating a few items for gifts.

4. Travel Awards:

i) Travel Awards:

- A volunteer is needed to collect names of students and draw 3 names for the three travel awards for this semester. Jenn Sunday has agreed to volunteer to collect names. The deadline for submitting your name for the award is in two weeks.

5. Faculty Mole:

i) Simon Goring is temporarily unable to continue being the Faculty Mole due to personal reasons. The Caucus agrees to vote in a temporary replacement.

- Samineh Deheshi has volunteered for the position.

Motion for Samineh to replace Simon as the Faculty Mole until he is back. Motion made by Isabelle, seconded by Brandon.	Carried
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3. Reports from committees

a. GSS – Thomas Unsoeld

- GSS Benefits: The GSS is now partnering with an administrator for the benefits plan. This will result in lower plan fees which will save about \$35 a year for each grad student. Starting in January, all grad students participating in the plan will need to pay for benefits for both Spring and Summer semesters. Then in September, students will need to make a lump-sum payment for a full year of benefits (3 semesters). The new partner studentcare.net/works offers an improved hotline and an e-mail contact service that guarantees a reply to questions within 24 hrs. McGill and UBC are using studentcare to administer their benefit service plan as well.
- GSS meeting: Some people are unhappy with the GSS and there will be a meeting at the pub on Dec 3 from 3:30 – 5:30pm to discuss the issues of concern. Thomas will attend the meeting for the Bisc Caucus.

b. TSSU – Mike Wogin

- Meeting with GSS: TSSU had a concern with the GSS about changing the benefits coordinator position at the GSS to an outside source.
- Donations: The TSSU donated money to Peddle, Housing Society, and a social justice cause surrounding the

Olympics.

- iii. Bargaining year: Starting in Jan 2010 will begin the bargaining year with the university.

- c. Faculty Mole – Simon Goring
 - i. Not present
 - d. DGSC – Jenn Sunday, Chantale Begin
 - i. Grad Courses: If graduate level courses were taken at UBC/SFU before the start of your graduate degree at SFU, they can be counted towards the courses that you need to take in your graduate degree. However, those courses could not have counted towards the completion of the previous degree. The students will need to state to the department before the start of their graduate degree if they want previously completed courses to count towards their graduate degree.
 - ii. MET: MET students will now need to find a supervisory committee within the first 4 semester, instead of within the first 3 semesters.
 - iii. MSc. Course Credits: The DGSC is considering reducing the number of credits MSc. students are required to complete because the department is finding that a lot of students are taking too long to complete their MSc. They have found that other universities require a lower amount of course work. The department brought up this idea because they want to be more competitive in student recruitment.
 - o The Caucus doesn't believe that the existing 12 credit requirement is too much for a MSc. degree. The completion time of a degree is largely based upon the scope of the project defined at the beginning of the degree. The only positive aspect of this proposal is that it might make the program more attractive, however it could also de-value the program.
 - e. DSC – Lindsay Farrell, Rian Dickson
 - Not present
 - f. International Students Rep - Muhammad Arashad
 - i. Not present
5. Additions to the Agenda:
- i. Pay Day Coffee:
 - The techs have requested for a Pay Day Coffee recruiter to get labs to sign up to host Pay Day Coffee. Since Dawn Cooper graduated, no one has replaced the role and it has been difficult in maintaining the Pay Day Coffee tradition.
 - Samineh suggests that some labs can host Pay Day

coffee as a joint venture since some labs are quite small and group effort may be more manageable.

- Isabelle will send out an e-mail to find the next Pay Day Coffee recruiter

ii. Christmas Hamper:

- Janey will send out an e-mail to Bisc-all for a suggestion for the recipient of the Christmas hamper.

iii. Movember Party:

- To celebrate the Movember campaign, there will be a Movember party. The Biology Grad Caucus will contribute a maximum of \$50 for prizes given at the party

Motion to contribute a maximum of \$50 for prizes at the Movember party. Motion made by Isabelle, seconded by Alex.	
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Carried

iv. Beer Garden Organizer:

- Anastasia, the current Beer Garden organizer, will be graduating soon and there will be a need for a new organizer to keep Beer Garden running.
- The Caucus suggests Anastasia to send out a e-mail to Bisc-grads to recruit a new volunteer.

6. Next Meeting: January 2010. The specific date will be confirmed via e-mail.

7. Isabelle motions to adjourn the meeting.

- Seconded by Alex
- Motion carried