



## Biology Graduate Caucus

Friday, March 26, 2010, 3:30 pm

**In attendance:** Janey Lam, Juliana Yeung, Dhani Kalidasan, Thomas Unsoeld, Isabelle Raymond, Aleks Maljkovic, Rian Dickson, Alex Chubaty, Rob Greenland, Samineh Deheshi, Erica Jeffery, Brett Favaro, Brendan Connors, Mike Wogin, and Jenn Sunday

### 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.

#### ii) Additions to the agenda:

Introductions by GSS executive candidates: Christi Garneau-Scott (Secretary candidate - ACE) and Duncan Wlodarczyk (Presidential candidate - ACE)

### 2. Events!

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

##### i) Reimbursements:

Motion to reimburse Dhani Kalidasan \$130.41 for the purchase of sushi for the Grad Symposium/Grad-hosted speaker event from the Biology Department Grad Symposium/Grad-hosted speaker funds. Motion made by Alex, seconded by Mike.	Carried
Motion to reimburse Rian Dickson \$30.13 for teas, coffee, and snacks purchased for the Grad Symposium/ Grad-hosted speaker event from the Biology Department Grad Symposium/Grad-hosted speaker funds. Motion made by Isabelle, seconded by Alex.	Carried
Motion to reimburse Juliana Yeung \$109.20 for the purchase of pizza for the Grad Symposium/Grad-hosted speaker event from the GSS grant. Motion made by Isabelle, seconded by Alex.	Carried

- Janey, Jenn, and Justin can go directly to the department for their reimbursement for the dinner with the grad hosted speaker.

##### ii) Feedback/Thoughts

- Thoughts from Felix Breden (Bisc Department Chair)
  - o Most staff and faculty enjoyed the event
  - o He suggests having the Grad Symposium to coincide with the Biology graduate recruitment week that the faculty is hoping to introduce next year. The graduate student recruitment event will most likely take place around the beginning of February, which is around the same time most other institutions have their graduate

recruitment events. If the Grad symposium were to be part of the graduate student recruitment process, then the department is willing to put in more resources for the Grad Symposium to possibly make it into a multiday event. The faculty believes that it will be interesting to combine the two events (Grad symposium/ grad recruitment) together and it will be a good way to introduce the research that goes on in the department to the prospective students.

- The dual event would most likely be a 3 day event (ie. Wednesday to Friday). Starting with an initial social (ie. Wed night dinner) where prospective and current student can socialize, followed by talks from the grad hosted speaker and department invited speakers on the next day (Thursday). Then graduate student talks and the general symposium social on the last day (Friday).
  - Proposed possible format changes to the symposium: Group different types of talks (E2O, CWE, cellular biology, etc.) into series and have separate speaker series through the day. Presentation would be from both grad students and faculty members.
- General feedback from the Caucus:
- Everyone in the caucus believes that we have reached the goal of the symposium: To demonstrate and introduce the diversity of the research conducted the Biology Department and introduce graduate students in the department to each other.
  - Feedback from other people in the department felt that the research talks were a bit long, but the caucus believes that the flow the student talks was carried out smoothly and efficiently.
  - The next grad caucus will have to decide if the caucus is willing to move the Grad Symposium to early February. Isabelle suggests having the symposium earlier to coincide with the proposed graduate recruitment event and have the grad hosted speaker later in the semester to make it easier for the organizational committee.
  - Everyone agrees that a smaller room (ie. SSB 7172) would be a more appropriate room for the event. The next committee will need to book the room much more in advance (ie. one semester ahead).
  - Next organizational committee will need to remember to double check the scheduled department talk to ensure that there are no conflicts.

### iii) Actual Costs (Treasurer)

- The budget for the event was \$3000 and the actual cost was \$2500. The funding sources were: Biology Department (\$1200) [grad-hosted speaker], GSS (\$750) [food/alcohol/pizza]; DGS (\$250) [prizes for student talks], and Biology Grad Caucus (\$310). Most of the cost savings came from the fact that the Biology Department had donated the left over beverages from the Christmas party for the Symposium social and lent the department

vehicle to the caucus at no charge to pick-up/drop-off the grad hosted speaker. As well, the grad hosted speaker stayed for fewer nights than originally planned and had fewer meals outside of the symposium.

### 3. Elections for Caucus Representatives (2010/2011):

-The elections will be held at the next caucus meeting to be held on April 30, 2010. The announcement calling for nominations will be made on March 29, 2010.

- There will be a total of 3.5 weeks before the elections.

- Nominations will open on Monday March 29<sup>th</sup>

-Nominations will close on April 23<sup>rd</sup> and campaigning will commence.

-Available positions:

- i. Chair
- ii. Associate Chair
- iii. Treasurer
- iv. Secretary
- v. Member at large
- vi. Events committee officers (3 positions)
- vii. Webmaster
- viii. GSS Rep
- ix. TSSU Rep
- x. Faculty mole
- xi. DGSC (2 positions) - 2yr
- xii. DSC (1 position) - 2yr
  - Rian is staying for one more year (2<sup>nd</sup> year of two year term)
- xiii. International Student Rep

### 4. Reports from committees

#### a. GSS - Thomas Unsoeld

- The GSS elections will coincide with the referendum, April 6-8, 2010. During this referendum several decisions will be made: (1) the continuation of funding to the Peak newspaper by the GSS, (2) to give signing authority to the executive director, and (3) to open one executive position to the general GSS membership.
- Benefit Plan: There will no longer be a permanent opt out option. All students will be automatically enrolled into the system and they will need to opt out annually by providing proof that they have the same level of coverage from an

alternate source. Annual benefit plan fees will be paid in a lump sum in the fall semester.

- Every semester there is a GSS meeting where all GSS member are invited to attend, and free burgers and cheap beer (\$2) are available.

b. TSSU - Mike Wogin

- TSSU elections has been held, see Mike for the details.
- TSSU has a survey circulating to assess level of accessibility of TA/TM positions for grad students.

c. Faculty Mole - Samineh Deheshi

- The department is thinking about changing departmental talks from a weekly to a monthly basis due to low attendance.
- The Caucus feels that this is a significant reduction and doesn't support this idea. We believe that if there is a greater influence from the supervisors for their students to attend talks, there would be a greater attendance. Most often the topics for the talks are only focused on aspect of biology, perhaps if there was a rotation of topics focusing on the various research areas in the department, there would be a greater interest for people to attend. As well, hosts should encourage speakers to keep talks to ~45min and have ~15 min for discussions.
- The Club Ilia socials after the talks are not working. The caucus suggests the department to have a non-alcoholic social with snacks after each talk instead going somewhere else on campus for the social. This will encourage people who are attending the talks to remain in the room to socialize and chat with the invited speaker.

d. DGSC - Jenn Sunday, Chantale Begin

No new news

e. DSC - Lindsay Farrell, Rian Dickson

No new news

f. International Students Rep - Muhammad Arshad

Not present

5. Introductions by GSS executive candidates: Christi Garneau- Scott (Secretary candidate - ACE) and Duncan Wlodarczak (Presidential candidate - ACE)

- Both candidates have been visiting various graduate caucuses throughout the school to promote their candidacy for the respective positions and the platform they are proposing for the GSS.
- Both candidates are from ACE
- Their aim, if elected, is to strengthen the relationship of the GSS with the different graduate caucuses and to stimulate the activity of graduate caucuses. They hope to increase communication by increasing the amount of training for graduate students on how to

run a graduate caucus, forwarding more information relating to the GSS by e-mailing to all graduate students, possibly starting grad student only intramurals (similar to Rez Challenge/ Biz Challenge), reaching out to international students to introduce them to the various resources available, and promoting grad student life on campus.

6. Next Meeting: April 30, 2010.
7. Isabelle motions to adjourn the meeting.
  - Seconded by Erica
  - Motion carried