



Biology Graduate Caucus

October 15, 2010 – 3:00PM, B9242

Chair: Brett Favaro

Associate chair: Stephanie Green

Attendance: Brett Favaro, Steph Green, Emily Meusser, Shannon Squires, Samineh Deheshi, Emily Whattam, Dhani Kalidasan, Natalie Dinsdale, Emily Darling, Chris Mull, Rowan Trebilco, Samantha Franks, Rian Dickson, Nicole Gerbrandt, Birgit Schwarz, Matt Huntley, Alex Chubaty

1. Welcome
 - a. Claim meeting expenses

Motion to reimburse Brett \$10.07 [chips] from BISC Grad Caucus funds.	Carried
Motioned by Alex	
Seconded by Steph	

2. Report on Finances - Dhani Kalidasan
 - \$ 491 core account
 - \$ 3545 trust account
3. Committee Report – Planning for the upcoming Publishing Workshop
 - Scheduled for Nov 16 @ 3:30, emails will be sent out
 - 6 speakers – 10 min talks about many aspects regarding papers and publishing
 - followed by BBQ social
 - possibility of filming for those unable to attend, only to be accessible for SFU students
4. Pumpkin Carving Contest
 - Jen Trowell organized it last year
 - plans to contact her and figure out what's needed
5. Grad Hosted Speaker – finalize date
 - nomination emails will be sent out within the week
 - Wendy Palen has reserved March 3, 10, 17
 - problems with 'no alcohol on Thursday' unofficial rule? Also now a Wed rule?
 - Alex proposed having the social on the Friday
 - possibility of having social at Club Ilia

- will look into it all
- Decided on March 10th
- Sub-Committees to be set up around January

6. Grad Symposium

- Felix wants to have a prospective grad student day/week
- mid Feb sometime

7. Emily Darling and Jenn Sunday – Discussion of Graduate Student Survival Guide (and report from DGSC committee)

- Jenn and Emily updated Survival guide that was created by Margo Moore
- Asked for edits especially from a Cell Biology/Molecular background – Samineh volunteered
- Alex explained how the computer cluster WestGrid worked

8. DSC discussion - Dr. Ron Ydenberg, chair of scholarship committee

- Overview: Departments vary, Biology is one of the largest, ~140 students, has a scholarship committee. Graduate Fellowships (60 or so) are a main source of funding. There are procedures in place to adjudicate scholarships. Separate from Graduate Committee. Ranking – ranked by each member separately and usually pretty good consensus but there is group discussion when opinions differ. The criteria for many scholarships and awards are vague, scholarship committee ranks each separately and then try to bring the committee to a consensus.

- Ron provides some examples:

-departments were not well-informed as to how the PPD would function, and the Biology Dept did not realize that they would be required to match the funds provided by the Dean of Grad Studies.

-award-holders were not told what form the award would take, and are understandably surprised when told that they may have to TA in order to receive the funds from the department

-some supervisors cannot use their own funds to match the award, as if they are funded through NSERC, they are not permitted to use NSERC \$\$ to “top-up” a student’s NSERC

-in a broader context – the PPD is being given to students who already hold a major award, and in some cases it may impact the dept’s ability to provide funding for students who do not have other funds

- Loose departmental policy of spreading out awards in an attempt to provide funding to as many grad students as possible.

- Brett asks Ron about how we can help as a caucus – Write to Dean of Grad Studies with concerns

6. Reports from committees

a. GSS – Thomas Unsoeld

-Announcement: General meeting on Nov 8

- Followup:
 - Lawsuit: Donation of lawsuit monies to a charity
 - sustainability: won't be forced but it will be considered
 - allocation of surplus budget ideas – all or some of the following:
 - New handbook
 - travel funding
 - graduate receptions
 - monthly socials
 - more promotions
 - support student art
 - interdisciplinary conference

7. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn	
Motioned by Brett	Carried
Seconded by Emily	