



Biology Graduate Caucus

February 9, 2011 – 3:30PM, B9242

Chair: Brett Favaro

Associate chair: Stephanie Green

Attendance: Brett Favaro, Steph Green, Emily Darling, Janey Lam, Cassandra Carroll, Alex Chubaty, Rian Dickson, Sam Franks, Birgit Schwarz, Jesse Taylor, Dhani Kalidasan, Rob Greenland, Matt Huntley

1. Welcome

- a. No meeting expenses

2. Budget update – Dhani Kalidasan

- budget core funds are at \$878
- symposium and speaker will cost \$2500
 - 5 funders- caucus, GSS, dean of science, dean of grad studies office, biology department
- GSS funding requests:
 - symposium: asked for \$750 from GSS got \$500
 - publishing workshop: asked for \$255, got full amount

Motion to increase allowed expenditure for symposium/speaker from core account from \$225 to \$500	Carried-unanimous
Motioned by Steph	
Seconded by Alex	

3. Trust fund money from GSS(~\$3000)

- may affect future GSS funding requests
- brainstorm ideas for its use
 - new competitive award (service award? nomination based?)
 - upgrade defence room (B9242)
 - big project/legacy project – possibly matched funding by department?
 - money towards bringing in external examiners – matched by department?
- sit down with or Ron or Felix, someone in the department, to discuss ideas

3. Grad hosted speaker update – Stephanie Green

- planning meeting later today – March 17-18 with Don Mackay from Trent,

- Thursday 17th departmental seminar with social at Club Ilia to follow
- Friday 18th meet with students, then symposium in the afternoon
- grad symposium limited to 3 min per talk
- in IRMACS

4. **DSC/Scholarship update** – Samantha Franks, Rian Dickson

- meeting with Thea Hinds later today
 - department will notify people who have applied whether they are or are not in the running for GFs
 - discussed changing the way funds are allocated to departments
 - alternative was giving lump sum to departments
 - possibility of changing current entrance scholarships to spread over all grad students
- MSc students that have upgraded to PhD should still apply for the President's Research Stipend

Announcement of special caucus meeting Tuesday February 22, 3:30 – 4:30 B9242.

Purpose is to discuss how students want to see departmental scholarship policies changed.

5. **Committee updates**

- a. DGSC – Emily Darling, Erica Jeffrey
 - DGSC chair is interested in reducing timeline for Masters ideas
 - no more GFs or TAs for long completion times?
 - get data on whether long completion times result in longer theses/more publications
 - investigate what the department/ grad students want from the Masters program
 - compare stats with other Canadian universities
 - ideas about more specific Stats courses that apply to biology
 - ideas about how to spend money earmarked for attracting future grad students
 - bounty for bringing in other grad students
- b. TSSU – Brian LaBore

Summary sent in:

 - Continuing protests about goldcorp
 - slow-moving contract/collective agreement negotiations
 - the University is refusing to post signs (that are mandated by law) in labs containing hazardous material informing lab workers and occupants as to the hazards of being around or working in said environment
 - the last update on negotiations from the TSSU's website (posted 2 days ago):

"On Tuesday, February 1st, the bargaining committee heard from the employer that they need to retain the right to keep disciplinary documents on your file forever. We were also told that when discipline happens they don't want to inform the TSSU, they are not in favour of progressive discipline and they refuse to have the word "reasonable" in the Collective Agreement."

- As tuition rates increase without a corresponding increase in pay for TAs, the University is effectively forcing a pay-cut on all TAs; and a forced pay-cut is a clear contract violation. The bargaining committee is also desperately trying to work on this.

c. Faculty Mole – Samineh Deheshi
-not present

d. GSS – Thomas Unsoeld

- nominations for alternate councilor for GSS meetings from our department
 - will be stipended when the person is acting department councilor
 - Steph was nominated but other nominations can still be accepted
- call for GSS officers, details in email or website (<http://www.sfugradsociety.ca/Elections.html>)
- annual general meeting is coming up on wed feb 23 at 4pm, social at 6pm, email to come
- travel grants discussed
- Reminder that free coffee is available at GSS everyday

6. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn	
Motioned by Alex	
Seconded by Sam	Carried-unanimous