



Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus

August 18th 2014 – 3:30 to 4:30 PM

In Attendance: Leslie Saunders (Chair), Dan Peach (Events Committee), Matt Holl (Events Committee), Kyle Bobiwash (Events Committee), Antonia Musso (TSSU rep), Paul Macdonald (TSSU rep), Heather Coatsworth (TSSU rep), Jen Scholefield (Member at Large), Jayme Lewthwaite (Treasurer), Samneh Deheshi (GSS rep), Mike Hrabar (GSS rep), Karen Lo (Faculty Mole), Marinde Out (Webmaster), Sarah Thomson (DGSC rep), Melanie Pylatuk, Sara Ali.

Absent: Pascale Gibeau (Secretary), Fiona Francis (Assoc. Chair), Marlene Wagner (TSSU rep), Nicola Smith (DGSC rep), Lindsay Davidson (DSC rep), Luis Malpica Cruz (DSC rep), Sebastian Ibarra (International Students Rep).

1. Welcome –

Meeting called to order at 15:32 by Leslie Saunders.

- a. Attendance
- b. Additions to Agenda
 - i. Living Wage Campaign

Visit by Christina Batstone, the GSS Advocate & Policy Advisor to talk about the Living Wage campaign. They are trying to encourage SFU to be the first university in Canada to adhere to it. Vancouver has the highest living costs in BC. Living Wage campaign argues for basic living needs to be met (including transportation, child care etc., but not debt repayment); a wage of \$20.02/hour is aimed for at SFU. The most challenged workers at SFU are the cleaning & childcare workers, followed by cafeteria employees & Research Assistants.

Research Assistants (RA) are in a unique category as they are not really employed by the university, but paid by professors. Campaign organizers would not want the repercussions to be fewer RAships available to students; therefore may need to find another way to increase RA wage, for example maybe tuition reduction or other benefits. Details yet to be discussed.

GSS is collecting petition signatures from individuals and whole caucuses to call on SFU to endorse the campaign. If implemented, SFU would have 5 years to get all employees to living wage. Petition will be presented and discussed at a Board of Governors meeting in the Fall (yet to be determined).

Motion for the BISC Graduate Caucus to endorse the Living Wage campaign.

Motioned by: Antonia Musso

Seconded by: Mike Hrabar

Decision: Motion carries unanimously.

ii. Grad hosted speaker - update (Leslie Saunders)

Dr. Tyronne Hayes won the vote and is available. Based on the Google docs seminar schedule, March 11th or March 25th are the best dates. Leslie Saunders has tentatively booked March 11th as the date.

Seminars on Wednesdays now. Workshops could be on a day either before or after seminar. Need to explore options of what to do.

Workshop suggestions include: advocacy advice, career development, communication with media and/or other groups. We will discuss further closer to the time.

iii. Grad student peer mentorship program – update (Dan Peach)

7 people volunteered to be mentors, and 5 new students want mentors. Program seems to be working well and people want information. They can contact each other by phone or email, or meet in person. Mentors and mentees were matched up by specific information they may want or need, and by hobbies or interests if provided.

iv. Welcome BBQ (September 4th) – events committee

Student orientation to be held prior to BBQ. Once orientation schedule is set up, the person who is last on the timetable can escort new grads down to grad lounge and to the BBQ.

Need volunteers for set up and take down, food shopping, cooking and food prep, sell Biology t-shirts – Dan Peach will email grads students to ask for volunteers.

Get to know you Bingo will be played!

Motion for Dan Peach to spend up to \$500 for food at the welcome BBQ and for drinks at the Highland pub (from the core account).

Motioned by: Leslie Saunders

Seconded by: Antonia Musso

Decision: Motion carries with abstention from Dan Peach.

Motion for Leslie Saunders to spend up to \$30 on prizes for welcome BBQ games (from the trust account).

Motioned by: Dan Peach

Seconded by: Karen Lo

Decision: Motion carries with abstention from Leslie Saunders.

v. Science Communication Toastmasters

Goal: club to practice talking in front of general audience. Trial meeting went well, and organizers are now trying to find funding. GSS needs a caucus to apply to funding so it becomes a BISC grad caucus supported event – this comes from the professional development fund, and consists of a single sum of \$750. This is the same pot of money from which we get funding for symposium held in spring semester. The GSS says it will not affect Biology chances of getting future events but we want to check this. This funding contributes to membership fees to Toastmasters, which will bring in people from outside SFU to advise members (rather than just getting feedback from academics).

Motion for BISC graduate student caucus to endorse support for Science communication toastmasters, conditional on it not affecting future funding opportunities for BISC grad caucus.

Motioned by: Jen Scholefield

Seconded by Jayme Lewthwaite

Decision: Motion carries with abstention from Karen Lo (organizer).

c. Motion to approve minutes from last month's meeting.

Motion to approve minutes from July meeting. Moved by: Leslie Saunders Seconded by: Jen Scholefield Decision: Motion carries unanimously.
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2. Treasury update
Core Account - \$508.98
Trust Account - \$1049.72

Reminder: GSS takes back 50% of the money in core account that is not spent at the end of the year.

3. Committee updates

- a) DGSC (Sarah Thomsen)
No update.

- b) DSC (Lindsay Davidson, Luis Malpica Cruz)
Rep absent, no update.

- c) GSS (Mike Hrabar, Samineh Deheshi)
 - I. Budget update: new executive director is focused on cutting unnecessary spending (e.g. the GSS pays rent in Maggie Bentson even though SFSS don't).
 - II. Endorsed committee to support teachers in teachers strike.
 - III. Developing a letter regarding the Gaza conflict –will be decided at the next meeting so caucus members can go to GSS reps to see and discuss the letter. Reps can pass on their views at the meeting.
 - IV. A GSS rep could come to the welcome BBQ to tell more info about the GSS to incoming students (they need to be invited).

- d) TSSU (Antonia Musso, Marlene Wagner, Paul Macdonald)

Meeting missed last month as all stewards were away.

- I. Reminder to members about wage tracker/pay stub review – check wages every time you get paid, log into myinfo account to view. Can look on TSSU website for more guidance.
 - II. Current campaign focus: sessional instructors need assistance. Suggest to read collective agreement for MSP coverage etc.
 - III. Bargaining for new collective agreement will begin soon.
- e) Faculty Mole (Karen Lo)
No meeting.

4. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn August 18, 2014 meeting of the Biological Sciences Graduate Student Caucus at 4:37pm.

Moved by: Leslie Saunders

Seconded by: Dan Peach

Decision: Motion carries unanimously.