



## Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus

October 21<sup>st</sup> 2014 – 3:30 to 4:30 PM

**In Attendance:** Leslie Saunders (Chair), Dan Peach (Events Committee), Jen Scholefield (Member at Large), Karen Lo (Faculty Mole), Pascale Gibeau (Secretary), Fiona Francis (Assoc. Chair), Dan Greenberg, Amanda Kissel, Joyce Leung, Paul MacDonald (TSSU rep), Jayme Lewthwaite (Treasurer), Leon Li, Luis Malpica Cruz (DSC rep), Josh Pol, Sarah Thomsen (DGSC rep), Nicola Smith (DGSC rep), Melanie Pylatuk, Tanya Procyshyn, Jesse Taylor, Matt Holl (Events committee).

**Absent:** Kyle Bobiwash (Events Committee), Antonia Musso (TSSU rep), Heather Coatsworth (TSSU rep), Sebastian Ibarra (International Students Rep), Marlene Wagner (TSSU rep), Lindsay Davidson (DSC rep), Samneh Deheshi (GSS rep), Mike Hrabar (GSS rep), Marinde Out (Webmaster).

### 1. Welcome –

Meeting called to order at 15:31 by Leslie Saunders.

- a. Attendance
- b. Additions to Agenda
  - i. Halloween Party (Thursday, October 30th)

Dan Peach to follow up with grad students, after sending first email. Funding from last year: 100\$ pumpkins, 200\$ for food; it was adequate last year so should be ok this year.

Will need volunteers to run the BBQ; Dan will be asking grad students by email.

Fiona Francis will contact Club Ilia and Renaissance to ask for prices to donate to best pumpkins.

Motion to pay Dan Peach up to 100\$ for pumpkins and 200\$, for the Halloween BBQ to be held on October 30th, out of core account.

Moved by: Leslie Saunders

Seconded by: Fiona Francis

Decision: Motion carries with abstention from Dan Peach.

### ii. UBC Zoology- SFU Biology social

Leslie Saunders connected with UBC zoology graduate caucus president, and proposes common activity to connect both universities. Asking for suggestions:

- Event with live bands at the Biltmore in winter semester (but hard to connect and discuss with people in a bar with loud music)
- Movember competition
- Scavenger hunt- teams mixed with both UBC and SFU people to promote networking and getting to know each other.

- Documentary screening: we could hold the event somewhere in East Vancouver because that is in between SFU and UBC, e.g. at a community centre, theatre (Rio theatre), or Science World. Fiona to look into this.

Also mention that it would be nice to get the list of seminars happening at UBC. There is a lot of overlap in subjects, and it would foster meetings between students from both universities. Leslie Saunders to follow up.

### iii. Winterfest brainstorm

Leslie Saunders talked to Melissa (Chair's secretary), who mentioned that department still open to get suggestions of theme for this year's Winterfest; looking for something similar to previous years (variety show with prizes). Idea now is to make a list of suggestions and submit to vote for grad students after November caucus meeting. Leslie Saunders to follow up.

Also, Brian Medford is looking for help from someone who has 'serving it right' to help with serving alcohol, and department is looking for alternate locations to host it; locations suggested: GSS lounge, Halpern center, Rotundra?

Date: December 12th.

### iv. Fall by-election vote (TSSU Steward & GSS rep)

Motion to approve Leon Li as the acclaimed TSSU steward for the Biology Grad Caucus for the 2014-2015 academic term.

Moved by: Leslie Saunders

Seconded by: Dan Peach

Decision: Motion carries with abstention from Leon Li.

Motion to elect Joyce Leung to the position of GSS representative on the Biology grad caucus for the 2014-2015 academic term.

Moved by: Leslie Saunders

Seconded by: Dan Peach

Decision: Motion carries with 13 in favor, 2 oppose, and 3 abstentions.

Motion to elect Josh Pol to the position of GSS representative on the Biology grad caucus for the 2014-2015 academic term.

Moved by: Leslie Saunders

Seconded by: Dan Peach

Decision: Motion is defeated with 2 in favor, 3 oppose, and 10 abstentions.

Grad caucus thanks Leon and Joyce for their election. Grad caucus also thanks Josh for participating, and encourages him to apply again for the position next year.

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

Motion to approve the minutes from the September Biology grad caucus meeting.

Moved by: Leslie Saunders

Seconded by: Paul MacDonald

Decision: Motion carries unanimously.

## 2. Treasury update

Core account hasn't been updated for a month because the admin person is on holiday, and no one can access account balance. Therefore, impossible to include a proper treasury update on the time of the meeting. Jayme L. sent an email on Oct. 30 to say that Trust account balance was \$1,107.24 (including year-end transfer of \$57.52 from the Core Account). The Core account still hadn't been updated.

Still waiting on updates from department about the total attendance to adjust amount that the caucus will receive this year, but expected to be similar as last year.

Still no worries to be had for the Halloween party, based on update on treasury last month.

Caucus sold 23 t-shirts, and Jayme needs to deposit the money into trust account.

Motion for Jayme to deposit 230\$ from the t-shirt sale into trust account.

Moved by: Jayme Lewthwaite

Seconded by: Leslie Saunders

Decision: Motion carries unanimously.

## 3. Committee updates

a. DGSC(Sarah Thomsen)

2 meetings were held since last caucus. DGSC has two events "Beyond the ivory tower" to promote careers outside of academia, one day for Molecular Ecology (Nov 19th) and one day for biology-ecology (Nov.27th).

Dean of GS was asking if interested in having concurrent undergrad and Masters program; and the idea of PhD Candidate exit seminar received very little support, so not likely to go forward.

Grad students will be asked shortly their opinions about drafting a common definition of what is required for Masters or PhD (e.g. how many chapters, presentations, etc.).

b. DSC (Lindsay Davidson, Luis Malpica Cruz)

Mentions of a new scholarship option to attract good students, providing funds for 4 years (from NSERC or other scholarship, and match up with top ups). 25,000\$ per year, including TAs, GS, RAs. Would secure funding for 4 years, with no need to re-apply.

A question was brought up to scholarship committee: would there be options for scholarships to cover tuition fees?

c. GSS (Mike Hrabar, Samineh Deheshi, Jesse Taylor)

There is opening for three director positions (paid; finance, grad services, and communication): info is available on GSS website.

No increases in tuition fees planned for international students.

d. TSSU (Antonia Musso, Marlene Wagner, Paul Macdonald, Heather Coatsworth, Leon Li)

There was a meeting two weeks ago: currently discussing sessional lecturers rights, and there is importance in bargaining for grad students. Employers suggesting that grad students be favored over long standing sessionals, meaning there would be no recognition of seniority rights for sessionals.

Departments still giving 20% of all TAs-TMs to non-graduate students when there are grad students available and willing to teach; if a grad student in biology is aware of that case, please email Paul or Leon.

e. Faculty Mole (Karen Lo)

Mitacs talked to profs about different Mitacs opportunities (workshops, programs with industry). Karen has email of Mitacs contact person, if needed for grad students in Biology.

Developmental biologist position might be opened soon for hire.

The grad students policy has started to be put officially in writing; focuses on funding policy about RA, TAs, respective requirements of profs and students, etc. Biology grad students can see the draft by asking Karen.

#### **4. Other News**

Proposed documentary screening for November (Jen S. and Joyce to organize).

#### **5. Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn October 21, 2014 meeting of the Biological Sciences Graduate Student Caucus at 4:33pm.

Moved by: Leslie Saunders

Seconded by: Jen Scholefield

Decision: Motion carries unanimously.