



Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus

November 18th 2014 – 3:30 to 4:30 PM

In Attendance: Lindsay Davidson (DSC rep), Pascale Gibeau (Secretary), Leon Li (TSSU steward), Paul MacDonald (TSSU rep), Dan Peach (Events Committee), Alexandra Rees, Karen Lo (Faculty Mole), Marinde Out (Webmaster), Dan Greenberg, Fiona Francis (Assoc. Chair), Samneh Deheshi (GSS rep), Marlene Wagner (TSSU rep), Jayme Lewthwaite (Treasurer).

Absent: Leslie Saunders (Chair), Jen Scholefield (Member at Large), Luis Malpica Cruz (DSC rep), Sarah Thomsen (DGSC rep), Nicola Smith (DGSC rep), Matt Holl (Events committee), Kyle Bobiwash (Events Committee), Antonia Musso (TSSU rep), Heather Coatsworth (TSSU rep), Sebastian Ibarra (International Students Rep), Mike Hrabar (GSS rep).

1. Welcome – meeting called to order at 15:31 by Fiona Francis.

- a. Attendance
- b. Additions to Agenda
 - i. Halloween event recap

The event was a success. Attendance was about 60 people, there was enough food for everyone, and the pumpkin carving was popular. The whole event was under budget (~ 200\$ food and pumpkin).

- ii. Winterfest planning

Leslie and Fiona had a planning meeting with department. There is a list of the things that grad students are in charge with:

- choosing the theme: "superheroes" was selected by voting online
- organizing the skits: need to know general number of skits by Dec.5 (plus special requests for equipment, mics, etc)
- managing setting up and cleaning afterwards: need volunteers to help
- provide the MC: Dan Greenberg was suggested and accepted
- provide Santa: Paul or Kyle
- provide door prices: go around to Ilia, Renaissance, etc. -- Dan P. will do it.
- bring appetizers: was suggested each lab brings 2 appys; and/or the labs that do not do skits are responsible to bring appys (to be confirmed by email).
- provide background music: people to bring iphones and music lists.

Event will be held in the Biophysics lounge on Dec. 12, starting at 15:30 (set up starts at 13:30). Department is responsible for publicizing event.

Dan P. to send email to grad students to announce event, and publicize need for skits, volunteers, appys, etc.

iii. Grad hosted speaker update

No update yet, but sub-committee was formed to deal with organizing the event, and is meeting on the coming Friday. The sub-committee will communicate updates when needed.

iv. Cash advances

Cash advances are available for grad students to cover conferences or field work expenses; encouraging more people to take them, as it is an easy way to avoid having to cover expenses out of our own pocket. There is a form on website to fill out, and submit; it takes about 2 weeks to receive the money.

v. Tox Talks

Alex R. present to discuss Tox Talks; event has been organized twice, and is happening this year on Feb 7, 2015. It is a grad student symposium organized by grad students, focusing on toxicology topics (anything around drugs, carcinogens, toxicology, etc.). Presentations are 5 or 15 mins, and can be proposals or data-based talks. There is a keynote speaker.

Event had about 50 people last year (from REM, MET, MPM), was friendly audience, and covered lots of different topics around toxicology.

Organizing committee is looking for presenters for this year; check <http://www.sfu.ca/conferences/toxtalks.html>. Also looking for financial support from Bio grad caucus to help offset costs for food, printing etc.

Motion to endorse Tox Talks and support the event with 200\$ from core account of the Bio Grad caucus.

Motioned by: Fiona Francis

Seconded by: Lindsay Davidson

Decision: Motion carries with abstention from Alex R.

vi. Documentary screening

There is a proposed screening on Dec. 3 or 4. Three potential documentaries: *Mid way* (plastic pollution), *Bananas!* (pesticide use), and *People of a feather* (Inuit in changing climate). Email to be sent for voting on which one to see. Thursday Dec. 4 might be better to avoid potential conflict with weekly seminar speakers.

Marlene suggesting to host another documentary screening in the winter; she will follow up in January.

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

Motion to approve the minutes from the October Biology grad caucus meeting.
Moved by: Fiona Francis
Seconded by: Dan Greenberg
Decision: Motion carries unanimously.

- d. December grad caucus meeting

Motion to cancel the December Biology grad caucus meeting because of closeness to Christmas.
Moved by: Dan Peach
Seconded by: Paul MacDonald
Decision: Motion carries unanimously.

2. Treasury update

Trust account: \$1337.24 (includes t-shirt money).
Core account: \$2000 (for the full year).

3. Committee updates

- a. DGSC (Sarah Thomsen, Nicola Smith)

No meeting since last month. No updates.

- b. DSC (Lindsay Davidson, Luis Malpica Cruz)

NSERC application period passed, but not many people applied within department at PhD level (only 4). Lindsay asked if it was because of communication problems, but appears it was not the case -- simply not many new PhD students coming in, or coming in without funding.

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

Core funding still getting figured out, but caucus should assume to receive same amount allocated as last year.

GSS still working on gender neutral bathrooms.

Taking donations for food awareness week.

Discussing option to extend benefits to post doc; so they receive same amount of health care as the grad students.

Discussed (and rejected) the option to remove the sunset clause, which is a clause that maintains allocation of funding to various programs for 5 years. Idea was to get

more flexibility to change funding within 5 years, but was rejected by GSS as it is considered stability in funding for programs is more important.

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

No rep could be at last meeting because of scheduling conflicts, but they received minutes of meeting.

Bargaining for TA still happening; employer last offered payment for MSP and extended health care instead of including those within employment package for TAs. Still on table. Also still discussing the question of recognizing the seniority of TAs.

Another point of discussion was the balance between regular TAships, and distance-based education TAship; differences in how the number of students are counted could mean more work for distance-based education TAs.

- e. Faculty Mole (Karen Lo)

No meeting, no update.

4. Other

- a. SFU's Queer Graduate, Faculty and Staff Network

In collaboration with Out on Campus and the Graduate Student Society, the goal is to create opportunities for Queer Graduate students, Faculty and Staff to get in touch, meet one another and socialize in a friendly and safe environment.

To join the mailing list in order to hear about upcoming events: send an email to maillist@sfu.ca (CC to : queer-gfs-contact@sfu.ca); include only the subject "subscribe queer-grad-fac-staff" (Nothing is needed in the body of the email message).

5. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn November 18, 2014 meeting of the Biological Sciences Graduate Student Caucus at 16:18.
Moved by: Fiona Francis
Seconded by: Jaime Lewthwaite
Decision: Motion carries unanimously.