



Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus

January 20th 2015 – 3:30 to 4:30 PM

In Attendance: Leslie Saunders (Chair), Jayme Lewthwaite (Treasurer), Dan Greenberg, Antonia Musso (TSSU rep), Adam Blake, Karen Lo (Faculty Mole), Matt Holl (Events committee), Jen Scholefield (Member at Large), Lindsay Davidson (DSC rep), Marlene Wagner (TSSU rep), Amanda Kissel, Paul MacDonald (TSSU rep), Sarah Thomsen (DGSC rep), Mike Hrabar (GSS rep), Leon Li (TSSU steward), Joyce Leung (GSS rep), Pascale Gibeau (Secretary).

Absent: Dan Peach (Events Committee), Marinde Out (Webmaster), Fiona Francis (Assoc. Chair), Samneh Deheshi (GSS rep), Luis Malpica Cruz (DSC rep), Nicola Smith (DGSC rep), Kyle Bobiwash (Events Committee), Heather Coatsworth (TSSU rep), Sebastian Ibarra (International Students Rep).

1. Welcome – meeting called to order at 15:31 by Leslie Saunders.

- a. Attendance
- b. Additions to Agenda
 - i. Winterfest Recap

Event was a success, well attended, good skits. Caucus spent 50\$ extra, taken out of petty cash.

ii. Grad Hosted Speaker

Leslie working out details of visit with guest speaker. Dates of visit are March 11 and 12. Presentation to be held on March 11; meetings with interested labs and Science and Advocacy workshop on March 12.

Total budget: 2000\$

Department: covers flights, accommodation, transportation around town.

Dean of Grad studies: 290\$ for post-seminar drinks

Faculty of science: 290\$ for lunch, refreshments

Grad caucus: 220\$ for per diem, gift (FN art? Marlene to email his grad students to ask what he would like)

To plan ahead for next year's budget: Faculty of Science and Dean of Grad Studies do not pay for alcohol.

iii. Grad Symposium

Grad symposium is an event organized by Grad Caucus. It is a chance for department to get together and show case the research done. Traditionally, posters and presentations, but for the past two years, different format was chosen. In 2014, students randomly paired up, and given some time to come up with a research question relating to everyone

in group. Then, the groups of students present 3 Minutes talk with visual support of overhead, to explain their ideas.

Note from last year: do not hold on the last Friday of semester, to avoid noise from party (ask Highland pub to make sure no other events going on).

Suggestions for this year: repeat experience of last year. Was good occasion to mingle, Highland pub was a good venue, simple to organize, and food was good. Also, event requires no preparation for grad students, who just have to show up, which is good. We should also encourage faculty members to show up this year. Book audio-visual (AV) ahead of time.

To do: book overheads and pens, book AV, find judges, pick teams, book food, do publicity, find date, get funding (GSS). Volunteers to organize: Jayme, Paul, looking for one more volunteer. Deadline for GSS funding: Feb 2.

Tentative date: March 27th.

iv. Biology department 'swag'

Elizabeth E. mentioned interest from faculty members to expand department swags (mugs, tumblers, bottles). Department happy to facilitate effort, but would like caucus to design and distribute items in same way as T-shirts (which would also give some extra money to caucus).

Suggestion is to do a design competition, and new design could be used also for biology t-shirt. Antonia will send email out to launch the design competition.

Suggested that items should contain no plastic, and not be from sweat shop.

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

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

Moved by: Leslie Saunders

Seconded by: Jen Scholefield

Decision: Motion carries unanimously.

2. Treasury update

Core account: 1808.12\$

Trust account: 1337.24\$

3. Committee updates

a. DGSC (Sarah Thomsen, Nicola Smith)

Sarah confirming if all have received the email from Julian G. explaining new policy for grad funding. Have not received any complaints so far.

Also, DGSC put together a document outlining the learning outcomes for each of the grad programs. Discussed the pushback from faculty to allow for more flexibility.

Survey: update to come. Sarah needs help to put report together (summarize results, put comments); Karen and Marlene volunteered.

b. DSC (Lindsay Davidson, Luis Malpica Cruz)

DSC currently ranking NSERC masters applications and USRAs now.

Lindsay reminded grad students that they can ask her or Luis about awards, why they didn't get them, etc., and mentioned that more students should apply to the private awards (see upcoming email in the spring).

c. GSS (Mike Hrabar, Samineh Deheshi, Joyce Leung)

GSS mobilized about pipeline debate; upset about stance taken by SFU President to remain neutral and not provide legal aid to profs facing legal actions. Wrote a letter to President to express their view; no answers back from President as of yet.

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

Antonia confirming that there is no need to sign TA contract to start being paid anymore, and that everybody should be receiving paper contract at least by email.

Next meeting is the general membership meeting, on Jan 28th at 11:30-1:30; Antonia encouraging students to come for some or all of it. She will send out email reminder.

e. Faculty Mole (Karen Lo)

Faculty reacted to the learning outcomes document; concerned because publications should not be a measure of learning objectives. Also pushed back because they say that committee is there to define learning outcomes, to decide on a case by case basis, so no need to formalize learning outcomes in a document. On the other hand, a document makes explicit the standards of SFU that some young faculty might not know, and it might be useful to have some guiding principles for them, and externals. Might be useful to compare with standards of other universities.

Department has sent out an application for a cell bio/microbio faculty to be hired soon.

Brian Medford has retired. Replacement will be hired eventually.

4. Other

a. Reminder from Department Chair

Elizabeth wants all grad students to know that her door is open for whatever grad students need. She will make time to help with any issues BISC grad students might be facing. All grad students should feel free to contact her.

b. Annual meeting of Professional Pest Management Association

Jen S.: annual meeting of professional pest management will be held at IRMACS on Feb 25th; asking for funding from bio grad caucus as was done last year. Theme this year is climate change and pest management. In the past, caucus sponsored 200\$, and that allowed grad students to go for free.

Motion to support the annual meeting of the Professional Pest Management Association of BC with 200\$ from the core account.

Motioned by: Jen S.

Seconded by: Marlene

Motions carries with abstention from Jen S.

c. Announcement

- i. The first meeting of the Science Communication Grad Club is happening on January 21st, at 1:30 in the room 9242. All are welcome; please contact Karen Lo for more info or to join.
- ii. 3-Minutes thesis competition also coming up; see adds and emails publicizing the event.

5. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn January 20, 2015 meeting of the Biological Sciences Graduate Student Caucus at 16:36.

Moved by: Leslie S.

Seconded by: Dan G.

Decision: Motion carries unanimously.