



Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus

February 18th 2015 – 2:00 to 3:00 PM

In Attendance: Leslie Saunders (Chair), Jayme Lewthwaite (Treasurer), Nicola Smith (DGSC rep), Dan Greenberg, Paul MacDonald (TSSU rep), Lindsay Davidson (DSC rep), Amanda Kissel (acting as secretary), Matt Holl (Events committee), Dan Peach (Events Committee), Antonia Musso (TSSU rep), Jo Swain, Heather Coatsworth (TSSU rep), Mike Hrabar (GSS rep), Joyce Leung, Marlene Wagner (TSSU rep), Karen Lo (Faculty Mole).

Absent: Jen Scholefield (Member at Large), Sarah Thomsen (DGSC rep), Leon Li (TSSU steward), Pascale Gibeau (Secretary), Marinde Out (Webmaster), Fiona Francis (Assoc. Chair), Samneh Deheshi (GSS rep), Luis Malpica Cruz (DSC rep), Kyle Bobiwash (Events Committee), Sebastian Ibarra (International Students Rep).

1. **Welcome** – meeting called to order at 14:03 by Leslie Saunders.
 - a. Attendance
 - b. Additions to Agenda
 - i. TSSU Bargaining update (by Reagan Belan, chief steward, TSSU)

9.5 bargaining points for what TSSU is working for (see flyers); Reagan wanted to ensure that we know what's going on as a department.

TSSU has been bargaining since May 2014 because collective agreement expired in April 2014 - but still enforceable until a new agreement is reached.

Priorities for grad students:

- TSSU want a common posting date across departments for TAs so that people who have a varied background could work across departments;
- many departments merging online and in-person classroom structures;
- merged TA (get compensated by # of hours in classroom) and tutor marker language (get compensated by # of students). IF you exceed a certain # of students you get more money;
- Sessionals (25% of teacher time at SFU done by sessional) – TSSU want some sort of seniority system. Right-of-return only applicable to grad students (rather than seasoned sessionals), and grad students not likely to take advantage of this;
- TSSU want to code WorkSafe BC regulations into agreement and make sure that TAs get paid on time;

In biology: a few people approached Reagan about being assigned extra in-classroom hours on TUGS that were not reflected on base unit. For bio 102 quite a few discrepancies, and waiting for response from department.

TSSU have most of universities proposals, mostly concessions. SFU proposed that 'non-funded' programs get lower priority for TAs (i.e. course-based programs). TSSU planning to reject this.

Anyone can come to observe bargaining, that happens on Thursdays (twice a month, on public calendar); need to give the employer 48-72 hours notice.

ii. Grad Hosted Speaker

Not much changed since last grad caucus meeting; visit by Dr. Tyrone Hayes is scheduled for March 11th-12th; seminar on March 11th and morning meetings with labs on the 12th from 9-12AM, then Les Ecol followed by student lunch, and science and advocacy workshop (IRMACS 3-5pm). Not much indication from Dr. Hayes on the style of workshop.

Suggestions: present by emails questions before the workshop for him to go over, or leave it as an open discussion; talk about press releases and how to write them. Email Leslie with other suggestions.

Pre-registration needed for workshop.

Gift will be local gin.

iii. Grad Symposium

Symposium is happening on Friday March 27th. Jaime submitted a grant application to GSS for \$700. There is a decision meeting tomorrow which Jamie is going to attend (1pm). Stipulations of GSS is that caucus has to apply for other funding elsewhere; Elizabeth giving \$50 from department so that we are eligible.

Jayme also contacted highland pub to organize venue.

iv. BISC swag

Department and caucus collaborating on new bio items (t-shirts, water bottles). Department will get back to Leslie about what kinds of items is desired. Department is proposing to put forth initial funds to develop swags, and then caucus would distribute the swags and use funds from sales for themselves.

Antonia will initiate a logo contest as soon as we know what we are going to order (t-shirts can have complex patterns, but mugs simpler ones, so may put out a call for a few different designs). Adding colors ups costs, so may want to keep that simple. Antonia will send email out next week with requirements for pixel sizes, image qualities, etc. (contest to last a month, minimum). Potential for prize money.

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

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

Moved by: Leslie Saunders

Seconded by: Antonia

Decision: Motion carries unanimously.

2. Treasury update

Core account: \$1800. 12

Trust account: \$1337. 24 (Waiting on checks from Tox Talks to go through).

3. Committee updates

a. DGSC – (Nicola Smith, Sarah Thomsen)

Revised funding policy for department approved (\$21000 starting in September).

Learning outcomes: DGSC took document to department meeting but was not passed, so it came back to DGSC for revision. Most issues with PhD learning objectives (how many empirical chapters there needs to be); depending on what section, 1 or 2 chapters are a big deal, other disciplines 3 or 4. Revised learning outcomes:

- MSc/MPM- undertake original research and understand scientific research, 1+ chapters;
- PhD: students make significant contribution to research and perform as independent scientists, are familiar with publishing process, 2-5 (normally) chapters, with normally at least one chapter submitted for publishing before defending.

Discussed measures for MET faculty to decrease MET completion times. MET similar to MSc, except more course based w/research project. Over the past 5 years, averaged completion time is 3.5 years for MPM/MET.

- Agreed on welcome party/symposium that happens at beginning of semester, MET faculty will meet new students and discuss research w/in lab so that MET students can get an idea of what's going on w/in the program and find a research project sooner.
- Suggested that MET students start projects in summer (when no courses are offered).
- MET students have to have first committee meeting w/in first year (as opposed to now it's w/in first 2 years).

Elizabeth speaking to MET students, given that none of them are at caucus meeting, to make sure they get the information.

MPM program students voice concerns about courses and have asked that STATS650 be applied to program. Julian Gutman has said they could use it as an elective.

b. DSC (Lindsay Davidson, Luis Malpica Cruz)

Funding for this year: \$314,600 (38 GFS, 2 Graduate and international research awards, 4 special graduate entrance scholarships) are available to grad students!

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

No one could make meeting, but not much happened. Translink trying to get an extra 5% in taxes. Officers want title changed to director to up their stipend. UPass might potentially increase the fee next year, but not until next year.

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

No further updates besides what Reagan said.

e. Faculty Mole

No Departmental meetings since last Grad Caucus meeting.

4. Others

a. Caucus term ending mid-April so start thinking about potential roles you want to play for next year.

b. Science Communication Club, B9242 @ 1:30 (Karen Lo)
Biweekly meetings may reschedule to 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month so they won't conflict with caucus meeting. Carol Thorbes (SFU communications) going to be there next week to give an idea of what content they are looking for for SFU communications. Every meeting, people come up and give a presentation and get feedback from others as well as speaking coach.

5. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn February 18, 2015 meeting of the Biological Sciences Graduate Student Caucus at 14:53.

Moved by: Leslie S.

Seconded by: Dan G.

Decision: Motion carries unanimously.