



Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus

May 19th 2015 – 3:00 to 4:00 PM

In attendance: Dan Greenberg (Chair), Paul McDonald (Events Committee), Lindsay Davidson, Jayme Lewthwaite (Treasurer), Pascale Gibeau (Secretary), Tanya Procyshyn (Webmaster), Fauve Strachan (TSSU steward), Allison Cornell, Leslie Saunders (DGSC rep), Sebastian Pardo, Philina English, Evenling Tavera, Heather Coatsworth (Associate Chair).

Absent: Rachel Walls (Events Committee), Marinde Out (Events Committee), Fiona Francis (Member at Large), Nicola Smith (DGSC rep), Luis Malpica Cruz (DSC rep), Jennifer Bigman (DSC rep), Michael Hrabar (Faculty Mole & GSS rep), Adrienne Berchtold (TSSU steward), Leon Li (TSSU steward), Josh Pol (TSSU steward), Joyce Leung (GSS rep), Laur  l  ne Faye (GSS rep), Marlene Wagner (International student rep).

1. **Welcome** – Meeting called to order at 15:01 by Dan Greenberg.
 - a. Attendance
 - i. Introductions of the new executives
 - b. Additions to Agenda
 - i. BISC logo contest

There is still only one submission, and would like to have more for the contest. Dan Greenberg is taking the contest organization over from Antonia Musso, and suggests offering prizes for the winner of the logo contest (MEC gift card, free item) to encourage more submissions. Leslie Saunders will follow up with Elizabeth Elle (Department Chair) to confirm the financial involvement of the Department.

Motion to allocate up to 50\$ for the BISC logo contest, depending on the financial support from Department.

Moved by: Dan Greenberg

Seconded by: Leslie Saunders

Decision: Motion carries unanimously.

ii. Grad Hosted Speaker 2016

BISC Grad students should start thinking about who should/could be coming as the Grad Hosted Speaker in 2016. Speaker can be in or outside of academia.

As a reminder, in recent years, the caucus hosted:

2015: Tyrone Hayes

2014: Marc Mangel

2013: Nancy Baron

2012: Daniel Pauly

Suggestion from caucus: try to nominate women to even out sex ratio.

Reminder that some level of commitment is expected from the person who invites the speaker in organizing the venue, along with an organizing committee.

iii. Caucus Website Update

Tanya Procyshyn (webmaster) is suggesting updating the content and format of the caucus website. Currently, there are only the meeting minutes and list of executives on the website. The Grad caucus also has a Facebook page that hasn't been updated since 2012; could work on that too.

Suggestions of things to add to the BISC caucus website: News post, blog posts, Events announcements, lists and dates of departmental speakers and other speakers from UBC and/or Vancouver. Other suggestions should be forwarded to Tanya.

iv. Reimbursement

Motion to reimburse Jayme Lewthwaite the amount of 40.00\$ for MEC gift cards used for the grad student symposium.
Moved by: Dan Greenberg.
Seconded by: Leslie Saunders.
Decision: Motion carries with abstention from Jayme Lewthwaite.

v. Physiology lecturer search committee

The search committee for the Physiology lecturer (teaching upper level course and BISC 101-102) will be interviewing candidates on June 4, 5th, 11, 12th. On each of those days there is a period to meet with grad students from 3-3:30 PM (with cookies, juice and fruits!).

Students encouraged to show up and provide feedback on the candidates; there will be a sign up sheet during the sessions so that feedback can be forwarded back to the grad representative.

vi. International Historical Ecology conference

The 2nd International Historical Ecology meeting will be held at SFU on November 13-15, 2015; the event consists of a day of presentations, and two days of workshops. There is a survey on website to contribute questions for the workshops. Lead organizers are students from SFU and Sweden. More information can be found at <http://www.sfu.ca/conferences/historicalecology.html>.

Philina English (on behalf of the organizing committee) is looking for small contributions from Departments involved (Bio, archeo, REM), for room and refreshments (200-500\$).

Grad caucus concerned about the uncertainty about caucus budget for coming months (since new contributions will come in only in September), the number of BISC students that would go to the event, and the level of involvement of other departments. Consequently, the decision is postponed until Grad caucus meeting in June, to allow more time for Philina and Jayme L. to gather the needed information about the event and the caucus budget.

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

Motion to approve the minutes from the April Biology grad caucus meeting.
Moved by: Dan Greenberg.
Seconded by: Sebastian Pardo.
Decision: Motion carries unanimously.

2. Treasury update

Trust account: 1337.24\$
Core: 1129.47\$ (but several cheques are still pending)

3. Committee updates

1. DGSC

There only was a brief meeting in the morning, to announce that Julian Guttman is going on sabbatical, and that the new chair (1-year term) will be Isabelle Côté.

2. DSC

Rep absent but summary left to Dan Greenberg.

Graduate Fellowships: given the annual funding allocation, the department will most likely be able to provide 36 Graduate Fellowships (GFs), 3 Research Travel Awards, 3 Entrance Awards, and 3 President PhD scholarships. There will be a remaining 16,000\$ that will be used to support Travel and Minor Research Awards (TMRAs). This allocation could vary a bit but so far this is the way the awards are planned to be distributed. The ranking is as follows:

- 1) New applicants (both MSc & PhDs) who have never hold a GF before (11 GFs);
- 2) MSc who have applied for a GF before (11 GFs);
- 3) PhD who have applied for a GF before (14 GFs).

The higher number of GFs for PhDs is because of the high volume of PhDs who applied and their high caliber.

There were no big differences during the ranking process between the student reps and the PIs. Students were also placed in a "B" list, in case of last minute changes to the "A" list.

Worth knowing for all students in the department for future applications:

- The DSC enforces deadlines, and students that did not apply in time were left out of the competition.
- The new GA3 system seems to work well, but students planning to apply for an award in the future should take time early to set up their profile in the system to avoid last minute issues.
- Some GFs applicants did not supply a reference letter; these applications were accepted in time but some PIs suggested that incomplete applications should not be accepted in the future. The Grad Caucus student reps were not in total agreement with this possibility since it could penalize students for the supervisor's fault, but agree that it is also the responsibility of the students to have a complete application.
- While a CV is not mandatory for the GFs competition, the GA3 system now allows uploading one to the student's profile, which can greatly help the applicant show expertise and skills beyond GPA, publications, and presentations, and give the student some additional points.

Finally, please note that the deadline for the private awards is June 1st.

3. GSS

Rep absent too, but Lauréline Faye sent an email that Dan Greenberg summarized.

3 points have been discussed but not voted on.

- It was discussed whether keeping or not the Legal Clinic, knowing that students also have access to Probono. No consensus has been made. The main critic against the Legal Clinic service is that we would like to have more to say on the speciality of the lawyers we have access to.
- It was also question to change the GSS funds regulation. The plan would be to reduce the capital fund (today at 1,800,000 CAD). This fund is used for large space projects and we have none of these projects now (SFU guarantees the current space to the GSS). The yearly returns (40,000CAD) are now reinvested into the capital fund. The idea is to split the returns as follows: 50% to the capital fund, 25% to the operating fund, and 25% to the operating budget. This would allow increasing services, increasing grant and bursary funding, as well as funding advocacy campaigns. This would also mean that the operating fund would grow instead of being stagnant as it is now. That proposal was agreed upon by all participants.

- New idea for dental services: Healthy Smiles would come to the campus for free cleaning services to everybody on the campus, under a one-year contract. The GSS would earn money for each patient. The idea is still discussed.

4. TSSU

Rep absent, no update

5. Faculty Mole

Rep absent, no update.

4. Adjournment 15:44

Motion to adjourn the May 19th, 2015 meeting of the Biological Sciences Graduate Student Caucus at 15:44.

Moved by: Dan Greenberg.

Seconded by: Leslie Saunders.

Decision: Motion carries unanimously.