



Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus
October 20, 2016 – 15:30 to 16:30 PM

In attendance:

Heather Coatsworth (Associate chair), Marinde Out (Secretary and TSSU Steward), Allannah Biega (GSS rep), Mike Hrabar (GSS rep), Nicholas Salcedo Porras (TSSU Steward), Tanya Procyshyn (TSSU Steward), Kevin Hegeman (DGSC rep), Dan Greenberg (Faculty Mole and temporary DGSC rep), Jennifer Bigman (DSC rep), Pauline Deschodt (DSC rep), Joyce Leung (Events Committee), Kolitha Halangoda (Events Committee), Pascale Gibeau (Member at Large), Sean Ritter, Philina English.

Absent:

Kyle Bobiwash (Chair), Jayme Lewthwaite (Treasurer), Leon Li (GSS rep), Richard Johnston (TSSU Steward), Adrienne Berchtold (TSSU steward), Danielle Hoefele (Events Committee), Leslie Saunders (DGSC rep), Vanessa Guerra (Webmaster), Eveling Taverna Fernandez (International Student rep).

1. Welcome -- Meeting called to order at 15:31 by Heather Coatsworth

a. Attendance

b. Additions to Agenda

i. Halloween party

The Halloween Party takes place at 4 pm on the 27th of October in the Chemistry Atrium. The pub is booked, but the SFSS has a pub night so they would kick us out at 9 pm. That's why the party is moved to the Atrium. Pizza will be ordered and it's recommended to bring deserts. A keg will be ordered and beer will be for sale for \$2,-.

ii. Wildlife Society Student Chapter

Kyle Bobiwash (chair) would like to start a BC Wildlife Society Student Chapter. The Wildlife Society is an organization focusing on conservation and wildlife management. It enhances its members' networking and learning opportunities, professional and career development, and provides numerous ways for them to get more involved in creating a better future for wildlife and their habitats. Info: <http://wildlife.org/>

Kyle is going to send out a survey to see if people are interested to be involved. Three or less people are needed on the executive committee, and 10-15 graduate students need to become involved in total. Some of the advantages are that you can apply for awards, join their conferences and learn more about wildlife and conservation policies in Canada.

iii. Update from GSS Caucus Training – caucus credit card

Heather Coatsworth (Associate Chair) attended the GSS Caucus Training. She proposes to get a caucus pre-paid credit card for the next fiscal year (September 2017), so the Events Committee and other members can easily pay for caucus costs without going through the GSS reimbursement process.

iv. Sponsoring the PPMABC

The Professional Pest Management Association of British Columbia is having their general meeting on the SFU Burnaby campus in March 2017. This conference is especially useful for MPM program students or M. Sc. And Ph. D. students who are working on pest management projects. The organizers request sponsorship from the BISC graduate caucus.

Caucus members discussed how much money to offer to this event, and the decision was made to spend \$10 per person, so if 10 caucus members are expected to attend a meeting, \$100 will be offered.

New Rule of thumb for conference funding:

If 10 people go → \$100 caucus funding

If 20 people go → \$200 caucus funding

<p>Motion to spend up to \$100 for the March AGM of PPMABC. Moved by: Heather Coatsworth Seconded by: Dan Greenberg Decision: Motion carries with abstention from Heather Coatsworth.</p>

v. Sponsoring IDEAS

The Earth2Oceans Group and the Fisheries Group from the School of Resource Management (REM) are organizing their yearly conference IDEAS. This full day conference focuses on Aquatic Ecology and is attended by 30-35 students. It takes place on January 28th 2016.

The caucus would like to sponsor this event only if registration will be opened up for students outside E2O and REM, who also study Aquatic Ecology. Dan Greenberg will look into this. However, this conference is meant to stay small and informal, so it offers a safe environment for practicing talks and presenting preliminary results.

Motion to spend up to \$200 for the IDEAS conference under the condition that it is open for all biology students.

Moved by: Dan Greenberg

Seconded by: Heather Coatsworth

Decision: Motion carries with abstention from Dan Greenberg.

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

Motion to approve the minutes from the September Biology Graduate Caucus meeting.

Moved by: Heather Coatsworth

Seconded by: Dan Greenberg

Decision: Motion carries on unanimously.

2. Treasury update (Jayme Lewthwaite absent, update by Heather Coatsworth)

Core account: \$1598.74

(the only expenses this year so far have been for the Welcome BBQ)

Trust account: 1084.71

3. Committee updates

A. DGSC – Dan Greenberg and Kevin Hegeman

- The Biological Sciences Department succeeded to still let BISC800 (Skills for the Successful Scientists) and seminar courses count as credit courses (satisfactory/unsatisfactory courses generally do not receive credit).
- Some changes to courses took place:
 - BISC 829 (Conservation Ecology) no longer exists because it is redundant
 - BISC 821 is going to be a conglomeration of 821, 822, and 823 (seminar courses). You can now take BISC 821 three times instead of adding more course descriptions.
 - BISC 891 is added: the Ph. D. Candidacy Exam. This will be an 'in progress/complete' type of course that opens up possibilities like giving feedback on how you are doing.
- The Senate passed regulations for new students. The maximum number of terms will be 12 (4 years) for M. Sc. students and 18 (6 years) for Ph. D. students. After that you need to request extension (maximum 18 terms for M. Sc. students and 24 terms for Ph. D. students).
- The BISC caucus held an ad hoc meeting on October 19th 2016 about student-

supervisor relationships. The results of this meeting were brought to the DGSC meeting.

Proposed ideas by the caucus members:

1. Creating an expectation guideline for students to go through with their supervisors
2. Amending the Annual Progress Report (APR) to add a section to the Milestones: what are supervisors going to do to meet these milestones? The main objective of this is to prevent future conflict.
3. Department-wide anonymous survey for graduate students to rate their supervisor. The objective is to identify problem areas. The results would not go to the supervisor.
4. Exit interviews for alumni that would take place a certain time after graduation, to identify worry signs.

The DGSC members said that the guidelines (1) already exist, but it is in the format of 'what to expect from.'. It is currently not required for supervisors to go through the list. The DGSC is not in favour to making this mandatory, but they want to encourage and stress supervisors to go over the guidelines with their students. Apparently the Department of Graduate Studies already conveys exit surveys (4). The DGSC would like to work with us to push the guidelines document (1) and amend the APR (2).

- If you have specific ideas about amendments of the APR, contact Dan Greenberg (dgreenbe@sfu.ca) or Kevin Hegeman (khegeman@sfu.ca). They also invite you to discuss your current student/supervisor problems with them so they can bring your issues anonymously to the DGSC.
- Members argue that these solutions still do not hold supervisors accountable. However, these solutions are to prevent escalation, and to make supervisors more co-responsible for the milestones of their students.
- The guidelines will be given to new students, not to current ones.
- Margo Moore (DGSC chair) will be invited to give advice and hold an open dialog to student/supervisor relationships in the next caucus meeting.

B. DSC – Pauline Deschodt and Jenny Bigman

The committee has created a standardized yearly timeline to show which scholarships will be available, and when the application period starts and ends. This overview has been spread by email and posted on the BISC Graduate Caucus website. There still is a Biology Private Award open for application (related to Pest Management).

C. GSS – Allannah Biega, Leon Li, Mike Hrabar

SFU is working on adopting a Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy. Everyone is invited to contribute their thoughts to the drop-in events.

Consultations will take place in the Thesis Defence Room (Library 2020) at the following times:

- Tues Oct 25 at 1:30pm – Open session for students (**in Student Central - MBC 3000**)
- Wed Oct 26 at 1:30pm – Open session for students, staff and faculty
- Thurs Oct 27 at 4:30pm – Open session for students

More info: <http://www.sfu.ca/sexual-assault.html>

D. TSSU – Richard Johnston, Nicholas Salcedo Porras, Tanya Procyshyn, Adrienne Berchtold, Marinde Out

- TA applications for 1171 (Spring) are now open - Applications close Monday, November 7th at noon. These are department-wide postings, so you can also apply outside the department.
- Tip: if you do not want to sign up for fewer hours, mention this in the comment box! TSSU forces the department to give everyone at least 5.17 Base Units!
- TSSU offers childcare bursaries. Tip: you can get bursaries as long as you are a TSSU member, which is a full year. You can also renew your membership (only \$12.50) to keep getting the bursary after that year.
- Let TSSU stewards know if you run into problems.
- TSSU also funds conferences. For example, they recently funded the World Peace Forum (<http://www.peaceforumteachin.org>) with \$250. If you are organizing a conference and it vaguely is connected to teaching, you can request funding!

E. Faculty Mole – Dan Greenberg

No meeting

4. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the October 20 2016 meeting of the Biological Sciences Graduate Student Caucus at 16:36.

Moved by: Heather Coatsworth

Seconded by: Kevin Hegeman

Decision: Motion carries on unanimously.