



Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus
March 27th, 2017 – 15:30 to 16:30 PM

In attendance:

Kyle Bobiwash (Chair), Heather Coatsworth (Associate chair), Adrienne Berchtold (TSSU steward), Alannah Biega (GSS rep), Joyce Leung (Events Committee), Vanessa Guerra (Webmaster), Leslie Saunders (DGSC rep), Mike Hrabar (GSS rep), Stacey Hrushowy.

Absent:

Leon Li (GSS rep), Richard Johnston (TSSU Steward), Jennifer Bigman (DSC rep), Danielle Hoefele (Events Committee), Nicolas Salcedo Porras (TSSU Steward), Tanya Procyshyn (TSSU Steward), Kolitha Halangoda (Events Committee), Eveling Taverna Fernandez (International Student rep), Jayme Lewthwaite (Treasurer), Marinde Out (Secretary and TSSU Steward), Kevin Hegeman (DGSC rep), Dan Greenberg (Faculty Mole), Pauline Deschodt (DSC rep, Member at Large).

1. Welcome -- Meeting called to order at 15:35 by Heather Coatsworth.

a. Attendance

b. Additions to Agenda

i. Grad Hosted Speaker Recap

Dr. Lowman had a great time at SFU, and students seemed to enjoy meeting with her. Note to future organizers for planning events with the speaker, the organizers need to make sure that all students are able to have time to speak with the speaker if they wish. Creating a good mingling environment and having students switch chairs once in a while to be close to the speaker are both good ideas to facilitate this.

ii. Women in Science Lunches

Kristen Walters is meeting with Dr. Elle about how to create and facilitate women in science lunches. It was suggested that the meetings be informal, and occur bi-weekly to monthly, possibly over food and/or drink. Grads expressed interest in the opportunity to talk to female faculty members, staff, and non-academic individuals in science careers. Grads are hoping the meetings can act as a jumping off point for further discussions about how best to achieve gender inclusion throughout the department, as well as create a supportive network for females in STEM. Including all STEM related departments and faculties in these meeting would be great, and may give us an opportunity to apply for GSS funding.

iii. April Grad Symposium

The date of the grad symposium will be Thursday April 27th. It was suggested that we try to do an activity off campus for the symposium this year. Ideas suggested were curling, bowling, and the castle fun park.

Motion for Heather Coatsworth and Kyle Bobiwash to spend up to \$500 to buy necessary items/rent equipment and/or space for the April 27th grad symposium.
Moved by: Heather Coatsworth
Seconded by: Leslie Saunders
Decision: Motion carries with an abstention from Heather Coatsworth and Kyle Bobiwash.

iv. Open call for new caucus executive positions

Acting on the caucus is a great and easy way to get involved in the biology graduate community at SFU! It also allows you to hear about everything going on around campus, and have a say in what happens for grad students in our department. Multiple positions are available, and some of them even include a paid stipend. If you would like to act on the caucus for the 2017 – 2018 year, please put your name down on this document (<https://docs.google.com/document/d/13nt8CXB-5o95YxQOS9mhJ2pryNY3wWHOENTZQzib8XE/edit?usp=sharing>). More information about each position can be found at: <http://biscgrads.blogspot.ca/p/about.html>. If you have questions about any of the positions, feel free to contact the individuals currently holding the positions for more information (<http://biscgrads.blogspot.ca/p/contact-information-main-contact-email.html>) ☺.

v. Disclosure and Active Bystander training for grad students

The board of governors has officially passed the new Sexual Violence and Misconduct Prevention, Education and Support Policy after a long standing collaborative process. The policy is now going into the implementation stage, and it strongly encourages education and awareness for the entire university community. At present, it has been left to each department to take an initiative to provide education for their department. A representative from SFU's health and counselling team has designed workshops for groups in different positions (undergraduate, graduate, faculty etc.) to teach them how to respond when receiving a disclosure from someone who has experienced sexual violence/misconduct and how to be an active bystander if you witness sexual violence/misconduct. Adrienne Berchtold is meeting with Elizabeth Elle about implementing these workshops in biology for graduate students, faculty, and staff. It was suggested that a workshop be held for graduate students, with lunch. The graduate student workshop will take place in late April. If in the future we could incorporate this

workshop in with the BISC800 course, it would allow a large proportion of our graduate body to have access to this education.

Motion to give Adrienne Berchtold (on behalf of the TSSU) up to \$200 to spend on catering for a sexual violence and misconduct prevention workshop for graduate students.

Moved by: Adrienne Berchtold

Seconded by: Heather Coatsworth

Decision: Motion carries with an abstention from Adrienne Berchtold.

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

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

Moved by: Heather Coatsworth

Seconded by: Joyce Leung

Decision: Motion carries on unanimously.

2. Treasury update (via e-mail from Jayme Lewthwaite)

Core account: \$ 1048.75 (Tox Talks just submitted a reimbursement for \$200)

Trust account: \$ 1084.71

3. Committee updates

a. DGSC – Leslie Saunders

Reminder not to forget to include post-doc in grad events and notifications!

b. DSC – (via e-mail from Pauline Deschodt)

Reminder to apply for graduate fellowships (GFs). Deadline is April 14, 2017.

c. GSS – Alannah Biega

If you will be affected by the US travel ban, please complete the survey that the GSS has sent out. The chief safety officer from SFU, Mark LaLonde, talked to the GSS about the Kinder Morgan tank expansion (where they are tripling the capacity of the tank farm on Burnaby mountain). SFU is concerned about the risks that the expansion poses for SFU, and they are currently working to form an evacuation plan in case of a fire or other emergency. Construction for the tank farm expansion is likely to begin in the fall with the widening of Gagliardi Way and will last approximately two years. Kinder Morgan is required to make an emergency plan, but they are not required to implement the plan itself in the event of an emergency. They must release this plan 6 months before

production, but not construction. SFU will circulate this plan when it is released but they are not involved in this plan and are working on an emergency plan of their own as mentioned above. There is a town hall meeting being put on between Embark and other members of the SFU community, which will happen on April 3rd, from 4-6pm. There will be a panel discussion with faculty, First Nations and the entire community. If you are interested in reading more about the tank farm expansion, information can be found on the SFU website.

d. TSSU –Adrienne Berchtold

The arbitration between the TSSU and the biology department (regarding BISC102 base unit calculation) has now moved into the mediation stage.

During the week of May 15-19, the TSSU is holding a referendum for all union members on the BDS movement (boycott, divestment and sanction), as the TSSU wants to support the movement to divest from Israel financially, in a greater interest to get Israel to comply with International Law. There is an information session happening on March 30th, from 5-7pm in Saywell Hall, where individuals will present arguments for and against the BDS movement, as well as whether this action is within the jurisdiction of the TSSU. If passed, this would mean that the TSSU would boycott Israeli products, and advocate to SFU to do the same.

e. Faculty Mole – (via e-mail from Dan Greenberg)

Elizabeth Elle met with the deputy minister of education, and toured him and SFU representatives through our department. All agreed that the building and facilities were in bad shape, and the biology building is a first priority moving forward. Profs have been asked to add their leave/away time on the calendar if they are leaving for an extended period of time. The DGSC is thinking about how to better integrate PDFs into the department. A new brewing science course was approved. Creating grading guidelines to normalize grade distribution among courses in the biology department is currently underway, although there is pushback from some faculty. SFU transcripts now reflect the average grade in a course, as well as the grade assigned to the student. Arne, Isabelle and Julian Christians have developed a syllabus for the graduate seminar course so it will be consistent in the future and include expectations for students and teachers. Elizabeth suggested that the new document that will be sent out to all new graduate students also be posted in the perspective student area of the website. She also suggested that grad students, PIs and other faculty have new pictures taken to replace the old photos by the biology office. The terrestrial ecology hire will be discussed at the next meeting.

4. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the March 27th, 2017 meeting of the Biological Sciences Graduate Student Caucus at 4:35pm.

Moved by: Heather Coatsworth

Seconded by: Leslie Saunders

Decision: Motion carries on unanimously.