



Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus
January Meeting Agenda
January 29, 2018 – 4.00 to 5.00pm

In Attendance:

Elana Varner (secretary), Heather Coatsworth (member), Pauline Deschodt (DGSC), Rylee Murray (Chair), Kevin Colmenores (member), Colin Bailey (Faculty Mole), Mason King (Events Committee officer), Melissa Orobko (Events Committee coordinator), Adrienne Berchtold (member), Rachel Canham (events committee officer), Melissa Orobko (events committee officer), Kristen Walters (Co-chair), Liz Steves, Asim Renyard (TSSU), Blake Danis (member), Kristen Wilcox (member)

Absent

Yonathan Uriel (DGSC Rep), Kari Zurowski (GSS/Treasurer), Vanessa Guerra (GSS C.), *you know who else was missing?*

1. Welcome – Meeting adjourned at 4.04pm

b. Additions to Agenda

- i. Update from organizing committee for Spring Grad Hosted Speaker
 - Trevor Branch invited for March 21-22. Rachel is coordinating with him for a seminar and workshop. The seminar will be about blue whales at the Big data hub which is being booked for 3:30 wed March 21st. Soon to put out a Google poll to for people to meet with Trevor the first day. Workshop: Data Visualization related topic (TBD): Les Ecol room and right after that seminar. Pizza and coffee provided. Email update to come. Dinner the 21st for students will be purchased - funds available.

Suggest motion for 200\$ towards drinks on Wednesday? No, money is from the department.

- Look into option for getting an advance – Heather got \$400 previously
- Is there money from GSS or is it covered from us? Need to revisit budget for this purpose
 - GSS deadline was probably January – MAYBE January 31st – worth looking into but maybe past already

ii. Sponsor students for PPMABC -Pauline

- This year there is a panel for industry and academia sides of things. Symposium is March 5th. Deadline for earlybird rates is the 5th, usually caucus sponsors student fees. Last year asked for \$100.

MOTION: for caucus to give \$100 for PPMABC student registration –Rylee started motion, Pauline seconds. Motion passed.

iii. Planning trivia night for bio grad students – Elizabeth Steves - Inviting Chemistry and Physics too. Feb 21st Club Ilia reserved for 50 people between 6:30-8:30.

Be sure to invite REM too

Maybe ask other caucuses for money for future trivia nights – 50 buck rotating etc.

Ask for money for a prize from GSS - \$50

Prizes will likely include: Club Ilia gift certificates, Nesters gift baskets, bubble tea place on campus

Be sure to mention this in email when circulating minutes

MOTION: to give \$50 to Elizabeth Steve's for a science grad student trivia night prize – Seconded by Colin. Elizabeth abstains. Motion passes.

iv. Tox Talks symposium – asking for funding for annual symposium. Talk about ways to improve study and keep environment safe. March 24th. Choosing speakers now. Will have prizes for presentations. Asking group for \$200. \$200 will allow them to get more from GSS too. Also getting/asking for funding from health, enviro, chem, bio, industry etc.. Account associated with event is the Biology Department.

MOTION: to give Tox Talks \$200. To be deposited into the Biology Department account – Seconded by Mason. Rylee abstain. Motion passed.

c. Motion to approve minutes from November 2017 meeting

MOTION: to approve minutes from November 2017 meeting Rylee put forth. Elana Seconds. Rylee abstains. Motion passes.

2. Treasury update

Core account: \$1,051. 41

Trust: \$1221.26

Extra beverages = sold to stats beers for \$128

3. Committee updates

a. DGSC – Jamie sent email with 3 main points:

1. Ethan Mcgonagal will be teaching a Modeling in Stats in Fall of 2018
2. Complaints about grad thesis defence room: wifi cuts out, lack of sound proofing, etc. Margo Moore mentioned to DGSC across campus. Peter Ruben will bring this to the campus and request for new room.

3. External examiners – some have not prepared questions – or even have other commitments during defense – to remedy this a 1 page set of instructions is being drafted for circulation to examiners
4. Jamie is drafting grad sense of community survey – many complains about lack of community – should go to grad students in the next month

b. DSC – Pauline : TMRA, GDRA, and President’s scholarships are open and close Feb 15th at 4pm

If travel was last fall you can apply again and be reimbursed. Generally there is a summer and spring application. Not a lot applied last time so everyone got it.

c. GSS- Koletha presentation about Andrew Petter WHAT WAS THE DETAIL HERE?– seeking for support for new bio building should hear next year, otherwise current safety /issues in this building will be dealt with.

Student housing is not a main issue – SFU does not want to increase debt – but they are making long term plans

Highland pub – SFU food services does not want to run it so they are looking for another party.

GSS looking for volunteers for housing group advocacy

Volunteers GSS space working group – SFU student society moving out of Maggie Benson

d. TSSU – Mirinda

Grievance committee – harassment thru evaluation forms – can’t be tolerated but not sure course of action

Join a committee! Stipend is \$150 per semester – Groups in need are: health and safety, grievance, solidarity and social justice – plus for every 12 hrs worked = ia an extra \$20

For more information see TSSU/committees .ca

Karen Dean is leaving in March - need new person with similar qualifications to fill – currently have committee for her position

Asim – be careful about unpaid work – biology has tendency to fudge ½ base unit here and there – 1st year courses especially – if base units are off / shaved off here and there it is an issue!

General issue: Increasing number of students but not TAs

See table in agreement for correct break down of base units that should be adhered to

Generally, not sure how TA assignment is happening – if ranked class as 1st choice and Teacher does too, how are you not assigned? ‘Yes’ was the answer – but not what happened with student. Only could be no if you had a major award.

e. Faculty Mole – Colin: 2 department meetings since last meeting –

December: academic planning process: hopeful that faculty will have more input/more involvement. ½ day meeting sometime this year to go

over it. Specifically, course equivalents, and rejustify the 2 course teaching load. Currently a graduate directed reading course = 1 course credit and a professor with students in a lab = 1 course. Not changing at the moment.

- Teaching faculty – senior professors get to teach one less formal course every two years to do professional development. Talk of doing something with dean but has died down.
- Bathrooms – we got screwed in terms of requests: Lost on showers on 8000 level. Burnaby city regulations mandates # of stalls in wash room and space limitations, so no gender-neutral stall or shower.
- Shrum Chair – attempt to hire a new mid career faculty member – woman (preferred) neurobiology was the aim but failed with only 6 applicants who were early career people. New advertisement will be placed this year but broadly in Cell Bio instead, telling department to reach out to people they want to apply. Looking for someone working on Biomechanisms of disease and is interdisciplinary in life sciences. Asking applicants to talk about how they think they'd fit into the department.
- TPC – biannual salary review process; collective bargaining agreement. Noting a persistent lack of understanding among faculty about how performance is evaluated vs change in salary. Someone was quoted as saying it is a zero sum game of salary drying up. Within faculty need to understand their performance vs how much someone gets paid. Specifically they look at your 2 year CV.
- Decreasing budget over next 5 years. Noticing it is hard to attract talented students, they think due to demography
- Changes in K-12 program are not for better. Noticing the level of education of students coming into the department is suffering
- Department has good NSCER funding success but our faculty has been declining in numbers
- Stats has done well to change from IRMACs to big data – Biology has not done so well here
- 1st nations and reconciliation in science– some people say 'science is science' others say ways to incorporating 1st nations into history and astronomy. Having trouble thinking of a way of modifying how and why they teach things to incorporate
- Decrease in graduate and undergrad – life sciences department vs biology: biology sounds old fashioned vs Life sciences is more end game job geared in sound
- Mismatch of infrastructure and staff support – no maintenance people to maintain new equipment.
- May aim to harmonize lower levels of life sciences: find ways to share courses or larger unified course

January meeting: Much shorter than December

- Academic planning is on hold
- Planning to overhaul cell and molec. Curriculum to modernize is and remove overlap with other departments

5. Adjournment – Rylee puts forth, Colin seconds. Motion Passes.

SECRETARY APPROVAL:
(*Electronic Signature & Date*) Elana Varner 1.29.18
