

Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus

June 20 2018 – 3:30pm

1. Welcome

a. Attendance

Pauline Deschodt (Chair), Elana Varner (Vice President), Kari Zurowski (Secretary), Don Wiggins (Member), Mason King (Member), Yonathan Uriel (DSC Rep), Melissa Orobko (Social events committee and DGSC rep), Jenny Bigman (Faculty Mole), Serena Wong (DSC rep), Colin Bailey (Member)

b. Additions to Agenda

i. Summer BBQ + picnic tables

- 4 new tables, assembly made into a fun event. Department covered \$200 of food.
- Pauline paid for alcohol. But \$127 back from selling drink for \$2.00 per. Pauline is still owed \$111.00.

Motion to reimburse Pauline \$111.00 for the purchase of drinks for the beginning of summer BBQ from the Core account

- Kari starts motion and Yonathan seconds. Passed unanimously. Pauline and Kari abstain.

Motion to reimburse Pauline \$20 for veggies for the beginning of summer BBQ from the Core account

- Kari starts and Yonathan seconds. Passed unanimously. Pauline and Kari abstain.

FUTURE SUMMER BBQs

- **Every other Thursday** put the grill on at 4 pm for everyone to come grill their own food. **Next one will be June 28th.**
- We aim to improve music for future parties: Need to get a better speaker: Check Amazon Prime: Ask Elizabeth if they want to buy them for us (Maybe look at ones of different price points and see what the department wants to buy.)

ii. Fall Grad hosted speaker updates

- Voting now closed
- 30 votes put in
- 1st place Dr. Jenny Hills → DESCRIPTION OF HER HERE: **PAULINE PLEASE fill this part in!** 😊
- study effect of climate on plant communities
- manuscript writing and R courses

- Going to send invite and see if they're available, if not ask the runner up.
- We'll ask her for an abstract of seminar talk and workshop

iii. Graduate student orientation Sept BBQ

- GSS will fund alcohol
- Opportunity to mix new and older student and maybe kick start mentorship program?

Brainstorm for jumpstarting mentorship program:

- Meet mentor at orientation
- Wear sign if you're willing to be mentor at the BBQ
- Give them money to spend on coffee as initiative for them to meet (Elizabeth said they can have money for it)
- Schedule regular meeting

Spread the word:

- Announce all of this stuff at the next BBQ
- Early August: Send out email with the benefits of the program to invite people to join

General Tasks:

- Marlene will tell us when the list of incoming new students will be around
- Meet with Elizabeth before she leaves at the end of August

iv. New committee - Department Outreach and Engagement Committee

- Needs Graduate Student volunteer
- Mission is to connect the general public and high school students with science
- No email about this yet but we will spread the word
- No idea when it starts or what responsibilities are, but if someone is interested we can find out

v. 2019 MBB Colloquium

- 20th anniversary of MBB
- Having a seminar that is open to other departments
- Would like to promote it to biology students and see who would like to join
- Watch out for email soon!

vi. GSS REP summer

- Kari is the only one at the moment but she is out of town in July and August so she needs coverage
- They give out \$50 a meeting for attendance

- Important someone covers because they will be approving the budget for the year so someone should be there
- July 10th and August 14th
- One in the library and one at Maggie Benson
- Motion put forward by Kari for Pauline and Melissa GSS alternated. Yonathan seconds. Passes unanimously. Pauline, Kari and Melissa abstain
- Kari will send them details in email shortly

vii. Other

Workshop committee – Should meet in August for September organization. The people interested included: Asim, Heather, Elana, Rachel, Kristen

Facebook account for Graduate Biology Students – Better way to reach everyone more reliably. Maybe add a social media account to the webmaster responsibilities.

c. **Motion** to approve minutes from May's meeting – Put forth by Pauline, Melissa seconds. Pass unanimously.

2. Treasury update

Core - \$359.41

Trust - \$1026.26

3. Committee updates

a. **DGSC**- Melissa: May 30th last meeting.

Things of note:

Held a mental health workshop for all faculty. 30 Profs attended, seems to have been a success. There will be a new online program for mental health online assistance. Includes tips and 1 on 1 online consoling. Hoping to launch it next month in time for September

Talked about engagement with Grad students. Happy to hear of the current initiatives. DGSC happy to help structure this. Bisc 800 held in the Fall instead to help socializing.

GSC approved a new neuro specialization in the new bisc grad program. Students from BBK, psych, and BISC can enroll in their home departments. Consists of 2 courses and a workshop and that's it. A way to bring the different departments together. 1 or 2 profs per department that can supervise this.

GRAD STUDENT Stipend increase – Vote to increase by \$1000 a year. \$1000 this September and another \$1000 next September. Money will come from supervisors.

- TSSU- collective agreement expires in 2019 so DGSC is talking about increasing the amount per unit awarded
- Also want to increase the GFs and also from the school in general.

- They might try to bring back half GFs which is detrimental
- Hard to do in some cases for supervisors to find the money but DGSC was unanimous that it is ethical to do

b. DSC – scholarship application evaluations. Maybe hear back early July. **Saw a lot of applications with missing CVs and missing transcripts. EXTREMELY COMMON and DETRIMENTAL.** Must be loaded individually on each application. Often a CV is the only way to showcase your qualifications for a scholarship. Meet with GA3 website person for this to be brought up. Have a meeting for grad students before next season.

c. GSS – Very short meeting. Director of university relations (student from another department) might drop in on our Caucus meeting. Consultation best practices framework for departments and facilities. Hard to get a hold of people by email so might get in touch via meetings.

d. TSSU- No person attended this time.

e. Faculty Mole – Colin

- Dean of science showed up to this meeting. She'll be leaving Dean position soon.
- Elizabeth will be new associate VP. New Dean starts Sept 1st. Put in acting chair until the end of the calendar year. No candidate yet. Proper process to look for new chair.

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- Process for determining temporary is just sending in names and putting it to a vote at next meeting.

-Dean just passed down the Academic plan to the chairs of science. One department hasn't submitted the plan yet.

- Biomass construction put off again due to permitting.

-Pestology oven is getting fixed. New airflow system and new coating on the windows to fix problem.

- Shrum chair search continues out of Deans office. They have never run a search before so there have been some problems.

- Increasing requirements for TA selection for lab based skills.

- Isabelle nominated Ann Sullivan for associated membership → she counts as a biology supervisor on committees and can be a supervisor as well

- DGSC neuro and raise got voted through. Voted almost unanimously except for one person.

- Raise will still bring us short of minimum wage. Research funding is not considered to be hourly. They think they have the legal wiggle room to not pay us minimum wage.

- TA rule changed. Cant expect 8 units per year on average.

- John Moore brought up if supervisor undergoes funding crisis? Student may have to TA more. In past money has been gifted or loaned from the chair. On assumption other funding will be found to get going again. Only happens occasionally.

-Opportunity to designate a few new need based fellowships. Discussion fell short

- Risk management. Thought that annual meeting is supposed to buffer for this. DSC mentioned that applications for scholarships and TA- ships. Show how you fit in the role in your CV or resume you can highlight relevant skills etc. Saying that there was a lack of this previously.

- Discuss about getting more money in the department. Chem just dropped enrollment and upped 24000 for masters and 28000 for PhD.

4. Adjournment- Motion put forth by Pauline. Yonathan seconds. Passed unanimously. Next meeting is August.