

# Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus

**August 22<sup>nd</sup> 2018 – 3:30pm**

## 1. Welcome

a. Attendance – Kevin Colmenares (Events Committee), Allison Dennert (Events Committee), Dan Greenberg (Member at large), Kari Zurowski (Treasurer), Asim Renyard (Events Committee), Pauline Deschodt (President), Melissa Orobko (Events Committee), Elana Varner (Vice President and Stand in Secretary)

## b. Additions to Agenda

### i. Graduate student orientation Sept BBQ

- Melissa applied for GSS Grant –
  - Might be rejected due to it being purely social but it is written on website that orientation is covered. Maybe copy and paste this from website as response and ask Marleen to provide them with the information herself.
- September 6<sup>th</sup> Thursday at 1:30 for Orientation. BBQ at 3:30. Expecting 30 new students.
- Mentorship – include this in message announcing the BBQ
  - Send out email to get volunteers for this.
  - Option to have money dedicated to this for coffee fund to encourage regular meetings – i.e. the month after they've started their program or once a semester
  - At BBQ maybe have mentors wear high vis vests or party hats to be visible
  - Pauline will send email for volunteers
- The event planning group will meet next Wednesday and they have access to a Costco Card.
- Have BBQ be structured? Bingo sheet to get to know people as an icebreaker
  - Scavenger hunt?
  - Prizes? Drink tickets? Gift Cards for: Coffee? Illia? Nesters? T-shirts?
- Bring shirts out to sell
- Budget: \$250 from Caucus, \$250 from grant, and \$100 from the department
  - Email Barb to ask her for money – would be an expense claim or cash advance (only if done really early). Might be better in person as she is really friendly – Asim will do this.

**Motion:** Spend up to \$350 for the Welcome BBQ. Put forward by Elana. Seconded by Allison. All in favor. Asim, Kari and Melissa abstain.

- Incentivize people to come. Maybe 1 beer for every year you've been here for a max of 2 years. Then 1 beer for every 2 years after that.
  - Take attendance / ballpark of how many people
  - Give faculty a free beer too to encourage them to come. # of students they bring to it divided by 2. Maybe their students get beer.
  - Get good non-alcoholic options
- ii. Fall Grad hosted speaker updates – Dr. Mary O'Connor from UBC Zoology. December 5<sup>th</sup> is best. Jon and Ron have been told the date.  
 Dr. Mary O'Connor, UBC Zoology: Dr. O'Connor's lab works on temperature and ecological structure, both experimentally and in coastal seagrass ecosystems. She also works on understanding biodiversity across scales, and the metabolic theory of ecology. She has built an impressive reputation as a marine macroecologist, an interdisciplinary collaborator, and an excellent mentor to her graduate students. She is quantitative, data-driven, and an immensely impressive speaker. I feel that her engaging personality, passion for mentorship, and reputation as a scientist make her an excellent candidate for the fall grad hosted speaker.

We should start thinking about the Spring one soon.

- iii. Workshop September 2018 – TAing in Biology with Megan Barker. She used to do workshops and is amazing at it. She is working directly with the department.
- iv.

**Workshop description: Biology TA Essentials: Leading the Room and Supporting Self-Directed Learning**

Hey there, new and returning Biology TAs! Want some tips about how to help your students, and be an awesome TA? Nervous about how to run your lab or tutorial? Looking for some free food in the first week of September? We have the workshop for you!

In our workshop, you'll get hands-on practice with:

- Setting goals for how you want to lead your lab or tutorial section(s),
- Productively managing the group, including dealing with tricky situations, and
- Building rapport with your students to make your lab/tutorial great!

From participation in this interactive workshop, you will come away with a toolkit of ideas for approaching teaching, and a concrete plan for how you can work with your students in an effective way. This is highly encouraged for both brand-new and experienced TAs!

For attendance people will get training hours allotment. Barb might come into talk about hours.

- First of hopefully many topics that the grad caucus will cover regularly.
  - September 5<sup>th</sup> will be this one. Finalize hours and room soon to start advertising.
- v. EcoEvo Retreat – UBC email reminder. Want a theme by the end of the week. Get people to volunteer. Movie depiction of your study organism (movie monsters).
- Get volunteers squared away
- vi. 2019 MBB Colloquium – Reminder to spread about the 20-year anniversary. If people want to be in it then let Pauline know so she can tell the department.
- vii. Grad caucus documents available online for committees –
- Have like a repository to gain access to stored documents. Wanted it to be password protected but won't work with current website: can have a secret link instead just be sure to remove confidential info or have each file password protected or a private website via a google account.
  - Send Cat the webmaster files that would be helpful.
  - Not a lot of people actually look at the website. We don't have a FB page which might be a better way to communicate. Maybe ask Cat if she'd be willing to help organize that. Just a private group. Have one person from each lab on initial invite and they'll be responsible for inviting their entire lab.
- viii. Other – none

c. **Motion** to approve minutes from June's meeting

Motion by Pauline, Kevin seconds. Kari, Pauline, and Melissa are all in favor. Those who didn't attend last meeting abstained.

## 2. Treasury update

Core: 359.41

Trust: 1026.26

**Motion** to move remaining funds from core account to trust. Pauline puts forward, Asim second. All in favor. Kari abstains.

### 3. Committee updates

a. DGSC – no meeting since June. Just reviewing applications. New chair in September to be voted in then. References are very important in this: If you are applying to grad school and asking for references be sure that you ask people who will give you a good reference.

b. DSC – Yonathan emailed saying no news. Asked Debbie for private award assignments and still haven't heard back on the updates. Maybe CC Tony next time around for this email.

c. GSS – Melissa attended August meeting.

- Need grad student volunteers for committees i.e. for community building committee. GSS has a surplus of funds to move from Maggie Benson to the new building and don't know the new rent yet.
- Not many caucuses are applying for networking, conferences, and orientations. They have a travel grant too. \$500 that you can apply to before and after travel. Also, there may be a school wide travel grant too where there is an open application period and they simply give it out on a first come first serve basis.
- Kept coffee and tea service free. Most of their budget is \$300,000 in salaries. Emergency grocery cards that are available.
- They had a GSS trivia night, which was very successful.
- In camera session was fascinating. The executive director (paid 70,000) with a lot of responsibilities, every year gets a review which has been outsourced to an independent company.

d. TSSU – No, likely no meeting but Rachel has not been in touch

e. Faculty Mole – There has also not been a meeting

- Final comments: Biology seminar series issue: Half of it is internal this semester. The whole point is to bring in external view points. 5 of the 10 seemingly right in a row. People are going to UBC to watch seminars this semester instead. The budget is the same, so it is not a money issue. It is embarrassing to the university. Caucus could write a letter saying its members are not happy about this. In the future press our faculty members to invite – maybe offer them suggestions. Or make the process more transparent. Draft letter for Grad Caucus editing.

4. Adjournment – Pauline put forward. Dan Greenberg seconds. Passes unanimously.