

Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus

January 21st, 2019– 3:30pm

1. Welcome

a. Attendance

Steering Committee

Chair: Pauline Deschodt

Associate Chair: Elana Varner

Treasurer/GSS Rep: Kari Zurowski

Secretary: Rachel Munger

Officers

Events Committee: Allison Dennert, Asim Renyard, Kevin Colmenares

Representatives

GSS Rep: Sarah Johnson

DGSC/ Events Committee: Melissa Orobko

DSC Rep: Serena Wong, Yonathan Uriel

Other members present:

Don Wiggins, Jenna Keen, Catherine Villeneuve (webmaster), Liro Salminen, Colin Bailey, Mason King, Marie-Helene Burle (former member), Elijah Reyes, Laura Kroesen, and Florian Reurink

b. Additions to Agenda

- **Motion** to vote Rachel Munger in as new secretary on the BISC Grad caucus until April 30th, 2019.
Second: Elana Varner. Abstention: Rachel Munger. Passes unanimously.

c. Winterfest Recap

- Some expressed that it was uneventful, and used to be more engaging in previous years.
- Fill out survey which already goes around expressing interest for more interactive activities for Winterfest 2019 (games, trivia, karaoke, Christmas songs?, skits?)

d. Fall grad hosted speaker feedback

- Fall grad hosted speaker was excellent, very positive feedback from the workshop that was held as well.

c. Spring grad hosted speaker

- Elena Bennet unavailable, so postponed to speak in fall 2019. Too short notice to ask next voted speakers to come from afar, so Spring 2019 hosted speaker could be local speaker from Fall 2018 grad hosted speaker vote. Ron already has busy speaking schedule, Pauline but may ask alternate local speakers from Fall 2018.

d. Workshops:

- i) January 2019 workshop: Challenging Imposter Syndrome and Mental Health
- Positive feedback, speakers were directly from health and counselling.
 - Should hold this workshop once a year if possible!
- ii) Upcoming workshop: lead by Yonathan Uriel. How to apply for scholarships, grants, external scholarships, tri-council, GA3 system, common pitfalls, misconceptions. Held in late March.

e. PPMABC (Professional Pest Management Association of BC) symposium 2019

- Two student awards given last year (\$100 ea). About 10 students delivered presentations/posters last year. Up to 50 students attended (approximately?)
- **Motion** to financially support up to \$200 toward the Professional Pest Management Association of BC 2019
Second: Asim Renyard. Passes unanimously. Abstention: Kari Zurowski

f. Tox Talks 2019 (SFU Internal)

- Jenna Keen describes Tox Talks as a conference for Toxicology students
- **Motion** to give \$200 towards Tox Talks 2019
Second: Asim Renyard. Passes unanimously. Abstention: Jenna Keen, Kari Zurowski.

g. Career day in REM

- Career day held by REM: Occurring 2-3pm January 25th Big Data Hub. Ten minute talks with questions (representatives from places and people like BC Hydro, Environment Climate Change Canada, DFO Research Scientist, Forest Ecology Research Leader).
- Florian is hoping to hold one similar to this for Biology. More to come!

h. Q & A with the department Chair

- New Department Chair (Isabelle Côté) agreed to a Q&A. Caucus and any members should come up with list of questions for chair 1 month in advance and send to her. We have our Caucus meeting, adjourn the caucus meeting, then chair comes at the end to answer questions at the meeting.
- Any questions for the Dept. Chair can be emailed to Pauline.

i. Other

- i) Resurrection of Grad Symposium? Used to exist but died over the years. Historically, entire lab would give fun/low pressure presentation on what the lab does as a whole. To be resurrected! Discussion committee to be formed including Melissa, Laura, and others.

- ii) Allison: As a follow up on this, would be excellent to survey each BISC PI to know how many grad students in the department, and how many in each lab, so we'll know how well we are reaching grad student audiences, and what gaps of people aren't being included.
 - iii) Asim would like more legitimate cleaning supplies for events. Would get stored in locked cupboard between events.
Motion to allow Asim to buy sponges, soap, all purpose spray, and towels in the amount of approximately \$30. Second: Allison. Passes unanimously. Abstention: Asim.
 - iv) Asim would also like some party games for events like movie night, etc.
Motion to allow Asim to buy Dutch Blitz, Jungle Speed, and puzzles in the amount of approximately \$50. Second: Allison. Passes unanimously. Abstention: Asim.
 - v) Colin Bailey: Had positive experience gaining financial support from SFU Library for Open Access Journal Publishing. Was very easy and efficient to deal with Library to get money to publish and open access article. Apply once your paper has been accepted.
 - vi) Melissa: ongoing chair election, brought up at last DGSC meeting. Policies for voting a Chair in: There are two separate votes. First vote to settle on a candidate, second vote is a ratification vote. Second vote can only be faculty, but first vote can include others (eg could include Caucus, staff etc). Who should get to vote?!
 Three years to plan it all. Caucus could email questions to candidates ahead of time. Committee to be formed with some students and faculty. Good use for grad caucus website as well!
 - vii) Marie-Helen – As a grad student for many years and R peer in the research commons, we don't learn proper coding and formatting, not trained to review each other's code, only trained to review each other's writing. Demand is there, so trying to build a community of students (and faculty) who need R coding help, improve coding language. One on one consultations and coding workshops. Help faculty build appropriate courses for undergrads and grads. No budget for it anywhere, looking for funding. Looking for unofficial support from Caucus as she sets out to see if there is funding for her. Marie will send out official proposal and set a time for a Q&A period. Caucus would write an official statement in support of Marie, after she sends out a proposal and holds a Q&A session.
- j. **Motion** to approve minutes from November's meeting (Pauline)
 Second: Allison. Passes unanimously.

2. Treasury update

- Core account: \$1400
- Trust account: \$993.13
- Set allotment for each semester (A third per semester of what the Caucus gets each year). We spent more than our allotment from the fall semester, so remainder came from different account.

3. Committee updates

a. DGSC

Melissa: BISC 800 survey being sent out.

b. DSC

Yonathan and Serena: Ranking NSERC scholarships, nominations go to the NSERC committee soon. TMRA and GIRTA just opened, can submit anytime for past or future travel. Note: Number of GIRTA's that one receives are limited per degree, but TMRA are not!

c. GSS

AGM is on February 5th from 4-6pm, in MBC 2290, with a social at Club Ilia after. January meeting had tuition freeze now people come in who support a tuition freeze for the next two years.

d. TSSU

No updates

e. Faculty Mole

No updates

4. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the January 2019 meeting.

Second: Elana. Passes unanimously.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rachel Munger', with a large, stylized initial 'R' at the start.

Secretary – Rachel Munger