

Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus

February 25th 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, Jayme Lewthwaite

DSC Rep: Serena Wong

Other members present:

Colin Bailey (faculty mole), Elijah Reyes, Rana Chavoshi, Hannah Watkins, Deb Obrist, and Robert Gochian.

b. Additions to Agenda

Reimbursement (Fall Grad hosted speaker and January workshop)

i) Motion to reimburse Elana VARNER \$162.87 (\$61.95 for grad hosted speaker entertainment, \$27.30 social media workshop coffee, and \$73.62 for health workshop coffee and snacks) from the BISC grad caucus core account.

Moved by: Pauline Deschodt

Second by: Allison Dennert

Result: Passes unanimously. Abstention: Elana Varner.

ii) Motion to reimburse Pauline DESCHODT 11.95\$ for tea for workshops and grad caucus events from the BISC grad caucus petty cash.

Moved by: Elana Varner

Second by: Allison Dennert

Result: Passes unanimously. Abstention: Pauline Deschodt.

- Reminder that if you have not been reimbursed for anything, please come forward and remind the Caucus as soon as possible.

iii) BISC Graduate Scholarship Workshop

Motion to spend \$150 for stipends for speakers, snacks and drinks from the Core account to finance the Graduate Scholarship Workshop

Moved by: Pauline Deschodt

Second by: Asim Renyard

Result: Passes unanimously. Abstention: Sarah Johnson

BISC Graduate Scholarship Workshop is being held on Wednesday March 13th, 1-3pm. Sarah and Yonathan are taking all requests from survey for scholarship workshop, so please fill out. Snacks from Costco will be about ~80\$.

We have \$387 for this term, motion the \$150 on this workshop considers the food, and compensation for the work of the people who have worked hard to lead the workshop.

Pauline: Is there a good way to maintain consistent compensation for workshop leaders?

Asim: It should be standardized for all who are running workshops in the future.

Allison: GSS has professional development grants. Usually you apply as a stand-alone person, but wonder if the BISC Caucus could apply.

Separate fund: department could help us for the workshops, talk to Isabelle (Dept Chair). Could make it work with about \$500/semester.

iv) BISC 800 Survey updates

Results of the BISC 800 results were compiled by Melissa after 26 email responses came back from bisc-grad wide survey. Survey was broken into people having taken it, currently taking it, and those won't take it during their degree.

- Fall is preferred semester for BISC 800 to occur on an annual basis. Rotating semester was not preferred. Top responses for topics are publishing, discussions, scholarship applications, giving good talks, imposter syndrome, student supervisor relationships, and career options. Items that came up as additional requests could potentially be made into workshops if the material can't be covered in the class itself.
- One major recurring additional response from the survey was to have a general "BISC graduate guidelines" session. Although this could be offered as a Caucus workshop, many agree it would be better to have the department hold a mandatory session every fall.
- Part of the problem is that information is very difficult to find on the Biology website pages, as it is located on many difficult-to-locate web pages. Highly requested that department update website to reflect all the requirements in one place. Basic guidelines should be in one place and should ideally not take the curriculum time of BISC 800.

Melissa: What would we like to do with this info?

Maintain similar structure for all subsequent BISC 800 offerings? Same basic structure with a shared pool of slides that each prof could refer to. Base content on the survey results. Bring forward to DGSC and see what their thoughts are. Next meeting is around March 7th, will be

brought up then, and report back to Caucus next month. Would also be good to include the department's PowerPoint from the mandatory fall take-in session and have that available on the website. Any more ideas can be sent to Jayme or Melissa.

Sarah: Would love to see mentor programs for seasoned and incoming students up and running again. Could commence at the incoming BBQ, where there's one or two reps from each program (MET, MPM, BISC, etc) and students can get matched with them if they want. Create examples of questions that students could ask mentors, a little bit about how the relationship can be, and post them on the Caucus website and Caucus Facebook page.

Elana: Caucus could provide \$10 coffee cards as an incentive for mentor and mentee to have meetings. Could be once monthly, or however often is desired.

v) Diversity Committee

Elana: Diversity Committee has been discussed in previous meetings, need visual representation of diversity committee. Anyone who is interested in it should email evartner@sfu.ca. Time commitment will depend on what people want to take on for projects and responsibilities.

vi) Grad Symposium

Grad symposium to be revived? Could do group presentations from each lab (3min talk, video, poster etc). Could do 1 slide, 5 min presentation. Could go off Marine Mammal Symposium which has great framework for short and catchy presentations to inform others of what a group is broadly doing. 6 people signed up to take on the Grad Symposium (Melissa has this information), so someone will take the lead.

c. Motion to approve minutes from our January's meeting

Moved by: Pauline Deschodt

Second by: Serena Wong

Result: Passes unanimously. Abstention: Rachel Munger.

2. Treasury update

Core account \$1250.00

Trust account \$993.13

3. Committee updates

a. DGSC – Upcoming meeting is on March 7th. Jayme talking to Margo Moore about student supervisor and conflict materials, doing a flow chart to improve previous available resources.

b. DSC – Scholarship workshop coming up on March 13th, 1-3pm. Sarah and Yonathan are taking all requests from survey for scholarship workshop, so please fill out.

c. GSS – Meeting was cancelled (snowed out).

d. TSSU – No updates.

e. Faculty Mole –

Report from Colin:

- David Green looking for a replacement. New Barb is interim position. Biomass facility, construction was supposed to start and things were going to be blocked off. Marine lab and BISC 101 being renovated. Four years until actual biology building renovations.
- More robust sabbaticals for professors which will involve an outline of proposed goals and accomplishments during their sabbatical.
- Re-instate the Grad Chairs Committee. Want to start a new Research Committee for strategic development and planning with an additional focus on raising the international profile of SFU while will allow for more ways to obtain research funding.
- Appointments committee searching for an environmental microbiologist (87 applicants!).
- Interview on March 18 for potential new faculty member for Dr. Moorecroft. Regular spousal appointment.
- Dean has been given two Canada Research Chairs positions. Like hiring opportunities. Multiple faculties could compete to fill these spots. One was data science, the other is stem cell biology. Junior Canada Research Chairs expire in 2020.
- Entrance scholarships for September of this year, alternative to NSERC if you don't get it.
- Outreach programs – grad students to run outreach activities. Danielle and Andy already doing it, they are visiting high schools for outreach. Grad students are paid, and it boosts the profile of the department.
- Revitalizing the SFU Facebook and Twitter accounts.

4. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the February 2019 meeting.

Moved by: Pauline Deschodt

Second by: Melissa Orobko

Result: Passes unanimously

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

Secretary – Rachel Munger