

Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus
May 28, 2019, 3:30-4:30pm

1. Welcome

a. Attendance

Steering Committee

Chair: Yonathan Uriel

Associate Chair: Melissa Orobko

Treasurer: Kari Zurowski

Secretary: Tess Forstner

Member at Large: Pauline Deschodt

Officers

Events Committee: Elijah Reyes, Jaime Chalissery, Asim Renyard

Diversity Committee: Elana Varner, Ranah Chavoski, Sarah Johnson

Webmaster: Adam Blake

Representatives:

GSS Rep: Kari Zurowski

DGSC: Melissa Orobko, Sarah Johnson

TSSU Rep: Tess Forstner

DSC Rep: Serena Wong

b. Additions to Agenda

- i. Motion to approve minutes from April's meeting by Asim Renyard
- ii. Seconds Pauline Deschodt
- iii. Motion passes unanimously

2. Treasurer's Update

a. Core account: \$1066.21

- i. After reimbursement from April's meeting core account is: \$566.61

b. Trust: \$ 993.13

3. Representatives' Update

a. DGSC: Melissa Orobko

- i. Ongoing initiative to increase graduate fellowships. Options are to increase with departments or GSS. There is not widespread interest in other departments to increase graduate fellowships. Best option: DGSC can bring issue to department. There is another stipend increase in the fall, from 22,000 to 23,000, ideally it would go up again to bring us on-par with minimum wage. There was a lot of push-back at the DGSC meeting as we are students, not employees. Each grad student costs university \$10000, so pushing for more money could be tricky. Consensus is to revisit later with DGSC chairs and department route and GSS route needs to be explored.
- ii. Support to add student/supervisor relationship to website and hand out at orientation, so every student will get the paper and encouraged to have meeting with supervisor to discuss handout

- iii. Coffee orders for defenses: who should do it? Asking coffee student, Vinny?
 - iv. Minor changes to how they set biweekly amounts, going by term not from averages of the full year
 - v. A proposal must be submitted in advance to approve external examiners, which may require examiners to provide workshops at SFU. The supervisor would send an invitation to examiner to additionally host a workshop
 - vi. BISC 800 and website: DGSC liked report, agreed to have BISC 800 every fall and to sit down and standardize topics taught in the course. But they are not going to put the material online, so if you want to see the material, take the course. Website updated by Justin, the office assistant. Justin will update website with set procedure instead of contractor. Priority changes: MET have to finalize committee by end of third semester, list of documents required to move from masters to PhD, and masters student are required to submit proposal (2-3 pages single spaced, with background, research objectives, and methods)with APR. Would be ideal for Melissa will do this updating and get paid for it. DGSC will review website every year. Next meeting in September.
- b. DSC- Serena Wong
 - i. Private awards due May 31st
- c. GSS- Allison Dennert attended meeting but passed notes to Kari Zurowski who reported to caucus
 - i. Coffee: it costs GSS \$1 a cup, so the cost isn't because too many of people are using it but because the coffee is too expensive to begin with. Options are to discontinue coffee or people paying coffee at cost.
 - ii. New housing building which is university owned may be managed by GSS in future
 - iii. Two of the GSS directors resigned
- d. TSSU – Tess Forstner
 - i. Attended General Membership Meeting
 - ii. TSSU Reps visiting at the end of meeting for message
 - iii. Grievance and bargaining update: new collective agreement, 5 sessions already held and 4 more to come. Next session is in June. Come to Bargaining Meetings!
 - iv. Join a committee! Stipend positions. Spring 2019 election results
 - v. New GSS Liaison role
 - vi. Letter condemning Alabama abortion laws
- e. Faculty Meeting- Hannah Watkins in the field but sent notes to Yonathan Uriel
 - i. Request to record seminar talks
 - ii. When new building is put in, there will a restructuring layout of student/supervisor offices more similar to E2O. Priority is to improve Surrey campus' research program as they already have a building.
 - iii. There will be a new data sciences building in B lot, to be built by private company. In 5 years the library will be going under renovations and will be moved to biology building. Undecided where biology will be moved to.
 - iv. Potential mentorship of old/new faculty.

- f. Pauline Deschodt went to a departmental meeting: they are hiring Jane Fowler but would have preferred to have hired two faculty instead of just one.
- 4. Grad-hosted speaker for Spring 2020
 - a. Looking far ahead as speaker for fall is already organized. Starting poll for inputting suggestions and then vote on speakers. Will let people input suggestions until June caucus meeting.
- 5. Committees
 - a. Establishing Terms of Reference
 - i. Details goals of committee and the larger body they report to
 - b. Committee Updates
 - i. Events committee: no events on the horizon. Could do smaller events in addition to two annual events, if they want to organize them. Develop an organized list of what is in BISC lounge cabinets
 - ii. Diversity committee: Join the new diversity committee! Hoping to have workshops and events down the line. First action is to send out survey to department to ask what could be improved upon, etc. Upcoming Science World event: 2nd annual LGBTSTEM day on July 5th.
 - iii. Workshops committee: organize sexual violence prevention workshops and collaborate with diversity and events committee.
 - 1. ACTION ITEM: workshop committee comes up with schedule for 2019-2020
- 6. Meeting with Dean of Science and Director of Advancement (Pauline Deschodt):
 - a. Dean's goal is to increase number of grad students and Director of Advancement finds new sponsors. Following UBC's example, Director of Advancement wants grad students to tell their stories to try to get potential sponsors. Free parking on weekends potential negotiation with car share companies. Would like to pay tuition with by-weekly payments throughout semester, like we can with TAs. Desire orientation for harassment and safety training for new students. Include agreement to discuss supervisor/student relationships when student starts. Desires that faculty be trained in employee management and teaching.
- 7. Adjournment
 - a. Motion to adjourn to May 2019 meeting (4:38)
 - b. Moved by Yonathan Uriel
 - c. Second by Serena Wong
 - d. Passes unanimously