

Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus
November 25, 2019, 2:30pm

1. Welcome

a. Attendance

Steering Committee

Chair: Yonathan Uriel

Associate Chair: Melissa Orobko

Treasurer: Brett Hodinka

Secretary: Tess Forstner

Member at Large: Pauline Deschodt

Officers

Events Committee: Elijah Reyes

Diversity Committee: Joanna Enns, Sarah Johnson

Workshop Committee: Sarah Johnson

Representatives:

DGSC: Melissa Orobko, Sarah Johnson

TSSU Rep: Tess Forstner, Allison Dennert

DSC Rep: Rachel Munger

GSS Rep: Allison Dennert

Faculty Mole: Hannah Watkins

Members: Robert Gochian, Nico Munoz, Griffin Dare

b. Additions to Agenda

i. Territorial acknowledgment from Melissa Orobko

1. Hannah Watkins volunteered to do the next one

ii. **Motion to approve minutes from October meeting**

1. Moved by Yonathan Uriel
2. Seconded by Allison Dennert
3. Motion passes unanimously

2. Treasurer's Update: Brett Hodinka

a. Core account: \$1836.41

b. Trust: \$1509.74

3. Representatives' Update

a. DGSC: Melissa Orobko

i. BISC 800: 8 core topics have been agreed upon

ii. Website updates

1. Clarifying that tuition and fees aren't included in admission offer. Working toward updating it in actual admissions offers now.
 - a. Needs updates on tuition discounts after x semesters
2. Up to 5 pages allowed now for MSc thesis proposals if committee requests it
3. Paper handouts are becoming available on the website
4. Timeline of degree program for website is being developed

- iii. Still investigating where figure of \$10,000 cost of grad students originated
 - iv. Coffee running out at popular thesis defenses. If anticipating tons of people to attend a defense, order two
 - 1. \$47 for each coffee dispenser, so order with consideration
- b. DSC- Rachel Munger
 - i. President award evaluated
 - ii. NSERC doctoral applications have been given feedback
 - iii. TMRA and GRTA were evaluated and ranked
- c. GSS- Allison Dennert
 - i. Alternate representatives need to be elected to receive stipends
 - ii. **Motion to elect Ranah Chavoski as GSS alternate representative**
 - 1. Moved by Yonathan Uriel
 - 2. Seconded by Pauline Deschodt
 - 3. Unanimously approved
 - 4. Abstained: Allison Dennert
 - iii. Caucus can apply for as many grants as they want from the GSS: no limits
 - iv. Four-month term for director of student services: can either extend current position or re-elect a new person
 - v. Increased MSP premiums for international students; if interested in issue can refer to GSS or TSSU website to get involved
- d. TSSU – Tess Forstner/Jade video chatting in from TSSU
 - i. SFU has officially unionized research assistants!
 - 1. 919 cards signed!
 - ii. 2 weeks ago, SFU initiated and settled with a voluntary recognition to expediate union certification process
 - iii. Already won with voluntary recognition: SFU recognizes stipend and scholarship RAs as employees. Work study students and undergrads are now also part of the union
 - iv. Bargaining priorities are being planned. Collective bargaining will begin May 1. Get involved!
 - 1. Even while collective agreement is being negotiated, working conditions cannot be lessened.
 - 2. Every 30 days TSSU and SFU meet to update each other on unionization progress
- e. Faculty Meeting – Hannah Watkins
 - i. Recurring: where does \$10,000 figure of grad student cost come from
 - ii. Megan Barker: developing course in spring for TA training
 - iii. Pay day coffee was dying but now is being resuscitated
 - iv. Isabelle met with dean of grad studies because grad students aren't covered during field work. Looking into it
 - v. Biology building no longer future storage area for library during renovations
 - 1. Potentially building another TASC building, if so, biology would move into it
 - vi. Only 65% retention of undergrads in biology. Conducting research into why people are leaving

- vii. Faculty are starting mentorship program for new faculty
 - 1. Each new faculty member is assigned a teaching mentor and a research mentor
- viii. Not many travel scholarships had applications this year

4. Committee Update

- a. Diversity and Inclusion Committee
 - i. No report
- b. Workshop Committee
 - i. No report. Still looking for new members
- c. Events Committee
 - i. Halloween party postmortem
 - 1. Did not overspend
 - ii. **Motion to reimburse Asim Reynard \$68.61 from core account for alcohol purchases from Welcome BBQ**
 - 1. Moved by Pauline Deschodt
 - 2. Seconded by Yonathan Uriel
 - 3. Unanimously approved

5. Support for IDEAS 2020

- a. 12th annual Inter-Departmental Ecology of Aquatic Species
- b. One day showcase for graduate research on Jan 5, 2020
 - i. has been going on for 12 years
- c. Organized this year by Griffin Dare and Nico Munoz
- d. Last year over 75 attendees, most were graduate students
- e. Last year caucus donated \$200 which was 9% of budget so asking for it again
- f. **Motion to support \$200 grant for IDEAS symposium from core account**
 - i. Moved by Yonathan Uriel
 - ii. Seconded by Elijah Reyes
 - iii. Motion passes unanimously
 - 1. Abstained: Nico Munoz

6. Grad-hosted speaker

- a. Went well and had high attendance
- b. Next semesters grad speaker all set up

7. Adjournment

- a. **Motion to adjourn to November 2019 meeting (3:34pm)**
 - i. Moved by Yonathan Uriel
 - ii. Second by Allison Dennert
 - iii. Motion passes unanimously



Tesia Forstner - Secretary