

Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus
January 27, 2020, 12:30pm

1. Welcome
 - a. Attendance
 - Steering Committee**
 - Chair: Yonathan Uriel
 - Associate Chair: Melissa Orobko
 - Treasurer: Brett Hodinka
 - Secretary: Tess Forstner
 - Officers**
 - Events Committee: Elijah Reyes, Kevin Colmenares, Asim Renyard
 - Diversity Committee: Joanna Enns, Elana Varner, Ranah Chavoshi
 - Workshop Committee: Yonathan Uriel, Elana Varner
 - Representatives:**
 - DGSC: Melissa Oroboko
 - TSSU Rep: Tess Forstner, Allison Dennert
 - DSC Rep: Rachel Munger, Serena Wong
 - GSS Rep: Allison Dennert, Ranah Chavoshi
 - Faculty Mole: Hannah Watkins
 - Members:** Steven Brownlee, Mason King, Kirk Hart
 - b. Additions to Agenda
 - i. Territorial acknowledgment from Yonathan Uriel. Open discussion on ways to decolonize our own research.
 1. Serena Wong volunteered for next caucus meeting
 - ii. **Motion to approve minutes from December meeting**
 1. Moved by Yonathan Uriel
 2. Seconded by Allison Dennert
 3. Motion passes unanimously
2. Treasurer's Update: Brett Hodinka
 - a. Core account: \$1141.41
 - b. Trust: \$1509.74
3. Representatives' Update
 - a. DGSC: Melissa Oroboko
 - i. No update, as there was no meeting.
 - b. DSC- Serena Wong
 - i. We just ranked NSERC CGS-M so now going to university-wide ranking
 - ii. TMRA and PS applications due Feb 16th
 - iii. No GIRTA competition opening so if you want to apply contact Debbie
 - iv. Undergrad awards: USRA's due Feb 6th @ 4 pm AND Shaughn and Sharon Clements Biological Sciences Independent Study Award (must have done independent study) due Feb 6th @ 4 pm

- v. There have been changes to BASS (Base Allocation Support for Students) funding - effective Fall 2020
 - 1. Increasing value for the GF to \$7000. For comparison, BASS funding in 2019/20 was \$6,249,500 for all departments, which if all of it was used as GF's at \$6,500 would have resulted in 961 GF's. This year, with both the increase of the total funding, and to the value of a GF, there are potentially 1,065 GF's available to offer. New total BASS is \$7,457,500
- c. GSS- Allison Dennert
 - i. Grad student U-pass contract was renewed, so U-pass price will not increase
 - ii. There will be a referendum for increase in fees for clubs in the next election
 - iii. GSS financial statements: where all your fees go! GSS fees not increasing soon.
 - iv. Feb 11th at 5:00pm GSS annual meeting. COME! It's a party!
 - v. Update on what admin is doing for grad students from the perspective of SFU president:
 - 1. SFU independently recognized RA as employees, more funding for scholarships and bursary (but in reality students only won more scholarships, there wasn't an increase in availability of scholarships), developed 30 new housing units at market minus 10%, and were shocked to learn that we would rather have less well-funded grad students instead of more poorly-funded grad students
 - 2. presidents' priorities are to update bio-sciences building, direct action to implement truth and reconciliation plan, gondola, presidential transfer.
 - vi. **Motion to vote to retroactively amend our past resolution and have Ranah Chavoshi's GSS alternate start date be October 1st, 2019**
 - 1. Moved by Yonathan Uriel
 - 2. Seconded by Elana Varner
 - 3. Abstained by Ranah Chavoshi, Allison Dennert
- d. TSSU – Tess Forstner
 - i. Had 2 general membership mtgs, 1 steward mtg in January: next steward meeting is in March
 - 1. Come to the Special General Membership Meeting on Tuesday, Feb 4, 4:30 - 6:30, AQ 4150
 - 2. Next general membership meeting is Feb 25, 2020 4:30-6:30pm at HC 7000. Free Dinner!!!! Important information!!!!
 - ii. With new mural in BISC hallway, TSSU bulletin board has moved to outside grad lounge
 - iii. New chair for TSSU: Alex Garcia. Ratified in meeting, since no one else volunteered
 - iv. Come to bargaining! Want more general members to come and add pressure to SFU. English language and culture center at Vancouver campus has little equality with temporary positions (no sick leave, no benefits, no tuition waiver, no retirement even after 20 years). Asking for support to come to bargaining so they can have better lives! Just drop in for a hot minute or stay awhile. Anything helps!

1. Next bargaining is TODAY! Until 5pm in EDB 7600, Burnaby
 - a. Next on is Wednesday Jan 29, 9-5:00 HC 1520, Vancouver.
- v. RA unionization update: We doubled our membership (1500 new members)! And doubled our funds! Now what?!?!
 1. What we won: 1) recognize all RA as SFU employees (includes science) 2) collective bargaining starts May 1, 2020 3) status quo protections so things cannot get worse 4) creating 1st list of SFU RAs, must be completed ASAP.
 2. Need to get list of people who are RAs to better know what should be fought for during bargaining. Please join RA mailing list by registering at **researchiswork.com/signup**
 3. TSSU pays! Join RA mobilization team to help canvas (door knocking, blogging, etc.) No minimum hours and pay is great! Nominate yourself, \$100 per month for 1st 6 hours and \$20 per hour with max of \$1200 per month.
 4. April proposal for contract is due. There are now TWO contract development committees. One for RA contract and the other committee is for remaining TSSU members (Steven is our rep from BISC!)
- vi. TSSU is restructuring!
 1. Now that we have more members, we have a new budget! Current execs are being seriously overworked, so TSSU needs a new structure. Still a work in progress but stay tuned!
- vii. **MSP campaign: WE WON!!!**
 1. Please see tssu.ca/msp for information of the settlement. The settlement has two key parts:
 - a. Invoices from **Sept 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020** will need to be submitted to SFU by March 31, 2020 and you will be retroactively reimbursed by SFU Admin with payments to come by July 31, 2020.
 - b. From **April 1, 2020 onwards** those still being charged premiums for MSP will be able to enroll in a group plan through SFU, who will pay their bills just like under the old system.
 2. Come to the Celebration tomorrow Tuesday, Jan 28, 4 - 7pm at Club Ilia!!!!
- e. Faculty Meeting – Hannah Watkins
 - i. SFU no longer reclassifying people out of Research Assistant roles. But they will be changing the way they appointment and pay RAs.
 - ii. Some faculty are increasing student stipends to compensate for increased MSP premiums for international students.
 - iii. \$10,000 per grad student figure: apparently this figure is not actually used for any planning, but no one STILL really knows where the figure comes from.
 - iv. Building undergrad science meeting place

- v. Previous dean of science wanted to dissolve biological sciences. New dean no longer wants this. But they are still thinking of restructuring biology in the future. If you have strong opinions, get your supervisor to email Isabelle Cote.
4. Committee Update
- a. Diversity and Inclusion Committee
 - i. Organizing decolonizing event: speaker session followed by round-table open discussion. Hopefully have 1 speaker per semester.
 - ii. Meeting with Isabelle Cote soon to maintain relationship with faculty
 - iii. Organizing LGBTQIA2+ open event in O Chem lounge
 - 1. Friday, March 13, 2020 1:30-3:30pm
 - 2. Trying to expand beyond biology and get all STEM departments. Trying to budget to get 15 science posters printed. \$400 for food and venue but would need additional \$600 for poster printing.
 - 3. Advertise! Invite everyone! Undergrads, other departments, etc.
 - iv. Working to get SFU involved in Pride Parade. Sign petition!
 - v. Grad hosting indigenous speaker in future
 - b. Workshop Committee
 - i. Megan Barker wants workshop on how to write and present CV for teaching jobs. Broadcast to other caucuses. Will happen in mid March
 - ii. "How to apply for scholarships" workshop going to happen again
 - c. Events Committee
 - i. No update
5. ToxTalks Funding
- a. MSc in environmental toxicology has symposium every year. Asking for \$200 for awards and food. Samantha Lundquist is contact: slundqui@sfu.ca
 - b. Motion to provide \$200 from core account for ToxTalks Symposium**
 - i. Moved by Yonathan Uriel
 - ii. Seconded by Allison Dennert
 - iii. Abstain from Mason King
6. Graduate Student Showcase 2020?
- a. Potential restructure to make this event's committee's responsibility in the future
 - b. Let's do it again! By February meeting, let's self organize how to get this ball rolling and who wants to plan it
7. Potential shared MBB and BISC caucus storage space
- a. MBB caucus is interested in buying lots of poster board and materials. They have a budget, but no storage space. Any ideas on where available storage space is? Potentially use the conex and talk to Maya about that.
8. Adjournment
- a. Motion to adjourn to January meeting (2:02pm)**
 - i. Moved by Yonathan Uriel
 - ii. Second by Allison Dennert
 - iii. Motion passes unanimously



Tesia Forstner - Secretary

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Forstner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.