

Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus
March 23, 2020, 4:30pm
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

1. Welcome
 - a. Attendance
 - Steering Committee:**
 - Chair: Yonathan Uriel
 - Associate Chair: Melissa Orobko
 - Treasurer: Brett Hodinka
 - Secretary: Tess Forstner
 - Webmaster: Adam Blake
 - Member at Large: Pauline Deschodt
 - Officers:**
 - Events Committee: Elijah Reyes, Jamie Chalissery, Asim Renyard
 - Diversity Committee: Ranah Chavoshi, Sarah Johnson, Steven Brownlee, Joanna Enns
 - Workshop Committee: Yonathan Uriel
 - Representatives:**
 - DGSC: Melissa Oroboko, Sarah Johnson
 - TSSU Rep: Tess Forstner, Allison Dennert
 - DSC Rep: Serena Wong
 - GSS Rep: Allison Dennert, Ranah Chavoshi
 - Faculty Mole: Hannah Watkins
 - Members:** Mason King, Emily Betz, Janesse Holmes, Nancy Yang, honorary house-pets
 - b. Additions to Agenda
 - i. Territorial acknowledgment from Steven Brownlee
 - ii. **Motion to approve minutes from February meeting**
 1. Moved by Yonathan Uriel
 2. Seconded by Allison Dennert
 3. Motion passes unanimously
2. Treasurer's Update: Brett Hodinka
 - a. Core account: \$1096.41
 - b. Trust: \$1509.74
 - c. **Motion for all remaining funds in the core account (except for the \$200 motioned in this meeting to reimburse Pauline Deschodt) to be transferred into the trust account**
 - i. Moved by Yonathan Uriel
 - ii. Seconded by Ranah Chavoshi
 - iii. Motion passes unanimously
3. Representatives' Update
 - a. DGSC: Melissa Oroboko
 - i. No updates
 - b. DSC- Serena Wong

- i. TMRA and GRTA have been given out, but most travel has been cancelled. So send Debbie an email if your travel has been cancelled.
 - ii. GF open on GA3, and deadline is July
 - iii. Private awards should still go on as usual
- c. GSS- Allison Dennert
 - i. <https://sfugradsociety.ca/information-on-the-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/>
 - ii. GSS director elections are happening, so a few candidates talked to council about their election or re-election. Candidate profiles are on the GSS website.
 - iii. TSSU is requesting that councillors encourage their caucuses to respond to the RA surveys sent out. They were holding focus groups, which are perhaps now online? TSSU rep will likely expand on this.
 - iv. Studentcare, our healthcare service broker, is trying to raise fees more than inflation rates. The GSS has plans to oppose this, and any changes in fees would likely go to a referendum. We'll be chatting more about it at the April council meeting.
 - v. Graduate council voted to extend solidarity to Unist'ot'en and Gidimt'en opposition to RCMP and CGL on their territories as well as support their right to self-determination. The Exec Committee will be drafting a letter and sending it around to council.
 - vi. SFU Safe Walk Program is reviving and they are asking us to provide feedback on what graduate students need/want out of this program since they are more likely to be on campus after hours or on weekends. Let's have a brief chat about feed back or add your ideas to the chat.
- d. TSSU – Tess Forstner and Steven Brownlee
 - i. Bargaining has been suspended
 - ii. PLEASE FILL OUT RA SURVEY!!!!
 - 1. Have had 40% response rate
 - iii. Holding office hours via bluejeans: bluejeans.com/776880593
 - iv. General membership mtg held online Thursday, March 26 from 4:30-6:30 via [bluejeans: bluejeans.com/776880593](https://bluejeans.com/776880593)
 - 1. Discussing urgent bargaining updates, covid-19 updates, voting on important measures
- e. Faculty Meeting – Hannah Watkins
 - i. Wade Parkhouse is the man behind the \$10,000 per grad student cost. This amount includes costs of lights, air conditioning, faculty get a teaching release if they have grad students, etc. Although this amount is supposedly not used for any calculations, it is still brought up a lot
 - ii. MSP for TAs that aren't currently covered: working on that
 - iii. Commissioned marketing studies on why people didn't want to come to SFU
 - 1. Apparently, people don't know much about SFU. Working on how to better advertise the department
 - iv. Getting money to renovate BISC lobby/buildings
 - v. Proposing grading criteria for directed studies/readings courses for undergraduate honors projects, specifically what is required to get an A+
 - vi. What to name second year physiology course? Still pending.

- vii. Hired two new adjuncts
- viii. Photo competition: Erin Barely has been sending out emails
- ix. No longer seem concerned about new RA union

4. Committee Update

- a. Diversity and Inclusion Committee
 - i. LGBTQ day was cancelled and has not been rescheduled, but maybe will happen in the summer
 - ii. We received lots of money for the event. Have not lost money on it by cancelling everything was able to be cancelled or postponed. Everyone is still committed to contributing how much they pledged earlier.
- b. Workshop Committee
 - i. Hayley was organizing a workshop with Megan Barker/Liz Steeves. The TSSU has general guides on how to TA, but we wanted more specifics on how to TA for field/lab courses. This has obviously been suspended for the time being.
- c. Events Committee
 - i. No events until the Welcome BBQ

5. PPMABC Funding Approval

- a. Professional symposium to connect people within pest management, SFU students are invited to talk there. Normal expense for the caucus
- b. **Motion to reimburse Pauline Deschodt for \$200 from core account for the PPMABC**
 - i. Moved by Pauline Deschodt
 - ii. Seconded by Allison Dennert
 - iii. Motion passes unanimously
 - iv. Abstain: Pauline Deschodt

6. Should Faculty be using the Grad Lounge?

- a. Faculty don't have a designated lunch lounge. Apparently, the grad lounge is for everyone to use, not just grad students.
- b. What about a permanent booking of a biology room for lunchtime? We have no problem with faculty using the microwave/sink, but there is limited seating so we would prefer it to just stay for students

7. Dean of Graduate Science and other caucus president's meeting: Yonathan Uriel

- a. Summer semester classes are online only. TSSU stipulates that contracts can't be changed once signed, so all TA contracts have to be re-written for covid-19 response. BISC will have less TAships available over the summer. If a supervisor can't fund that student, the department/dean of grad studies will pay minimum stipends.
- b. Meeting weekly/biweekly for foreseeable future.
- c. Info regarding defences during Covid-19:
https://twitter.com/SFU_GradStudies/status/1240771100251811841?s=20

8. Open call to fill Caucus executive positions

- a. Step 1: find who does not want to continue/who cannot continue

- b. Step 2: does anyone desire to hold a new caucus position/want to join the caucus in a formal position?

9. Adjournment

a. Motion to adjourn to March meeting (5:47pm)

- 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", written in a cursive style.