

Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus
August 27, 2020, 1:30pm
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

1. Welcome

a. Attendance

Steering Committee:

Chair: Nancy Yang

Associate Chair: Tess Forstner

Treasurer: Brett Hodinka

Secretary: Gwyn Case

Webmaster: Nancy Yang

Member at Large: Asim Renyard

Officers:

Events Committee: Elijah Reyes, Asim Renyard

Diversity Committee: Steven Brownlee, Joanna Enns, Elana Varner, Ranah Chavoshi

Representatives:

DGSC: Hannah Watkins, Sarah Johnson

TSSU Rep: Steven Brownlee, Allison Dennert

GSS Rep: Mason King

Members: Yonathan Uriel

b. Additions to agenda

i. Territorial acknowledgement delivered by Jo Enns.

ii. Motion to approve July meeting minutes

1. Motioned by Nancy Yang

2. Seconded by Elana Varner

3. Motion passes unanimously.

2. Representatives updates

a. Treasurer's update (Brett Hodinka)

i. Core: \$2,000

ii. Trust: \$1,659.74 as of last month, no updates since.

b. DGSC updates (Sarah Johnson, Hannah Watkins)

i. No meeting in August, next meeting in September, so no updates.

c. DSC updates (Sarah Gravel, Rachel Munger)

i. Private award recipients should have been notified via email and can accept or decline their offer on the GA3 system. The next set of rankings will tentatively be NSERC Vanier (likely late October/early November) and NSERC PhD (usually November) applications. Please email Rachel (rmunger@sfu.ca) or Sarah (sarah_gravel@sfu.ca) if you have any NSERC application questions, our reps would love to be of assistance.

- d. GSS (Allison Dennert)
 - i. GSS budgets were approved, details can found on the GSS website.
 - ii. Some new positions have been approved to help with pandemic support, also some raises were approved to account for inflation.
 - iii. A summary of the work the GSS has done to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on students can be seen here (https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GwSzRUXTssfnGTPyHByud_BQUzl4YcrHwJqg0OLR7IE/edit). One of the biggest fights, and most challenging, has been against a tuition raise. No progress has been made due to SFU's hard stance, but the GSS is continuing to push.
 - iv. A very kind and organized student put together a guide to the MSP/IHF for international students who are having troubles with their study permit, which you can see here (https://docs.google.com/document/d/1uEVgmmH70hhKZfVLWUot1mx7_0M0E5QEESAU_6MH1eY/edit).
 - v. Getting to campus: free parking appears to be ending, but the UPass has been renewed. The opt-out period has been extended to the same day tuition payment is due (September 22).
 - vi. There has been a survey sent out by SFU regarding the university's response to the pandemic. Feel free to fill it out honestly :)
 - e. TSSU rep (Steven Brownlee)
 - i. Check your TA contract to confirm when you are scheduled to start: some people have discovered unusual start dates. It should be the first day of classes.
 - ii. Return to work safety plans have been decentralized and patchwork. Because RAs are recognized as employees of SFU, they are covered by WorkSafeBC, so if you are a RA with concerns about your safety plan you have options and leverage.
 - iii. Results from the latest TSSU bargaining survey are being transformed right now into a contract proposal. Bargaining will hopefully begin in the fall.
3. Committee updates
- a. Diversity & Inclusion Committee (Elana Varner)
 - i. More progress on the BIPOC scholarship! Terms of reference are undergoing revisions and work has begun on a landing page for outreach and fundraising. Primary questions to resolve in the terms of reference are whether the scholarship should be an endowment or an annual award, whether the scholarship can be awarded as a top-up rather than folded into the annual stipend, and the enactment of a tiered fundraising model.

- ii. You can see the terms of reference here (https://docs.google.com/document/d/1i3HljUInfVSXks9WqBa77E83-HE6ESp_DPKuqlxBE0E/edit) and the website draft content here (https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vEjRl8OG7uSArwYxyciPV7ccFCKCqWWRTP-9h_j_l6Y/edit) Comments, suggestions, etc are welcome!
- iii. Mike Hart is trying to arrange sensitivity training for his lab and would like access to last year's D&I survey results in order to help the development process.

The caucus moves to release a summary of the survey - with supporting information written by the D+I committee to clarify the results - pending clarification from Mike Hart about the uses of the data, and in satisfying the Committee's concerns about ensuring that the grant will be used in pursuance of greater diversity, equity and inclusion within the department

Motioned by Steven Brownlee

Seconded by Ranah Chavoshi

Motion passes unanimously

- b. Workshop Committee (Hayley Reekie via Nancy Yang)
 - i. Another CV writing workshop will be in the fall.
 - ii. Recordings of the previous two recent workshops are available on request.
- c. Events committee (Elijah Reyes)
 - i. Welcome BBQ is upcoming! Sept 10 in the afternoon after grad student orientation. Exact plan of attack is pending final tally of volunteer helpers. If you are willing to help please email Elijah at bisc-events@sfu.ca!!
- 4. Chairs update (Nancy Yang)
 - i. Motion to transfer 100% of unused core funds of the Biological Sciences graduate caucus to the Biological Sciences graduate caucus trust account

Motioned by Nancy Yang
Seconded by Elana Varner
Motion passes.
- b. **Meeting adjourned @ 2:50**

Gwyn Case – Secretary

