

BISC graduate student caucus meeting

August 18, 2022, 2:00 pm

Hybrid Meeting (In-person at 7000-level Grad Lounge and on Zoom)

1. Welcome & Intro

Attendance:

Brett Hodinka (Chair)

Steven Brownlee (TSSU Steward, DGSC, DEI Committee)

Em Lim (Scholarship Committee, DEI Committee)

Emmanuel Hung (Treasurer, Secretary)

Hanna Watkins (member)

Ramis Rafay (member)

Mason King (member)

Asim Renyard (member)

Motion to approve the June meeting minutes

- Proposed by Brett Hodinka
- Seconded by Em Lim
- Motion passes unanimously

Pacific Ecology and Evolution Conference (PEEC)

- The annual PEEC meeting will be organized by SFU this year.
- If interested in helping out/joining the organizing committee, please email Em Lim (em_lim@sfu.ca)!

Graduate Stipend Update

- Stipend amount is increasing by \$2000 (\$24,000 → \$26,000) starting this upcoming September.
- A pilot program will then be run to dissolve and re-distribute some of the existing funding (used for graduate dean entrance scholarship, TARA, Travel Aid and Minor Research Award, President's scholarships and GFs) to make up for tuition costs so that the take-home amount for graduate students is the true value of their stipend.
- NOTE: Tuition waiver only exists for eligible students, i.e., in first two years of MSc/MPM/MET or first four years of PhD.
- See attached Action Plan for more information.

Fall Grad Hosted Speaker

- Received a total of 3 nominations and had to forego voting due to time constraints

- Selected speaker is Dr. Noah Ashley ([website](#))
- There are still several openings for nominees for fall seminars – all are welcome to email Brett Hodinka (brett_hodinka@sfu.ca) with their nominations!

New Graduate Student Orientation on September 8th

2. Representative updates

i) Treasurer's update (Emmanuel Hung)

- Account updates:
 - o Core account: \$1,205.52
 - o Trust account: \$2,181.27
- At end of fiscal year (Aug 31st), GSS will auto-deposit 50% of unused total allocation into Trust (\$1205.52 max) and any remainder will be taken back by the GSS unless notified of motion to transfer all remaining funds to Trust account.

Motion to transfer all unused core funds of the Biological Sciences graduate caucus to the Biological Sciences graduate caucus trust account.

- Proposed by Brett Hodinka
- Seconded by Emmanuel Hung
- Motion passes unanimously

Motion that the Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus reimburse Allison Dennert for \$75.44 from the core account for the purchase of pizza for the graduate stipend information session.

- Proposed by Brett Hodinka
- Seconded by Em Lim
- Motion passes unanimously

ii) DGSC (Steven Brownlee)

- Mike Hart will be taking time off teaching responsibilities to audit how graduates are doing, checking items such as time to degree, number of chapters in thesis, etc. The aim is to quantify why completion times are so long.
- Mike wants to run a series of town hall meetings with faculty and grads regarding any misgivings concerning stipend issues.
- There will be an upcoming faculty retreat to cover how to best change the existing programs and the future of the BISC department.

iii) DSC (Em Lim)

- Results for internal/donor awards, entrance scholarships and departmental undergrad awards have been released.

iv) GSS (Steven Brownlee)

- Draft budget consultations will be held to determine where GSS student fees go – if you would like to participate in this process, attend the AGM and add your vote.
- A Cost of Living Adjustment Campaign, to guarantee that all graduate researchers are paid a minimum stipend, has been launched.

3. Committee updates

i) Events (Brett Hodinka)

- Planning to host a welcome BBQ event on September 23rd.
- Will be applying for GSS and BISC department event funds.

Motion that the Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus approve the spending of \$200 from the core account for the purchase of food, beverages and other materials required to host the Biological Sciences Graduate Student Welcome BBQ event to be held on September 23rd, 2022.

- Proposed by Brett Hodinka
- Seconded by Emmanuel Hung
- Motion passes unanimously

(Motion passed via email vote held on August 31st, 2022)

Motion to adjourn the meeting

- Proposed by Brett Hodinka
- Seconded by Steven Brownlee
- Motion passes unanimously