

CONSTITUTION

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES GRADUATE STUDENT CAUCUS

Document history

Amended / Updated:

1998

2004-08-27

2006-11-24

2008-06-13

2009-05-01

2010-04-30

2020-07-31

Ratified by Simon Fraser Student Society

2006-11-29

Ratified by Graduate Student Society

2008-06-24

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Biological Sciences Graduate Student Caucus Constitution

I. Name

The name of the organization is the Biological Sciences Graduate Student Caucus (the Caucus). It is constituted as a caucus of the Graduate Student Society (GSS) at Simon Fraser University as defined in By-law IV of the GSS.

II. Objectives

The objectives of the Caucus are to promote and represent the interests of graduate students from the department of Biological Sciences. To further these objectives, the Caucus shall:

1. Identify and promote the academic, intellectual and career concerns of the membership;
2. Provide social and recreational activities for the membership; and
3. Run elections in order to place graduate students on committees or events that need or permit graduate student representation.

The aims and objectives of the Caucus shall be consistent with those of the GSS constitution and policies.

III. Membership

The Caucus consists of all registered graduate students in the Department of Biological Sciences.

IV. Steering Committee

The Caucus shall have a Steering Committee, which shall consist of the following officers:

1. Chair
2. Associate Chair
3. Secretary
4. Treasurer
5. Member at Large

The powers and duties of the Steering Committee are limited to the following:

1. Convening all general meetings, having ensured that an agenda has been prepared and that due notice, as stated in Article VI, Section 1, has been given;
2. Ensuring that the directives of this constitution and decisions made at general meetings are carried out; and
3. Maintaining communications between the GSS, the Biosciences Student Union, and other student unions, the Department, Faculty, and other University organizations as needed.

V. Officers

There shall be the following officers with the power to sign cheques and authorize expenditures, and the responsibilities for conducting elections:

1. Chair
2. Associate Chair
3. Events Committee Officers (3)

4. Secretary
5. Treasurer
6. Webmaster
7. Member at Large

Further, power and duties of officers shall be:

1. Chair

- a. To prepare agendas, chair General and Steering Committee meetings;
- b. To ensure that the requirements of the Constitution and the decisions of the Caucus are carried out;
- c. To oversee and co-coordinate the events organized by the Events Committee;
- d. To represent the Caucus to the Department in general, or to any Departmental Committee where a representative has not been elected or cannot attend; and
- e. The Chair cannot vote in any election except in the event of a tie.

2. Associate Chair

- a. To assist the chair in power and duties a-d;
- b. The Associate Chair cannot vote in any election except in the event of a tie.

3. Events Committee Officers (3)

- a. To share and distribute the Events Committee duties outlined by Article VI,

4. Secretary

- a. To keep minutes of meetings and distribute the minutes by email, or post a copy on the Graduate Student notice board near the common area.

5. Treasurer

- a. To maintain all financial records of the Caucus, including an accounting of all funds received and spent;
- b. To prepare a budget;
- c. To make regular financial reports to the membership;
- d. To provide liaison between the Caucus and all sources of funding, including the GSS.

6. Webmaster

- a. To update and maintain the caucus website.

7. Member at Large

- a. Attend all meetings;
- b. Any additional duty as required by the Steering Committee.

VI. Events Committee

The Caucus shall have an Events Committee consisting of three officers who will share duties in a fair and equitable manner. The powers and duties of the Events Committee are limited to the following:

1. To assist one another in organizing and co-coordinating caucus events under the guidance and assistance of the Chair and the Associate Chair;
2. To recruit and direct caucus volunteers who will assist with running these events.

VII. Diversity & Inclusion Committee

The Caucus shall have a Diversity and Inclusion Committee consisting of at minimum three officers who will share duties in a fair and equitable manner. The role of the Committee is to uphold the equality and autonomy of all Caucus members, and ensure that all Caucus members are given a voice. Any Caucus member may join the Committee as an un-elected volunteer; volunteers are expected to participate under the same terms as elected committee members. To ensure transparency, the Committee will keep records of all meetings and action items, and provide these to the Caucus Chair and Webmaster on a monthly basis, to be made publicly available on the Caucus blog. The powers and duties of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee are limited to the following:

1. To collect anonymous demographic information on Caucus membership, and to share this information with the Caucus and other bodies within the University.

i. Transparency of information clause: Before any private information can be collected, the Diversity and Inclusion Committee must make it clear how the information will be collected, how the information will be shared, who the information will be shared with, how the information will be stored, and for how long the information will be stored. The Caucus must reach a consensus vote before any information collected by the Diversity and Inclusion Committee can be shared within or outside of the Caucus.

2. To organize and co-coordinate Caucus events to support and showcase marginalized groups within the Caucus membership and the wider University research community (e.g. LGBTQ+STEM Day)

VIII. Representatives of the Caucus

Other elected positions of the Caucus include representatives to various committees relevant to graduate students in the Department of Biological Sciences. The Caucus has representatives on the following committees:

1. Departmental Graduate Studies Committee (DGSC) (2)
2. Departmental Scholarship Committee (DSC) (2)
3. Faculty Mole
4. Teaching Support Staff Union (TSSU) Steward

5. Graduate Student Society (GSS) Council Representative

6. International Students Rep

The duties of these representatives are to:

1. Attend their respective committee meetings and
2. Report important events and information pertaining to those committees at Caucus meetings.

IX. Meetings

1. There shall be one regular meeting per month. Notice of General Meetings, containing a statement of purpose and an agenda, shall consist of at least one announcement on the BioSciences Graduate Student computer billboard (bisc-grads@sfu.ca). This notice must be given no less than one week in advance of the meeting.
2. Further General Meetings can be called by any member of the Steering Committee and a General Meeting must be called upon receipt of a petition signed by 8 members of the Caucus. The meeting shall be called within two weeks of the decision of the Member or receipt of the petition.
3. Quorum for a General Meeting is 8 members of the caucus.
4. The Steering Committee may meet more frequently, if required, at the call of the Chair. Quorum shall be a majority of the seats filled.
5. If, at any time, no member of the Steering Committee is able or willing to call a General Meeting at the request of the membership, any member may do so providing:
 - a. Proper notice is given as required in Article VI, section 1; and
 - b. The GSS Council is informed of the particulars.

X. Elections

The following procedure shall govern the election of a Graduate Student Society Council member representing the students of the Biological Sciences Graduate Student Caucus (called the "representative") in accordance with section 8 of By-law XI -- Elections and Referenda ("the by-law") of The Graduate Student Society at Simon Fraser University. This same procedure will also be followed when electing other officers and representatives of the Caucus:

1. The term for the elected officer or representative, not including the DGSC and DSC representatives, shall be one year starting on May 1st and ending on April 30th of the following year. The term for the DGSC and DSC representatives shall be either one or two years, starting on May 1st and ending on April 30th, such that there is always one year overlap between the existing and the newly elected representative. In case the officer or representative resigns during his term, an election will be held according to the rules stated here and the newly elected representative will hold the position for the remainder of the regular term of his predecessor until April 30th.

2. The Biological Sciences Graduate Student Caucus Chair ("the Chair"), or a person appointed by the Biological Sciences Graduate Student Caucus, shall administer the elections and report the results thereof to the Graduate Council.

3. The appointed administrator shall call an election within one month, should the Council seat for the Biological Sciences Graduate Student Caucus become vacant, or if the term of office for the incumbent is due to end. Elections shall normally take place at the last General Meeting of the spring semester. The Notice of Meeting shall contain notice of the elections. In the event of a newly created position requiring a Caucus representative an election can be conducted at a General Meeting, called for the purpose, at any time of the year.

4. The Executive shall schedule the election accordingly so that:

- Nominations will open on a day when the University is open, and will stay open for at least one week
- Campaigning will not begin until nominations have closed, and will occur for at least one week

Voting will not occur until after campaigning has closed, and the dates of the election shall be published accordingly. The Steering Committee will ensure that campaigning regulations (as defined by the Steering Committee) are distributed to all electoral participants.

5. If only one person is nominated for any officer or representative position that position must still be ratified by a majority at a quorated caucus meeting.

6. An election for a representative shall be advertised by the Executive to the members of the Biological Sciences Graduate Student Caucus immediately upon it being called. Any member of the Caucus is eligible for any position. No member of the Caucus can hold more than one Officer position on the Steering Committee (Chair, Associate Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Member at Large), but any member of the Caucus can hold more than 1 position (with a maximum of 1 position on the Steering Committee). Any current member of the Steering Committee running for re-election cannot conduct the election.

7. Voting in any election for representatives shall be conducted by secret ballot in a manner determined by the Executive, which may be by paper ballot, electronic ballot, or blind show of hands. Voting may take place at a Biological Sciences Graduate Student Caucus meeting, or at some other time convenient to the members of the Biological Sciences Graduate Student Caucus.

8. If there is more than one representative to be elected, the Executive may, at its discretion, combine the elections for those representatives in a manner it sees fit, so long as the winners shall be those who receive the most votes.

9. The members may recall any person elected or appointed to represent them by a 2/3 vote of the members present at a quorate General Meeting called for this purpose. Notice of the meeting must contain the purpose.

10. No proxy votes are allowed during elections.

11. This procedure may be modified by the Biological Sciences Graduate Student Caucus, but it shall not be binding until it is approved by the Electoral Committee of the GSS according to S.8 of the By-law.

XI. Amendments

1. This constitution may be amended by the membership of the Caucus by a 2/3rds majority of those present and voting at a quorate general meeting called for the purpose;
2. Except that Article 10, Dissolution, shall not be amended.
3. The proposed amendment must be posted electronically and prominently near the Departmental Office for a minimum of two weeks prior to the meeting, and all notices of meetings must indicate where copies of the amendment can be readily obtained.
4. Such amendments shall not be effective unless ratified by the Student Union Organizer (GSS).

XII. Dissolution

1. In the event that the members decide to dissolve the Caucus, or in the event that the Caucus becomes inactive, all assets of the Caucus shall be held in trust by the GSS for a minimum period of two years.
2. If, after 2 years, the Caucus is not activated, all Caucus assets become the property of the GSS.
3. If, during this period, the Caucus becomes active again, the trust shall be dissolved and all assets shall become the property of the Graduate Student Caucus.