**Description**

The Welcome Back BBQ will be modeled after last year's successful event. This is an event to orient new graduate students to our department and to welcome back existing graduate students. This event is part of orientation day for new graduate students and a large component is new graduate students interacting with existing graduate students to orient themselves to our department.

We will grill burgers (with veggie, vegan, and gluten-free options), provide snacks and refreshments, and sell beverages. To further incentivize students to come, we will be giving a free drink to all new students and a free drink to the first 20 existing graduate students that arrive. We will be matching up new students with existing students that will serve as mentors to the new students. We will also run a "human bingo" game to enhance student networking.

**Describe how this event will directly benefit your Caucus:**

This event will help orient new graduate students to the department and will welcome back existing graduate students. This orientation is important for new students to learn about the department they are joining and to learn from existing graduate students. This will contribute to a sense of community and belonging, which are key aspects for graduate students' mental health and graduate success. Additionally, it can help new students learn more about research being undertaken in the department and to share their research plans, which helps foster ideas for research and potentially lays the groundwork for future research collaborations.

**Description of how this event will benefit/strengthen the larger university community:**

A feeling of orientation in a student's home department is extremely beneficial for success in their graduate program. It also increases their sense of belonging and community, improving the well-being and mental health of graduate students, which increases interest in and likelihood of participating in the larger university community. Oriented, happy, and healthier graduate students benefit and strengthen the larger university community. Increased networking also improves research quality by fostering collaborations among students and by broadening research questions and ideas.

**Past history**:

This event has been hosted by the Biology Grad Caucus for many years and with good turnouts and was successful enough that we would like to continue its tradition. Feedback from past attendees has been very positive. Due to a logistical issue, the caucus did not apply for this grant last year but are enthusiastic to apply this year because of the expected benefit that it will have for our caucus, department, and the larger university community.

**Efforts to make it more cost effective:**

The venue will be of no cost to us, we will buy cost-effective food and beverages, and we will search out prizes from the local UniverCity community of businesses. The caucus already owns a BBQ for cooking food, which reduces food costs.

**Contributions from Caucus:**

The caucus would like to evenly split the expenses with the GSS by contributing $250 towards the event, and are asking for the same amount from GSS.

**Additional sources of funding:** $100 from the dept

**Trust** $1026.26

**Core** $2100