

Bisc Grad Caucus Meeting Minutes

September 12, 2003

In attendance: Martin Brummel, Andrea Pomeroy, Courtney Albert, Lilly Cesh, Sunny LeBourdais, Kim Mathot, Silke Nebel, Dawn Cooper, Amanda Niehaus, Suzanne Gray, Shelly Hoover Brianne Adison, Jen Perry, Raoul, Brian Ma, Lee Henry, Allison Henderson

1. GF's

-50 respondents so far on the issue of whether or not GF eligibility should be expanded to allow major award holders to obtain GF's as well. Currently about 95% no, 5% yes.

- if you have not yet responded and would like to, you can e-mail Jeff Ball at jrball@sfu.ca

-there is also the potential to have special guidelines for major award holders, such as a stipulation that they can only hold 1 GF over the course of their other major award, or that a limited number of GF's may be awarded to students who are already funded. These issues will be discussed once we know whether or not the GF's will become open to them

2. Scholarships committee

-there has been some concern voiced that the grad student representation on the scholarship committee has been spotty. Consequently, a motion was put forth by Shelly, seconded by Allison and unanimously supported to have a second grad student attend all scholarships committee meetings and be ready to step in for scholarship rankings should the principle grad student committee member be unable to do so for any reason.

-Allison will send out an e-mail to advertise the position.

3. Adjuncts on committees

-the Department would like our opinion on whether or not Adjuncts should have full status on committees. Currently, at least two regular faculty are required on a committee, and any number of adjuncts may be on the committee as well.

-if the regulations change for regarding adjuncts on committees, the criteria used to determine who is offered an adjunct professorship will likely be changed. Also, adjuncts are given appointments that last 3 years - so having a committee comprised of many adjuncts could prove impractical for PhD students whose degrees often require more than three years to complete.

-unanimous consensus of the caucus to maintain the current regulations for committee composition

4. Professor evaluation profiles

-motion to create a new position within the caucus was put forth by Shelly, seconded by Allison and unanimously supported by the caucus.

-this person will be responsible for devising an anonymous questionnaire for grad students to complete on the completion of their program evaluating their committee members. New and incoming students will be able to access the file.

5. Chair

-Allison will be going into the field for the next several months, and normally the member at large (Kat Salvant) would chair in her absence. However, Kat is taking a course at UBC and won't be able to fill in, therefore Andrea Pomeroy will chair in Allison's absence.

6. Grad Symposium

-the grad symposium will be held in spring. Allison will be sending out e-mails in the near future requesting volunteers in various areas (ex: Alcohol, advertising, organizing speakers). All inquiries regarding volunteering for this event can be sent to Allison (allison_henderson@sfu.ca).

7. Let's Talk Science

-outreach program directed towards elementary and high schools in the community. Great opportunity to gain volunteer experience in a leadership role. If you are interested in learning more about the program or volunteering, e-mail lts@sfu.ca (grad representatives are Jen Perry (biology) and Alex Eberhart (biochem)).

8. Faculty hiring committee representatives

-currently, the biology chair appoints all members to hiring committees
-we would like to see the grad student rep position be advertised within the caucus so that all interested students have the opportunity to participate in the hiring process
-Allison will speak to Tony about forwarding future positions to the grad caucus so we can put forth a suggested grad student rep

9. SFU/UBC/UVIC retreat

-the retreat will be held in Brackendale again this year on November 1st and 2nd.
-contact Andrea Pomeroy (apomeroy@sfu.ca) if you would like to be involved in organizing the retreat.
-music for the Halloween dance and ideas for the Sunday activity are both needed.

10. Caucus sponsored grad fellowship

-Brian Ma would like to organize a caucus sponsored scholarship. Monies would be raised at caucus events and Brian will ask the biology department if they will match our contribution. This scholarship would be awarded based on both academic merit and department involvement (through grad caucus or other committees)