



Biology Graduate Caucus Meeting Minutes

September 24, 2004

In attendance: Danielle Simonot; Keith Tierney; Megan Kerford; Jeff Christie; Jason Catterson, Nicola Cook, Sunny LeBourdais, Sarah Jamieson, Andrea Pomeroy, Jonathan Whiteley, Suzanne Gray, Martin Brummell, Raul Ursic, Dawn Cooper, Iain Jones, Charlotte Voss, Joline Widemeyer, Tanya Burke, Sandra Webster

1. Andrea welcomed all; people in attendance made introductions; Bisc Grad Caucus executives were introduced, including absentees Katrina Salvante and Christiana Cheng.
2. Caucus meeting time: times have been flexible; members in attendance agreed to establish time for future meetings at 3:30pm.
3. New student orientation wrap up
 - a. Suzanne Gray reported: The event was a success – at least 20 students showed up, free pizza and beverages were well received. Mentors and students met, and the program appears to be going well. In December, a questionnaire will be circulated to get feedback on how the program went. The event cost \$225 to run, which was below the \$250 budget. Thanks were offered to Suzanne for running the event.
4. Signing authority
 - a. A motion was tabled that the executive (Andrea Pomeroy, Christiana Cheng, Katrina Salvante, and Keith Tierney) have signing authority, moved by Martin Brummell, seconded by Jonathan Whiteley Carried
5. Grad symposium
 - a. In February or March, the Bisc Grads generally have a poster symposium with music and food. The session provides good opportunities for networking. General discussion ensued on possible people for the steering committee for this year's event. The meetings will be held in the pub, and the Bisc Caucus pays for the lunches. Please advise Andrea Pomeroy if you are interested. Sarah Jamieson, Dawn Cooper, Jeff Christie, and Andrea Pomeroy all expressed interest.
6. Elect a rep to the DGSC
 - a. Joline Widemeyer will be leaving her post; an email was circulated on job requirements, which include mandatory two-year commitment. Suzanne Gray expressed interested in post.
 - i. Suzanne Gray was nominated by Joline, Shelley seconded (by email) Carried
7. Committee reports
 - a. DGSC:
 - i. Joline Widemeyer gave her report: Chair for last year (Larry Dill) has been reelected. Other members are Tony Williams, Gerhard Gries, Arne Mooers, Dave Green, Joline, and Shelley. Margo Moore is no longer on the committee (a replacement is being sought).

- ii. NSERC travel awards (\$700) – The pot of money appears smaller each semester due to increased application. The money comes from interest accrued by the university for NSERC scholarships. Traditionally funding is on a ‘first come, first serve basis’. Unfortunately, attaining the confirmation letter (a grant requirement) can be difficult to get, and can delay submission of grant past the critical first week of September, which can eliminate funding chances. Currently there are no restrictions on the number of times the award can be held. Biology students have traditionally been the only users of the awards, but not any longer. Arne Mooers, suggested that two dates for application be given, that MSc students can get the grant once and PhD students twice, that a letter from supervisor should now be sufficient confirmation of presentation, and applicants be ranked if necessary. The Dean rejected DGSC suggestions, thus this year’s procedure is as before. The first applications were given numbers, and the order will determine funding. DGSC members may need a stronger voice to highlight why the existing policy is not fair. Graduate Caucus may add strength to the DGSC voice. General discussion ensued on how each faculty gets awards: awards are not prorated based on the size of the NSERC pool, since it is thought that biology was getting more than its share. There appears to be a few people per year that are denied NSERC travel. Currently, IMBB students have been tapping into funds, which they were not doing previously. Joline will develop stats on the number on people that are being denied funding. Andrea will draft a letter up on behalf of Bisc Caucus to address the points.
 - iii. DGSC (Shelley and Joline) are working to clarify MET funding issues.
- b. Faculty mole – With the change in secretary, Dawn Cooper was not made aware of the meeting (Faith Rapchuck is the new Secretary, replacing Bridget). The coffee room idea is finally moving forward, and money is in place for renovations. The room will serve as a meeting space. Discussion ensued on possible room amenities: comfy couches, toaster oven, kettle, stacking chairs, tables with foldable legs, fixed PowerPoint projector, fixed computer w/ internet access, and picture(s) donated to graduate lounge. A wireless hub was suggested to enable laptop wireless connection. A sink will also be present, and a maintenance schedule will be posted. The room will be accessed using a code for security purposes.
- c. Payday coffee day – hosted by labs (takes 30 minutes effort, staff buy coffee, sugar, tea; hosts must bring cream, juice, other items as necessary); email Dawn for event openings.
- d. TSSU – Logbook lotto: fill out hours, if you enter there is a good chance you will win since submission is low. \$70 tuition credit is gone.
- e. GIC – Generally there are two socials per semester, but since the pub is raising prices there will now be only one. SFU does not fund MSP; Dawn Cooper offered to form committee to tackle issue. General discussion ensued on lack of MSP funding at SFU.

8. Claim our money!

- a. A motion was tabled that Bisc Caucus retain its \$200 per semester funding from SFU. Moved by Sandra Webster, seconded by Martin Brummell Carried
- 9. Money for Jonathan and Keith
 - a. A \$50 stipend for website maintenance will be for a year's service, with the last person being Jonathan Whiteley. Moved by Martin Brummell, seconded by Jason Catterson Carried
 - b. A \$50 stipend for Bisc Caucus logo contest, with the last winner being Keith Tierney. Moved by Martin Brummell, seconded by Jeff Christie Carried
- 10. Other business
 - a. The department should provide incentive stipends for people sitting on various committees. Jonathan Stecyck had drafted letter on behalf on Bisc Caucus, which will be completed by Andrea Pomeroy.
- 11. Meeting adjourned