

SFU Department of Biological Sciences Graduate Student Caucus
February 2024 Meeting Minutes

February 16th, 2024
Room 9242

1. Welcome

- Attendance

Miranda Dennis (Chair)

Vanessa Hum (Secretary)

Ramis Rafay (Events, Webmaster)

Steven Brownlee (Events, TSSU)

Soobin Yim (DGSC)

blake danis (EDI)

Claire Attridge (DGSC)

Brett Hodinka (Events Committee)

Emmanuel Hung (Member at large, DSC)

Jess Hercus (Faculty Mole Steward for TSSU)

- Motion to approve January meeting minutes
 - Motioned by Miranda Dennis
 - Seconded by Brett Hodinka
 - Motion passes unanimously

2. Chair's Report (Miranda Dennis)

- The grad-hosted speaker (Dr. Alexandra Davis) gave an excellent talk last week. The grad lunch was also successful with 18 grads attending. Talk of future grad lunches are in the works.
- Faculty of Science 1st Annual Career Fair organization/participation
 - The Physics grad caucus is looking to set up a Faculty of Science career fair for graduate students and post-docs in all science departments
 - Each faculty propose what companies they want to come (2-4 companies from each department)
 - Send list of companies to invite to the event (any of interest to BISC and other departments)
 - DFO
 - BC Genome
 - Send more suggestions of companies to invite to Miranda Dennis at miranda_dennis@sfu.ca in the next couple of days, please! (We don't need to know anyone from the company, just a list of ideas.)
 - Event date: April (in-person)
 - Location: TBD
- Grad hosted speaker recap
 - The event went well
 - 18 grads attended the pizza lunch
 - Possible pizza lunch with Dr. Sara Smith from Mount Royal University, departmental speaker on Monday, March 4th at 3:30pm in SSB 7172

- Pizza would hopefully help more grads attend
 - Department will fund pizza lunch if grads attend
- March 6, 8, 20th there will be pizza lunches paid for by the department by Biology Candidate Meetups
 - FREE pizza!
 - A good opportunity to get some career advice
- Future meeting with Tony Williams to discuss collaboration and engagement of faculty and grads at departmental events

3. Treasurer's Update

- We did get spring allotment
- Trust amount: \$4860.72
- Core amount: \$1051.72
- Will check in about pizza receipt from grad hosted speaker

4. Representatives' Updates

- DGSC (Claire Attridge)
 - Minimum funding policy
 - PhD scholarship is within our minimum funding, not on top
 - There was a misunderstanding at the entire University level
 - Policy details are still being organized
 - More details to come with what has been proposed
 - An issue with professors and consolidating courses
 - Courses that are costing more money than their actual value
 - Our department is evaluating if we can consolidate any courses
 - BISC 800 and BISC statistics course are being looked at
 - Thinking that stats course could be a faculty of science course rather than just BISC
 - The department still needs to evaluate our courses despite opinions that BISC courses do not need to be generalized
 - Survey to come for graduate students to share their opinion on generalizing BISC courses
 - Reach out to Claire (claire_attridge@sfu.ca) if you have any questions
 - APR forms to GPR transition
 - Do not panic about your GPR, there are technical difficulties at the moment
 - Hopefully will be sorted out by May
- DSC (Emmanuel Hung)
 - TARA
 - Have been received by some people
 - Applications have been reviewed
 - Talking about a GF feedback sheet with more information on how the rankings are handled

- Have not heard back from committee
 - Would like to have transparency on the website about applications
- GSS (Steven Brownlee)
 - Short council meeting
 - AGM on the 13th of February
 - Usual audit of finances for GSS
 - There will be changes for Health Care Plan (Presentation by GSS on more information:
 - <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/12PEBKaacundNYbowgHnF1h7AiFbrai0u/edit#slide=id.p19>)
 - Running a deficit
 - There are a couple of plans to deal with the deficit
 - i. Increase fees for the plan
 - ii. Cuts in the coverage
 - Referendum in March
 - More Q & A sessions for the GSS to come
- TSSU (Jess Hercus)
 - Everyone should have gotten retro pay if they were a TA, TM, sessional prior to sessional
 - Let Jess (jess_hercus@sfu.ca) know if you have not received retro pay yet
 - Ongoing hearing session for RA's and their work
 - Seems to be going well so far
 - We may find out grad RA's will be considered TSSU members within the next month or two, but could take longer
- Faculty Meeting (Jess Hercus)
 - We will be getting a new Department Chair in Summer 2025
 - Julian Christians is going on sabbatical, so Erin Barley will be Department Associate Chair
 - Budget – wanting to decrease teaching
 - Thelma Finlayson shortlist discussion
 - Stuck at four
 - Discussion on the definition of ECR
 - H index?
 - If anyone works in Let's Talk Science
 - Budget – workers who quit are not going to be replaced
 - If anyone works in Science in Action, is safe

5. Committee Updates

- Diversity and Inclusion (blake danis)
 - Two members are stepping down
 - More representation of grad students may be needed
 - Lots of work done University-wide level
 - Kevin Lam and blake danis

- Unable to hold meetings at the moment
- There has been a Canvas module sent out to BISC EDI Community with discussion board and posts
 - Training for the committee itself is being done
- Workshop
- Events
 - No events coming up

6. Adjournment

- Motioned by Miranda Dennis
- Seconded by Ramis Rafay
- Motion passes unanimously