

## SOBGS minutes - October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013

### **Part 1: Transition**

- All new members should read the constitution on roles, and look at the general meeting report
- New members should have meeting with predecessors to ensure a smooth transition. E-mails for 2012-2013 members were distributed in an email sent by Mat.

### **Part 2: Business**

#### **1. BGRF update**

- 4<sup>th</sup> annual Biology Graduate Research Forum 2013 is taking place on Saturday, October 19<sup>th</sup> from 9:00-16:00.
- The conference will consist of approximately 16 oral presentations, 20 posters and will feature keynote speaker Melissa Holmes on naked mole rats
- Photo contest will also be taking place
- Registration to attend the conference as a non-participant closed on October 1<sup>st</sup>. However, those who have not signed up but still wish to attend can do so, they will just not receive a lunch

#### **2. Career Development**

- A series of seminars and discussions for PhD students
- Purpose to help senior PhD students find post-doc positions before finishing their PhD
- 2-3 volunteers (preferably senior PhD students) from SOBGS are needed to help develop the content of the seminars and discussion

#### **3. Departmental Review**

- All may wish to keep a copy of the departmental review for future reference
- How often do internal/external reviews take place?

#### **4. Committee reports**

##### **a. SOGS**

1. New health care plan. This new plan includes amazing offers from Shoppers Drug Mart. This includes discounts up to 90% when the health plan is used. For additional details, please see [www.sogs.ca](http://www.sogs.ca).

2. Mustang express for grad students? SOGS representative should inquire at next SOGS meeting if it is possible for grad students to have access to the Mustang express service.

##### **b. PSAC**

- Multiple positions available in several of the union's committees. Possible committees include: Foodbank Committee, Financial Assistance Committee, and the Political Action and Social Justice Committee. More information can be found on the PSAC Local 610 website.
- Department Steward nominations for 2013-2014 are now taking place. 5 positions are available. Nomination forms and more information can be found on the PSAC Local 610 website.
- Financial Support Package (FSP) letters are available from Diane, and must be signed
- A full TAsHIP for the 2012-2013 year: \$1345
- Financial assistance application deadline for October is October 15<sup>th</sup>.

c. Graduate Education

- Nothing to report

d. Undergraduate Education

- Nothing to report

e. Seminar committee

- Graduate nominated speakers have been determined, and the elected speakers are Dr. Alastair G.B. Simpson and Dr. Spencer Sealey. Both talks will be taking place in the winter term.

f. Research committee

- Dr. Irena Creed is the new chair of the research committee
- Research committee hopes to be much more active this year, and an initial goal the committee has set is to submit a report to the Dean of Science of an overview of what the department is all about. This report will outline the strengths of the department, and hopes to propose areas in the department to be headed by 1-2 tier professors.
- Currently, the committee is taking stock of the departmental capabilities
- If requested by the research committee, another rep may be added

g. Outreach

- Nothing to report

h. Social

- Planning for the Halloween party is underway, with the tentative date set for Friday, October 25<sup>th</sup>. Costume contests and pumpkin carving contests will be taking place, and the committee is in the process of determining other activities for the event
- Bioformal fundraisers being brainstormed, and venue is being determined.

i. SOBGS Chair

- 2 new faculty members have joined the department! We would like to welcome Dr. David Smith and Dr. Anne Simon

## 5. Committee Tasks

- a. Handbook part 2 update: has not been updated since 2009, Aimee has asked if the Graduate education committee could look through the second part of the handbook and see how much needs to be updated. An ad hoc committee could be created if there is too much work
- b. Student nominated speakers: the seminar committee should email students about setting up meetings with the student nominated speakers.
  - The selection criteria for the grad student dinner with student nominated speaker has changed. The new selection criteria will allow students in that specific research area to have priority.
- c. SOBGS website: the outreach committee should help update the website, and make it more interactive. A meeting with Vicky Lightfoot to get set up with the website should be arranged.
  - Changes to the website could include the new SOBGS photo, past minutes of meetings and the details for the next social event. A recent publication area could be added and kept current, and could also include recent dissertations and milestones reached by students in the department.
- d. Alcohol at events: a drop in attendance has been noted, possibly due to lack of alcohol at SOBGS events. Social committee should look into having alcohol at events, or looking into how to increase attendance at dry events.
- e. Bioformal: Sub-committees for bioformal should be formed, as well as a possible fundraising sub-committee. Social committee is already looking into possible venues, and planning fundraising events. A call for volunteer bakers for bake sales has been issued; anyone who wishes to contribute baked goods should contact a member of the social committee.

## 9. Schedule and Budget

- Monthly SOBGS meetings will be held for the 2013-2014 year. Meeting times will be determined each month via doodle polls to reflect changing availabilities
- Projected budget is available online in the Annual General meeting minutes
- 5 seats are available at the SOGS meetings, and these should be filled as much as possible.