

SOBGS Minutes – October 14th, 2015

1) Introductions!

- Those present introduced themselves (role, programme, lab)

2) Minute Taker

- Jantina Toxopeus volunteered to take minutes

3) Biology Graduate Research Forum this Friday, October 16th – Jackie Lebenzon

- Reminder to attend and support fellow organizers and presenters!
- At the next meeting: SOBGS will discuss execution of the event and brainstorm improvements for 2016

4) Social Committee Workload – Jackie Lebenzon

- Suggestion to create sub-committees for some or all of the following: Halloween party, Fundraising (alcohol holiday basket, bake sales, candy grams, carol grams), Biology swag (e.g. t-shirts), Coffee house, Bio formal, Summer BBQ
- **Action item:** social committee to send a list of sub-committees to Jackie, who will put out the call for volunteers
- Consideration for the budget: to use 10% of bake sale proceeds to fund more making

5) Professional Development for Science Students – Jackie Lebenzon

- SOBGS has been contacted by Burns Cheadle, the Director of Student Professional Development, to discuss current initiatives to enhance and expand incorporation of soft skills training in our programme, and to gauge our observations and expectations when it comes to gaining professional career services at Western.
- We bounced around ideas of holding an open forum/discussion for grad students, and whether to involve faculty.
- **Action item:** Jackie to email him back to see if there's anything specific they want, and whether they could put together and/or send out a survey.

6) New SOBGS Position: AAFC Representative.– Jackie Lebenzon and Mandana Miri

- Based on Brent Sinclair's grad chair visit to Ag Can, and input from Mandana, it has been suggested that we create an AAFC Representative position on SOBGS to liaise with AgCan students and help improve the sense of community.
- **Action item:** Mandana to draft a proposal for this (with Jackie's help)
- Consideration for later in the term: using the proposal to inform a constitutional amendment (to be voted on at a general meeting, probably in December).

7) Committee reports!

a. SOGS – Doyun Ko, Kate Mathers, Sarah McFarlane, Kurtis Turnbull

- Nothing to report outside of Morag's last email.
- Councillor nomination forms due October 21st
- **Action item:** Doyun Ko to pick up and fill out forms to make sure all SOGS reps are registered with SOGS

b. PSAC – Jackie Lebenzon (in lieu of Tosha Kelly)

- Currently, collective bargaining is ongoing.
- A reminder from Trish Tully: every TA should sign a union card every year (at the PSAC office, lower floor Sommerville House) in order to retain their voting rights and ability to claim benefits.
- We currently have a number of union stewards (with Tosha Kelly as head steward), but there's space for 2 or 3 more if anyone is interested in having a more active role with the union.

c. Graduate Education – Mandana Miri, Jantina Toxopeus

- We haven't had a committee meeting since the SOBGS election, but some recent updates include:
- Brent Sinclair (grad chair) visiting AgCan (see comments above on suggested new AAFC Rep)
- Grad Ed will be soliciting feedback from students and faculty this semester (in the form of a survey) on the graduate programme structure, and how effective the milestones are.
- We will continue to rank scholarship applications as they come in (NSERC PhD scholarships are up first).

d. Undergraduate Education – Susan Anthony

- Susan met with the outgoing reps (Tosha Kelly, Joel Slade), and has been added to the BUGS mailing list so she can keep up-to-date with them and attend monthly meetings.
- There are plans to do another grad-undergrad mixer like last year.

e. Seminar – Caryn Dooner, Trish Tully

- The seminar speaker schedule is full for the year, including the 2 graduate student-nominated speakers.
- The new brand of coffee is going over well.
- Discussion: Mandana asked if it would be possible for some seminar speakers to also give their talk at AgCan → these requests should be routed through David Smith (the faculty advisor of the seminar committee).

f. Research – Adam Fatt (C&M), Matheus Lima (E&E), Eric Dusenge (P&B)

- The research committee has had 1 meeting this term. Main discussion points:
 - revisiting the research clusters (<https://www.uwo.ca/biology/research/index.html>), which may be done in the form of a survey
 - creating an event to promote the research of faculty members
- Also suggested (at the SOBGS meeting, not the research committee meeting):
 - generating a database of skills/techniques that each lab is proficient in (to facilitate collaborations between labs)
 - creating some sort of incentive to write blogs on recent publications (an accessible format, probably on the biology website) → to be coordinated with the help of the Outreach committee

g. Outreach – Katie Woolfson

- Katie is being trained on the computer-side of managing outreach stuff

h. Social – Kat Doughty, Jalina Bielaska-Da Silva

- The Halloween party is scheduled for October 29th (around 5 pm)
- There will be a bakesale next week, on October 22nd

i. Chairperson – Jackie Lebenzon

- Jackie attended her first faculty meeting – the main relevant topic was discussion of this research promotion event (described above)

8) Other business

Sustainability – Justin Croft

- The departmental administration has approved the use of a compost bin in the lunchroom, but we are still waiting for Facilities Management to act on this.