

SOBGS Meeting Minutes – November 24th, 2016

In attendance:

Chair: André Duarte

Principal SOGS: Kate Mathers

SOGS: Leah Hayward, John Ciancio, Sasha Madhavji

Grad Education: Nicole Zathey

Undergrad Education: Amanda Maccannell

Seminar: Sommer Jarvis, Ariel Frame

Research: Mohamed Gatie, Kevin Young, Adriano Alonso Pereira da Cunha

Outreach: Jalina Bielaska Da Silva

Social: Jackie Lebenzon, Kaitlyn Ludba, and Lauren Witterick

Sustainability: Dylan Baloun

Meeting starts and we go straight to new business and voting on **constitutional amendments.**

#1 Change Assistant to Coordinator in line 10.2 (André)

Rationale: SOBGS bank account is in Carol Curtis' name. She is the Program Coordinator, and the one who keeps track of our finances.

Motion carries.

#2 Make deadlines for expense claims (30 days limit for receipts) (André)

Rationale: The Constitution has no deadlines when it comes to finances. We recently received an expense claim dated more than one year ago; and we had to pay because no deadline for claims is instituted.

Ariel: is 30 days enough?

Andre: Yes

Dylan: Yes

Jackie: Suggestion to add 'SOBGS' before social events

Motion Carried with change to wording.

#3 SOGS requirements for council meetings (André)

Rationale: SOGS changed this item in its constitution in August 2016. Full participation now demands that councillors remain at the meeting for at least one and a half hours.

Motion Carried .

#4 SOGS change to constitution (number of reps)

Kate: Constitution has a fixed number of SOGS reps, but the number changes from year to year depending on student enrollment. So this year we accidentally elected one more person than there are on council. To avoid this in future years, change the constitution to elect 6 reps through the regular election process. Once SOGS releases the number of councillors that we have for the department, councillors will be chosen based on the rank positions from SOBGS elections (i.e. top 4 people will be SOGS reps, and the other two will be alternates if we have 4 SOGS positions, top 5 people will be SOGS reps, and the other one will be an alternate if we have 5 SOGS positions etc.).

Ariel: What if the number increases?

Kate: Probably will not. It's based on number of students and we don't foresee a big spike in enrolment such that we need to increase our presence at SOGS meetings.

Motion carried.

#5 New Treasurer Position (André)

Rationale: The Society needs a Treasurer in order to maintain minimum standards of organization and transparency in its finances.

Jackie: Can we take over the bank account?

André: We can't get a card for the account because it is in Carol's name. For now, it will remain in Carol's name (discuss with Jackie later).

Jackie: Can we add to the wording that the treasurer will produce the budget along with the chair?

Andre: Yes.

Ariel: Is the final say still the chair?

Andre: Yes.

Motion passed.

#6 Change wording of Grad ed committee responsibilities (André)

Rationale: Recent change in the Grad. Ed. Constitution allocated 2 fixed positions to SOBGS representatives.

Motion passed

#7 Social committee. Add extra blurb in all representatives roles and responsibilities to hold accountable for helping social committee run fundraising events.

Jackie: The Society of Biology Graduate Students is a society run entirely by graduate students. This means that all the finances of the society are also fundraised by members of the society and are consequently used to run events that improve the student experience of biology graduate students at Western. According to section 12.11 of the SOBGS constitution, three social committee members are currently responsible for organizing all fundraising activities for the society, along with organizing all social events. This places a heavy workload on the social committee, and there are often instances where more help is needed to successfully run fundraising events. Although social committee plans events that spend finances per the SOBGS budget, these events are attended by all SOBGS members, including all SOBGS executives. Therefore, we propose that all other SOBGS executives not on Social Committee be required to play a minor volunteering role in fundraising events organized by the SOBGS Social Committee. This will help alleviate some of the workload placed on social committee, and will ensure that all SOBGS executive representatives get a chance to involve themselves in activities outside of their own committee responsibilities.

Jalina: Add in volunteering for social events?

Leah: How are you going to enforce it? What's the point of the constitution?

Jackie: Part of duties.. just like all other responsibilities

Kate: If this has been an issue for a number of years. Fundraising subcommittee? People sign up for roles based on the duties they are interested in, not necessarily to help out SOBGS as a whole.

Leah: Make more SOBGS positions?

Most of the comments from reps are regarding the vague wording of the motion. Collectively decide to reword the motion to accommodate people who have field seasons, and to make it more of an encouraging volunteer perk, VS a mandatory role/responsibility. We will bring the motion to the AGM and let the general members vote.

4 against

1 Abstention

13 for

Motion passes.

Reports:

SOGS

OCTOBER

1. Scholarship at Western
 - Open access requirements for NSERC.. anything that you've published with NSERC needs to be published with open access
 - Scholarship@Western has resources that will show you what open access requirements are for different funding agencies
 - Can post your published manuscripts here, and it fulfills the open access requirements
2. 150th anniversary fund. Money for projects relevant to this!
3. SOGS finance committee reported 60000 surplus.
 - Thesis completion fund for Year x students (with PSAC)
 - Don't know how much \$\$ but they are forming a committee to figure out how the money will be distributed
 - Food bank that is specifically for non TAs
 - More scholarships for grad students
 - \$1500 into grad club décor!

NOVEMBER

1. Western Grad Research Conference (info in email Kate just sent out)
2. Ugly sweater xmas party at the grad club
3. Health Plan Committee reviewing health plan options
 - Health plan up for review
 - Usually this creates problems
 - Looking at plans from different brokers
 - (4 plans, from 4 brokers).. based on a survey of what students say they want
 - Will present their ideas to SOGS council, and SOGS will be voting on the best health plan

PSAC

Not present

Grad Ed

- Couple meetings since last SOBGS meeting
- Brent wants to rework a lot of the milestones that are coming up
 - o Changing comp exams in terms of the forms that students need to fill out, and some of the expectations
 - o Make it more transparent in what topics an level of knowledge you need to study
- Also talked about dealing with final defenses in terms of pass, fails and other outcomes (more rubric based system.. still needs to be approved)
- NSERC applications and travel awards are being ranked

Kate: Are there monetary incentives for publications?

Nicole: Has not been discussed. We are compiling a master list of every professor and all publications that have come out of the labs. Focused more on milestone's a bit more at the moment.

Undergrad Ed:

- First meeting
- Bio undergrad program is under review
- Focused on fourth year seminar courses
- Seminar courses are still not going to have TA assignments (because there is max enrollment of 20 students)

Seminar:

- Nothing to report. Pizza is flowing, coffee is brewing.
- Disorganization is being dealt with due to shift of chair position on the faculty level.

Research:

- Bryan wants them to talk to students about publishing
 - o Difficulties, suggestions, etc.
- Improve communication between students and profs
- Long term goal is to come up with a way for everyone to get more pubs (students and faculty)
- Research committee will be speaking to students about interactions between profs and students to improve transparency of expectations on either end

Outreach:

- Fall preview day was good
- Lots of undergrad help
- Jalina will put picture on the website shortly

Social

- Helping out plan Holly Jolly with department committee
- Taco in a bag success
- Bird banding success
- No xmas party

Sustainability

- Compost bins for AFAR, Collip and BGS YAY

- Someone stole the compost bin outside of AFAR... Dylan is dealing with that
- Made a sub-committee so there is enough people to take out the compost

Chair

- New proposal assessment approved (read email from Brent or read new grad handbook)

New business

- Controlled and effect use of SOBGS surplus

Small things ... for the lunchroom

Scholarships?

Will discuss at future meetings.

Meeting adjourned!