

SOBGS Annual General Meeting Minutes

April 17th, 2014

In attendance:

Aimee Lee Houde

Joanna Konopka

Morag Dick

Timothy Hain

Julia Matheson

Matthew Turnbull

Minutes:

6:04 – Meeting called to order

6:05 – Agenda ratified unanimously

6:06 – SOBGS budget presentation by AL Houde

- SOGS representatives commended for high attendance
- \$500 higher fundraising than projected for the year
- Large BGRF subsidy from department, may order less food and will be using new poster boards from Dentistry to reduce costs in future years
- Lower Bio Formal attendance, slightly higher ticket price, but generally favourable reviews
- Some reusable Halloween decorations purchased
- High Festivus event costs because of alcohol provided
- Large surplus heading into next year
- M Dick: do we have to pay for the BGRF venue? AL Houde: various costs folded into BGRF item, we may look into a different venue next year, several options are available
- Next year's budget, much lower department BGRF subsidy should be required, current amount is unsustainable
- We will be charging a small poster board rental fee to cover cost of minor repairs/replacements
- M Turnbull: \$942 at end of this year, \$700 projected to start next year with, where do we expect the extra \$242 to go? AL Houde: potential emergency costs over the summer, but if none appear, just means a larger surplus carried over into next year

6:15 – Chair report by AL Houde

- 30 attendees @ Festivus, probably more at Halloween
- Positive BGRF reviews and feedback
- Will touch on external department review suggestions at upcoming faculty retreat

- Some MSc students may have felt left out of PhD professional development workshops, but Dr. Sinclair felt there are existing resources on campus for career advice at that level
 - o Otherwise, very good interest and turnout, even from AgCan students

6:19 – SOGS report by T Hain

- Off-record conversation with senator who has offered to discuss biograd issues with administration officials in a more cooperative manner than SOGS executive members might
- AL Houde: how much influence does this person have? T Hain: many issues can be resolved with discussions that don't require a full SOGS meeting and motion
- There is a trial effort to allow post-docs to opt into the SOGS health plan, and a debate over whether other graduate students would be "subsidizing" them in this case, because individuals who opt into plans generally use them more fully
- M Dick: extended debate at SOGS over this issue. T Hain: only 6 post-docs actually affected at this time.

6:25 – Union report by J Matheson

- Next chief sciences steward won't be from biology, so hopefully they will still communicate well with the department
- J Matheson: will there still be a chief steward SOBGS position? AL Houde: Yes, the new SOBGS union representative who reports at SOBGS meetings will be decided amongst the bio stewards

6:26 – Graduate education committee report by AL Houde

- No questions about material from AGM package

6:28 – Undergraduate education committee report by AL Houde

- Encouragement to attend departmental retreat to voice opinions and advocate for graduate student issues

6:30 – Seminar committee report by M Turnbull and J Konopka

- Encouragement to nominate graduate speakers, call will go out very soon

6:38 – Outreach committee report by R Harris

- Can relay questions to other members
- AL Houde: some Cascade access issues, including a period without updates; hopefully access will increase

6:40 – Research committee report by AL Houde

- More active, galvanized by external review
- Considering ways to quantify employability of graduates as both academics and professionals

- Dr. David Smith is the new social media liason, send “stories” to him for bio department marketing and visibility
- J Konopka: what kind of “stories”? AL Houde: consider “outreach” spin, may discuss research, major events, etc.
- R Harris: should this be under Outreach’s mandate? AL Houde: more just a hub, a go-through position for getting news exposure

6:44 – Social committee report by AL Houde

- Carol grams were successful
- Coffee house well received
- Big increase in Festivus budget to get alcohol
- Bake sale themes seemed to work well, but requires constant table staffing
- Transition manual in development
- T Hain: it would be good for the next social committee to have hard data in the transition manual e.g. number of carol grams ordered, attendance numbers at events, notes that alcohol would probably attract more attendees at Halloween

6:49 – Meeting adjourned