

BioGrads Meeting Minutes

Thursday, Dec 10th, 2009

Social Reps (Tara and Cat)

- Holiday Party planning details
 - reservations for atrium, tables, chairs, and bar services have all been finalized
 - final numbers (85) were given to the caterer this afternoon
 - it was decided that no more tickets would be sold since food for only 85 people was ordered
 - judges have been selected to help with the door decorating and gingerbread construction contests
 - we will be collecting money in order to buy gifts for children from the Sears wish tree
 - committee members will meet in the atrium tomorrow at 3:30pm to help set up for the party
 - things left to do this evening:
 - get supplies for gingerbread contest
 - create trivia questions

Faculty Rep (Rhiannon):

- Rhiannon brought up a few questions at the last Faculty meeting:
 - Question 1: In light of budget cuts and possible TA slots being lost, what will happen to current TA slots? Will the workload per TA increase or will there be fewer TA slots available?
 - Answer: The workload per TA will not increase. Instead, there will be fewer positions available overall. This will mean that the department won't be able to support as many graduate students.*
 - Question 2: How is the difference in support staff across departments being accounted for in the budget?
 - Answer: This difference has been noticed and brought up*
 - Question 3: Is anything being done to address some of the grad student issues/concerns related to graduate courses?
 - No Answer for now*
- IAR report will be returned in June
- changes to professor NSERC grants will be taking place soon
 - in the past, those who had NSERCS in the past would usually have an automatic renewal and increases were based on performance
 - previous NSERC grants will no longer be considered when re-applying to NSERC
 - awards will be ranked solely based on the merit of the proposal and merit of current research
- a new autoclave is being purchased
- the theme of the upcoming Darwin Day will be virus evolution

QUBS rep (Cory):

- there was a QUBS committee meeting one week ago
- there is a huge deficit for next year, but a lot of the costs will be absorbed by delaying repairs and expansions

- another plan is to increase the user fee, but ideally this will be kept as minimal as possible
- also asking the university to help cover the cost of severance pay for past employees
- instead of replacing Floyd's old position, the committee is applying for a grant to create a new position:
 - during the field season, this person would be responsible for helping to run the site
 - during the off season, the focus would be on outreach and fundraising
 - the idea is that with outreach and fundraising, the position would eventually pay for itself
- considering putting on offer on a old house which is on QUBS property with money from a land trust
 - ideally, this house could become the home of the on-site QUBS director
 - the current QUBS director's house could then be used for QUBS researchers with families

SGPS Reps (Chad and Chris)

- Chris inquired about the issue concerning phone calls and door-to-door visits to biology grad students by TAFE
 - SGPS stated that they did not provide information on student contact info to TAFE
 - any information obtained by TAFE would have come from the university
- currently, the value/function of the School of Graduate Studies office is being evaluated and the Vice Principal would like to hear from grad students
- two emergency motions were brought up:
 - one dealing with senior staff salary reductions
 - the other dealing with international student tuition and awards
- for more information on the motions and other topics discussed at the monthly SGPS meeting, you can consult minutes on their website (<http://www.sgps.ca/council/documents.html>)

GC Rep (Scott):

- no update since all scholarship rankings are over

Academic Rep (Mark):

- Josh Powles from the Walker Lab would like to take the 2nd position of Academic Rep
- look into moving the current TA database onto q-share since we can't create a password protected link on the new website
- would like to increase the scope of the Academic Rep position by acting as a liaison with the Teaching and Learning center to make the services they offer (e.g., teaching dossiers for grad students) more accessible

Sports Rep (Ann):

- not present

RTP Rep (Julie):

- not present

Secretary (Anneli):

- nothing to report

Chair (Martin):
-nothing to report