

BGSC Open Meeting Agenda - January 27, 2020

1. Motion to approve agenda for January 27, 2020
 - a. Mike, Jenna
2. Motion to approve minutes January 13, 2020
 - a. Riley, Ryan
3. Updates
 - a. Update from co-chairs
 - i. International student representative position - Vote!
 1. Note we can have multiple reps and they don't have to be SGPS member
 - ii. Grad student vote controversy - Was discussed at faculty meeting. Main discussion at end of meeting
4. Updates from representatives:
 - a. QUBS - no updates
 - b. Faculty and Staff -
 - i. Jenna updated re holiday party and academic speaker
 - ii. New interim phytotron manager
 - iii. Sustainability group meeting Tuesday 2:30
 - iv. Panel on divestment at university club at 3pm Thursday
 - v. Refinement of Health Policy due to coronavirus - updates coming soon (see OnQ sign-in page)
 - vi. Possibility of guidelines for NSERC letters! Will be discussed at Grad Committee meeting.
 - c. Graduate Committee -
 - i. Compiling edits for Guide to Grad studies - Jessie will update once another round of edits has happened. Things are progressing!
 - d. Union -
 - i. No major updates but goal moving forward to reduce International student tuition fees
 - e. SGPS -
 - i. Fee structure will return to old format (back to flat fee with no opt in/opt out) but with more transparency. This was voted on but this seems pretty permanent
 - ii. International Student Fee rework - our min funding is still above average but still room to improve. New models are being debated
 - iii. Conversation with senate re. Sexual violence policy. Can lead to grey areas due to grad students' status as employees as well as students (?). This is being discussed.
 - iv. Thursday - Professional Headshots free for all SGPS members! JDUC SGPS lounge

- v. Looking into status of MSc PhD stipends compared to other universities - more details to come
 - vi. Grad courses reading week - updates to come
 - vii. International Commissioner position open.
 - viii. Also looking for VP community and VP finance positions to be filled
 - ix. Divestment... some controversy.
 - 1. Moving forward with SGPS divestment, with some details to sort out.
 - 2. Difficult to tell if SGPS will support AMS divestment... more details to fund
 - x. Excel workshop in February.. If anyone is interested...
 - xi. Grad Day to celebrate students in research. Want to have twice a year.
 - xii. We also put forward a survey to all of SGPS re student vote on hiring committees, to see what other departments think.
- f. RTPs -
 - i. Kristen is reading through applications (108)
 - g. Undergrad rep
 - i. Feb 27th Majors Night - encourage first years to major in Biology - we will send out reminder
5. Update from Social coordinators -
- a. Holiday party SGPS grant update - waiting to hear.
 - b. New Intramurals, BEERS and CIDERS
 - i. Volleyball started last week (we won!). More room on the team!
 - ii. BEERS is on Wednesday -Allen
 - c. D&D Night - Feb. 19 @ GC (this was the ONLY day possible)
 - i. Games and DMs to be announced
 - d. Darwin party - Saturday the 15th? Everyone has to dress up as something Darwin-related.
6. Update from Academic
- a. Joe's talk went well
 - b. Trying to organize another workshop for later in the semester (TA-related?)
 - c. Send survey to see if coordinators are actually planning on using the standardized TA feedback form
7. BGRS update
- a. Looked around for speaker suggestions
 - b. Host department BBQ after BGRS - faculty will take care of it!
8. Main Discussion - Graduate Student Vote
- a. For at least 34 years, grad students have had a vote, but the vote was taken away this semester. The BGSC has written a letter to the faculty (incorporating

student feedback). Essentially, faculty is largely interested in our opinions but there were some strong dissenting opinions.

- b. Main concerns from faculty (gathered by Brian and discussed at meeting)
 - i. incomplete or biased feedback - we are working with Sharon to standardize and formalize information sheets post seminars, etc.
 - ii. Grad student perspective is limited - this is true for the students-at-large but not true for the student rep, who reads 100+ applications and attends all seminars
 - iii. Implications will not affect students, who are only in the department for 2-6 years.
 - c. Meeting notes from Regan and Cale
 - i. Asked for reasoning re. Taking vote away
 - ii. Much appreciation of the letter
 - iii. Many faculty had no problems
 - iv. Quantitative inconsistent feedback was common concern - we have drafted feedback forms and sent to Sharon (who is leading current hiring committee) (forms for both seminars and student lunch)
 - v. Concerns about volume of feedback - forms and enthusiasm from faculty should help.
 - vi. Student perspective - we argue this is also important and our opinions are still valuable. We still have 1 vote out of 6.
 - vii. Shortlisted candidates' research program (in keeping with confidentiality) could be sent to all students
 - viii. Proportional voting system? Depends on the number of faculty on the committee - we could try to keep our vote at a consistent 20% (small search committees would have disproportionately high contribution from the students)
 - ix. Lack of EDI training - maybe the rep can have some more training (as should all members of the search committee). In addition to standard TA training - there is a course offered by the university. This is also reasonable
 - x. Make a committee to discuss making changes?
9. International grad rep vote
- a. Positions granted to Harsha and Peiwen