

BGSC Exec Meeting Minutes - June 22, 2020

1. Motion to approve agenda for June 22, 2020
 - a. Mike, Coco
2. Motion to approve minutes from June 8, 2020
 - a. Peiwen, Heather
3. Updates
 - a. Update from co-chairs
 - i. Status of anti-racism initiatives
 1. "Applying" page of biology website written but not posted. Draft is on Slack channel
 2. Also on BGSC page with links to co-chairs emails
 3. Seminar speaker diversity efforts underway for MCIB - hopefully EEB as well
 4. Dr Andrade talk booked for Nov 13th
 5. Scholarship for graduate students - profs are deducting from their salaries to fund
 6. Scholarship for OUPFB field courses (undergraduate) - at least 10 universities are precipitating. Shelley and Regan have been meeting with Awards people - first attempt/pilot will be funding from EDI funds. May take a few years.
 7. Anti-racism book club - see Slack or emails from Riley for details
 - ii. Possible initiative on departmental climate, anonymous workplace harassment and discrimination survey for grad/undergrad students in labs (see recent statement from U of T's EEB department [http://www.eeb.utoronto.ca/Assets/EEB+2013+Digital+Assets/EEB\\$!27s+Statement+on+Departmental+Climate\\$!2c+and+Moving+Forward.pdf](http://www.eeb.utoronto.ca/Assets/EEB+2013+Digital+Assets/EEB$!27s+Statement+on+Departmental+Climate$!2c+and+Moving+Forward.pdf))
 1. Will be working with EDI committee to develop this
 - iii. Graduate mentoring program for new students - we will develop this over the summer (formalization due to inconsistencies among labs)
4. Updates from representatives:
 - a. QUBS - none
 - b. Faculty and Staff - meetings are now monthly or on a case-by-case basis
 - i. Extra TAships available for pre-semester prep - TBA
 - ii. Incoming students recommended to have proposals and first committee meetings done this autumn in light of covid
 - iii. Faculty recommending a strongly worded statement to SGS to extend funding in light of covid
 - iv. Tuition should be waived for over-term students affected by covid
 - v. Brian recommended reaching out to Environmental Sciences re their student symposium as info for the BGRS
 - vi. Next meeting Thursday
 - c. Alumni/Graduate Committee - seminar series update

- i. First seminar was last week - turnout was ~15 people are we are hoping to have better attendance.
 - ii. Next week Dave Ensing
 - iii. Looking for MCIB-focused speakers as well! (Ryan might have a contact?)
 - d. SGPS - no updates - next meeting is August
 - e. RTPs - na
 - f. International - Updates from the International Student Affairs Commissioner
 - i. Also emailed Joanne to forward these updates to incoming Intl students joining the program this Fall
 - ii. If any Intl students that need help should direct concerns (esp regarding Covid) to Joanne, Peiwen, or Harsha.
 - iii. Currently no guarantee of TAs if students cannot get into Canada but will still have other internal awards - likely will be a case-by-case basis. Reason is that they will not be able to pay students that do not have Canadian banking accounts
 - g. Union - no meeting but there was recently a Q&A session
 - i. TAs - apparently there will be more TAs available for the Fall due to increase in enrollment in online classes.
 - ii. Redistributing work & starting TA contracts so that TAs are involved in planning online delivery. TAs should be aware that they must be paid for any work they do like this!! (in the Winter in-person tutorials may also have more TA demands due to more sections etc)
 - iii. Reopening of labs - students have rights to maintain safe covid practices and be provided with PPE and training on how to use.
- 5. Update from Social coordinators -
 - a. Virtual BEERS and CIDERS
 - i. We will be taking a break for the rest of the summer
 - b. Racism book/reading club
 - i. First meeting July 28 for Desmond Cole's The Skin We're In
- 6. Update from Academic - TA evaluation forms for online TAs?
 - a. Hayden is working on new evaluation forms for online TAs - let Hayden know if you have any ideas. These will be re-distributed by mid-July
- 7. BGRS update -
 - a. Majority of committee members did not want to hold BGRS over summer but Coco will also poll the entire student population
 - b. Possible concern that might not be able to secure funding in the following years because this year is online?
 - c. TBD - will let students decide
- 8. Discussion

- a. Update from EDI reps (not yet voted into council but invited to meeting; voting into council must be done at open meeting)
 - i. Sam and Kristen will be voted into council ASAP at open meeting two weeks from now
 - ii. Update from recent EDI meeting: (concerned graduate letter to Faculty, mainly re BIPOC graduate student scholarship)
 - 1. Eager about idea of mandatory anti-racism training
 - 2. Not all training is available online as of yet
 - 3. Committee is unsure how to diversify seminar speakers - this is up to seminar organizers but could try to develop some sort of protocol
 - 4. In terms of developing scholarship, we need more information. Is BIPOC scholarship aimed towards recruiting or making the department more supportive in general - important to understand is there such low diversity in the first place.
 - 5. If scholarship is not broad enough to be able to recruit - not contingent on financial need (consideration not a necessity). Open up to a more broad Equity-based scholarship for all marginalized groups
 - 6. Second issue - how will funds be allocated (e.g. subtracting a TAship, tuition reduction, etc.?). TAship reduction should come with option to still apply for TAships (unlike other large scholarships). This is TBD!
 - 7. Third issue - criteria for receiving award. Also TBD.
 - 8. Looking at equity-based scholarships at other universities for guidance.
 - 9. Could also partner with other departments (& sharing our initiatives may also spur other departments to follow suit)
 - 10. Spotlight profiles on Biology website.
 - 11. Possibility that if no student does not end up recruiting a student, it could go to a conference travel fund for BIPOC students, but this is complicated by the fact that profs are donating from their own salaries.
 - iii. Vote on interim faculty rep to replace Jenna
 - 1. Jonas and Hana provide blurbs - Hana was voted in