BGSC Executive Meeting Agenda

October 19th, 2026 @ 11:00am

In attendance

Shannon, Victoria, Jaico, Sree, Jamie, Julia, Dithara, Colin, Charlotte, Ariane
Colin and Charlotte , Alice, Kirsten, Nick, Mabel

Motion to approve agenda for October 19th, 2026 @ 11:00am

Motion: Jamie; seconded: Charlotte

Motion to approve minutes from September 25th, 2026 @ 9:00am

See here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Y-savkoG7V4F6D6bi3Ld-4plRudlx5HnNxbu_KtGK1Y/edit?usp=sharing

Motion: Colin ; seconded: Jamie

Sreevatshan (Sree) Kannurpatti Srinivasan has been nominated for **Social Representative**

- Sree presents his blurb:

"Having served as the International Student Representative for two years and as an I-EDIAA Representative last year, I have gained a better understanding of both the strengths of our graduate student community and the challenges students can face when navigating departmental and broader university structures, including SGPS and PSAC. These experiences have also shown me how important it is to create spaces where concerns surrounding racism, exclusion, accessibility, and inequity can be discussed openly rather than overlooked. In this role, I hope to help organize social events that are welcoming, inclusive, equitable, and accessible to all Biology graduate students. I also want to continue advocating for underrepresented students, supporting reconciliation and anti-racism initiatives, and ensuring that our events reflect and celebrate the diversity that strengthens our biology community. Most importantly, I hope to help create opportunities for students to connect with one another and feel that they genuinely belong within the department."

- Sree leaves the room so the council can discuss and vote. Council unanimously votes yes.

Updates from Co-chairs (Colin & Charlotte)

Anonymous survey on accessibility and mental health

- Colin and Charlotte had a meeting with Sharon; Sharon wants to make it clear that her door always remains open for discussions with students with any concerns they may have.

- Last year the IEDA committee wanted to send out an anonymous survey to learn about mental health, however, a major issue is that Qualtrics is not fully anonymous. Sharon would like to consult the Psychology department in order to learn how to make the survey fully anonymous.
- Issues that need to be addressed concerning the survey: consulting the Psychology department is a good idea in order to go obtain ethics approval, store the data on the proper server, design the survey properly (word the questions correctly for example), and address the issue of a small sample size.
- Mental health resources should be discussed in the grad to gateway studies course and we should also include other resources related to food safety. This information should also be made available online on the grad studies guide.
- On November 2nd someone from FAS is coming to discuss these issues.
- Colin and Shannon will arrange for a mental health expert to come during a seminar slot.

Homecoming

- Homecoming went well, alumni came and it was a good opportunity for networking. For next year, this could be an opportunity to find potential seminar speakers. Sharon suggested that the social rep should help plan homecoming, however the council agrees this would be too much responsibility as it occurs too soon after the BGSC elections.

Event for holidays

- Sharon plans on having an additional Xmas holiday party to encourage the presence of faculty. The social coordinators would not plan this; however, they may help coordinate.
- Unknown if the department is providing funds for the Xmas party at the grizzly grill (last year we received 500$).

BGSC initiatives

- Changes Sharon would like to bring to the department include:
    - More industry/gov speakers at seminar (this is already a work in progress on Shannon's part).
    - Improve wellness.
    - Creating a program that tracks student progress on OnQ such as upcoming deadlines for students, committee meeting dates etc. Issues brought up by the council include: some students do not check OnQ, logistically this may be difficult due to different start dates, Kiki may already be working on a document like this, the supervisor agreement also partially already serves the same purpose.

Cyclical Program Review

Sharon would like the point of view from students/council for the cyclical program review.

Updates from representatives

Faculty and RTP Committeed Representative (**Jamie Would**)

- Packages are being finalized for 2 professors that are up for tenure review (Jannice and another prof?).

SGPS Representative (**Shannon Marginson**)

- Queens is moving towards disclosure of AI as opposed to ban; students are now allowed to use it as long as they disclose the use of it.

International Student Representatives (**Dithara Perrera & Jaico Yin**)

- No updates.

Union Representative (**Isaac Coles**)

- No updates.

Indigenization Equity Diversity Inclusion Anti-Racism and Accessibility (I-EDIAA) Representative (**Mabel Fuentes Vergara**)

- No updates.

Alumni and Graduate Committee Representatives (**Alice Dooley & Nicholas Smith**)

- No updates.
- Charlotte asked if there could be discussions on having rules in place for extenuating circumstances for when a supervisor leaves.
- It may be better if profs organize orientation for students at the beginning of the fall semester.

Seminar Representative (**Shannon Marginson**)

- Pizza will be offered at the Thursday seminars.
- People to reach out to about giving a talk/if they known anyone: Barb Vanderbeld, Bruce Tuffs (many of his students go to industry/government), Vicki Friesen, Zoe Kane (may have interviewed to people who are interested), Saied (however he gave a talk 3 years ago).

Sustainability Representative (**Julia Atteck**)

- Charlotte will reach out to Shay and Colin to Livia to see if the sustainability action meetings are still running.

QOFEI Representative (**Isaac Coles**)

- No updates.

Social Coordinator (**Kirsten Benidickson**)

- Halloween department trick or treat will occur on Oct. 30th from 12-2pm. An advertisement for it will be included in the Petri dish newsletter.
- Kirsten will reach out to Sharon regarding funding for the holiday party.
- If a retreat at Elbow Lake is occurring in the Spring, this needs to be planned soon. Reach out to Matt.

QUBS Representative (**Victoria Tawa**)

- QUBS hosted a field trip for HOCO which went well
- Shelley and Sonia are open to hearing opinions on how they can improve QUBS.

Other discussion points

BGRS 2027

- In September, Jamie sent out a survey regarding interest in having BGRS held at QUBS. There were concerns about transportation and space, but generally the response was positive. 28 survey respondents and 50 attendees for BGRS 2026. The responses were sent to Shelley.
- Colin and Charlotte will likely be responsible for organizing BGRS 2027 if no one else is interested.