

BiGCoW Meeting Minutes – Friday May 27th, 2011

Social coordinators (Celia Symons and Laura Doubleday (absent))

- BioGrad night: around 29 people came.
- BiGCoW paid \$250 for the event, \$250 came from other sources.
 - A report was written up for the incoming treasurer.
- There should be around \$260 left over for the next year's BiGCoW committee.
- Some of this should go towards the 'Welcome grads' BBQ held in the beginning of the school year.
- The request should go through John Topping if we would like some funding for the BBQ. This usually goes towards food, as most people bring their own refreshments.

Sports Coordinator (Adriana Lopez (absent))

- There will not be any sports-related events from BioGrad during the summer.

SGPS Representatives (Derek Gray & Open position)

- SGPS will not have any more meetings until August or September.
 - The previous meeting they discussed the ISIC cards; they should be good until the end of this year. They are making a petition to be sent to Via Rail to complain about how the Grad students use their services and we would like to be able to continue getting the student benefits
 - This petition may happen in the next month or so. The national organization may be making a standardized form for all schools.
 - When that form comes out, we should send out an email to the Bio Grads
 - They also discussed services on campus during the summer. SGPS is asking for feedback on what services we would like to keep open during the summer. (Gym, food courts etc).

Graduate Committee Representative (Niraj Kumar)

- Niraj did not receive an email regarding the graduate committee meeting that was held. Need to find out how to get onto this emailing list.
- We are not getting the aid that we need in finding a career with our degrees. We need more access to a list of skill sets that we can add to our CV. There should be more effort into promoting ourselves as potential employees on the Queen's website.
- We should also stay in touch with the Alumni and find out where they have gone, to demonstrate how our skill sets can be applied in the workplace.
- We should see whether we can get in touch with previous Alumni, either through Facebook or other means, to offer guidance to current graduate students.
- Maybe one of our objectives for the next year would be to help students get in contact with Alumni. From there, we can determine the most efficient way to get this resource to other graduate students.
- The SGPS has a mentorship program where they get willing alumni to mentor current students, however it currently does not include biology alumni.

Chair (Anneli Jokela) and BiGCoW discussion

- Next year, maybe there should be a new representative whose responsibility to create a database of information of Biology Alumni that would be willing to network. You could even do this through the theses in the library. We could find out where people are getting employed, which would be useful.
 - Not everyone goes down the Professor route, so it would help to provide some guidance into alternative paths with graduate degrees.
- Should consider whether the alumni representative position could be merged into the academic coordinator position. It would involve a quick inventory of the alumni.
- A LinkDN website database platform may be the most useful way of providing this alumni information. A Queen's biology alumni group could be created which alumni could join.
- If we do create the position of Alumni representative, we may also create a newsletter that the BioGrad could send to alumni, or alumni event once a year.
- We could send a mass email asking people to update their 'professional status' if it has changed each year.
- We should promote the new position of Alumni representative in the fall when new grads enter Queen's. We will need to vote on the admendment later in the summer for this new position, so there is time to draft up what the position entails.
 - Getting the database started will be the hardest part, so we can all help with the start-up.

RTP Representative (Roslyn Dakin)

- BEERS seminars: When they are consistent they are great, it allows for grads to get involved in a more social event. Instead of being passed between labs, we should give the responsibility to the students to organize it.
 - This would apply to EEB more specifically than all members of the biology grad group
 - Emails should also be sent out earlier to give people time to plan for it
 - There are more students presenting at EEB, so there is less need for grads to present at BEERS.
 - Maybe before Queen's fall semester begins, we should have an EEB meeting and see if people want to do BEERS at that time.

Academic Coordinators (Sarah Wallace and Amanda Xuereb (absent))

- New grad students would benefit from a list of the social events that occur on campus for biology grads.
 - For the orientation in the fall, they are still considering dates for the BBQ.
 - We also have an orientation day that students attend that we may be organizing, or Joanne might.
 - Orientation week maybe should also have a short seminar on how to be a biology TA. Could explain how the TA database works at that point.

Final Comments

- Our next meeting early August so we can plan Orientation week.
- Last year, the orientation with Joanne, Grad club, and then the BBQ all occurred on the same day.
- We may have a quick meeting in July to vote on the Alumni representative position.