

**Fall Semester, 2012
GSO Meeting Minutes**

**GSO Meeting
September 10th, 2012**

Students/Faculty Present: Lisa, Dani , Jeff S., Emily, Dan B., Anna, Crystal, Carina, Beth (via Skype from KBS) and Susan (via Skype from KBS), Kristen, Natalia, Matt J., Kent, Chad, Dave, Alan Prather

Alan Prather's Announcements:

- GSO great for citizenship on intramural scholarship applications.
- NSF-GRFP resources
 - Begin collection of past grant applications? Repository online that we can password protect?
 - Begin thinking about ways to begin structuring collection, requirements we would desire
 - Workshops
 - Thinking about this at the College level
 - Training program that could occur every year
 - Focus on proposals or scientific writing in general?
 - Targeted programs directed specifically at things like the DDIG, pre-doc, etc...
 - What about student-led workshops?
 - Potential faculty directory who might be willing to help once or twice
 - Continue to brainstorm
 - Annual Grad Student Reports
 - Due September 12th, 2012
 - Have CV in as well
 - Sign-up sheet downstairs, must hand in report first.
- Questions
 - Retreats?
 - Historically, retreats have been grad student-faculty joint retreats
 - Would require planning a year in advance
 - Faculty would like a review of retreat, not just a planning committee

Updates

Kent – COGS, September Meeting

- Grad students requested space in library four or five years ago
 - Granted
 - Spaces were lockable
 - Places to study
- After hiring new employees, two those rooms were taken back

- President said that the space designations would remain as they are
- Areas with newer furniture and individual study areas are available
 - Designated quiet areas
- Fueled interested in Chittenden Hall Restoration
 - For graduate students only
 - Meeting space, study space, etc...
- One room left
 - Talk of taking it back because of safety
- Committees were formed
- Budgets were discussed
 - Money available, look into getting some funding for workshops
 - Conference Funding
 - For fall or early spring
 - Lottery
 - Can only use once per your grad student career
 - Many more applicants in the spring
 - Info available on COGS website
- Events
 - Bowling
 - Tailgating
 - Kent will get some info out

Committee/Officer Elections

President – Kristen accepting role

- Will lead meetings
- Attend faculty meetings

Treasurer –Emily

- In charge of checking and savings
- Currently sitting at about \$1100

Secretary – Dani

- Will send Kristen minutes
- Will be mailed out
- Will be put on webpage

Webmaster – Lisa

- Minutes will be put online
- Current grad students send her your pic and stuff

DSAC – Jeff S. will continue as our rep

- Meet with CNS deans and reps from each department

DAC – Department Advisory Council – Matt J.

- Small council
- A lot of overlap from faculty meetings
- One meeting per month

Retreat Committee – Carina

- Would like some help
- Different theme this year
- Last year focused on communication with other scientists and non-scientists. Had a panel of professional communicators/public relations type people.
- Dani will help.

Graduate Committee – Chad

- Review applications for grad program
- Meet once to three times per year
- Primarily during December – February

GEU – Tiffany will be returning in Spring. Need a Fall Rep – Dave

- Pass on info regarding contracts, health insurance, grievances, etc...

COGS – Kent

Curriculum Committee – Jonathan

- Review undergrad course offerings
- Didn't meet last year, but will (maybe?) this year
- All departments reviewed concurrently

Seminar Committee – Kristen

- Looking for somebody to learn the ropes as to what needs to be done
- Not a huge time commitment (about once/semester)
- Poll students and get students to vote for speakers each semester
- Make sure blurbs are finished
- Chad interested in apprenticeship

T-shirt and Soda Committee – Dan/Kent

- Tshirts left over from last year and the year before are available for purchase

- Solicit entries for tshirt designs to vote on
- Submit order to printing company
- Matt is willing to help
- Other duty: Keep fridge stocked, recycle cans

Social Committee – Anna

- Chili Cookoff
- Bar Crawl
- Tailgating

KBS Liasons – Colin and Beth

Diversity – Dan

- 11-12 on Thursdays

PLB GSO Meeting

October 1, 2012

Students Present: Kristen, Chad, Anna, Dan B., Natalia, Jeff S., Dani, Dave M., Matt J.

Committee Updates:

Council on Diversity and Community for the CNS – Dan

- Focusing on LGBT issues
 - In 2009, MSU did survey called Campus Climate Report to get a sense of where students stood with LGBT issues
 - 2nd highest response rate was from CNS (19%)
 - Found that the higher up you move in the University, the worse your experience was as an LGBT person
 - Reasoning?
 - What is the council going to do?
 - Go into campus climate report and dig deeper
 - Find out what kind of networks students in CNS have
 - How do social networks compare in grads vs. undergrads and how do social networks differ?
 - Resurveying possibly down the line
 - What right now? Safe spaces for those who are out, possibly inviting those in plant biology who have overcome obstacles to come speak and have lunch, inviting more minorities to our general
 - **Richard Schwartz wants to work with admissions committee to invite and recruit more minority students to apply to graduate school**

Graduate Student Committee – Chad

- For next year, they'd like to change application deadline from December 15th to December 1st because fellowship applications are due earlier. This would give them extra time.
- Alan brought up concern about graduate students still taking classes in their third and fourth year. This could possibly be slowing us down.
 - Comments?
 - Reasoning? Classes every other year or semester (availability), true interest in taking other classes because they want to, guidance committee recommending more classes at first committee meeting?
- Professors expressed that they don't know graduate students aside from those they interact with in the lab.
 - Ideas as to why, and how to ameliorate?
 - Meeting with pictures and description – unlikely to happen.
 - Spreadsheet with information on research, are comps finished?, who is on your committee → Can we use this spreadsheet to see who is getting done on time?
 - Probably stemmed from a faculty meeting this spring where it was noted that students don't interact with faculty
 - Event? Unlikely as well...

- Alan is concerned that students aren't getting comps done on time
 - Oral comps must be done thirty days into fall semester of third year
 - Proposal needs to be done by end of December in 3rd year
 - If you are sixty days late, you are no longer eligible for intramural fellowships
 - When will this take effect?
 - University is looking at organizing dual degree guidelines
 - Go through same admissions protocols as everyone else with an advisor lined up ahead of time

DAC – Matt

- There won't be a graduate student retreat this year
- Attempt to have a big one in January
 - Combine faculty, postdocs, students
- Want to overhaul Plant Bio website
- Putting room over near PLB for teaching greenhouse

Faculty Meetings – Kristen

- Wilkerson and Lau gave two tenure talks
- Anne Royer got teaching award at KBS this year
- The North greenhouse was closed down and condemned
- New teaching greenhouse space near PLB will have open house sometime in the future
- Forming a committee right now to look for a new faculty position for integrative plant biology
 - Will start interviewing in November, seminars probably this spring
- Two additional positions opening up
 - KBS faculty doing work relating to plants in some way can apply
- HVAC renovation is happening slowly – means that there will be some shutdown of hoods as the maintenance progresses
- “Diversity” hires – money available for recruitment
- Plant Biology website updates
 - **Would like a grad student to help with design and aesthetics**
 - Potentially match other site formats with money available
- Protocol for requesting greenhouse space
- Faculty search at KBS
- Two retreats
 - One in January
 - One in May
 - January: Science retreat, formed like a scientific meeting. Grads and postdocs can attend
 - May retreat: planning retreat. May be able to send one or two grad reps, but not the whole department.

Social Committee – Anna

- Email sent out for potential activities yet
- Shirts for bar crawl?
 - “I like plants” shirts
 - Buy additional ones

- For the tailgate?
 - Talk to treasurer
 - Talk to people about pitching in
 - Date? Mid-November?
- Happy Hour
 - Is 5 o'clock too early?
 - Earliest is probably 5:30 pm or 6 pm
 - New plan: force people to go?

Other:

When is NSF GFRP meeting? 10 am this Friday.

Lisa said undergrad PLB club wants to have a graduate student speaker. If interested, contact Lisa

GSO Meeting

November 5, 2012

Students Present: Kristen, Chad, Anna, Dan B., Natalia, Jeff S., Dave M., Matt J., Lisa, Colin (via KBS)

Committee Updates:

Updates about the PLB Retreat in January – Jeff

- When: January 21, 2012 (MLK Jr. Day) from 8:30am to 4:00pm
- Where: MSU Student Union (north side of campus)
- Who's invited: All faculty, graduate students, post-docs, and technicians in the department
 - RSVP to Stacy ASAP!!!
- Goals of the retreat: To get an overview of the research going on throughout the department (via posters and discussions) and to generate ideas about how to improve upon the department standard of performing truly integrative research

Council on Diversity and Community for the CNS – Dan

- Focusing on LGBT issues
 - The committee is dedicating efforts right now to increasing visibility of LGBT members in CNS in the hopes of creating a comfortable and safe atmosphere for everyone
 - If you have any ideas and thoughts about this, contact Dan
 - As a reminder, CNS is willing to finance bringing in an outside speaker who addresses ideas about diversity and/or who represents someone who has a diverse background and does interesting science
 - If you have thoughts on who to invite, contact Dan!
 - Specifically, Plant Sciences is working to incorporate a “minority element” into the Plant Sciences Recruiting Weekend hosted in the spring for prospective new grads
 - One suggestion is to include a panel of graduate students that have a “round table” discussion with the prospectives about diversity and culture at MSU

DAC – Matt

- No updates

GEU (Grad Employee Union) – Dave

- The GEU is offering to give “Listening Tours” in which they attend a GSO meeting and talk with us about what the GEU offers to graduate employees
- **New Updates about Healthcare Reform**
 - Insurance maximum coverage has been extended to \$250,000 per accident/sickness
 - There is an unlimited lifetime maximum coverage
 - Preventative care is now 100% covered

- Contraceptives 100% covered
 - If you opt to buy additional coverage for dependents, the payment scheme has been changed from 4 payments per year to 1 large payment per year
- The university is discussing possibilities to change the set tuition waiver limits for graduate students
 - Right now, grads are funded for 9 credits in the spring and fall semesters, and 5 in the summer
 - In other Big10 schools, tuition waivers are either 12 a semester, or unlimited
 - Although MSU wants to be competitive with other schools in the Big10, they are also worried about incurring additional, unnecessary costs if grads take more credits than they actually need
 - A temporary solution is to provide each student with a “pool” of 100 credits to be used as desired throughout their time at the university.

Faculty Meetings – Kristen

- No faculty meeting the previous month, so no updates

Treasury – Emily

- With successful t-shirt and hat sales, there is currently \$100 to add to the treasury

Social Committee – Anna

- The PLB Tailgate will be for the MSU vs. Northwestern game on Nov. 17
 - Last home game of the year, so attend!

Other:

Ideas about how to facilitate creating more of a community atmosphere in the department, specifically improving communication among grads and among grads and faculty.

- Add information about grad students to a spreadsheet that highlights a more comprehensive view of what they do and their accomplishments to date. This information could be added to the spreadsheet about grad progress in the department.
 - Could be redundant as this information is on the website already...
 - We should work to get the grad student website completed!!! Send your information to Lisa
- Possibly have an additional grad mentor, apart from your primary advisor
- Pizza lunch with faculty
 - This could be like the grad student luncheons with the speaker, but involve different faculty in the department instead of outside speakers
- Find a way to recognize graduate student achievements
 - Perhaps:
 - an “Outstanding Grad” award (for PLB, separate from CNS)
 - an “Excellence in Teaching” Award
 - a “Service” Award
 - others?

- Potentially, a “Grad Student of the Month” – like what’s done in elementary school when a student is highlighted and information about him/her is posted in the department somewhere (w/ gold stars and all!)
 - Could also highlight this person on the PLB website
- Perhaps students could contribute to a blog that is linked to the PLB website that communicates their research to a broad audience
- Potentially have a “Grad Student Colloquium” like the one run for EEBC
- For grads only: have a pizza party for a pre-comps study session – get grilled for your comps before they happen, by sympathetic peers
- **Organize a grad student-faculty breakfast/lunch/coffee date of some sort. NOTE: All of us really liked this idea**
 - This would be a voluntary thing for interested faculty and grads, and perhaps the faculty could get a little funding from department to treat the grads
 - The idea would be to have a small group of grad students – preferably students from different realms of the department – meet with a faculty member for an informal date of sorts
 - We hope, and expect, this would provide an opportunity to bridge communication gaps within the grad student population in PLB, and also between grads and faculty.
 - A further benefit: This could possibly make faculty “less scary” to talk to, and thus if a grad is having some difficulty that potentially is keeping them from progressing (ie: taking comps/writing up a proposal), they would feel comfortable coming to a faculty member for some guidance and mentorship.

GSO Meeting Minutes

December 3rd, 2012

Members Present: Kristen, Dani, Chad, Anna, Jeff S., Lisa, Crystal, Natalia, Carina, Emily D., Colin (Skype from KBS), Dave M., Liz S. (Skype from KBS), Daniel B., Kent

Guest: Dr. Richard Triemer

Dr. Triemer's Announcements:

- Retreat in January
 - For whole department, post-docs, faculty, students, students not in PLB that work in PLB
 - Get an idea for research across the entire department
 - Focus groups
 - Look for email from Jeff S. (Retreat Committee)
 - Deadline for reservations is today (December 3rd, 2012)
- Faculty Meeting
 - Summary from Kristen
 - Role of graduate students on faculty search committees
 - Question of official vote
 - Overview from Dr. Triemer
 - Department review is coming up
 - During this time, by-laws are reviewed
 - Graduate student participation on committees
 - Real issue is role on faculty search committee
 - Beneficial for graduate students to learn about application process
 - 50 graduate students, and only 1 search a year
 - Question is "Should graduate students be voting members of the search committee?"
 - Typically, four faculty members and a graduate student
 - Potential for being deciding vote
 - Usually don't have advisor and a graduate student from the same lab on the search committee
 - Conflict of interest
 - Can still have committee members on that search committee
 - Question of whether we want to be voting members of the committee or not
 - Responses to questions/opinions of grad students
 - "Committee is generally an advisory role and chair has final say. So, what do you look for when making your decision?"

- Summary of entire process: Search committee advises faculty who then advise chair
- Chair has to have a very good reason for disagreeing with choice of search committee
- “Does it make more sense to have a tie then to have the tie broken by a student?”
 - In general, there is no strong opinion.
 - 84 applicants in current search
 - As a student, this is a lot of work.
 - Amount to 40 or 50 applicants that require a lot of time
 - Many faculty believe that if grad student is investing that much time, then they should have a right to vote
 - Others are concerned of putting student in a very uncomfortable position if there is a tie
 - “Graduate student on search committee should represent all graduate students, so should it really be a conflict of interest?”
 - What if there is 50/50 split among students?
 - Very strong candidates usually apply and decision is often difficult to make. Not often a clear case of who is the best for the job.
 - Ends with student representative having final say
 - “Do graduate students vote in other departments on campus?”
 - Some do and some don’t
 - At MSU they always have been voting members of the search committee
 - Chair has no issue with it at all, because committee is advisory
 - Always invite 3-5 people for interviews, so top 3 will always be invited. As long as there is consensus in top few candidates, it doesn’t really matter who is number 1

- After seminars, candidates are re-ranked
 - Search committee decides who is invited to interview
 - Following seminar/interview, the search committee reconvenes and votes on who the department should hire
- “Whether or not you have a vote on the committee, can you feel comfortable expressing differences of opinions? At some point, this will probably happen on committees anyways, and you will have to discuss your ideas anyways. It’s practice.”
 - Dr. Triemer agrees, and this resounds with the discussion at the faculty decision.
- Colin (current graduate student on search committee)
 - Currently we have an active GSO, important part of PLB department
 - How the committee actually functions: having the graduate student have the ability to vote is important for both parties (faculty and grad student)
 - A lot of time is spent on this
 - One vote out of five
 - Emphasis on arriving at some type of consensus of group
 - Issue of one vote hasn’t been a big deal
 - Hasn’t been concerned with sharing his opinion
- Issue of tie-breaker, swinging of the grad student towards one vote by faculty
 - Voters present to faculty
 - Then, discussion among faculty
- Kristen: experience from last year
 - More debate among faculty as a group than there was among search committee
- Dr. Triemer:

- Rank order of candidates at end
- Then, ask if candidates are all acceptable as faculty members?
- People we are recruiting are interviewing across the country
- Look at top candidates
 - Fill niches
 - Bring in expertise
- Then go back to faculty's rank-order of top candidates
 - Usually get first choice, if not, second is typical
- "Unique perspective of grad student on committee and why that might be important?"
 - Statement on research, teaching, and CV of candidates
 - Faculty focus on quality of research
 - Also, value of candidate as an instructor and experience in mentorship roles, how they may structure lab and mentor graduate students
- "Graduate students investment in future of department?"
 - Potential mentors and faculty for future generations of students
 - Important to look at these people as future mentors and advisors
 - Important for success of the department
- Dr. Triemer: "Grad student role as a long-term role."
 - We have first year to fifth or sixth years in GSO
 - Looking at closer to a ten year window
 - Research-wise, that is about as far as anybody can look
 - Part of retreat is a planning report
 - Every report is a five-year report
 - Although, we have a long-term perspective, we think about "Over the next five years, where are the areas that we need to hire faculty?"

- “In PRL, they solicit feedback from post-docs, graduate students, etc... to sit in on a seminar and then fill out survey to get an idea”
 - PLB does this as well
 - Dr. Triemer – undergrads aren’t included in this
 - No interest in long-term goals
 - Form sent out by Stacy
- Dr. Triemer: “Do we include post-docs on search committee?”
 - Much greater discrepancy on feelings between yes’s and no’s
 - Post-docs are usually on two or three years
 - Not usually involved in department as graduate students are
 - Individual faculty members hire post-docs
 - Some faculty think that post-docs shouldn’t vote
 - Some think post-docs could be strictly advisory, but again the time issue comes up. If post-doc can’t vote, why should graduate student be able to vote?
 - Will be having a meeting with post-docs at some point
 - Search committees are getting bigger; with bigger committees, they are more cumbersome
- “Graduate students are much more affected by faculty hires. Post-docs don’t have as big of an impact on the greater PLB population.
 - University is encouraging faculty to have post-docs for 2 years, 3 on the outside and then to move on
 - Search committee process could help a total of three post-docs in the application process

- Graduate students are engines that drive the department
- Nobody is talking about taking graduate students off of committee, it's about the vote
- "Having a vote makes student feel more invested."
 - If Colin has a vote, the greater grad student population should feel more invested
 - Motivation to invest time in forming opinion
- "If we were strictly advisory (no vote), would this change our investment?"
 - Sense of responsibility
 - Faculty members still read through all graduate student input
- Dr. Triemer: "Graduate students feel like we should deserve a vote."
 - Yes, consensus among graduate student
 - Emily: Sends a message to our department that we are well-rounded and looking for faculty that are not only good researches, but mentors and advisors

Colin (faculty search committee) – 84 applicants applied to this search. Over the last month, search committee has narrowed list down to potential interviewees. This list has been submitted to the chair. Can't give specifics, however exciting group of people applied and are high-powered within their field. Their application materials should be made available to us. We couldn't get a larger sample available for us, but perhaps for those who we will be inviting to interview. In mid-January, interviews will begin. Research seminars will be given on Tuesday morning. This will overlap with the time during the Evolution course. This was the only time that everybody on the committee could meet. There will probably be three or four interviews. After the seminar, there will be a lunch with graduate students and post-docs. Try and attend these and get an idea of candidates' ability to interact with graduate students. Great chance for us to get to know candidates and to "show off" MSU. After the interviews happen, we will receive forms to solicit feedback. That will be collated and used to represent grad students' opinion during the search. Then, top selection will be notified. Following on previous discussion, make sure we are visible during this search going forward.

Kent (COGS) – 5 year plan/3 year plan looking forward. Looking at evaluating where GSOs in the university are going. Also, discussion on the radio tax. They have over three years of operating money (\$900,000) in reserves. Question of why the taxes are increasing if they aren't using it. Mismanagement of money. Funds for spring recruitment meeting available when we choose to use it. Plant Biology chili cook-off, the

sooner we get started, the sooner we can get funding for it. Funding will be first-come, first-serve. Don't have to file in Spring semester. We can file up to three months ahead of time. This will probably start during spring semester.

Jeff (Retreat) – Please register! Also, those of us who took PLB 803 last spring, think about presenting our projects (about 5 mins) at the retreat and give an overview of the questions we were trying to address.

Lisa – Reminder: our RCR forms are due in two weeks. Will forward email from department secretary.

Dan (Diversity Committee) – If you have a diverse seminar speaker that you would like to invite to the PLB seminar, email him.