

Plant Biology Graduate Student Organization (GSO)
Monthly Meeting Minutes
Fall Semester 2014

September 2, 2014

Members Present: Emily D., Daniel B., Colleen, Lisa, Ellie, Christina, Tiffany, Teresa, Carina

Filling open GSO positions-- asked for volunteers

- Department Advisory Council (DAC): Colleen
- Curriculum Committee: Lisa
- Graduate Committee: Teresa
- Graduate Employee Union (GEU): Ellie
- Council of Graduate Students (COGS): Open at the moment, good committee for new students to learn about things at the university and meet people from different departments. First meeting is tomorrow.
- Retreat: holding off choosing people for now. Adelle said we can submit a proposal for money. Carina is tentatively interested in helping someone else with this committee.
- T-shirt and Soda: Christina
- KBS Liason: will ask KBS students
- Student Advisory Council (SAC): Beth J. said she could do this but we need to check with her schedule.

Filled positions

- President: Emily D.
- Treasurer: Emily D.
- Secretary: Dani
- Webmaster: Lisa
- Social committee: Anna
- Seminar committee: Chad
- Council on Diversity and Community (CDC): Daniel B.

Other updates –

- Treasury update: \$1400 balance currently, save about \$800 for t-shirts and extra chili cookoff money. Could start buying lunch food for meetings to encourage more people to come.
- Lisa will go to COGS meeting for chili cookoff funding today to see if they are awarding us any money, since Anna will miss it.
- Emily met with Alan Prather and discussed having casual student-faculty meetings once a month at the on a different week but at the same time as our GSO meeting, and have a few faculty present on professional development issues. Alan said the grad students should give him suggestions, so we discussed some at the meeting. David Lowry's wife (David's a new PLB faculty member) does a lot of work with science communication, so maybe we could have her talk to us as well.
- Dan: CDC seminar series is starting this year where they invite seminar speakers, fly them out, and they do a research seminar and also a separate seminar on challenges they faced in their career and diversity in their field. Yvette Perfecto from University of Michigan is coming to give a seminar at KBS in November, and then will give a diversity talk on main campus, so keep your eye out for those announcements.

- Anna will probably do a social event once a month – the chili cookoff is proposed for October, and we may have a tailgate another month and a bar crawl. -Lisa: the department is releasing a new webpage in the next few weeks, and she will meet with Bill of the computer lab to update the GSO webpage. He said it should be able to have separate tabs for different subpages instead of listing everything on one long page like it is now. Alan at the front office is now in charge of updating the list of current students, so if you don't have a picture or research interests listed, submit it to him.
- Christina should request t-shirt designs in October, so we can vote and get shirts ordered and delivered before winter break.
- Emily will send out a doodle poll for the best times for GSO meetings this semester. It would be nice to do it during lunchtime since more people are willing to take a break then.

October 7th, 2014

Members Present: Anna, John T., Brian, Emily D., Dani, Sam, Christina, Dan B., Ellie, Carina

Announcements

Student Advisory Committee (Sam)

- On September 11th, had introductory meeting to set up different committees.
- Biology Initiative – This was started last year and the main goal is to address changes in undergraduate biology curriculum.
- Agriculture, Food, and Health Career Fair at Spartan Stadium is coming up on October 9th .
- Recently awarded an externship funded by NIH
- Certificate Program for Computer Science is being developed. For graduate students, this will be a certificate. For undergraduates, it will be a minor option.

Faculty Meeting (Emily)

- Search for new Plant Biology chairperson is ongoing. Working to coordinate interview talks and seminars.
- There is a new person working in Genomics who is spending 50% of his time on research and 50% on service. This service can be bioinformatics help, for instance.
- Greenhouse Committee: We have a committee now to allocate space in greenhouses. There is now an application form to complete.
- New person for PLB Teaching Labs is Jameel. Rather than Jan, contact Jameel for teaching questions.
- Fixed term research assistants were discussed (rather than a shorter-term post-doc). Somebody asked if this was a new trend. Consensus was that it's not supposed to replace faculty, but it is becoming more common to have post-docs for ~5 years.
- New courses for graduate students in the works. Faculty will lead different modules throughout the course. The focus is on integrative research in Plant Biology. There will be a post-doc with duties that include overseeing this course.
- New department website should be unveiled online soon.
- Academic Analytic Ratings
 - MSU PLB ranked fairly high in every category
 - For grant dollars per faculty, we were 3rd in the country
 - For total articles (definition), we were 7th in the country
 - For faculty with awards, we were 5th in the country
- Upcoming RCR workshop for those who need hours (October 30th at 3 pm). Look for future email with more details.

- MSU Plant Biology Technology Colloquium
 - Website: <https://plantmetabolism.natsci.msu.edu/annual-symposium/>
- Workshop series that was discussed at last month's GSO meeting fell through. Let Emily know about ideas.
 - Potential idea: With funding for retreat that is built into budget, we could organize a professional development series ourselves.
 - Dan talked with a KBS faculty member who mentioned that KBS might be starting up their Winter Retreat near Sleeping Bear Dunes. Perhaps Plant Biology could tag on with this as a retreat option.

Seminar Committee (Emily filling in for Chad)

- Student invited speaker for spring is Dan Simberloff.
- Susan Harrison will be speaking in Fall of 2015.

Plant Biology GSO (Emily)

- Discussion of managing PLB GSO budget
- Plan for future spending
 - Snacks and refreshments for each meeting. Agreed on a cap of \$20 for normal meeting snacks.
 - Discuss potential uses as they arise with PLB members as they arise at upcoming meetings. Vote.

Social Committee (Anna)

- Weren't planning on having a Halloween Bar Crawl, but is there interest? Anna will send out an email.
- Chili Cook-off in November
 - Potentially Friday, November 21st
 - Plan to discuss details at November GSO meeting
- Tailgate
 - Saturday, November 8th
 - Will discuss budget on November 4th GSO meeting.

CNS Council for Diversity and Community (Dan)

- CNS Diversity Council is hosting first Pathways to Science lecture and discussion tomorrow, October 8th. Lunch is open to post-docs and graduate students

COGS (Brian)

- Elections took most of the meeting time, not many updates
- We were awarded the money for Chili Cook-off (~\$700)

GEU (Ellie)

- Discussion of Right to Work. We are losing right to have everybody automatically enrolled in the GEU.
- Because Aetna increased prices, GEU is working with University on new agreement
- COGS sided with University on health insurance issue
- GEU reminds everybody in the department to register to vote
- Comment on costs of out-of-network healthcare through Aetna for students who are doing research out of the general MSU area.

Soda & Tshirt Committee (Christina)

- Soda restocked in fridge
- T-shirt email will be sent out soon

November 4, 2014

Members Present: Emily D., Sam, Christina, Brian, Ellie, Colleen, Teresa, Chad, Lisa, Dan B., Raffica

Committee Updates

COGS

- Brian said they are still trying to make a functional committee to work with the GEU on the grad student healthcare coverage. The University changed our coverage without the GEU giving them the ok that they could change it, and this is against the rules.

GEU

- Ellie said we are the only department that has full TA enrollment in the union. People in the union are mad at COGS because they are supporting the university and taking the side of Aetna and not taking the side of the grad students. We renegotiate everything in our GEU contract with the university for healthcare every 3-4 years, and we are renegotiating it now, so let Ellie know if there is anything specific you want brought up.

Graduate Committee

- Teresa said University Committee of Graduate Studies is requiring us to have a lay abstract in addition to an abstract when submitting dissertations. Emily asked if we could have them more accessible to the public rather than having them just searched through ProQuest online, such as listed on a PLB alumni page on the website.
- College wants the department to write a definition of a dissertation or thesis. Also wants student's graduate committees to get more involved with their students. We will probably keep the same annual progress report with Alan in the fall, and for our annual committee meeting there will be another form where members can write feedback that will be submitted to Alan.
- We have no procedure for officially dismissing students from a lab, although we have one for staff that is dismissed. We want to write something in the handbook, and have a former letter sent to the student, committee, and office, and give the student a certain timeframe to find a new lab.
- Emily said it should be a decision to dismiss the student made as a committee and not just the advisor
- Grad applications are due Dec. 1. Soon after, Plant Science Fellowships and University fellowships are due. Meeting in January.

Student Advisory Council

- Sam said John Tran went to last meeting, Dean Kirkpatrick wants to make a new Computational Math, Science, and Engineering that is different from computer science. It will offer undergrad and graduate programs. Shin-Han is in charge of developing the program. Emily said they may discuss it more at the next faculty meeting.
- Capital Campaign is MSU's ongoing fundraising effort to raise \$1.5 million. We have reached 40% of goal, and will ramp up advertisements. It will provide scholarships and fellowships to undergraduate and graduate students and other discretionary funds.

Department Advisory Council

- Colleen said last meeting was cancelled because everyone was sick.

Diversity Council

- Dan said they had second Pathways to Diversity seminar with Ivette Perfecto. Her lunch was well attended, and she gave a good seminar on campus and at KBS. Dan encourages more people to go to the lunches in the future. The next seminar speaker hosted should be next semester.

GSO updates

Social Committee

- Emily said Anna (who couldn't come today) wanted to discuss budgeting for tailgate this Saturday. Emily may send out a little survey to students to ask who thinks they are coming and if they are vegetarian.
- Turnout will depend on weather. Christina recommended spending about \$8 per person.

T-shirt committee

- Christina said no one submitted t-shirt designs, but she came up with two designs. She is willing to try out the new poll function on the new webpage, and will get some quotes for using multiple shirt paint colors.

Website

- Lisa said the department will release their new website in the next couple weeks, and she has been learning how to edit the GSO page from Bill Parks at the computer lab. It will now have subpages so that all text isn't on one single page. There will be pages for events, officers and committees, meeting minutes and t-shirt designs. Raffica asked if meeting minutes can be posted as pdfs instead of as word documents, and Lisa thought that would be doable. Brian said you might be able to make the pdfs not searchable by text online, since in the past we had problems with the minutes coming up in google searches of people mentioned.

Faculty Meeting

- Emily said someone presented about Michigan Translational Research Program. They bridge research and commercialization, so people could apply for money for scale-up studies and prototype development. One at MSU already is limited to agriculture.
- Plant Bio as a department is doing great in our rankings, but the university has gone down. University is providing some money for tenure-track faculty hires that would increase competitiveness. We may get money for a more senior hire in PLB. As a university, we need to work on number of and prestige of awards. They also want a committee in the department to look out for awards that faculty could get, because sometimes they aren't part of certain societies.
- They want more equitable teaching loads for faculty and an official policy.
- Have 14 candidates for department chair search, and are still reviewing. In spring semester they will decide who to invite for interviews.

December 2, 2014

Members Present: Anna, Colleen, Emily, Dani, Sam, Raffica, Ellie, Lisa, Brian, Crystal, Teresa

Announcements

T-Shirt Committee (Emily filling in for Christina)

- T-shirts will be arriving soon and can be picked up in the graduate student lounge

Chairperson Search Committee (Emily filling in)

- To approve candidates, list of names will be passed along soon

EEBB Faculty Search (Emily filling in for Carina)

- Narrowed phone interview list down to 11
- From there, will narrow list down to 5 or 6 who will come to MSU for interviews.

Faculty Meeting (Emily)

- Adelle no longer working for Plant Biology department
- Department is advertising for new secretary, but the new secretary probably wouldn't start until January

- Rich Kobe renewed for adjunct status
- Discussion of University funds to recruit more high-profile professors
- Teaching responsibilities discussion

Graduate Student Recruiting (Teresa)

- Grad student recruiting weekend coming up
- Meeting tomorrow (12/3) to make list of who is invited

Graduate Employees Union (Ellie)

- Question about health care dispute came up during meeting
- Some discussion of Right to Work concerns

Council of Graduate Students (COGS) (Brian)

- Last meeting was presentation on what they envision for health care (kind of GEU-related stuff)
- Having a meeting tomorrow (12/3)
- Discussion of COGS financial system

Student Advisory Council (SAC) (Sam)

- MSU is trying to be more competitive with some of our peers by establishing grants in key areas that we are already strong in (food security, neuroscience, etc...)
- Hope to be more competitive for funding opportunities as well
- \$15 million first year
- Focused on applied research, any department in any school can write proposals that fit into applied science categories. Natural Science received apps from every department, will be sent on to Dean and Central Administration
- Emphasis on applied science vs. basic science is a point of contention, still ongoing discussion
- Department of Zoology will soon be “Department of Integrative Biology”

Social Committee (Anna)

- Chili cook-off – 101 ballots submitted (pretty good attendance!)
- 20 people entered, 10 people dropped out at last minute
- 10 chilis in the end
- Made \$35 selling old version of t-shirts
- Made \$60 additionally in donations
- Lisa suggested that she’d organize a cookie exchange next week

GSO Budget (Emily)

- We spent over \$1000 on t-shirt orders this year
- Much more than in the past

Webmaster Updates (Lisa)

- Lisa is working with Bill on new design of PLB GSO website
- Different than in past, has sub-pages
- They said websites would be going live on December 1st across department, but as of today (12/2), the new page hasn’t been moved to existing URL Faculty asked for a bit more time to make final updates to their page.

GSO Meetings (Emily)

- Next meeting will be first Tuesday in February