

**Graduate Student Organization
Meeting Minutes
Fall Semester 2015**

September 9, 2015

Attending: Brian St. Aubin, Isaac Osei-Bonsu, Anna Groves, Christopher Warneke, Meredith Zettlemyer, Clint Slocum, Joelyn de Lima, Christina Azodi, John Tran, Sam Perez, Caitlyn Byron, Jeff Kovach, Teresa Clark, Emily Dittmar, Colleen Friel

Positions For 2015-2016

President: Emily Dittmar

Treasurer: Emily Dittmar

Secretary: Christina Azodi

Social Chair: Anna Groves

Meeting snacks & soda: Isaac Osei-Bonsu & Clint Slocum

T-shirts: Christina Azodi

Retreat: TBD

SAC: Sam Perez

GEU Rep: Ellie Siler?

COGS: Joelyn de Lima

CDC: John Tran or Sam Perez (depending on meeting time)

DAC: Colleen Friel

Graduate Committee: Teresa Clark

Curriculum Committee: John Tran

Seminar Committee: Chad Zirbel

Announcements:

Tailgating the MSU v Oregon Game on Saturday, 9/12/15, at 5:00 in the PLB parking lot. The GSO will provide veggie burgers, brats, and refreshments (budget = \$100). Please bring a dish/drinks to share.

The Chili Cook Off will take place Friday, November 6th from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. More details next month.

There is interest in starting a graduate student seminar series (i.e. Brown Bag Series). Clint Slocum has expressed interest in organizing. He will explore some options for timing and formatting and we will discuss the details at our next meeting.

Design ideas for this year's PLB t-shirts are due to Christina (azodichr@msu.edu) by September 18th at 5:00 pm.

October 7, 2015

Members Present: Emily, Anna, Teresa, Joelyn, Clint, Carina, Adam, Caitlyn, Ellie, Sam, Brian

Updates

Anna– Social Chair

- Bar crawl
- Chili cook-off volunteers
 - Cup counter if needed – Teresa
 - Man the booth – Clint & Joelyn
 - Flyer designer – Carina
 - Flyer printer—
 - Flyer hanger upper—
 - Nat Sci—Emily
 - PLB—
 - MPS—
 - BPS--
 - CSS—
 - Prize shopper—Joelyn
 - GFS shopper—Caitlyn
 - Dessert picker upper (day of cook-off)—
 - Cornbread & ice (day of cook-off)—
 - Set-up—Adam, Caitlyn, Teresa
- Prize ideas:
 - Immersion blender
 - Vitamix
 - Breadmaker
 - Best buy
 - Cast iron cookware

Joelyn-- COGS

- We should be getting \$150 from COGS to have our GSO meetings
- Graduate Advocacy Conference instead of the Grad-wide Research Conference that formerly existed
 - If it has research, they will be in the form of ignite talks or something similar
 - Not yet finalized, just a proposal
- COGS will pay for your absentee ballot
- Budget has changed, so they have a lot of extra money this year
 - Might put it toward some sort of trust, but nothing official yet

Ellie—GEU

- Just moved to “Right to Work”
- GEU is legally required to protect you, but you are not legally obligated to pay the union
- Will send an email with the new contract and what the GEU does
- Not sure if people on fellowship can join—definitely important for TAs, maybe RAs

Sam—SAC

- Grief Absence Policy:
 - Formerly, student had to approach all their teachers before and after leaving
 - New policy is that associate dean has to approve the grievance before the student (undergrad) leaves
 - Initial approval is almost automatic, but then you have something like a month to provide proof (like an obituary)

- Degree of closeness has something to do with it... Grandparents may not be excused absences
- Still figuring out the specifics
- New “Computational Math, Science, & Engineering” program
 - 30 full time faculty
 - 10 new hires-- searches starting this January
 - Other faculty will be recruited from other departments
 - It will start as a certificate program first
 - Eventually will have dual major or minor option
 - Will have required coursework
 - PhD program can also be dual degree—kind of like EEBC is added to a PLB degree
 - Not clear how this will affect Quantitative Biology program that already exists
 - Andrew Christlieb from Math Dept is the head
 - 15 of the faculty that have been announced so far are all men

Teresa – Council in Diversity & Community (CDC)

- Want to try to be more partnered with Alliance for Graduate & Professional Students
- New mission for the year: Establishing connections with other CDC-like groups across the university
 - What are other groups doing?
 - How do other groups work on recruitment and retention of minorities?

Teresa—Seminar committee

- Didn’t get a chance to give our feedback much to Alan etc
- Solution is to have our own PLB seminar series—get rid of PRL—fill those slots with more local PLB people (faculty, notable graduate students)
- Treimer didn’t want to change things because tradition, but hopefully the new chair will be able to do it next year
- Nobody wants punitive action
- Final idea is to do a raffle with one ticket per seminar attended

Brian—Molecular Plant Sciences Program

- Original idea is for there to be “PRL Students”
- Would be a degree-granting program
- Wants it to be as open as PLB currently is—can join whatever lab you want (with encouragement for PRL labs)
- Courses, grad requirements, etc. would come later
- Confusion in general right now about what all it would look like
- Heads of the other departments have said they’re for it
- Department funding is based on number of students in the labs of the professors
- Makes the most sense to think of it like EEBC for PLB molecular students—gives a core curriculum that is most relevant to them, to supplement the few PLB courses

Emily—Presidente

- Ask the new chair coming in to put us in the budget
- E.g. if we wanted to do a seminar series or retreat for ourselves
- New chair is starting next semester, but has been in touch with people already

Clint—Student-run Seminar Series

- \$240 committed to snacks and beverages for this from Tracy, Alan, et al
- Wednesdays 4-5pm
- Need someone to coordinate refreshments and such
- Two 15-20 minute talks with 20 mins for milling in the middle
- We will likely invite the faculty and assume most won't come
- Can be practice talks, comps practice, ideas, whatever
- Sign up ASAP if you want to participate!!!

November 4, 2015

Attending: Brian St. Aubin, Isaac Osei-Bonsu, Anna Groves, Joelyn de Lima, Christina Azodi, John Tran, Sam Perez, Teresa Clark, Emily Dittmar, Colleen Friel, Shawna Rowe, Ellie Siler, Klara Scharnagl, Anna Groves

DAC: The University is thinking of starting a Molecular Plant Sciences Program. It could be a program in addition to your degree (like EEBB) or could be a separate degree granting department. Please try to attend the town hall meeting Tues, Nov 10th from 3:30-5:00 pm in 101 Biochemistry to voice your opinion.

PLB Seminar Series: Start Wednesday, Nov 11th from 4:00-5:00. Will be every Wednesday when we do not have a GSO meeting.

GSO Meetings: Sending out a poll to determine if we will keep the same time or move it to 4:00-5:00 so it is consistent with the seminar series timing.

CDC: Trying to recruit new graduate and undergraduates – let anyone you know who's interested in diversity know.

Graduate Committee: There were changes to Union Contract that mean we need to update our academic grievance policy. The big change is that now within the department we need to have a judiciary committee to handle any grievances. Since our department has rarely had grievances Alan suggested to have that committee made up of the student representatives for the Grad Committee, DAC, and president of the GSO and the 3 faculty representatives in the Graduate Committee. The Graduate Director (currently Alan Prather) would chair the committee.

PLB recruitment weekend will be the first weekend of February. Please brainstorm ideas for how to make the Saturday program more engaging and organized for those students who do not go to KBS. Ideas include: potluck (hosted by faculty member or current graduate student), attend MSU event (hockey game), presentations by representatives from various academic groups (EEBB, Quantitative Biology, Environmental Science and Policy, etc).

Changes to the Grad Student Handbook:

- Must submit dissertation proposal 2 weeks before proposal defense
- Include guidelines for content for first committee meeting
- Provide feedback forms for committee members to fill out after committee meetings.

SAC: A reminder to complete the Sexual Misconduct Training if you are a university employees. That training will now be required for all students and faculty who are mentoring minors (i.e. high school students and freshman).

There is a new initiative in the Big 10 to improve support for socioeconomically disadvantaged post-docs.

The university plans to put a registration stop on students who have been here for 5 years and have not completed their qualifying exams, or 8 years and have not completed their degree.

COGS:

- Active shooter workshop – they want all graduate students to go who have not gone through that training yet. We can host that within the department if we ask.
- Please consider attending the Managing your Digital Identity Workshop hosted by the Vet School
- If you are on a COGS related committee you can get reimbursed for parking for 3 hours in order to attend an event/meeting
- Reminder that the Family Resources Center has great offers for parents/families.

GEU: Focusing this semester on discrimination related issues (especially against international students). They are also filling grievances for those TAs/RAs who did not get paid for the first month of the semester. If you want to get more involved with GEU please let Ellie know.

Faculty Meeting: There will be a town hall meeting on the graduate program, for faculty only. The question they want to answer is “How does our department serve graduate student needs?” Stephen Hsu (VP for Research and Graduate Studies) attended the last faculty meeting. Big requests were for MS, genomics, and new/updated greenhouses.

Emily's Updates:

- Lets consider new fund raising ideas. For the past two years we've been making about \$100 (shirts and chili cook-off donations) and spending about \$200 (meeting snacks, tailgating)
 - o KBS has a holiday sale, we could have them sell shirts for us for a small cut.
- The new PLB chair is starting this January.
 - o This is a good opportunity to ask for funds/support for new programs (professional development, seminars, etc.)

Miscellaneous Topics:

The education wing of the department is growing and we should be sure to include them. One of the big suggestions was to include 1-2 lectures on biology education in the new PLB 801 course.