

# PLB GSO Meeting 9.13.2016

**Attending:** Teresa Clark, Meredith Zettlemyer, Colleen Friel, Christopher Warneke, Shawna Rowe, Joelyn de Lima, Adam Seroka, Sam Perez, Elie Siler, Klara Scharnagl, Carina Baskett, John Tran, Christina Azodi, Caitlyn Byron

**GEU (Elie):** Labor union that works on graduate health insurance, employment, sexual assault and harassment complaints, financial assistance (solidarity grants). Meets 6-7:30pm on Tuesdays (twice a month only) with free dinner provided. *Need someone to volunteer to represent PLB at the GEU meetings this year.*

To join the GEU: For TAs, enroll once with no fee. For students on fellowship or RAs, you cannot be a permanent member. You can enroll for a single year for \$40 a year (or \$20 a semester). The GEU does still represent graduate students on fellowship. If you want to join the GEU, there are membership cards in the Grad Student Lounge (PLB 240).; fill out the card and return it to Elie's mailbox or the GEU office.

## **COGS (Joelyn):**

- Funding for leadership and development grant: Original amount \$300, increased to \$500 funding. One possibility for this is a creative arts project.
- Legal services: We pay boatloads of money for lawyers. If you need legal services, go through COGS. Can handle up to misdemeanors.
- Discounted meal plans: You can buy up to 50 meals for a semester in \$7/meal in bunches of 10 meals (minimum \$70).
- City of East Lansing parking permits: Parking permits for the Hamster Cage are available for \$150/semester through COGS.
- Tickets for sporting events: see COGS website
- *Wicked* tickets: see Joelyn's email
- Child care funding is available through COGS grants.
- Graduate Academic Conference: Spring research conference with all Big 10 universities being invited. More information to come.
- Funding:
  1. Event funding: Applied for GSO meeting funding
  2. Applying for election funding for next month's official COGS election
  3. Collaborative funding: if we collaborate with another department on an event, each department apply for funding separately and get more money for that single event.

*We need someone to serve as a second for Joelyn, who can attend COGS meetings when she is out (commitment more in the spring).*

## **Graduate Organizations (John):**

- SACNAS: 1st meeting Thursday 5:30 in Anthony Hall room 1310
  - Society dedicated to fostering the success of Hispanic/Chicano and Native American scientists
  - National conference in October
  - Research symposium in the spring. First place winner will win an all-inclusive travel award to next year's SACNAS national conference
  - See their Facebook page for more info: [SACNAS-MSU Chapter](#)

- Alliance for Graduate Education: Meets first Thursday of every month in the evening, includes undergrad and grad students
  - Research conference October 22
  - Chalk talks at monthly meetings

**Seminar Committee (Ravi):**

- Who handles PRL and PLB lunches?
- Contact for PRL: Danny Ducat
- Sign up for lunches with seminar speakers
- Sign in at seminars on the sign in sheet for attendance (there may be a drawing for \$100 in travel funds, tbd)

**Graduate Committee (Christina):**

- Molecular Plant Program
  - Being discussed/in preliminary stages of planning the new program, which will incorporate genetics, BMS, CMSE, CMB and other molecular departments
  - Currently in curriculum stage: developing new classes and revamping old ones to give a more standardized coursework track for molecular plant science students
  - Planning to recruit this year and have a first cohort come in in two years
- RCR
  - Requirements changing but as of yet unknown how
  - Currently, first and second year students go to discussion-based seminars run by the Graduate School; this is followed by completing 3 hours of RCR discussion/year with your PI in years 3+
  - Will become part of yearly progress report due to lack of reporting
- Progress Reports
  - Need for more consistent, formal feedback from advisors
  - Current: Student Progress Report submitted to Alan and to everyone on your committee
  - Committee names, committee meeting, comprehensive exams date, brief research plan, brief personal assessment
  - Need to ask students what they think of usefulness of progress reports; send poll through graduate secretaries so as to be anonymous
  - Developing a committee review form to fill out during committee meetings regarding student progress
    - Separate more detailed form for advisor?
    - Maybe not fill out during committee meetings? Concerns over later thoughts, logistics, cramming it in at the end of a meeting, should not be minutes of the committee meeting
    - Short form for each committee member with specific questions to fill out at end of committee meetings for provide feedback to student
      - Brainstorm ideas for specific questions and feedback students want; Christina will send out a mock form for feedback via Google docs
      - Focus on student's career goals and how they align with progress to date (can skip certain questions at some meetings, like at exam)
      - Using a 1-5 scale with additional questions beneath regarding each skillset students are supposed to be developing (public speaking, presentations, statistics, etc.)

**Student Lecture Series:** Need someone to help with organization and to coordinate snacks for seminars.

**Social Committee (Christopher):**

- Public social calendar published online; will send out link and login information soon to add events
- GSO Google folder with social information to be shared soon
- Saturday September 24: PLB Tailgate
- Chillax time (Carina): coffee and knitting break
- Chili cook-off: tentative date Friday November 4
  - Potential conflict with PRL retreat Nov 3-4
  - Location ideas: BPS atrium, MPS atrium? Need non-carpeted space.

**How to improve the graduate student experience (Teresa)?**

- Feedback from advisor and committee (see "Progress Reports")
- Career preparation and professional development
  - Teresa will add a crowdsource document with careers to look for, what you need to prepare, and resources for career development to the GSO Google folder
  - "Soft skill" seminars on time management, leadership, team organization
  - Occupational handbook publication--Bureau of Statistics publishes salaries, outlook, preparation for some careers (Sam)
- Grad student mental health
  - Advertise workshops and invite faculty
  - Work life balance, stress management, counseling resources
  - COGS magnet with mental health resources to (i) put in mailboxes for students and request that they put it somewhere to be reused if they do not want it or (ii) give to PI to provide to their grad students as a resource
- Starting graduate student committees for each topic: contact Teresa if you're interested in forming/joining a committee
- Grad student and postdoc retreat: contact Nash or Anna
  - Funding from department?
  - Location away from campus? A one day or overnight option (Waterloo)?

## PLB GSO Meeting 10.11.2016

**Attending:** Teresa, Colleen, Christopher, Carina, Shawna, Ravi, Joelyn, Adam, Ava, Brian, Meredith, Danielle, Christina, Emily, Isaac

**COGS (Joelyn):**

- Joelyn elected as representative, with Teresa as her second.
- Department needs to read the Keeling Report and get back to Joelyn about the women's report

**Student Advisory Committee (Sam):**

- New RCR requirements to be implemented spring 2017
  - All RCR requirements will be online modules
  - 2 requirements: (i) 3 hour annual refresher starting in the 3rd year and (ii) 6 hours of discussion based training spread out over your whole time as a graduate student
  - Old students are allowed to switch to old requirements

- Alan must record RCR on Grad Plan, not the student
- Computational modeling and high performance computing certificates (there are courses)
- PMPS
- If graduating in spring 2017 or beyond, you have to submit grad plan and do degree audit system to receive degree, otherwise degree is delayed

#### **DAC (Colleen):**

- Budget announcement: the College of Natural Sciences is in debt. 1% of department budget is going to CNS.
- Changing labor laws: postdocs now classified as non-exempt, so if you are not over a certain salary threshold, you will have to be paid overtime or not work more than 40 hrs/week. Faculty need to work with HR.
- Global Impact Initiative (GII) searches are proceeding. Have a committee for genomics search, still need a chair.
- PLB Directory being set up in 2-3 years
- Want professors to get more awards to improve department rankings
- Switching faculty spaces in the works, but space is currently limited
- Molecular program: tbd

#### **Seminar committee (Ravi):**

- New system for signing up for lunches via email (but you can sign up with Leonora at the last minute if necessary)

#### **CDC (John):**

- Event on facilitating difficult dialogues in the classroom (Learn at Lunch Series) this week
  - Panel presentation and sharing experiences with attendees on addressing politics, race, global warming, etc. in class
- Subcommittees for racial equality and gender rights being formed
- Muslim support group being formed
- Listserv being developed--email John to be added

#### **Graduate Committee (Christina):**

- Landscape design and bright green with dark text won for t shirts
  - Cost to print per shirt is \$7-8
  - Charge \$12 for shirts
  - 1 for \$12, 2 for \$20? Or drop price later

#### **Faculty meeting (Teresa):**

- Postdoc salaries
- Changing postdocs to research assistants so that they can write their own grants
- Searches for genomics faculty
  - Plant Biology Biotechnology & Health Symposium
- GII search through KBS for a terrestrial scientist working at the LTER, this will be a senior faculty who will have a strong teaching role and be based at KBS. Opens in December.
- Plant Molecular and Systems Biology Program
  - Most faculty voted to support the new grad program going forward with submission to the Curriculum Committee
  - Suggesting more courses, like the -omics course

- Molecular plant physiology course
- Computational biology requirement
- Admitting 10 students/year?
  - Might fund those students for 1-2 years
  - Discussion on how to coordinate funding and admission with departments
- How to fit in existing students?
- Will having additional students admitted through this program make it harder for other students to get TA positions/funding?

**GEU (Shawna):**

- Get your keychains if you are a dues-paying members (20% off at Espresso Royale, Tin Can, Farmer's Market)
- PLB 90% TA membership

**Carina:**

- List of how to improve graduate program--if we don't agree with the list or want to add/delete points, who should students be talking to about student priorities for the program? Alan
  - For example, diversity and mental health
- Graduate Committee reads applications
  - GRE scores affect University and CNS funding and admissions
  - Usually based on writing and goals
  - How much do we care about rankings, and how much does that overshadow other priorities?
- Colleen will bring up following up on retreat questions at the DAC meeting next month

**Science Festival (Teresa):**

- Now accepting applications to present at the festival (groups or individual)--due in November
- Kids-oriented activities or giving a presentation
- Encouraging Astronomy on Tap-like events (can do joint presentations)
- Broader impacts for NSF
- Science Festival is in April, all month

**Chili Cookoff (Christopher):**

- COGS gave us funding--but with the date change we need to resubmit
- Room suggestions? Atrium
- Need to reserve long tables
- Need to design t-shirts for cooks ("i like plants" shirt?). Send suggestions to Christopher, Shawna, or Caitlyn
- Friday November 11 5pm-?
- Volunteer sign ups coming out soon

**PLB GSO listserv:** for social events. Must go through Sarah Seloske to get on regular PLB GRAD listserv. Opt out option is available for PLB GSO, so use PLB GRAD listserv if the information needs to get to everyone. If someone (postdoc, undergrad) wants access to the GSO listserv, email Bill.

**PLB GSO 11/8/2016**

- Attending: Teresa, Carina, Christina, Adam, Joelyn, Ravi, Shawna, Chad, Colleen, Anna, Meredith, Sam, Caitlyn
- Chili Cook Off—this Friday 11/11
  - Confirm/sign up to submit a chili
  - Pick up flyers from Christopher
  - Email Christopher or Shawna if you want to volunteer on Friday
  - T-shirts to be sold/picked up at chili cook off--Christina
- Student Lecture Series
  - This week: panel of older graduate students to discuss exams, funding, etc.
  - Someone should email the GSO listserv about the SLS in advance
  - Need a new SLS coordinator as of spring 2017 semester
    - Duties: keep up the google sign up sheet, send weekly email, encourage people to sign up
  - Setting a permanent time slot
- Graduate Committee (Christina)
  - No updates on a yearly presentation requirement
  - Moving forward on the committee meeting forms
    - Currently the working form is for all committee meetings with an exception for exams, etc. but discussion open on having different forms for each year (students would prefer one form). First year form might be different.
    - Laying out what is expected at committee meetings (especially the first one)
  - Proposed requirement to have a normal committee meeting every year
    - Oral exams spring semester 2<sup>nd</sup> year, written in fall 3<sup>rd</sup> year: set up leads to no committee meeting between 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year
    - Ecology perspective: 5<sup>th</sup> semester orals would be better because difficulty of balancing both exams and a field season in the spring
    - Paper date matters more—date the exams in the appropriate timeframe (regardless of when you actually take the exams)
    - Must be done with both exams by end of 5<sup>th</sup> semester (University requirement)
  - RCR requirements
    - Online modules in first year, in following years must do 3 hours of training in lab
    - Currently university requirements are unclear
    - Don't know whether the requirements will be retroactive
    - Be sure to log your RCR hours
    - Reporting issues—PI is in charge of this right now? Will be added to yearly review form.
    - RCR hours are by calendar year—due in December
- PLB Facebook page
  - Send posts to Leonora or post ourselves?
  - Used to advertise professional activities and to potential grad students
    - E.g., Biology on Tap, awards, passing exams, upcoming talks
- COGS (Joelyn)
  - “Engineering fee”--\$700 for some not obvious reason
  - Joelyn is now Chair for Advisory Council to the VP—looking for input on women's led agenda
- SAC (Sam)—meeting tomorrow
- CNS Curriculum Committee (Sam)

- Molecular Plant Science Program
  - Recruitment starts fall 2017
  - Goal: foundation for molecular plant science students
  - Expected enrollment 5-10 admitted students/year. Target 25-50 students at a time
  - 4 formal requirements: (1) PLB856, (2) PLB866 Molecular Plant Physiology, (3) 1 computational and quantitative biology course (3 options), (4) 1 elective course
  - Budget: internal reallocation and CNS funding request
  - Changes to plant biochemistry course
- Council of Diversity and Community (Teresa)
  - Racial Equality Subcommittee
  - Transgender Rights Subcommittee working with LGBTQ
  - Muslim Support Subcommittee working with Muslim Student Association
  - Undergraduate recruitment, targeted towards joining specific subcommittees—pass potential names on to Teresa
  - Diversity issues listserv on events and resources
    - Currently by invitation only—email Teresa if interested
    - Ideas for making it accessible: moderators, msu.edu email only for reporting purposes
  - Diversity Seminar Speaker Series Nov 14
  - Healing Spaces—town hall set up to discuss minority group needs
- Counseling Center has mental health workshops
  - Get in touch with Matt Hine to add Counseling Center resources to Grad Wellness
  - Joelyn is looking into these resources
- Faculty meeting (Teresa)
  - Ongoing faculty searches: KBS, Plant Resilience Initiative, and Global Initiative
    - Hires coming from 1% cut to funding?
  - Ongoing postdoc pay changes
  - BioSci162—data and models in undergraduate course
  - PLB TA resources at risk with MPS program—may affect funding/recruitment
  - Pushing for more TA requirements

## PLB GSO Meeting 12.13.2016

Attending; Teresa, Adam, Klara, Colleen, Shawna, Chad, Brian, Matt K., Christopher, Meredith, Christina, Sarah Seloske

### Sarah Seloske

- Contact for information, overrides, any help
- Guidance Committee Meetings
  - All information and new forms will be posted on PLB website
  - Confusion over material for 1<sup>st</sup> committee meeting: ask expectations of committee members
  - Year 1: coursework schedule
    - Suggestion to discuss comprehensive exam format? Might be too much for 1<sup>st</sup> meeting

- Year 2: oral exams for PhD students, research for Masters students (exams are your yearly required meeting)
- Year 3: research proposal for PhD students, research for Masters students
- At what point should you ask your committee members for exam topics?
  - Varies by professor
  - Suggestion (not a requirement!) to have a meeting or emails to decide on topics and assign them to each faculty member
  - Tips on “what to expect” to be posted on PLB website; point out to new faculty as well
- How strict is the 90 day window between the oral and written exam?
  - Should this guideline be removed, if most students don’t actually follow the 90 day rule (requirement is just to be done with both exams by 3<sup>rd</sup> year December)?
    - Summer doesn’t allow most students to do the oral exam in their 2<sup>nd</sup> year and the written exam in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year

**Constitution ratified:** [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HXemrvHw9mgX8\\_PY7cLATO6l1N2jt\\_Wx-ZBGPZ05kYw/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HXemrvHw9mgX8_PY7cLATO6l1N2jt_Wx-ZBGPZ05kYw/edit)

- New outreach coordinator position
  - Distributing information about outreach opportunities, getting the PLB GSO involved in ongoing and new outreach events, working with Leonora (Communications Coordinator) on communicating outreach events, sharing outreach news with the PLB GSO webmaster
  - Communicating our science with the public: Part of outreach position? How often? Work with Communications Coordinator (Leonora)
  - Proposed to work with herbarium on Science Festival and Darwin Day
- Elections
  - Do the COGS funds have to go to a meeting that is the actual election of a COGS representative, or can it be a meeting related to elections (general elections, learn-about-positions meetings, etc.)? Ask Joelyn the COGS rules on funding for elections.
  - Benefits of online elections vs. in person with COGS funding
  - Need to formalize nomination process
    - Set deadlines for nominations
    - Filling empty positions
  - Election meeting followed by a week of online/absentee voting? Absentee voting prior to election meeting? TBD if needed
    - Absentee votes sent to impartial observer (Graduate Secretary?)
    - This is all in the odd case that we need to vote someone in

Other:

- Soda money taken from fridge—use lockbox and lock the door
  - Next semester GSO meetings will be the third Wednesday of each month at 10:30am