

Plant Biology Graduate Student Organization Meetings Fall 2017

**Most recent meeting at top*

Plant Biology GSO meeting 13/12/2017

Attending: Christina Azodi, Teresa Clark, Joelyn de Lima, Colleen Friel, Jeremy Pardo, Shawna Rowe, Christopher Warneke, Elizabeth Yablon

- Department retreat (Teresa & Colleen)
 - Draft schedule only allots 1 hour (3-4pm) at the end of the retreat to a joint faculty-grad student session. They did allot grad student breakout sessions to discuss concerns amongst ourselves.
 - We need to decide if anyone wants to be in charge of these breakout sessions, or if we want to make a statement about our concerns regarding the format, or if we want to ask for grad students, faculty, and postdocs to attend all the afternoon sessions together
 - Current afternoon sessions:
 - Faculty development and mentoring
 - Workload balance (teaching responsibilities)
 - Graduate program (not explicitly grad student concerns)
 - Could our session be shifted to the first session? This might assist with the faculty mentoring discussion.
 - December DAC meeting was cancelled without notice
 - Grad Committee meets tomorrow, Dec 14, and will ask to move our session to after lunch. Conveyed by a student or by the Grad Director?
 - How many students will be attending? (3 currently)—concern about ability of grad students to attend this event—please push your lab members to attend
 - Discussion of changes to grad funding guidelines in the handbook
 - Colleen will email the DAC and make them aware of our concerns after the Grad Committee meeting
 - We would like to have a way for faculty to address our concerns
- Financial accounts (Joelyn)
 - Improving since the beginning of the semester—currently ~\$2K in the bank
 - Joelyn proposed a grad student loan relief program, if people need emergency money, if we have >\$3K
 - How do we ensure the money is paid back? A 1-month deadline?
- T-shirts (Christina)
 - 20-30 shirts left (few Women's, mostly Unisex)
- Recruitment (Christina)
 - Strong large pool, slightly more ecology applications (standard, as molecular students apply through BMB)
 - Applicants will be forwarded to the MPS program
 - Recruitment will likely be the first weekend in February
 - Similar schedule to previous years—we have all day Saturday to plan for
 - Talk to Christina about ideas or comments on recruitment-related activities
 - Any ideas other than hockey? Normally 1/3 splits between excited, ambivalent, or negative responses
 - Liability issues for physical activities?
 - Broad Museum?

- Housing tour gets good feedback—continue
- Tours of Lansing? (need vans)
- Board game night? Or option of hockey game or board game night?
 - In the Atrium? Games and pizza?
- Reception at a faculty member's house?
- Dietary issues—check with Anna
- Need to coordinate with EEBS events (&KBS)
- Need to clarify programs vs. departments for applicants in future years

Plant Biology GSO Meeting 15/11/2017

Attending: Christina Azodi, Carina Baskett, Teresa Clark, Colleen Friel, Emily Jennings, Jason Olsen, Isaac Osei-Bonsu, Jeremy Pardo, Shawna Rowe, Brian St. Aubin, Christopher Warneke, Elizabeth Yablon

- Chili-Cookoff Update (Christopher)
 - 181 people attended (~150 last year), with 25 chilis (most ever!)
 - Need to buy new cups for next year—250 is a good estimate
 - Feedback form to chefs and students sent out today
 - Bigger space for next year? Chefs couldn't move between the tables effectively. However, there are limited options.
 - Receipts will be turned in by social committee
 - Clean-up began before the cookoff was scheduled to end. Shorten the time to prevent people from showing up after the event has concluded.
- T-shirts (Christina)
 - Presold 200/250 ordered. 25 are leftover, in normal sizes. Talk to Christina if you want more shirts or know someone who would like to purchase one!
 - \$1400 total profits from t-shirt sales (assuming we sell the remaining 25)
 - Wear your shirts! Leftover shirts are usually sold when people see someone wearing one. When people compliment your shirt, tell them they can buy one for only \$10.
 - Chili-Cookoff was not a good time to pick up t-shirts. In the future, we could have them picked up at a GSO meeting or before a departmental seminar (also a good time for people to purchase shirts if they didn't before).
- Grad student funding follow up (Christina)
 - Request from Departmental Chair to change the wording on funding in the Grad Student Handbook. In the past, changes have come from either the grad students or the grad committee (this is the first time a request has come from the Chair to change the handbook). These changes need to come out of the committee.
 - The grad committee has not been aware of the number of concerns that grad students have and agree that this needs to be worked on. However, they look to the future and the budgetary costs of the University, and realize that there will be a time in the (potentially near) future when students won't always be able to be supported on TA.
 - Potential solutions:
 - When the TA form comes out, if you are in your 5+ year, you need to write a letter indicating that you need TA funding and why. Your annual review will also be considered.
 - 6th years get funding before 7th year students, etc. This may also be based on how many times you have received TA funding previously (with people that have

- gotten TA funding less often having greater priority than people who have been supported by TAships the entire time).
 - Lars and Tammy have written a draft of a change to the handbook that tries to account for this.
 - Grad student comments:
 - Do we feel comfortable with 6th year students always having priority over 7th year students?
 - How will this work between ecology and molecular labs? (Ecology students tend to take longer due to the nature of their studies.)
 - We need to account for unexpected delays that students may have (moving labs, health issues, etc.) in deciding what happens.
 - What do we do if there are no other funding options? What are the plans for that? Can students get part-time jobs (and still be successful grad students)? Christina will check with what the committee thinks about that.
 - This might affect 2-4 students/year, a small proportion of the department, but there are still a lot of students that have funding problems.
 - The committee is pushing for guidelines and firmer structures. Currently, funding decisions are delegated to the Chair, but the grad students would like this to shift to the Grad Director.
 - If this is going to be a problem, the PIs need to be aware of this situation and take on students accordingly. PIs may need to plan on personally funding any 6+ year students if there is no other funding available. PIs and committees need to set their expectations to a level in which a dissertation is achievable in 5 years.
- Student Advisory Committee (Elizabeth)
 - The University is aware of the problems with the federal tax plan. They don't have a good plan for what to do, as nothing has happened yet.
 - Call your representatives or use the GEU link to email your representatives.
- **Department Retreat (Colleen)**
 - **Scheduled for January 5, 2017, on campus**
 - Starting with a State of the Department address
 - Morning: undergrad curriculum and space issues
 - Grad students not expected to be there in the morning, but are welcome
 - Afternoon: grad student issues (with everyone together)
 - Grad student concerns are under the umbrella of grad student mentoring
 - Our intended breakout sessions could be incorporated into various mentoring breakout sessions. Everything we want to discuss needs to be framed in terms of goals for the retreat—we need to talk about this.
- WAWC survey being sent out today
- **Cookie Exchange (tentatively) scheduled for Monday, 12/11/2017, 4pm in the Grad Lounge**
- **December GSO meeting is rescheduled for 12/11, 10am in the Grad Lounge**
- **Recruitment is February 1-4, 2018. Block off your calendar!**

Plant Biology GSO Meeting 18/10/2017

Attending: Teresa, Meredith, Elizabeth, Colleen, Emily J., Joelyn, Caitlyn, Jason, Beth, Christina, Jeremy, Ravi, Christopher, Carina, Brian, Anna

- **COGS Representative Election: Joelyn de Lima**

- Proposed Constitution amendments—ALL PASSED
 - An updated Constitution will be posted on the GSO website (<https://plantbiology.natsci.msu.edu/grad-program/graduate-student-organization/plb-gso-constitution/>)
 - We will reregister the new Constitution with Student Services next year
 - Amendment 1: Increase accountability of Treasurer
 - 4.4.1: Financial Meetings: Treasurer Remains in Position
 - 4.4.2: Financial Meetings: Treasurer Turnover
 - Amendment 2: Provide open access to PLB GSO financial account(s)
 - 4.4.3: Transparency of Financial Account(s)
 - Amendment 3 To clarify the need of the Treasurer to maintain clear records of all financial transactions on the PLB GSO account(s)
 - 4.4.4: Maintenance of Financial Records
 - Amendment 4: Update the description of the Treasurer’s responsibilities to account for the preceding amendments
 - Amendment 5: To clarify the role of the President in the absence of a Treasurer
 - Amendment 6: To remove the position of “Representative to the PLB Curriculum Committee” from the Constitution
 - Amendment 7: To revise the description of the Outreach Coordinator as well as to indicate that there can be more than one Outreach Coordinator
 - Amendment 8: Provided that any of the preceding amendment have passed, this amendment is to revise the date on which the Constitution was most recently amended
- Chili Cook-Off – November 3rd
 - Planning on BPS Atrium
 - Volunteers needed to label cups (will be in PLB 240, with snacks!)
- T-shirt sales
 - 197 shirts sold—4x as many as last year
 - 2015 (\$10) and 2016 (\$8) t-shirts for sale—contact Christina
- Department retreat: Friday, Jan 5
 - Grad student attendance recommended!
 - Grad programs
 - Diane Ebert-May is officially the new Grad Director as of Nov 1
 - Space/facilities
 - Undergraduate program (size concerns)
 - Hiring and faculty development
 - Recommended mentoring and lab management
 - Suggested topics from grad students:
 - Time to finish
 - TA positions & funding deadlines
 - Mentoring & lab management
 - Mental health
 - Feedback on research & professional development
 - Need to have faculty & grad student joint discussion or small focus groups of faculty & students with particular topics (as opposed to the separate grad event previously used)
 - Break-out sessions w/ brief presentations (<5 mins) on the importance/points of each topic beforehand
 - Goal of each breakout should be to have a rough outline of next steps (form—main problems, recommendations, actions?)

- Post discussion points online to hold accountable?
 - Survey along the lines of EEBB's sent out to the entire department beforehand?
 - ID 1 faculty member in advance who cares about each issue
- Outreach (Beth)
 - Blog—need to look into rules for departments
- Seminar Committee (Ravi)
 - Open slots in spring semester—call out for postdocs
 - One external spot open in spring semester—reserved for a grad-nominated speaker
 - New nominations will be open (including the 2nd option from last fall)
 - Should be a US researcher
 - Working on setting up video streaming
 - Seminar time might change again in fall 2018
- GEU (Shawna)
 - General membership meeting: Oct 27 5:30pm at Allen St. Marketplace
 - Bargaining contract with MSU upcoming in fall 2018
 - Needs membership—TA membership & associate membership
 - If you're filled out a yellow card at any point, you're in the system, so you're automatically enrolled if you are a TA (dues come out of pay automatically)
 - Associate membership must be updated yearly (\$40)
 - Works on salaries, funding, health insurance, etc.

Plant Biology GSO Meeting 20/09/2017

Attending: Elizabeth, Erika, Teresa, Meredith, Joelyn, Caitlyn, Christopher, Brian, Christina, Isaac, Beth, Danielle, Tara, Jeremy, Jason, Emily

- Officer positions
 - Officers:
 - President - Teresa Clark
 - Treasurer - Joelyn de Lima
 - Secretary - Meredith Zettlemyer
 - Social Chairs - Christopher Warneke, Caitlyn Byron, Danielle Young
 - Representatives:
 - SAC Representative - Elizabeth Yablon
 - CDC Representative - Jason Olsen
 - GEU Representative - Shawna Rowe
 - DAC Representative- Colleen Friel
 - PLB Graduate Committee Representative - Christina Azodi
 - PLB Seminar Committee Representative - Ravi Ranjan
 - Other Positions:
 - Outreach Coordinator - Beth Moore
 - T-shirt Coordinator - Christina Azodi
 - SLS Coordinator - Jeremy Pardo

- Webmaster - Meredith Zettlemoyer
- Grad Lounge Soda & GSO Meeting Snacks Coordinator – Emily Jennings
- KBS Liaisons to the PLB GSO - Ravi Ranjan, Meredith Zettlemoyer

New Officers: Send Meredith (zettlem2@msu.edu) a photo (and any updates to your position that you would like included on the [GSO website](#)).

- Plant Sciences t-shirt (Christina)
 - Not prepaying for t-shirts this year—flat rate this year
 - Vote for color scheme coming up
 - Chili Cook-off sales—preorder some, or have sale sign ups
 - Setting up a PayPal system to streamline money collection
- Budget (Joelyn)
 - <\$700 in the bank this year
 - **Proposed amendments to Constitution:**
 - Make the accounts public ([link](#))
 - Treasurer should meet with at least one other officer at the beginning of the year to go over the accounts
 - At the end of the year, the outgoing treasurer, incoming treasurer, and one other officer should meet to review the accounts
- **Chili Cook-off November 3rd** (Christopher and Caitlyn)
 - Joelyn is working on COGS funding (going off same funding as 2016)
 - Ads and sign-ups for cooks coming up
 - Location: ~~BPS?~~ Or MPS and stage the chili in the auditorium room?
 - Separating chilis (A-G, by vegetarian v. meat.) to avoid mountains of chilis
 - Need 2800 more cups—can reallocate from t-shirt money
 - **Will need volunteers to label chili cups--Danielle is coordinating volunteers**
- **PLB Tailgate this Saturday 9/23/2017—please bring food!**
 - Note on football games: there are now only 7 parking passes/department to park on game days, so you are unlikely to be able use that to work on campus on game days
- SPLS talk next Wednesday, 12pm—Teresa Clark
- Seminar Series (Ravi)
 - PLB only this year
 - Times have changed—now 3:30pm on Fridays
 - Half internal (postdocs and faculty), half external speakers
 - External speakers have lunches available—email Ravi to sign up for lunch (ranjanra@msu.edu)
- Outreach (Beth)
 - Girls’ STEM day event
 - Need volunteers for Darwin Day at the MSU Museum—PLB will have its 1st ever booth
 - Girls’ Math & Science Day (w/ GWIS) is in March 2018
 - Contact john3784@msu.edu
- Graduate Director Search (Teresa)
 - Lars Brudvig currently filling in
 - Annual meetings for 2017 with Andy Jarosz
 - **Diane Ebert-May is considering being the next graduate director**—she will be invited to October GSO meeting to get to know the graduate students and concerns

- Working remotely in the springs (but planning to be on campus for major events)
- Working on putting together committee evaluation forms (progress, recommendations, career development).
 - Discussion of adding progress towards degree section to that form (to replace annual meetings?)
 - Suggestion to put a box on the form to indicate whether you want to meet with the graduate director that year (required meetings years 1-2 and last year; optional other years?) to discuss graduation requirements
- Secretary positions might be changing
- Departmental retreat planned for January 2018
 - Focus on budget, TA positions, online courses