

## Plant Biology Graduate Student Organization Meetings Spring Semester 2013

### February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Members Present: Sam, Dani, Carina, Natalia, Lisa, Anna, Dan B., Kristen, Dave M., Matt J., Chad, Jeff S., Kent

#### Committee Updates

COGS (Kent): Heads from D.C. and government say funding may be delayed. Information regarding fiscal cliff was discussed. There is a potential of shortening up longer term grants.

T-shirt/Soda Committee: Fridge has been restocked.

Dean's Student Advisory Council (Jeff): Recruitment meeting was discussed. PLB 999 credits that we enroll in were discussed as well. How many do you need to be "full-time"? Answers varied from 3 credits to 6 credits. He said try to keep those minimal because somebody is charged. Don't enroll for more than necessary because it could change how much things cost. Contact Dean of Graduate School for more information.

Graduate Committee (Chad Zirbel): Put up people for UEF/UDF and CNS fellowships. We've received five so far.

Diversity Committee (Dan Brickley): Dean decided to fund one "diverse" seminar speaker per semester for the entire college. That will fund their talk, but they'll also have to give a talk to the whole college, and agree to meet with any interested graduate students. Recruiting weekend is this weekend. Van driver positions are filled.

Social Committee (Anna Groves): Seeking input regarding Chili Cook-off. Date is still up in the air. We had some people request that we don't have the chili cook-off in April. April also coincides with another MSU event that is expected to book every available space. Potential dates could be in March, so we need to contact COGS soon regarding funding. Emily will help with the application with funding. COGS is meeting for a finance committee meeting soon, so we should get the application in before this Friday. General idea is to have it on a Friday afternoon. Then, if we obtain COGS funding it is open to the public to sign up. We should consider having participation prizes as well. Dan proposed we do a volunteer activity as a group. Potentially we could do invasive species removal or clean-up in a regional park. Group consensus that we should have a St. Patty's Day bar crawl.

Faculty Search Committee (Colin Kremer): Turn in feedback form a.s.a.p. so that Colin can represent us at the Thursday meeting with faculty. Turn them in by Tuesday night at the latest. There have been issues with the feedback form. Keep trying to open the feedback form until it works. Email Colin if you can't get it to work. As a committee, the goal is to come up with a specific recommendation to the chair of the department. At that point, the chair communicates with University administration.

### February 21, 2013

- News on the faculty hire:
  - After a lot of debate, the faculty decided to make an offer to Dr. Brandvain only. Dr. Brandvain has since been invited back to MSU, and we are still waiting to hear his response. If Dr. Brandvain does not accept the offer, no other candidate will be offered the position and another search will take place in the coming year(s)

- Changes in the PLB By-Laws:
  - As originally written, graduate students are invited to sit on committees, but ARE NOT voting members.
  - After considerable debate, the faculty voted to change the by-laws to convey that grads are allowed to be voting members on committees.
  - Further, it was decided to add a statement in the by-laws saying that if post-docs form some sort of body, they may send a representative to the faculty meetings.

### March 20, 2013

- Faculty and Post-Doc mentorship awards through CNS
  - If you would like to nominate a young faculty member and/or a post-doc who you believe has been an exceptional mentor and role model, please fill out the application that Dr. Triemer sent out earlier
    - NOTE: Kristen will be forwarding the email out again later this evening.
    - Due by **APRIL 15**
- Previously, all faculty were emailed about when a student's comprehensive exam was scheduled (not just the proposal defense, but the oral portion too!). The faculty voted to stop this practice and only send out an announcement for public proposal defenses
- New graduate students:
  - The department is still waiting to hear back from several students
  - The current acceptance rate is about 40%, which is on par with other years
- Dr. Triemer presented information about the President Simon's Plan for the University, which has been termed "Bolder by Design"
  - Here's a link to an article about it in the State News if you want to read more: <http://statenews.com/article/2013/01/pres-simon-lays-out-bolder-by-design-plan-for-future>

### Other announcements:

- Talked about where we can sell more t-shirts. Maybe at Science Festival? Some people didn't know what Science Festival is. It is taking place from April 12-21. The schedule is here: <http://sciencefestival.msu.edu/> They still need more general volunteers.

### April 1, 2013

Members present: Matt J., Jeff S., Dave M., Sam, Lisa, Natalia, Chad, Dan B., Anna, Dani

Announcements: We will have a GSO meeting the first week of May (finals week).

### Committee Updates:

Matt - DAC

- Deciding which company to go with for designing a new PLB website. Faculty don't like updating their pages on the current website because it's hard to do, and it's outdated. Will decide pretty soon, and they will set it up, then the department can handle all updating information.

- Talk of nominating one or two people for departmental distinguished professors. Might put up two. If both get the award, they are nominated for the University Distinguished Professor award.

#### Dave - GEU

- Since right to work proposal passed, GEU is trying to extend current contract with the University before they have to deal with the effects of that. The extension is probably not going to happen. Current contract goes until May 2015.
- Last year, the university switched from quarterly payments for dependents on Aetna health insurance to once a year payments. GEU is trying to switch it back to quarterly. University lets you get a loan if you want to pay installments, but they charge interest. GEU might also try to make it a no-interest loan.
- For TAships, people should have found out by March 31 for summer and by April 22 for fall TAships. If you haven't heard by then, the GEU wants to hear about it. The credit-hours available is the same situation as it was in the fall. They are still working on a permanent solution, as that is only temporary.

#### Jeff – DSAC

- College got \$1.5 million to increase number of TAs in biology. Some graduate programs in departments could become larger because they can offer more TA slots. Probably won't be for BioSci - that program is set.
- Trying to increase more lab support for upper division classes. 75% of undergraduates in the sciences are majoring in biology, and there's not enough TA support.

#### Lisa and Anna - Chili Cookoff recap

- Chili Cookoff last Friday was very successful. We ended up getting \$1500 from COGS, so we were able to offer better prizes and get more supplies than last year. We had 14 chili entrants, and about 90 people came to eat chili. All entrants received a customized PLB Chili Cookoff Apron that Dave did a great job setting up. We sold two t-shirts, and received \$40 in donations.
- Congratulations again to our winners: Dan Brickley (best name), Patric Vaelli (best spice), Alita Burmeister (best vegetarian chili), and Michael Steury/Brock Humphries (best meat chili)!
- Please, if anyone wants any or all leftover sour cream or cheese, help yourself in the PLB grad lounge or let Anna know.
- LOST AND FOUND: A can opener (did someone sneak a can of chili in?) and a **\*\*LAB NOTEBOOK THAT LOOKS IMPORTANT\*\*** The notebook is all human/cell biology type notes from this semester.

#### Anna - Social Committee

- No new updates on having a volunteer event for a park clean-up or restoration activity. -She wants to know about moving the chili cookoff to the fall. Everyone seems to agree that would be fine. She received several complaints that we held it during Lent, and turnout was probably lower than normal because some people were already traveling for Easter weekend. Past years, people didn't like it being the last week in April, right before finals.
- We should have the social chair in charge of the event the previous year then fill out a COGS funding form in the spring, to make sure it can be submitted first thing in the fall, since it takes us a while to choose a new social chair in September.

- Anna says we shouldn't have a new person be in charge of the chili cookoff because it's too hard to figure things out without seeing it happen the year before.
- She is volunteering to be in charge of it next year, whether or not she is social chair. She is taking really good notes of all stages of the process.
- We will have a t-shirt wearing day next Friday (April 12). Anna will email us reminders! Tell people we still have more shirts for sale from the past two year's designs and the i like plants shirts, as well as hats.

Dan - CNS Diversity Council

- Approved supporting one diverse seminar speaker each semester. They are accepting applications for next year. If we think of someone who is diverse or works for diversity and is an interesting scientist, we could get them funded to come. They would get an honorarium, and give a seminar for PLB, and one for the college about work-life-career issues. They will host one person each semester, but it can be from any department.
- They wouldn't have to be fit into our normal PLB seminar series if there is no space, he thinks. The plant bio-related seminar could be held on a different day.

Chad - Graduate Committee

- Some students accepted, others declined, and others we are waiting to hear from. We got quite a few UDF and Plant Science Fellowships to offer them. We aren't offering any 1<sup>st</sup>-year grad students TAs. Some faculty also said they could fund new students that were accepted.

Kristen - PLB Seminar Committee & faculty meeting minutes

- For the grad-nominated seminar speaker, here were our top three choices, in order:  
David Ackerly  
Maureen Stanton  
Diane Campbell  
She'll be emailing Dr. Ackerly and waiting to hear his reply to our offer. She'll keep you all posted!

**May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

Members Present: Kristen, Carina, Anna, Dani, Jeff, Emily D.

Updates:

Faculty Meeting Representative (Kristen) – Meeting cancelled last month. No updates.

Social Committee (Anna) – Chili cook-off reimbursements are all being processed. Suggestion: Consider getting a university account for PLB GSO, instead of using a MSUFCU account, but unsure which is easier logistically for reimbursements (for things like chili cook-off).

Soda/T-shirt Committee (Dan absent): Emily Dittmar volunteered to take care of soda over the summer.

