

## MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1:30 pm Friday 29 January 2016

Stewart Biology Building W4/12

### ATTENDANCE

**Academic Staff:** G. Bell, G. Brown, T. Bureau, L. Chapman, D. Dankort, J. Dent, A. Gonzalez, I. Gregory-Eaves, S. Hekimi, M. Hendricks, P. Lasko, M. Lechowicz, B. Leung, L. Nilson, N. Price, R. Reyes-Lamothe, R. Roy, J. Sakata, F. Schöck, D. Schoen, A. Watt, T. Western, S. Woolley, M. Zetka, H. Zheng

**Graduate Students:** M.R. Bradley-Gill

**Department:** M. Colonna, N. Nelson, J. Pandur, L. Sabaz, C. Smith, A. Spilker, L. Testa

**Approval of Agenda dated 29 January 2016 – G. Bell**

**Motion to approve:** D. Dankort

**Seconded by:** P. Lasko

**Voting on motion:** All in favor. Motion carried.

**Approval of Minutes dated 18 December 2015 – G. Bell**

**Motion to approve:** D. Dankort

**Seconded by:** M. Lechowicz

**Voting on Motion:** All in favor. Motion carried.

---

### Matters Arising – G. Bell

The architects were commissioned to produce a report by 31 December 2015 but have not done so. Graham Bell has a meeting next week with the Dean about the NFOE report and he will either provide a copy of the report or will explain why it is not ready yet.

---

### **Molecular Biology Search Update – G. Bell**

Stephanie Weber has agreed to be appointed Assistant Professor in the Biology Department and will begin 1 August 2016.

---

### **Canada Wide Science Fair – G. Bell**

There are local science fairs (at high schools and such) and the winners of those go to regional science fairs, and the winners of those go to provincial science fairs, and the winners of those go to the Canada wide science fair. These are really good projects from high school students across Canada. This is most likely the last time it will be held in Montreal in the foreseeable future. This is a good opportunity for us to participate in the event and probably a good recruiting ground. The event needs a lot of support, particularly judges and volunteers of different kinds.

---

### **Neuro Search Update – J. Dent**

The search committee met and approved a short list of 4 interviewees: Jessica Cande, Andrew Seeds, Pavan Ramdya and Sara Wasserman. Three of them accepted our invitation and Sara Wasserman had already accepted a position at another University. The committee met again in early January to find a replacement to interview and decided on Tomoko Oyama from Janelia Farm. The committee will meet again after all 4 candidates have been interviewed in the Department to come up with a ranked list.

---

### **Graduate Training Committee – L. Chapman**

Allocation of Responsibilities (Reminder)

Ancil Gittens

- Registration/Courses
- Maintain Current Graduate Student List
- Supervisory Committee
- PhD Qualifying Examination
- PhD Seminar
- Thesis Submission
- Transfer of Program from Master to PhD
- Student Letters i.e. International Students require letters for renewal of their CAQ etc.
- External Awards i.e. NSERC, CIHR, FQRNT, etc.
- Internal Awards from McGill/Faculty
- Updating Graduate Calendar
- Provide Graduate Information updates to Webmaster for revisions to be made

Sonal Patel

- Payment of Student Stipends
- Coordination of Great Awards and Research Travel Awards
- \*\* Sonal also handles PDF appointments

Susan Gabe

- Coordination of Teaching Assistants (TA) posting jobs, contacting professors, sending job offers to students, preparation of TA student lists, union involvement, etc.

Lucy Scigliano

- Payment of Teaching Assistants

\*\*Please let Ancil and Sonal know if your graduate student receives a new fellowship or award

Recruitment for 2015-2016

September 2015: 27 graduate students (16 MSc, 11 PhD)

January 2016: 3 graduate students (2 MSc, 1 PhD)

Recruitment for 2016-2017

International students:

- January 15th for September registration
- August 15th for January registration

Canadian residents and citizens:

- March 15th for September registration (*For students applying for NSERC CGSM: 21 January 2016*)
- October 15th for January registration

Fall Admissions

Files can be viewed online: <https://nimbus.mcgill.ca/uApply/review/dashboard>

The names are not in alphabetical order but you can use the search tab to be quicker. If you have any problems with the link or files, please contact Ancil. We will create a spreadsheet of applicant names and the potential supervisors that they listed after the March deadline.

Reminder: PhD applicants without a masters must have a CGPA of 3.5/4 to be fast tracked to PhD 1.

When you have made the decision to accept a student you MUST send Ancil an email conveying your intentions. Ancil will then calculate the GPA, initiate the acceptance on the system, and prepare the Support Form.

Recruitment Awards (2016-2017)

Each incoming MSc student receives \$2500, each incoming PhD student receives \$5000. Students transferring from MSc to PhD receive \$2500 (i.e. since they already received \$2500 when they entered the program). *These funds are paid directly to the student and do not reduce the supervisor's contribution.*

#### Top ups to holders of major awards (2016-2017)

Biology provides top-up awards of \$2500 to students with major fellowships (greater than or equal to \$7500/year). These can be incoming students, or students who are already here but have just been awarded their first fellowship. Exclusions: We are not topping up students who get a second award. *These funds are paid directly to the student and do not reduce the supervisor's contribution.*

#### International Tuition Differential Awards

Approximately \$11,508 for 2016-2017. Tuition differential fee waivers are paid for by Faculty of Science and provided to the department as part of our Graduate Excellence Funding. However, this does not mean that there is an unlimited number of waivers.

International tuition fee funds that each Faculty of Science department receives will be determined by the number of students paying international student fees the year before.

Process: Faculty were invited to submit the names of International PhD students that they would like to be considered for an ITDA. The GTC meets in early February and selects the awardees for September 2016 and notifies the potential supervisor. This is then included in the support form and the letter. There will be another call for these awards in the fall for January 2017 admissions.

#### Writing-Year Awards for PhD Students

-Intended to provide dedicated writing time to PhD students who are in their final year, to allow them to focus on writing their PhD dissertations and assist in meeting thesis submission deadlines.

-Applications evaluated based on academic excellence and justification for award (e.g., financial need, pending post-doctoral fellow position). Previous TA workload will be considered in evaluating need, but TA experience is not required.

#### GREAT - Graduate Research Enhancement and Travel Awards (for conferences)

Graduate travel awards are given to students who will travel to present their research at a scientific conference. The amount of the award is \$500. Priority will be given to students who have not received an award in the past. The application deadline is now a rolling deadline.

#### Research Travel Awards for Biology Graduate Students (not for conferences)

Registered fulltime in a graduate degree program and traveling for the purpose of:

- Research
- Field work
- Learning about methodologies or research techniques
- Workshops or short courses
- Traveling internationally or within Canada
- Not receiving funds from the Student Exchange & Study Away (SESA) program
- Not traveling to attend a conference

2<sup>nd</sup> Call was just sent out for January - August 2016. Application deadline is February 10th, 2016. Note applications go to Sonal.

**Reminders:**

Graduate students should have a committee meeting annually. Please make sure that Ancil receives a copy of the committee meeting form (and progress report/proposal). First SC meeting should take place within 6 months.

Emails will be sent next week from Ancil for participation on upcoming defenses. With prompt responses, the earliest defenses can be scheduled is February 29<sup>th</sup>.

---

**Succession of the Chair Search Committee – G. Bell**

Graham Bell is stepping down as Chair when his term ends 31 May 2016. To allow for an orderly transition to the next Chair, a procedure was devised whereby the RPT committee nominated a selection committee who would consult widely and then deliver a recommendation to assembly which would subsequently be carried to the Dean. The chair of the search committee is Siegfried Hekimi.

**Report of the Selection Committee by S. Hekimi**

A procedure was agreed upon to identify a new Chair, this was done at the Retreat. The intention of the procedure was to avoid any divisiveness and allow for broad consultation to arrive today with a single name the department could endorse. The other intention is to make sure the choice of Chairman rests with the department, and not external to the department.

The RPT committee (S. Hekimi, L. Chapman, D. Schoen, D. Dankort and G. Fussmann) met without the current chair to identify a search committee composed of T. Western, I. Gregory-Eaves, N. Price, J. Dent and S. Hekimi as Chairman. By email S. Hekimi solicited a nomination from all academic staff, with self-nomination being allowed. A total of 9 candidates were nominated by 11 people. S. Hekimi met with each of the 9 candidates personally to try to convince them to stand as candidates. In the end only 4 people forwarded their CV to the committee for consideration. By the time the meetings were organized between the candidates and the search committee, 2 of the 4 candidates dropped out for personal reasons so we were left with 2 candidates.

The committee met with each of the candidates for about 2 hours each to ask for an introductory statement and to grill them on many subjects, including tenure, merit raises, non-academic staff, teaching assignments, graduate teaching, core teaching, fairness in spending departmental resources, transparency and dissemination of decisions, hiring practices, and integration across the groups. We arranged for individual meetings of the members of the search committee with academic staff to get feedback about the 2 candidates. The individual feedback was brought back and shared with the committee. The feedback indicated a general consensus that everyone seemed happy with either of the 2 candidates but the committee felt there was a clear preference for one candidate – this was the feeling of each committee member.

After the vote, S. Hekimi will inform the Dean about the result of the vote and provide supporting documentation regarding the process involved in reaching the decision. The Dean will then contact all academic staff to provide an opportunity for them to voice any concerns. The Dean will wait for 2 weeks

to allow ample time for people to get in touch with him, and then he will ratify the decision we make today at assembly.

**Motion to endorse G. Fussmann as the next Chair - S. Hekimi**

**Motion to approve:** P. Lasko

**Seconded by:** D. Dankort

**Voting on Motion:** All in favor. Motion carried

---

**Motion to adjourn - G. Bell**

**Motion to approve:** P. Lasko

**Seconded by:** I. Gregory-Eaves

**Voting on Motion:** All in favor. Motion carried

Meeting adjourned.