

**BGSA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
Tuesday November 27, 2014 (4:30PM)  
Stewart W4/12

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**Agenda**

1. Approval of Agenda

**B.G.S.A. Business**

2. Travel Grant Decision M-R Bradley-Gill
3. BGSA Room M-R Bradley-Gill
4. Upcoming events
  - a. Winter Orientation
  - b. CEEB
  - c. Molecular Symposium

**Reports by Committees**

5. PGSS Rep Victor Frankel
6. AGSEM Rep Sunci Avlijas and Andrea Morden

**Department Business**

7. Cyclical Review Sarah Baldwin
8. Stewart Biology Building Update Katie Millette

9. Any other business
  10. Adjournment
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**BGSA BUSINESS**

**2. TRAVEL GRANT DECISION**

Vote to be sent out to BGSA members to determine if we should:

- A. Keep award as is, travel grant will remain as a random draw to go towards conference travel OR
- B. Or use the \$400 travel grant for another academic purpose (such as an award for presentations at CEEB/Molecular Symposium)?

Mary-Rose will send out referendum to all BGSA members in the next few weeks

**3. BGSA ROOM**

Yay, we are getting a BGSA room! This will be great for keeping all BGSA related paperwork/documents in a common space. Will be one of the rooms near second cup, in the same hallway. Access is going to be key based, details still being worked out for this (who gets to hold on to the keys, etc.). Not exactly sure at the moment how the space will be used. As a office, lounge? Mary-Rose asked for people to send her e-mails if they have suggestions for it.

#### 4. UPCOMING EVENTS

- a) **Holiday party:** Dec 10
- b) **Winter orientation:** in January. More details to come.
- c) **Winter retreat:** Feb 27<sup>th</sup>
- d) **CEEB:** checked in with ecology students, organizational meeting was held Scott said
- e) **Molecular Symposium:** More info to come

### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

#### 5. PGSS REP: VICTOR FRANKEL

- a) **Canadian Federation of Students (CFS)** is the lobbying board for students at the government level. In January, there will be a paper ballot referendum held on campus to decide whether PGSS members wish to remain members of CFS.
- b) **PGSS is prioritizing support for mental health services:** make mental health services more accessible. Currently the waiting time for students to see a mental health professional at McGill can be very long.
- c) **McGill's divestment from fossil fuels:** Being voted on next week by board of governors. Victor has approached professors to sign on to this. Over 100 profs on board.
- d) **Secretary general of PGSS has been censured:** Because of lack of communication with councilors and executives and behavior at Thompson house.

#### 6. AGSEM REP ANDREA MORDEN

- a) **Bargaining and unionization drive:** Undergraduate teaching support positions can be unionized at McGill if we reach 50% of signing cards. Contact Andrea if you want to help people sign membership cards.
- b) **Campaign against austerity:** At AGSEM General Assembly, AGSEM adopted a mandate to be an active part of the issues surrounding austerity. To speak out against the austerity measures put into place by the government. To speak out against the cuts.
- c) **Bargaining update:** Bargaining committee monetary negotiations – Biology Department not going to be taking care of getting AGSEM contract signatures, AGSEM now responsible for this.

### DEPARTMENT BUSINESS

#### 7. CYCLICAL REVIEW: SARAH BALDWIN

What is the cyclical review? An external group comes in to evaluate the Biology Department (every 10 years?). The Dept. has to put together a self-study document. The post survey results are now on the BGSA website. To gather this information, we sent a survey to the graduate students in this department. We asked questions relating to:

1. Application process
2. Advisory support
3. Teaching opportunities

4. Finances
5. Departmental staff support
6. Career preparation
7. Quality and effectiveness of the graduate program

Sarah mentioned some of the highlights brought forth in the review:

- Students are happy to start in a single lab
- Feeling that the department is fragmented (i.e. disconnect between molecular, ecology, neurobiology, etc.)
- Feeling that students are not exposed enough to committee members, other expertise in the dept., etc.
- Graduate students are not TAing surprisingly not because of lab budget cuts but because their supervisors won't let them
- Students feel that funding arrangements seem to be inconsistent
- Career preparation: Dept. feels like they are not responsible for this

#### **8) STEWART BIOLOGY BUILDING UPDATE: KATIE MILLITTE**

Katie is on feasibility committee for decisions on the fate of the Stewart Biology building. Main message of report by the committee (report was 438 pages long): Something needs to be done! Goal of the report: Consider all problems and solutions (cost, disruptions, etc.) that work would cause. Could gut the building to remove asbestos in ceilings and walls, starting with South block. Another option is for psychology students to move out so we can use their space. Best cost effective solution: to gut buildings in the next 3-5 years

**9) Any other business:** None

**10) Meeting adjournment**