SNR GSA Meeting

December 9, 2013

Minutes:

1. Graduate committee rep—Katja Koehler-Cole

        a. **SNR Stipends**—Katja reported that the information gathered by the ad-hoc committee was presented to the graduate committee, and they were deliberating (and probably accepting) our suggestion to raise **SNR assistantships** to $18,000 for MS and $20,500 for PhD. However, Dr. Carroll talked at length about the SNR stipends, mainly about how they are set up in a very confusing manner at this point. He has requested that the Graduate Committee do a full re-working of the system, and we will have more to report back next semester. He clarified those students who are grant funded deal directly with their advisors to negotiate pay, and not with the School. If the pay raise does go through, it will apply only for incoming students on SNR assistantships.

        b. **Specializations within SNR**—Not all specializations are going away, but mainly the ones that are out-of-date according to the courses available on the SNR website. If classes you need for a specialization are not on the course list, then that specialization probably will be removed—but be sure to speak with your advisor!

 c. Muhammad requested that SNR start a discussion about **certifications for graduate students**, specifically mentioning GIS certification. It was suggested that summer courses, spring break courses, or some other between-class and field season courses could work well. John liked this idea, especially in light of specializations being removed, and mentioned that this is part of his long-term plan. It could be important in the job market to be able to say "I am certified in GIS/Stats/Wildlife/etc.". We will request that Katja bring this up with the Graduate Committee to determine how to move forward.

2. **Travel grants** awarded to Juliana Dai and Katja Koehler-Cole for Fall 2013, next 2 in Spring—**applications open February 21st, 2014** and must be received March 21st, 2014. It may be possible to receive funds after a conference if there are not enough applicants, but priority will be given to those who have not yet attended the conference.

a. **Research-related travel funds** (not conference travel)—Those present decided unanimously that we change the wording of our SNRGSA travel funds to include research-related travel (e.g., “The School of Natural Resources Graduate Student Association travel grant supports graduate students traveling to a conference to present their scholarly work or to a field site to conduct research”). This wording will be updated in all relevant locations. If in the SNRGSA Constitution, we may need to ratify the new wording next semester.

b. **Graduate committee has travel funds! $400 dollars**, please see <http://unlcms.unl.edu/snr/gsa/travel-grants> for more information on how to apply. If we don’t use these dollars, they may go away!

3. UNLGSA Rep—Maggi

        a. Healthcare RFP—will be sitting on committee next semester to help with new contract to provide student health coverage.

4. Treasurer’s Report—Katja Koehler-Cole—absent from meeting, but no new transactions outside food for Open House and today’s meeting

5. Fundraising—Ilonka Zlatar—idea for next semester is to have a series of **competitions** with **School of Biological Sciences to raise funds**. Whoever wins the competition will keep the funds raised for that particular day/game/match/etc.

 a. Funds can be used to **support SNRGSA efforts to provide travel and/or research grants**, as well as social activities for graduate students. This could be a great way to bolster funding for graduate students to attend professional conferences and get extra field research funds. If you want to help plan these competitions (anything from soccer matches to card games) contact Ilonka at ilonka.zlatar@gmail.com.

6. Social Chair—Jocelyn Olney

        a. **Wine and cheese in January**, details will be forthcoming, plus a Thirsty Thursday in spring semester. Karaoke was a suggestion, and many present liked the idea.

 b. If anyone wants to take over in March, Jocelyn will be headed to the field.

7. A few words from John Carroll, SNR Director

 a. GSA is an important avenue for students to bring up issues to the Faculty and he encourages all graduate students to take an active role in making SNR a better place for graduate students.

 b. Belonging to professional societies is also really important for graduate students.

 c. Wants to ensure that there are partnerships between faculty and graduate students, because the job market has changed since many of our professors entered academia. We need to take an active role in helping our mentors understand the current job market and the transitions between grad school and after-grad school.

8. Open positions (no longer open! Yay!)

        a. Outreach Chair—work with kids! Katie McCollum was voted in as Outreach Chair—be on the lookout for e-mails about Elementary Outreach during the spring semester!

        b. Secretary—Emma Buckley

        c. Safety and Facilities Committee Rep—(Bryce Johnson, tentative)

9. Outreach for Spring Semester—to be planned

10. Announcements and Door Prizes

        a. Dinos and Disasters, beginning of Feb, State Museum on city campus

        b. 3-minute Competition (see [HERE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HT_f830Mxn0)), Poster Fair, and Photography Contest (prize $$), to be developed for Spring 2014—**if you’re interested in helping contact us!!**

 c. Popcorn maker? Where'd it go?

 d. Anyone use couch or whiteboard in lounge area? Making space for GSA supplies

 e. Maps and More Store is contact for **scheduling rooms**—Jackie Loomis