

EGSA meeting minutes  
4:30, 30 April 2012  
CEL conference room

**In attendance:**

Sheena Sidhu	Peter Meng
Megan Greischar	Lillian Moller-Jacobs
Jessica Richards	Tracy Conklin
Salil Siriwat	Loren Rivera
Beth Johnson	Becky Heinig
Gabriel Villar	Dan Schmehl
Sean Halloran	Jason Smith
Katie Ellis	Elina Lastro
Wingyi Kung	Maggie Douglas
Ian Grettenberger	

**Summary of Gary Felton's visit:**

Gary Felton, the departmental head of the Dept. of Entomology, visited to answer graduate student questions. Below is a summary of our discussion:

*Vision for Graduate Program* – Gary continues to work towards increasing our reputation as a top entomology department. The dept. has ranked high in a national survey, which used data from 2006. Gary believes that the dept. has since improved with the new additions to the department and the continual support graduate students receive from winning grants and awards. There will be 7 new graduate students joining in the fall. Gary aims to have 7 to 8 new students per year, with a similar rate of graduation.

*Teaching Retreat* – Gary plans on organizing a teaching retreat for both faculty and graduate students at the Sieg Conference Center, sometime in late August. At the next EGSA meeting, grad students should develop a list of topics for discussion.

*Comprehensive exam reward* – In the interest of saving expenses and supporting more students, Gary proposes rewarding students who complete their comprehensive exam by their 5<sup>th</sup> semester with a pay grade raise (an addition of \$700 per year). He also indicates that exceptions can be made for students with special circumstances (such as needing to take additional classes for a dual title).

*T.A. for ENT 202 insect connection* – Gary expresses a desire for increase grad involvement, either in the discussion section or the guest lectures. He is making attempts at rectifying inaccuracies in the teaching materials. He is also hoping to include graduate students in the online world campus component.

*T.A. for track courses (ENT 315/316)* – Gary indicates that he plans on changing one of the instructors of the track courses. He also said that the teaching committee will make further attempts in choosing students who are suitable to teach these track courses, but reminds us that this can be difficult at times.

*Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence* – Several graduate students highly recommend taking courses from the Schreyer Institute and found it helpful when T.A.ing. There is a variety of programs offered, including an 8 week course, an online course, and a teaching certificate. More information can be found at <http://www.schreyerinstitute.psu.edu/CCT>

*Graduate Requirements/Courses* – The graduate students conveyed confusion with varying requirements from different sources. Gary stated that he will correct and inform both student and advisors with current graduate requirements. A likely possibility is the addition of a taxonomy course to the core requirements and a credit reduction to the Frontiers of Insect Science course. He also said that changes to the core courses should be a collective decision and recommends that the department as a whole discuss this issue at the teaching retreat. The students also suggested having an orientation for incoming students. Many students said that Ottar's stats module in prof. develop, which was not offered for the last 2 years, was useful and a good introduction to statistics. Scheduling conflicts was addressed again.

*Publications* – Over the past 10 years, the average publication rate was 3 publications per graduate student. Gary was concerned about the unusual cases of graduate students who graduated but did not publish. He encourages the graduate students to publish in journals with higher impact factors but did not think there was a certain number of publication needed for success. He agrees that the number of papers put out is depended on the type of science and the journal. This topic should be further discussed at the teaching retreat. Some questions include: What are some barriers to publishing? Should there be a "how to publish" component added to professional development? How important are publications to different non-academic career paths? Where are past students today?

### **Announcements:**

*Seminar speakers* – Elina will announce the student- chosen seminar speakers by the end of this week. The student who nominated the winners will coordinate their visit. If votes are high for a speaker, but he or she could not schedule a talk this semester, there are opportunities for the spring. Contact Elina for info at [elastro@psu.edu](mailto:elastro@psu.edu)

*EGSA officer elections* – Nominations are closed. Salil will send out details for voting later in the week. Contact her at [sus317@psu.edu](mailto:sus317@psu.edu)

*Committee nomination* – Tracy briefly explains the responsibilities of each committee. Those present voted for several graduate student representatives. The EGSA vice president will now automatically be the graduate representative to the seminar committee, as the VP has traditionally taken on most of the duties of that position. Next year's committee representatives are:

Recruiting: Lillian Moller-Jacob and Peter Meng

Nominations: Salil Siriwat

Safety: Loren Rivera-Vega

Seminar: EGSA VP

Space: Katie Ellis

Social: Anjel Helms

Awards: Paul Ayayee

Candidacy: Becky Heining and Sheena Sidhu  
Instruction: Gabriel Villar  
Outreach: Maggie Douglas and Ian Grettenberger

*International potluck* – **TODAY at 11:30 to 1:00pm in 504 ASI**. Bring your favorite International dish. More details at <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1N638JFGJcH9ThIvBWBOg2s9aB51iokvMSO4Gb-UhkuM/edit> or contact wingyi at [wik5030@psu.edu](mailto:wik5030@psu.edu)

*Insect photo contest* – **due 5/15**. A maximum of 8 photographs of live insects can be submitted to [pubs@entsoc.org](mailto:pubs@entsoc.org) by May 15<sup>th</sup>. More rules and information can be found at <http://www.entsoc.org/press-releases/call-2013-insect-calendar-photos>

*Science project competition* – **due 8/31**. Win \$100 for insect-related science project designed for grades K-12! Unlimited submissions to [april@entfdn.org](mailto:april@entfdn.org) by August 31<sup>st</sup>. More rules and information can be found at <http://www.entfdn.org/projectcontest.php>

*Meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm.*  
*Next meeting – May 28<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 pm in 504 ASI*