

EGSA meeting minutes
4:32 pm, 27 February 2012
CEL conference room

In attendance:

Katie Ellis
Beth Irwin
Salil Siriwat
Peter Meng
Loren Rivera
Sheena Sidhu
Dan Schmehl
Sean Halloran
Wingyi Kung

Elina Lastro
Jessica Richards
Lillian Moller-Jacobs
Xiaoying Liang
Gabriel Villar
Jason Smith
Ian Grettenberger
Maggie Douglas

Guests:

Grants and awards – Ed Rajotte proposed that the graduate students compile a list of available awards and systemically nominate each other to these awards. Salil suggested forming a googledoc and/or a timeline of award deadlines that can be shared on the website. Awards and grants look great on resumes and many may have low competition. Dan also noted that there may be many awards designated for international students. For ESA, available awards can be found [here](#). Please note that while many of the deadlines are not until July 1st, it is in the middle of field season, so it's best to start now! For more information, please contact Ed at uvu@psu.edu or Dan at drs335@psu.edu .

Committee Reports:

Comprehensive exam reward – Elina discussed the proposed reward of raising a pay grade (an addition of \$700 per year) for completing the comprehensive exam on time, or by the 5th semester. Elina points out that Ph.D. student must take the exam regardless, so the pay raise is a bonus. However, students would have to complete most coursework before taking the exam, as they are only allowed to take one class per semester after passing. Questions were raised about having a one-time award as an alternative to incite students not on departmental stipend. Further comments and questions can be directed to Elina at elastro@psu.edu.

Seminar speakers – Elina is now accepting nominations for next semester's seminar speakers. It was also decided that one seminar will be reserved for students to practice giving their ESA meeting presentation. There will be time for approximately 4 students to give talks and we can decide on whom at a later time. If interested, or if you have a nomination, please contact Elina at elastro@psu.edu.

Ent 202 – Salil announced that Ent202 (the Insect Connection) will now be offered as a world campus web course in the summer. It is not clear whether there will be T.A.s for this course.

Candidacy exam timeliness criteria – Salil reported that the faculty committee is proposing points taken off the candidacy exam as a penalty for turning in the written portion late. However, questions were raised about the effectiveness of deducting points from a pass/fail exam (unless there is a rubric?). A harsher penalty of re-taking the exam with a new selection of papers will probably be more effective.

Announcements:

New core courses –Frontiers to Insect Science is no longer a requirement and the new Insect Biodiversity and Evolution course is added to the core courses. There was a general consensus that students should be required to fulfill the core courses presented to them at the start of their program, but if you are unsure, talking to Gary was suggested. In addition, the new Biodiversity course may be of use to those who have not fulfilled their insect collection requirement. There were concerns raised in regards to the lack of clear communication between the department, advisors, and the students about course and T.A. requirements, degree deadlines, and general information. We will invite Gary Felton to our next EGSA meeting to clear up questions.

Outreach – There are two big outreach opportunity coming up – Bug camp and Exploration Day. Bug camp is a 4-day summer event where grad students lead groups of kids in different insect-related activities. If you are interested in organizing or participating (time commitment can vary!): please contact me at wik5030@psu.edu Exploration Day is a one-day science event for families around town. This year, it is held at the Park Forest Middle School on Sat. April 14th from 10 am to 3 pm. If interested in participating, please sign up for an organizational meeting [here](#). For more information, please contact Salil at sus317@psu.edu.

Events – Sheena and Gabe has kindly offered to host our **Annual Wine Tasting Party**. **Maple Harvest Festival** (March 24-25th) is a deliciously educational event at Shaver's Creek where all-you-can-eat pancakes and real maple syrup are served the entire day. An **International Potluck** will be held sometime in April. Please keep an eye out for emails about these events.

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.

Next meeting – March 26th at 4:30 pm in 504 ASI
Wingyi Kung