June 28: Monthly meeting with graduate students (Minutes)

Regarding the Strategic Planning Document

* After circulating the Strategic Planning document with the rest of the graduate students, PSGSA held a virtual coffee on June 18 to discuss the document/address items and ask opinions/comments.
* There was unanimous agreement in placing Infrastructure improvements as the top of the list of priorities in the strategic plan; **Claudio**: “total estimated costs of greenhouse repairs is $ 10-15M, and the department is thinking of ways to raise funds.”
* *Qstn: “It’s been mentioned that the strategic planning will occur in a 6-month period. What would be the next steps?”*
	+ *Ans: Clarification that the document itself has already been approved. The 6 months is being used to re-evaluate/change/remove action items depending on input from students, support staff, etc. who are not members of the Dept. Council.; additionally, the results of the plan will be implemented gradually, rather than immediately*
* Additionally, the three new committees proposed for the strategic plan were discussed: the 1) Social, 2) Events and 3) Communication/Promotions Committees; PSGSA has shared in the June 18 that interested students (notably, *newer* students) should e-mail if they want to participate. \*As of June 28, no inquiries have been received\*
* *Qstn: “what is the time commitment/duties expected from the student representatives in these committees?”*
	+ *Ans: still not certain, as it depends on the responsibilities of the committees. Typically, the department expects 2-3 years of commitment from committee members, but student representatives tend to hold positions for 1 year due to research being a priority – note that these student rep. positions are also flexible and replacements are always allowed when the need arises.*
* PSGSA: due to lack of responses from interested student representatives for these committees, it is likely that they will instead be added as 3 new positions in the next PSGSA elections.

Regarding the Department Leadership

* The dept. council is discussing the next steps in the Plant Science department leadership,. The council has outlined the following as the most likely options following the end of Dr. Stasolla’s mandate after Dec. 2021 (note that for each option, a Dept. head would still be elected):
	+ Creating a Dept. Manager position to coordinate and handle administrative duties,
	+ Creating a full-time OA3 position (replacing and re-structuring Christie’s old position) to carry similar responsibilities,
	+ Having the dept. council propose committees with each fulfilling the administrative goals of the head (therefore, no new positions will be created and council members will be expected to commit to more administrative duties)
* If students still have comments/questions regarding the strategic plan (ie. you were not able to attend the June 18 meeting) comments/questions about Dept. leadership, e-mail decastr4@myumanitoba.ca

Other questions:

* *“With provincial Covid restrictions being relaxed (esp. regarding quarantine following cross-provincial travel as well as the vaccinations) is the FAFS survey still applicable?”*
	+ *Ans: Claudio has brought this up to the Faculty recently since this was also asked by support staff; Expect changes in the FAFS entry/exit survey soon*
* *“Deep Freezers in the Plant Sci basement: How do students know which are designated to whose labs?”*
	+ *Ans: Lab’s P.I. or lab technicians should be able to notify the student(s) on which freezers are available for their use.*
* *“With Covid restrictions relaxing, are there already changes being prepared for the coming Fall term?”*
	+ *Ans: still no word on in-person/virtual teaching in the Fall. For now, at least in the Plant Sci dept., continue to only work in person only if you have greenhouse/lab work and to stay at home on days where you don’t (ie. just continuing thesis writing)*

PSGSA Announcement*: the Grod Lounge is still under maintenance. Please wait for an e-mail confirming when it can be used again*