**SSGSA Fall Meeting Minutes**

September 13, 2016

 14-15 members in attendance

Pre-Meeting w/ Paul

Grad student Program updates

- Remember iThenticate to check theses/manuscript for plagiarism. Advisors cannot submit students’ theses, and any co-author can submit manuscript.

- Reminder: Academic Integrity Tutorial (GRAD 07500) online course required for graduation. Only needed once.

Changes to Dept Supplementary Regs (PhD program) dated Oct 2015 on FGS website

- Section 5.6.2. PhD work schedule spans 42 now instead of 36

- Section 5.8. PhD Candidacy exam: questions from each examiner no more than 2 weeks to study.

- Section 5.4. PhD minimum course reqs: minimum 6 credit hrs 7000 level or higher, 3 of which from Dept of Soil Sci. Now in effect.

- You can find links to the supplementary guidelines at: <http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/afs/dept/soil_science/grad_programs/index.html>

Change to Dept Grad Student Support this past year:

 - Amalgamated grad student support of Faculty of Ag & Food Sci – Martha Blouw located in Plant Sci office (Ag 222) now. Lynda Closson responsible for travel & research projected related expenses (financial related).

Soil Science Stipend Policy

- Currently/as of July 1, 2014: MSc Min $17,500/year for 2 years, PhD min $21,000/year for 3 years. Changes based on faculty member, external awards, etc.

- Dept Council has requested SSGSA provide commentary on current stipend levels, how they compare elsewhere, and adequacy. Please discuss and provide feedback through dept council member.

Soil Sci Seminars

- No current theme/mode for organizing the seminar series. Good to hear w/in our faculty & guests visiting too.

- First seminar Sept 26/16, guest visiting from Finland (Dr. Martti Esala). 12:30 Rm 346.

- Do we want to be involved in organizing seminars, ongoing basis, what are student thoughts?

- Rotimi recommended the possibility of a committee w/ faculty, student, support to contribute to permanence in the organization of the seminar series. Helps foster ownership.

 - Ike followed up: there was a committee for last year to organize and make it up. 3 students & faculty. Helped to make it all happen.

- Task faculty, support/RA/PDF, 3 students to make up & plan. Would this be better to organize in May, extra time to plan for the F/W session. 1-2 times a month. Wednesdays @ 12:30.

 - \*\*\* Find 3 grad students interested in participating\*\*\*

- If Wed 12:30 is seminar, what about the alternate weeks? Would a stats support session help – sharing how they analyse, referencing style? Broader range of issues.

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1. Minutes from last meeting. Approved by Rotimi, 2nd Theresa.
2. Annual Report from President Ike
* Re-emphasize: Martha Blouw is in charge of academic needs, while financial or other needs through Lynda Closson.
* The Graduate student handbook was reviewed and updated. You can access it from the departmental website under Graduate programs. Find it at: <http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/afs/dept/soil_science/media/pdf/Grad_Student_Handbook.pdf> . Excellent if you’re just starting your program.
* Seminar Series 2016 committee members: Melody Caron, Mayowa Francis Adelekun, Matt Wood.
* Endowment fund worth $750 was approved by the Faculty Endowment Fund committee. This was used to support 7 graduate students for the 2016 MSSS summer tour. Students in attendance were Nicholson Jeke, Justice Zhanda, Mick Runzika, Magdalena Rogalsky, Matthew Wood, Wenyika Priscillar, and Ike Agomoh.
* CanU Academy was a success last year, Oct 15 & 22, 2015. Thank you so much for all the hard work you put in to make it happen! There were also follow up activities, last was in May in dept and back in March near UC. If there are more this fall, it’d be great to have a committee and continuity! Committee: Fernanda, Mayowa are interested. We will need everyone on board to help, please make time.
1. Treasurer’s Report



\* Updated after the meeting to include a secondary GSA cheque.

- Need to figure out a way to get people to pay for their owed amounts.

- Please write clearly about how much is owed. Will continue to run the canteen. But people need to pay their bills. \*\* Put a sign up if owe more than $20 please pay ASAP \*\* Amanda will make a poster. Bring this up at dept council as well, due to costs associated.

- Must keep everything in the office and slowly restock because of the theft.

1. Summer BBQ’s/Kitchen

- Volunteers & coordinators needed. Every two weeks- volunteer sign-up sheet and new volunteers needed for each BBQ. Will revisit in May meeting. Was a lot of pressure in May, everyone needs to participate.

- Regular cleaning of kitchen area and the fridge & freezer is needed. Should we assign research teams. Need a list of what needs to be done, so that can rotate through research groups. Fridge, freezer, microwaves, sink in both wings, coffee makers, pots, counters, both kitchens. Bring this up at dept council, need to involve them. Last time Lynda reimbursed for cleaning supply costs. Remind people to clean up after yourself.

1. Graduate Student Stipends.

- When students get awards, a significant part of it needs to be additional incentive to the student. Not a cost saving measure for the professor. Reward the student not the professor.

- PhD supplementary regs say that 42 months, while funding is only for 3 years. Start of program needs to be an agreement from the beginning. If funding only for 3 years, research program needs to meet it. The funding needs to match the expected commitment.

- MSc is only 2 years of funding, but how often is work being done outside of it? There needs to be uniformity across the department, if possible. Currently, some professors provide the funding, but not everyone does. What has the average time to completion been the last 10 years? Generally 2 ½.

- What numbers does the department have to demonstrate how long students are taken to complete, the amount of field work expected for experimentations, and the stipends being provided. What about a subdivision for field work, lab work, and corresponding writing and analysis, IN ADDITION to classes.

- What is the average time to completion for the department for Masters? For PhD? The funding needs to match the reality of expectations on the students.

- Animal science set up a committee to examine this last year to examine this, for example, and PhD was raised to $25k from $21k. What are average amounts in other similar departments here in Manitoba (not elsewhere, where cost of living etc. is diff). Within faculty? Within university?

- What about the rate of inflation to reflect cost of living adjustments? What about the cost of tuition for local and international students and how much of the stipend that takes. - As well, how does the stipend compare to minimum wage in the province (in a 35 hour work week)?

- Other universities make teaching assistance/teaching assistance as part of the stipend. May not be something that is able to be done for this university based on how hiring is done.

POST MEETING:

- For example, the average annual hours per worker in Canada (OECD) is 1704 (~33 hours/week), Manitoba’s minimum wage is $11.00 = $18,744 per year. Currently Master’s students are not paid minimum wage. Once tuition is added, none of the minimum stipends do.

1. GSA Report (Mick)

- University is planning to build a daycare, the UMGSA is donating it so we will have access to cheaper daycare on campus. Building will kick off next year! Will be subsidized.

- Summer mandatory fees started this past summer. The UMGSA are advocating for opting out, so if not using gym in particular can opt out.

- Department grants now need a list of activities done by the organization to prove how they are using the money. Complimented the SSGSA on the activities we are doing as an organization.

- U-Pass is available for grad students now. Valid for 8 months. $260 for the entire period. Applied to our fees. Can be picked up any time now.

1. Elections for New Executive

 President: Nike Jeke

 Secretary: Theresa Adesanya

 Treasurer: Justice

 MSSS Rep: Melody Caron

 Lunchroom Reps (2): Amanda Taylor & Priscilla

 Social Rep: Matt Wood

 GSA Rep: Fernanda & Mick Runzika (co-reps)