

Charter for the Chemistry and Biochemistry Graduate Representative Advisory Team

Mission:

The Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry desires to maintain a strong student-centered Ph.D. program with a high level of student morale, engagement and productivity. To advance that goal further we seek to improve communication lines between graduate students and faculty. To that end, the Chemistry and Biochemistry Graduate Representative Advisory Team (CBGReAT) for the Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry is established to report to the Graduate Education Committee (GEC). The committee will serve in an advisory role between the graduate students and the department, addressing both academic and social issues related to the graduate student body.

The overarching vision in instituting any such group must be to increase our Department's excellence; productive communication between students and faculty is critical to reaching that vision. The specific goals of this group are 1) to improve communication between students and faculty 2) to provide a direct mechanism for students to have a departmental voice and provide input to faculty on matters of graduate education and scholarship and 3) to organize/coordinate fun/informative grad-student-related events or projects, including but not limited to educational, professional development, and student social events.

Membership and Eligibility:

The Chemistry and Biochemistry Graduate Representative Advisory Team (CBGReAT) is composed of five graduate students, one from biochemistry, one from physical chemistry, two from O/I/Materials, and one "at large". Representatives can be faculty-, peer-, or self-nominated. Division representatives can be nominated only by students within their division. The "at large" member, however, may be nominated by any student in the department. Each member of the CBGReAT is elected for one year and can be re-elected once for a total tenure of two years. Eligible members must have completed their first year and do not expect to graduate within the next year. Should a student be unwilling or unable to complete their tenure as representative, the position will first be offered to the runner-up(s) from the election. If the runner-up(s) is unwilling to serve, an emergency election will be held to fill the position. If a student is unavailable for short period of time (less than 3 months), the runner-up(s) will be appointed as temporary replacement. If partitioning of the divisions changes, the number of representatives per division will be decided by a majority vote of the sitting committee.

Elections and Voting:

Students will vote to elect representatives in the Fall term. After the first cumulative exam, nominations will be solicited starting 3 weeks and ending 1 week before voting begins. Nominees will be asked about willingness to serve 1 week before voting begins, voting will be open for 14 days and will be conducted electronically. Information regarding nominees (i.e. pictures, lab location, etc.) will be distributed to graduate students so that students can consult with nominees before voting, if desired. An instant-runoff, open preferential system of voting will be used to elect members, allowing students to rank as many candidates as they choose in their division (self-

selected) and in the “at large” category. Winners will be decided as those which have majority support. The GEC representatives will oversee the current CBGReAT tallying the votes. The current CBGReAT will inform the winners first via email, in order to ensure willingness to serve. After winners have confirmed willingness, the whole Chemistry Department will be informed of the voting results via email from the current CBGReAT.

Communication:

To facilitate effective communication between grad students and CBGReAT the committee will operate a shared email account to communicate important happenings in the department to the student body. In addition, the committee will organize a large meeting twice a year to go over concerns and progress (see Meeting Format). Additional and more frequent communication can be conducted between CBGReAT and students via the CBGReAT listserv (CBGReAT@lists.uoregon.edu), through the blog (blogs.uoregon.edu/cbgreat), or in person. Flyers and announcements may also be used by the team to advertise for student events. Anonymous concern/comments, while not encouraged, can be communicated to CBGReAT via the “Student Comments/Concerns Form” found on the CBGReAT blog. CBGReAT members will communicate progress on issues currently being addressed to students either through direct communication with a single student and/or through progress reports distributed to students at the end of every term.

To facilitate effective communication between CBGReAT (representing grad students) and faculty members. Meetings with the Graduate Education Committee will be held at least once per term. Additional meeting(s) will be scheduled if there is a need to be addressed. CBGReAT will contribute their views to the chairs of faculty search committees and to the department curriculum committee, who will take their input into account during their decision-making processes.

To facilitate effective communication between CBGReAT members. The committee will meet monthly to discuss issues which have been brought to the attention of the representatives and also make progress on issues and projects underway. A shared file folder with all relevant materials will be maintained by the committee and made available to future committees to allow for continuity. Additionally, following elections a meeting with the sitting committee and the newly elected committee will be held to facilitate a smooth transition between committees.

Meeting Frequency:

The CBGReAT will meet twice a month. Formal meetings will occur the week following the Department faculty meeting. The first formal meeting of the term will only be between members of CBGReAT. The second formal CBGReAT meeting of the term will be open to the entire chemistry graduate student body. The final formal meeting of the term will be with the Graduate Education Committee representative(s). Department faculty representative(s) may also be invited to any meeting as necessary, as determined by the committee. At least two additional special meetings will be held per year with entire grad student body (in Nov/Dec and May/June terms) designed to bring in input/concerns/questions from whole student population. Exact times will be

determined by CBGReAT. Informal lunch-hour meetings will also be held monthly open to all students. Members will also be available by appointment to meet with students who wish to discuss issues/concerns/questions individually. In addition, following election of new members in the fall, the outgoing CBGReAT will meet with the new members to ensure transfer of knowledge/logistics. (See Appendix A for formats)

Duties:

Including, but not limited to:

1. Provide official means of communication between the faculty and students of the department.
2. Address and help to resolve issues/concerns (from students or faculty) regarding graduate education or student life.
3. Represent student interests in matters of graduate education, scholarship, and student life.
4. Organize/implement events and services to improve graduate student education and life, including but not limited to those involving educational, professional development, and social opportunities.