

**MINUTES**  
**Genetics Executive Committee Meeting**  
**July 8, 2019**

Attendees:

Semir Bayez (CSHL faculty representative)  
Paul Freimuth (BNL faculty representative)  
Martha Furie (Graduate Program Director)  
Shruti Iyer (CSHL student representative)  
Abraham Kohrman (SBU student representative)  
Howard Sirotkin (SBU faculty representative)  
Thomas White (SBU faculty representative)

1. The meeting convened at 3:00 PM, with all members of the Committee present.
2. Semir and Shruti were welcomed as new members.
3. Martha gave a brief update on the state of the program. Highlights included:
  - a. 41 students currently enrolled, with 3 set to graduate in August
  - b. 11 incoming students, including 3 in the MSTP program
    - i. Over-recruitment this year will need to be compensated for next year
    - ii. One Turner Fellow (URM)
  - c. 16 based at CSHL
  - d. 93 faculty, 26 based at CSHL
  - e. Almost all students are on track with respect to milestones
  - f. The budget is in relatively healthy shape
4. After much discussion of the pros and cons, it was unanimously decided to join the growing national trend in the biological/biomedical sciences and eliminate the GRE as a requirement for admission. *[Update: Genetics partnered with five other programs in the biological sciences here at SBU to request a waiver of the GRE requirement from the Dean of the Graduate School. This request was promptly granted and has already been implemented by the GS staff.]*
5. Some programs limit the number of faculty members. However, after discussion, it was decided that Genetics should keep its current policy of not imposing a cap on the number.
6. Martha proposed that the number of required semesters of BGE 691 Readings in Genetics (aka Journal Club) be reduced from three to two. Reasons are two-fold: 1) A major purpose of BGE 691 is to prepare students for the qualifying exam, but the third required semester of BGE 691 now occurs after the exam is taken. 2) Once they join a laboratory for dissertation research, almost all students participate in informal but comparable activities offered by their mentor or department. This reduction was approved unanimously. *[Update: A request to approve this curricular change has been sent to the Graduate Council.]*
7. The rapid rise in student fees was discussed. Abraham reported that the student unions are attempting to negotiate waiver of some fees for doctoral trainees, given that they are not only students but also provide instruction.

8. Martha reported that the Graduate School has recently decided that doctoral defenses cannot be held on the Cold Spring Harbor campus without petitioning the Dean of the Graduate School for approval on a case-by-case basis. Martha plans to ask the Dean to consider a new policy with respect to this issue, with the hope of avoiding the need to seek an exception for every CSHL trainee.
9. Student representatives left the meeting, and the faculty representatives discussed academic issues pertaining to individual students. Where appropriate, decisions for resolving these issues were made.
10. The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM.