Hi everyone. Please skim through these minutes, especially if you couldn’t make it to the meeting. **We really need everyone’s input and help for items in bold.** Thanks!

- Calla

1) **Announcement:**
   To every psych grad student far and wide – please feel free to express your concerns and opinions at any time to any PGSO officer. Communication has been lacking in the past and we are trying to change that. To start, please start sending your input about what kinds of things you’d like to see on the website!

2) **Budget Discussion:**
   Currently our yearly budget includes the following events:
   - wine and cheese socials
   - mentor gatherings
   - community gatherings (e.g. caramel apples)
   - pub nights
   - PGSO meeting snacks
   - finals snacks
   - mentor outings
   - coffee breaks
   - one large party

   One thing to understand is that beyond this basic framework, our budget is basically one flexible lump sum. We have 2 big funding sources: RSO money from the university, and money from SSD. Broadly, the RSO money funds activities aimed more at professional development, and the SSD money is more for social events. Aside from this, however, we have complete control over allocation of funds. If you have opinions about the way things are, or any changes you would like to see, please speak up – change is possible.

   One important thing to remember: financial planning should happen as early as possible. The funding sources cannot be counted on to come through in time for deadlines, and sometimes this can affect the budget. Events should be planned as early as a couple of months in advance to avoid missing funding deadlines.

   Another note -- we have one other potentially large funding source. If we propose something in particular that we feel for good reasons should not come from our working budget, we can apply for supplemental funding from the university. They review applications about every week, so extra money is available if we are organized about it.

3) **Funding for Mentor Outings:**
   Question: How much support (financial or otherwise) should the mentor families receive? Should we change the priority of the mentor program in our budget?
Opinions from the debate:

Having the funds to go out for coffee or beer is nice, but they are pretty negligible. The more important driving force is the outing itself, not the reimbursements we receive.

Increasing the financial priority of the program might necessitate an increase in structure, e.g. a quarterly poll to make sure people are understanding and participating, and so changes can be made as we see fit.

The point of the larger mentor parties is to socialize and become comfortable with each other, then the smaller group outings are where the real mentorship happens: maybe it would be better to redistribute funds towards these outings and away from the bigger party.

Once the funds run out, the mentee might feel less comfortable approaching the mentor to ask for guidance.

This sounds like the responsibility of the mentors and the families to make sure their mentees know they are still a resource beyond the available PGSO funding.

Since the available funds are so small, maybe mentor outings don’t even need a budget – maybe it should be the responsibility of the mentors and families to organize and fund splinter events, and the main mentor budget could be allocated to the party only.

Votes:

Should we add structure to the mentorship program?

Pretty much unanimous yes

Was the initial large mentor family party a good thing?

Again, yes, especially if we could organize it earlier, like first week of fall quarter

Should we adjust current funding for mentor outings (about $4 per person per quarter)?

keep (about 10 votes)
raise (about 4 votes)
abolish (no votes)

4) Ideas about Structure for the Mentor Program

To people who have been in a successful mentor/mentee relationship in the past or are in the present: would you be willing to write up a small note about how your relationship was successful to provide ideas and guidance for the group?

PGSO has a large recruitment event but no involvement in any kind of orientation event. One possibility is to organize our ideas into a proposal and formally petition to get the department involved so we do not have to take on this responsibility entirely ourselves.

It might be reasonable to incorporate some aspects of orientation into the mentor program, e.g. setting up mentors and families in the spring quarter before their entry into
the program, initiating conversations with new students over the summer to get them asking questions early and often, then throwing the large mentor gathering early in the year to continue fostering these relationships.

To people who know grad students in other departments around the university: would you be willing to ask about the nature of their department’s orientation event and write up a short summary? This will help us develop and support our proposal for the department’s involvement in orientation activities.

5) Revamping the Lounge
Problems with the current “grad student lounge”:
  - not a private place – in a very public area, close to class and work spaces
  - not solely a place for students – we share this space with the mail staff and department staff
  - not currently easily accessible to all students – not everyone has a key or knows how to get one
  - layout and design does not facilitate healthy social interactions

New Proposal:
It’s possible that basement space may be available for the institution of an actual PGSO lounge. Emma and Eric will be working together to develop a proposal for a “student lounge/study space”. The request will be framed to describe a space like the CCSN, “an integrative environment to foster the exchange of ideas and collaborations”. One possibility for acquiring space is to offer our efforts to organize, clean and consolidate all items from two rooms into one room, and in exchange we receive the use of one newly empty room. Please let us know about your input on this!