RGSA Meeting Minutes  
February 5, 2015  
Present: Stephanie Juice, Xiao Xiao, Bess Perry, Emil Tsao, Ariana Cano, Jess Espenshade

Updates  
Minigrants: Due February 19th; it gives two weeks to complete them. The RGSA Minigrant committee will review them during the last week of Friday and announce during the first week of March (possibly March 3rd). We’re in the process of appointing a 3 person review committee.

Professional Development: Bess has been working with Carolyn to figure out what would be useful for grad students.

Banner: Once Emil gets the banner files, he will work with Xiao to order the banner.

Research fair: Will be held February 23rd (Monday) at 5:30pm. Let’s send a call out to grad students to ask for descriptions of the research they would like assistance on. Then we can send the descriptions to Anna Smiles-Becker to distribute to undergrads.

Fall seminar series wrap up and reflection  
Bess: High of attendance was 26, low of 12. 48 submitted responses (although 100 accessed the survey). Mostly graduate student and faculty attendance. Most conflicts were time and work related. Interesting: folks asked for more research talks, and the most research-focused talk was the lowest rated talk of all of them.

Bess added: Everyone is invited to look through the consolidated summary/recommendations and provide input if there are missing elements. We should share this document with Donna Parish and summarize a couple key points at the faculty meeting (with the document available for those who want more detail). This was the first evaluation ever done of the seminar series and the responses should help in crafting increasingly effective/engaging future series.  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/0ByB9WXGr8hB7Nw9QktWbNk1wM2s/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0ByB9WXGr8hB7Nw9QktWbNk1wM2s/view?usp=sharing)

Fireside Chat  
The fireside chat was a success last year and Dean Mathews has offered to sponsor another one this semester. We are exploring possible speakers for this event.

Social Events  
RGSA Apres-Ski  
Ari is working with Bolton Valley Ski Resort to have a RSEN social event on March 14th. It will be called RGSA Apres-Ski  They are giving a discount for those without season passes: a downhill day pass would be $35 or a nordic pass, which would be more inexpensive. The nordic center has great social space for socializing.
Volunteer event
Friday 19th, Thursday: Ari is working to organize an afternoon volunteering event at the Chittenden Food Shelf for 8 people to help out. Bess: it’s the 40th anniversary of the UVM Natural Areas; it would be a great show of solidarity and RSENRE investment/giving-back to come help Rick Paradis (clearing trails etc.).

Graduate Retreat Survey
75% support for having a graduate retreat. Most prefer a day-only retreat on Saturday. In order to not digress into social cliques, we’ll send out a delineated agenda with all of the events.

Extra idea: Writing Days for Graduate Students?
Ari will try and reserve the Green Conference Room from 10-12pm once a month.