



From the Rep

I often use this space to write about various issues and to share possible solutions and approaches to the problems of grad student life and planning for the future. I want to take a break from that and share some hope.

Today, the academic student employees (aka, grad students) at the University of Washington are on strike. They are in the midst of negotiating a new contract with the university administration that will determine salaries, fees, and benefits over the next several years. Too often I am frustrated by the circumstances many graduate students find themselves in. Salaries below a living wage. Few, if any, benefits. And this is often controlled by a large bureaucratic system that students and their advisors have very little power to influence. Here, the grad student union is taking a stand to make grad school more accessible for everyone. Specifically, they are asking for increased health care that will cover mental health issues and trans health issues, salaries that reflect the rapidly rising rent prices in Seattle, subsidies for childcare, and a non-discrimination and harassment policy. I find this very encouraging for the grad students here, and it gives me hope for the future for grad students everywhere. This is setting a new standard for the treatment of grad students as employees, not just students, and addressing some of the largest needs facing grad students today: inclusivity, protection from harassment and discrimination, and mental health support. Maybe someday soon, this will be the standard everywhere. Take hope from this action, and in the meantime, take care of yourself!

— Stefanie



TOS Student Member Highlight

JIANGHUI DU. I am a PhD student at Oregon State University studying chemical oceanography and paleoceanography. Before coming to the United States, I received a B.S. and M.S. in geology from Peking University in Beijing. Moving to a different

country leads to challenges that are familiar to international students. Chief among them is the difficulty in communication due to cultural differences. Oftentimes I find it hard to understand what my US friends mean even though I can catch each phrase they speak: the cultural connotations just elude me. The adviser-student relationship is also very different. For example, even after four years I still find it uncomfortable calling my advisers by their first names, which is extremely disrespectful in East Asian cultures. One way for international students to move beyond these barriers is to engage in conversations, in student groups and in professional societies. Graduate students in the paleoclimate group at OSU organize two weekly events: the QuatTea where group members and visitors give informal science talks, and the Paleo-coffee where students gather together to discuss difficulties in life and research. Students in the Ocean Ecology and Biogeochemistry group have a weekly OEB Grad Night that involves beer and science. I'm part of both groups, and being involved in these activities makes me feel more confident in communication both personally and professionally. As I'm writing, we just finished the last call of our TOS mentoring group, which has been going on for a year. I'm grateful to the mentors who are so devoted to these calls. I have received many tips that are helping me navigate my student career as well as prepare for a professional career. I find that participation in community activities such as these is highly rewarding, and I would recommend it to those who struggle to adapt to a new culture.



Student & Early Career Meeting Summary

— Contributed by Hayley Schiebel

Incorporating Chitchat into Scientific Meetings with PechaKucha Events

At the 2018 Ocean Sciences Meeting (OSM), the Student and Early Career Activities Committee (SECAC) hosted a new activity (co-planned with Kay Bidle, a professor at Rutgers University) called PechaKucha (PK). PK is Japanese for chitchat. The theme of the evening was "Fluid Oceans," and the 10 presenters each had to follow the strict PK format of 20 slides total, each shown for 20 seconds with narration. The presenters, none of whom had ever given a PK talk before, were a mix of OSM attendees and local artists: Francesco Peri (engineering, lidar images and erosion); Kay Bidle (microbial oceanography, evolution, and ecology); Drew Harvell (host pathogens and Sea of Glass book); Emily Bosanquet (Pacific Northwest College of Art and art-science interface with NOAA); Reyn Yoshioka (photography of marine invertebrates); Alli Fong (polar regions and the importance of science communication); Kelly Luis (satellite imagery); Shelby Smith and Michelle Guthrie (human relationship with marine animals); Lynsee Sardell (art-science interfaces with NOAA and algae blooms); and Stephanie Fogel (salmon off drugs campaign with the EPA). About 100 people attended the event, which was held at the Spirit of 77, a pub near the convention center. Admission was free with an OSM name badge. The PK even was very successful, and SECAC recommends including PK events into the OSM program going forward.

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