GSA Council Meeting Agenda — November 2012
Tuesday, November 13, 2012, 6:00 pm
Graduate Lounge, RMC

Officers: Anna Dodson Saikin (President), Kiri Kilpatrick (Internal Vice-President), Heng Ji (External Vice-President), Aparna Raja Sagi (Treasurer), Niffy Hargrave (Secretary), Anne Hellebust (Parliamentarian), Carolyn Van Wingerden (Historian)

Representatives: Amanda Goodman (Chem), Sydney Boyd (Engl), Jacob Wahlen-Strotzman (P & A), Kelly Weber, (Hist), Pei Dong (MEMS), Eugeniya Poluektova (Ling), Lu Wang (Stat), Milind Chabbi (CS), Michael Sinai (Architecture)

I. Announcements and Updates
   1. Past Events
      a. Chief Justice Roberts, Wednesday, October 17
         i. Fantastic lecture, well-attended (nearly 4500 attendees)
         ii. Last of the “official” Centennial Events
            1. Capital Gain Campaign continues (until the end of the fiscal year)
            2. Tree Planting in conjunction with Hermann Park’s Centennial
      b. Halloween: Saturday, November 3
         i. Per usual, it was raining for this social event.
         ii. However, it was still well attended with approximately 400-500 attendees.
         iii. Party lasted until 2:00 am (successfully ran out of alcohol, candy, and snacks)
         iv. Costume prize went to a group of zombie nurses (won a $100 gift card to Buffalo Wild Wings)
   2. Upcoming Events
      a. Coffee Break w/OISS: Wednesday, November 14, 3 pm - 5 pm
         i. Will be serving Turkish coffee, croissants, and pastries.
         ii. Encouraged representatives and their respective departments to attend.
         iii. Trying to keep the same energy and momentum that we had during
Centennial

b. Sausagefest: Friday, November 16 (co-sponsored by Chemistry and Physics)
   i. Will have nearly 300 lbs of sausage
   ii. Organizers will email GSA Secretary with relevant information.
   iii. GSA is providing $2000 in sponsorship for this annual event.

c. Ten Days of Service
   i. Community service event that involves a contest between departments.
   ii. Detailed information will be distributed via the weekly announcements (GSA officers are still finalizing details, look in next week’s announcements for more information!)
   iii. Planned Schedule
      1. December 3 and 4: Coat Donations
      2. December 5, 6, and 7: Canned Food Drive
      3. December 7: Holiday Service Party at Valhalla
      4. December 8: Volunteer at Houston Food Bank
      5. December 9 and 10: Toys-for-Tots
      6. December 11 and 12: New Blanket Donations

d. REMINDER: Last Council Meeting of the Semester: Tuesday, December 11 (Grants meeting)

3. Family Committee: Still Need Volunteers! (Contact gsa@rice.edu for more information!)
   a. Question: Could we give some of our extra money to the family committee? (suggested by Kelly Weber, History rep)
   b. Could a Family Committee Budget encourage participation?
   c. Need to change advertising for this committee?
   d. GSA President will contact Justin Chen (in Physics and Astronomy), Meina Yates-Richard (in English).

4. Looking for Beer Bike Coordinators (contact gsa@rice.edu)
   a. Official Date: Saturday, March 23, 2013
   b. Will need to recruit captains as well as coordinators.
   c. Historically more difficult to get coordinators (need to attend meetings with RPC, etc.)
      i. Perks: will get to work with Valhalla, will get to design t-shirts
1. **Recommendation** that we work with the School of Architecture to design this year’s t-shirt (proposed by Michael Sinai, Architecture)

5. **GSA-OISS Mentorship Program**
   a. Heng Ji had recent meeting with Adria Baker (OISS)
   b. OISS is not fully committed to the program (this is going to be a pilot program)
   c. General idea is to mentor (professionally) the international undergraduates by pairing them with graduate students (domestic or international).
   d. Meetings will focus on career development: informing them about graduate student careers, helping develop expectations, etc.
   e. **GSA concerns**
      i. Do departments already have some of these mentorship programs available?
      ii. Unclear about undergraduate expectations of this program
   f. OISS will want graduate mentors from across the disciplines. Desirable to match mentors with mentees in similar disciplines. Mentors and mentees will meet about twice a month.
   g. At this time, OISS needs a coordinator (will be paid by OISS).
      i. OISS needs GSA’s help to find this coordinator and to begin recruiting mentors for Spring Semester.
      ii. OISS needs a coordinator who has past leadership experience--GSA officers thought it would be great to recruit amongst GSA reps.
      iii. Expected pay for coordinator: $12/hour (5-10 hours per week).
      iv. Email gsa@rice.edu if you are interested or know someone who would be qualified.
   h. **Council Recommendation**: Need to see if SA is on board with this idea as they would have a good idea of how best to access the undergraduate body.
   i. Council Recommendation: Need to talk with Dean Hutchinson as it is very important to get the undergraduate body excited about this program or else it will be less appealing and there is the risk of failure.

6. **Elevator Pitch Competition Committee (EPCC)**
   a. Based on SCREECH (competition held in engineering at the beginning of October)
b. This competition will be open to all graduate students across the disciplines.
c. GSA President has already contacted the organizer of the engineering event to help generate ideas about organization, judging, etc. for our EPC.
d. Committee will plan this event: Ideal date of March or April (we don’t want to be nearly as detailed as the Engineering event so we are not anticipating the same time commitment)
e. Prizes (possibly cash) would be provided
f. Career development and networking would also be part of this event (businesses, for example, attended the event in engineering)
g. GPS is willing to help organize the event; there will be a meeting with Arnaud Chevalier (in GPS) after Thanksgiving.
h. Holding the EPC would help fulfill some needs that grad students have expressed for more professional development/networking
i. Council Recommendation: work with the new writing center (esp. since there is an oral component in their mission)
j. Officer Recommendation: Need to get this committee going by the end of November, if you are interested, please email gsa@rice.edu
k. Council Recommendation: Because of the similarities with the poster competition/display hosted during Centennial, we should also communicate with CCD.

7. GSA Survey update
   a. In 1995, the GSA conducted a survey to ask about student relationships with advisors
      i. Results were overwhelmingly negative: many grad students wanted to change advisors, leave Rice, etc.
   b. For AY 2012-13, we want to gauge grad student happiness (esp. since Rice undergraduates are supposedly the happiest in the nation). Goal of the new survey is to take the temperature in four key areas: advisor relations, GSA satisfaction, wellness and health, and department happiness.
   c. Wellness Center already has a relatively recent comprehensive survey. We are more concerned with graduate student awareness of the services offered on campus.
   d. GSA officers have already had conversations with Student Activities, GPS, and the Wellness Center
e. End Goal: Developing a Best Practices document/Student Bill of Rights
f. Meeting with Rice’s Institutional Development this week (will help us to develop questions, keep within time parameters, etc.); this will not be a survey monkey type survey.
g. Asking for GSA representative suggestions and contributions for survey.
h. At this point, most of the legwork has been done, we are working on the fun aspect--what do we do with the data that we collect? (Could be useful to have input from psychology rep, sociology rep, statistics rep).

II. Presentation:
    1. Mario Bencomo, Rice Ring Committee
       a. Role is to inform graduate students about the Rice Ring
       b. This year’s deadline to purchase a ring (in time for the Ring Distribution Party): January 1, 2013
       c. February 21 will be the Rice Ring Celebration (significant primarily for seniors)
       d. Another deadline is March 22 for arrival one week before commencement
       e. Balfour trained people on campus on select days. However, you can always purchase rings at the bookstore.
       f. Question put to Council: Do we want a Balfour rep at a GSA sponsored activity or at specific times? Proposed that we could have a Balfour representative present at the GSA December Coffee Break
       g. General Question: Cost? Cheapest is $300 (stainless steel), GSA crest can be put on the inside of the ring; outside ring design has been unchanged for 80 years
       h. Payment plans are available
       i. Large majority of undergraduates do purchase Rice rings; trying to get this culture going amongst the graduate student body

III. New Business
    1. New Department and International Club Representatives
       a. Jacob Wahlen-Strothman (Physics and Astronomy)
       b. Bahar Salimian (Rice Iranian Society)
       c. Michael Sinai (School of Architecture)
2. Funding Request
   a. “Posada” (LAGSA and HACER, co-sponsored)
      i. Norma Torres is president of HACER (Undergraduate association, biggest and largest of the groups for the Latin American Student Body)
      ii. Gabriel Cerrotti, representing LAGSA
      iii. “Posada” is now detached from the religious aspect. Event now focuses on creating a cultural night (tango show, bands, salsa, vocals) and trying to display the diversity of hispanic culture
      iv. Event started in 1972: traditionally fills up the entire Grand Hall in RMC (approximately 450 seats).
      v. This year, LAGSA and HACER are trying to improve advertising, getting more of the student body involved and increasing interaction between graduate students and undergraduates.
      vi. Asking for $200 (min), $300 (ideal) of funding from GSA
          1. Will provide free tickets to Graduate Students (looking for at least 20 graduate attendees)
          2. Money will support food, performances, tickets, etc.
          3. Would also be willing to repurpose GSA funds previously given for LAGSA’s Spanish Corner, but this decision would be left entirely to the GSA Council
          4. Have already acquired funds from ALFA and SAPP
          5. Will be charging undergraduates $5 (for food, free for performances only)
          6. Unable to go through the normal grants route because of the recent idea to include graduate students.
      vii. Event happens December 1 (Begins at 5:30 pm)

   Council Decision: Agreed to fund $300 from general programming

Budget Update:
- Received $3000 extra from our blanket tax.
- All anticipated external funding has been received.
- Social Budget: only 25% spent as of November.
- Excess budget remaining in the following categories: Professional Development,
Community Service, and Lounge.

- Still have sufficient funds in Grants.
- Line items completed for the year: Orientation, Research Mixer, Centennial (slight overage, can be compensated for with funds from general programming)
- With an excess budget, Council has been asked for additional programming ideas.