GSA Council Meeting
Tuesday, April 15, 2014, 6:00 pm
Captain Lounge, RMC

Minutes

Representatives in attendance: Mauro Rinaldi (Biochemistry & Cell Biology), Alex Tatara (Bioengineering), Lauren Popp (Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering), Andrea Miranda (Chemistry), Yu Jun Leong (Civil & Environmental Engineering), Chris Nguyen (Computational & Applied Mathematics), Milind Chabbi (Computer Science), Sarah Huff (Earth Sciences), Vlad Soare (Linguistics), Marissa Knowles (Masters of Liberal Studies), Jacob M. Wahlen-Strothman (Physics & Astronomy), Debshila Mallick (Psychology), Jonathan Stewart (Statistics)

Guests in attendance: Anastasia Yee (Architecture), Chris Metzler (Electrical & Computer Engineering), Bahar Rizi (Chemical Engineering), Prof. Scott McGill (Classical Studies), Prof. Peter C. Caldwell (History), Dr. John Hutchinson (Dean of Undergraduates), Mihaela Nistor (Civil Engineering), Andrea Schlanther (Chemistry)

1. New Business

1.1. Dean Hutchinson Intro. Rice Dean of Undergraduates Dr. John Hutchinson spoke about the university services available for graduate students and noted several offices under his division that serve both undergraduates and graduate students. He encourage the GSA Council to contact him if any graduate-related concerns came up. He also briefly addressed a question about the student health insurance/services fees for graduate students.

1.2. Introduction of Joint Faculty Advisors. Dr. Scott McGill and Dr. Carl Caldwell were introduced as the 2014-2015 joint faculty advisors for the GSA. The Council voted to elect Dr. Caldwell as the new GSA joint faculty advisor.

1.3. Announcement of Coordinator Manager: A new officer position, Coordinate Manager, was created to oversee the coordinators for special GSA events (i.e., Orientation, 90 Second Thesis, Beer Bike, etc.). The officers appointed Andrea Schlanther from the Chemistry Department to this position.

1.4. Officer Elections.

1.4.1. The Council voted to elect Bahar Rizi as Lounge Manager.

1.4.2. The Council voted to elect Emily Thomas as Community Service Chair.
1.5. *Grant requests.*

1.5.1. The Council voted to award $1000 to the Rice Iranian Society for their 2014 Nowruz Spring Party.

1.5.2. The Council voted to award $250 to the PLAT Journal for their Spring Zine Workshop for architecture students.

1.5.3. The Council voted to award $200 to the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute at Rice for their guest lecture featuring Dr. Leonardo Duenas.

1.6. *RMC redesign.* The RMC will be receiving major renovations starting this summer, and the GSA has the unique opportunity to have some input in the re-design process. A ‘wish list’ of items that would benefit graduate students is currently being compiled. This list includes having more open communal study/meeting spaces and food selections for graduate students. Other suggestions include making electrical plugs more available, preserving the Rice Coffeehouse, improving the safety of the back stairs leading to the basement of the RMC, and preserving the GSA Captain’s Lounge.

2. *Past Events.*

2.1. Beer Bike took place on Saturday, March 29th. The event and the afterparty were a success.

2.2. Crawfish Boil took place on Friday, April 11th from 4-8pm. The event had around 300-400 attendees and was a success.

3. *Upcoming Events.*

3.1. The GSA will host its Spring Picnic event Friday, April 25th, from 5-9pm. There will be food, beer, and entertainment (water slide). Volunteers are needed for this event. All volunteers will receive a free GSA T-shirt.

3.2. The GSA Awards Ceremony will be held on Tuesday, May 6th from 12-1pm. The winners of the Faculty Teaching and Mentoring Award, Faculty/Staff Service Award, Robert Lowry Patten Award, GSA Service Award, and Friends of the Rice Graduate Students Award will be announced and receive their awards at this time.
4. Open Forum

4.1. The $75 late registration fee for graduate students was brought up as a concern. The lack of reminders about the registration deadline exacerbates to this issue. Since most graduate students are only registering for research credits and are not disrupting the class scheduling/registration process, it would be reasonable for this fee to be reduced, or at least for more reminders to be sent out to students. This issue will be brought up to Dr. Matsuda and/or the registration office for further discussion.

4.2 Sarah Huff was introduced as the new departmental representative for the Earth Sciences department. Andrea Miranda was introduced as the new departmental representative for the Chemistry Department.