GSA Council Meeting
Tuesday, November 18, 2014, 6:00 pm
Captain Lounge, RMC

Minutes

Reps in attendance: Jose Candelaria (Art History), Caitlin Guenther (Bioengineering), Joelle Baddour (Chem. & Biomolecular Engineering), Andrea Miranda (Chemistry), Ben Bass (Proxy from Civil & Environmental Engineering), Derek Mikesell (Computational & Applied Mathematics), Jacob Gao (Computer Science), Shannon Carter (Ecology & Evolutionary Biology), George Chen (Electrical & Computer Engineering), David Ponton (History), Bazile Lanneau (Linguistics), Miriam Kuzbary (Mathematics), Carissa Phillips-Garrett (Philosophy), Billy Rothwell (Sociology), Jonathan Stewart (Statistics)

Guests: Debbie Diamond (Dev & Alumni Relations), Peiyu Chen (RCSSC), Eslam Eshahat (EEB)

Officers: Alessandra Forcucci, Lynn Fahey, Jonathan Dornell, Ali Ayremlou, S. Kameshwar, Andie Schlanter, Bahar Rizi, Emily Thomas, Sarah Kim

1. New Business
   1.1. Rice Initiative: Internships and Alumni Networking. Debbie Diamond from Dev. & Alumni Relations came to speak about the new Initiative for Students launched in October. This multi-pronged initiative has three parts: (1) remarkable talent (providing scholarship funding for Rice students, including funds for grad student stipends/fellowships), (2) unparalleled education (providing funds for new and emerging departments) (3) extraordinary impact (providing more internship and mentorship opportunities for students).

   1.2. Re-visit “Voice of Rice” Grant. The Rice Chinese Students and Scholars Club proposed an updated budget of $600 for “The Voice of Rice” competition. The Council voted to award RCSSC the full amount requested.

   1.3. Beer Bike Coordinators. Beer Bike will take place on Saturday, March 28th. Two co-coordinators were needed for this event, and two GSA reps volunteered to fill these positions.

   1.4. Grad/Alumni Interactions and Mentorship. Rice’s current system of keeping track of alumni contacts is lacking, especially for Rice graduate student alumni. It would be ideal for grad students to have access to a list of Rice grad alumni to improve grad/alumni relations. A few departments (i.e., Statistics department) keep an internal list of alumni;
however, it would be ideal if all departments had this type of system or if there was a school wide system in place.

It should also be noted that different departments have different career interests/focuses. Graduate students in some departments (i.e., Mathematics) may not be interested in industry-related careers as much as in academia; and other departments may place a larger focus on academia over industry or vice-versa. These factors should be considered when designing grad/alumni programming.

Instead of trying to develop new programming, the GSA will focus on making existing alumni connection events and other professional development-related programming more accessible to graduate students.

1.5. Improving visibility/relevance of CCD resources for graduate students. A common complaint is that many of the CCD events and career fairs are focused around the oil and gas industry or other programs that are largely irrelevant to grad students. CCD resources that are relevant (i.e., RICELink, which lists all the professional developmental events that the CCD provides) should be better advertised and targeted to graduate students.

1.6. Rice Survey of Students. The Rice Survey of Students is a new mandatory survey, required for course registration. The purpose of the survey is to gather more information about Rice students. Though the survey is within legal protocol, reps were concerned whether the survey results are truly confidential, and who would have access to this information. They were also interested in the details of what the information was going to be used for.

2. Past Events

2.1. GSA/ISAR coffee break. The GSA collaborated with ISAR to host a coffee break on Tuesday, October 28th, from 4-6pm.

2.2. Halloween coffee break. The Halloween coffee break took place on Friday, October 31st, from 2 - 4 pm.

2.3. OISS coffee break. OISS partnered with the GSA to host a coffee break on Tuesday, November 18th, from 3-5 pm as part of International Education Week. The past few coffee breaks were very successful and better attended than previous coffee breaks.

2.4. Ten Days of Service. The GSA Ten Days of Service took place from November 8th to November 17th. The event was a success, and there was a lot of graduate student participation especially in the book, toy, shoes, and canned food drives. Donations will continue to be collected until Friday, November 21st.