GSA Council Meeting  
Tuesday, September 16, 2014, 6:00 pm  
Captain Lounge, RMC

Minutes

In attendance: Jose Candelaria (Art History), Caitlin Guenther (Bioengineering), Joelle Baddour (Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering), Andrea Miranda (Chemistry), Derek Mikesell (Computational & Applied Mathematics), Sarah Huff (Earth Sciences), Shannon Carter (Ecology & Evolutionary Biology), George Chen (Electrical & Computer Engineering), David Ponton (History), Bazile Lanneau (Linguistics), Travis Boyer (Mech. Engineering & Material Sciences), Jacob M. Wahlen-Strothman (Physics and Astronomy), Jonathan Stewart (Statistics)

Guests in attendance: Kate Cross (GPS), Josh Lunou (Jones School), Tapsi Seth (Statistics), Dean Taylor, Daniel Fu (Director of Planning and Projects)

Officers: Jonathan Dornell, Ali Ayremlou, Andie Schlather, Chris Dohna, S. Kameshwar, Bahar Rizi, Mike Farner, Ornsiree Junchaya, Sarah Kim

1. New Business

1.1. Sexual Misconduct Policy Updates. Dean Taylor came to speak about recent changes to sexual misconduct policy at Rice. Taylor is the chair of the working group that was assembled in mid-June to address the new sexual assault initiatives put forth by the federal government.

The goal of the working group is to create a safe environment for Rice community members to be able to come forward and report/discuss any instances of sexual misconduct, as well as to prepare the university to respond to these requests in an appropriate and sensitive way.

Taylor asked the members of the GSA Council to review the new policies (available at http://safe.rice.edu/) and give them any comments/feedback that would help improve these policies to address sexual misconduct issues faced specifically by the graduate student body at Rice. The working group can be contacted at notalonewg@owlspace.rice.edu.

1.2. Hurricane Preparedness. Daniel Fu informed the GSA Council about hurricane preparedness and procedures at Rice as it relates to graduate students. The university will provide temporary shelter on campus only to graduate students living in university housing (RGA, RVA, Morning Square Apartments). Graduate students living off campus are advised to prepare according to the neighborhood they live in. Graduate students are also not allowed to take shelter in offices during a hurricane, since in the case of an emergency (i.e. building fire) the university cannot rescue or provide resources to anyone outside of designated shelter areas.
In the event of a hurricane, all graduate students are recommended to prepare enough
supplies (i.e., food, water, toiletries) to last 72 hrs. Evacuating the Houston area is not
recommended, since this would cause additional traffic on roads that may delay the
evacuation of people from coastal areas which are at higher risk. If one chooses to
evacuate the area, they are recommended to (1) choose an evacuation destination early (i.e.,
book a hotel at least two weeks in advance) and (2) leave at least one week before the
hurricane arrizes.

Rice is tied to Texas medical center power grid (highest priority), so it will re-gain power
before most surrounding areas. Rice is also capable of co-generating its own electricity and
drawing water from its own well, which can support 50-60% of the campus.

1.3. Committee Elections
1.3.1. Commencement Speaker Selection Committee (2).
        Elected: Sheila Mayfield (MLS) and Ismael Loera (Chemistry)

1.3.2. Health Insurance Committee (2).
        Elected: Ya He (Civil and Environmental Eng.) and Titiksha Vats (Biochemistry)

1.3.3. Parking Committee (1). Elected: Alexa Solazzo (Sociology)

1.3.4. Student Activities & President’s Programming Fund Allocation (1).
        Elected: Derek Mikesell (CAAM).

1.3.5. GSA Grants Committee (4-8).
        Elected: Sarah Huff (Earth Science), Caitlin Guenther (Bioengineering),
        Derek Mikesell (CAAM), Mike Farner (Earth Science)

1.3.6. Honor Council (4-8). Elected: Tapsi Seth (Statistics), Travis Boyer (Materials
        Science)

2. Past Events

2.1. GSA Orientation. The GSA Orientation held on Wednesday, August 20th, was a success.
        More than eighty graduate student volunteers contributed to this event.

2.2. Discover Research. The GSA participated in the Discover Research fair on Wednesday,
        August 27th in lieu of holding a separate GSA/SA Research Mixer. Graduate student
        volunteers mingled and discussed their research with interested undergraduates. The GSA
        looks to increase the number of graduate student volunteers presenting at the event next
        year.
3. Upcoming Events

3.1. *Oktoberfest Picnic.* The Oktoberfest picnic will be held on Friday, September 26th, from 5 - 9 pm in front of Keck Hall. Burgers and hot dogs will be provided at the event, so volunteer grillers are needed for the picnic. The first hundred attendees and all volunteers will receive a free GSA pint glass.

3.2. *September Coffee Break.* The next GSA coffee break will be held on Tuesday, September 23rd, from 3 - 5 pm in the GSA Captains Lounge.

3.3. *GSA Lounge committee.* The GSA Lounge survey from a few months ago was not completed by many graduate students, so the survey may be sent out again to the graduate student body. Volunteers for the Lounge Committee are also needed to help start renovations on the Lounge. If interested in joining the Lounge Committee, contact Bahar at bs13@rice.edu.