Council Minutes for July 21, 2015 - 6:00pm

Meeting Opened: 6:02pm

In attendance:

- **Officers:** Lynn Fahey, Cat Majors, Emily Thomas, Peshal Nayak
- **Directors:** Jesse Choe, Andrea Miranda, Eric Lewis, Mehbuba T anzid, Josh Hill
- **Departmental Representatives:** Nathanael Vlachos (Anthropology), Jennifer Burnett (Applied Physics), Jose Candelaria (Art History), Sam Paulsen (Bioengineering), Blake Sutherland (Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering), Alexander Bui (Civil and Environmental Engineering), Ronnie Chatterjee (Computer Science), Lexi Malouta and Ruthie Halberstadt (Earth Sciences), Shannon Carter (Ecology and Evolutionary Biology), Shasha Liu (Economics), Cami Beekman (History), Diane Glick (Master of Liberal Studies), Miriam Kuzbary (Mathematics), Eleazar Marquez (Mechanical Engineering), Jacob M. Wahlen-Strothman (Physics and Astronomy), Vaishnavi Ramesh (Professional Masters in Engineering), Stephanie Zajac (Psychology), Justine Bakker (Religious Studies), Jonathan Steward (Statistics), Kareem Mehrabiani (Systems, Synthetic, and Physical Biology), and Victoria Finlon (Teaching, Master of Arts)
- **Cultural Representatives:** Bhagyashree Po (Indian Students at Rice), Quazi Z. Rasool (Rice Muslim Student Association)
- **Grants Representatives:** Soupik Barua (ISAR), Sabarethinam Kameshwar (CEVE GSA), Navya Vishnu (EERI), Guangyuan Yu (Reading Club)
- **Guests:** N/A

- **Welcome New Reps:** History - Cami Beekman (filling in)
- **August Council Meeting date change due to Orientation**
  - Now August 11th
- **Constitution and Bylaws Updates Discussion/Vote**
  - Allow academic programs (like Applied Physics and Systems, Synthetic, and Physical Biology) in addition to academic department to be part of the council
  - Grants (Enrichment, Professional Development, and Travel) approval process moved out of GSA Council Meeting
    - GSA Enrichment grants packet is still sent out to all representative
    - Reps are invited but not required to attend Grants Meeting with Grants Committee
    - Reps will no longer vote on Grants
    - Grants representative will still come to the Council Meeting if approved
    - Grants deadline is now midnight on the first of every month
    - The GSA Council can still make referenda against a Grants Committee decision if they disagree
    - Send out an announcement in the GSA Announcement about the change in Grants process
      - 19 in favor
      - 0 opposed/abstained
• **Open forum**
  ○ **Volunteers for Orientation**
    ■ Departmental GSA presidents able to volunteer, will not interfere with departmental activities
    ■ Everyone welcome to volunteer, not just “mainstream” grad students
    ■ Link to sign up on Facebook and GSA Announcements [http://goo.gl/forms/lXtoaNjjf0](http://goo.gl/forms/lXtoaNjjf0)
  ○ **Women’s Resource Center Issues**
    ■ No current full time staff or professionals or counselors
    ■ Grad students would like more support for family planning and how to have a family in grad school
      ● Also no IUD placement at Rice, affects both undergrads and grad students
    ■ There is currently no place to address transgender healthcare at Rice
      ● Could possible the Women’s Resource Center help with this
    ■ Women’s Resource Center is still treated as a club by a university, rather than a full center capable of providing professional assistance to women
  ● **Action Plan**
    ■ Receive feedback from the undergraduate Student Association about how they feel about this
    ■ See if physicians from Rice Health would like to advocate for professional staff at Women’s Resource Center as well
    ■ See if the Wellness Center would like to advocate for professional staff at Women’s Resource Center as well
    ■ Get conversation rolling with administration at GradStarter Grant Meeting
    ■ Reach out to undergraduate and local women’s resource center to see how ours compare and what the price would be to get full time staff
  ○ **Gym Hours during the Summer**
    ■ The gym currently closes at 9pm (8pm on weekends) in the summer
      ● Could we advocate for extended hours?
      ● Lack of staff is the problem
    ■ Overrun by youths during the summer, especially in the locker rooms and pool area
    ■ Are these issues sufficient that the recreation center should lower summer gym fees?
      ● Normal semesters of ~4.5 months = $49 (~$10.89/month)
      ● Summer semester of three months = $32 (~$10.67/month)
      ● Should Summer semester be cheaper?
  ○ **Social and Cultural Budget**
    ■ What is the difference between two?
Social and Cultural events are intertwined. Many of our Social events are cultural

- GICN is a cultural event, would that take up all of the budget?
  - Could possible make GICN more cost effective
  - Picnic seems to be a successful model
- Cultural events are still covered by other budget line items
  - Cultural picnics covered under social budget
  - Cultural Coffee Breaks covered by coffee break budget
- Cultural events won’t be turned away for lack of budget

Grants

- ISAR India’s Independence Day Celebration (Souptik Barua)
  - Funded - $250
- ISAR Freshers’ Welcome (Souptik Barua)
  - Funded - $250
- Reading Club (Guangyuan Yu)
  - Funded for First Meeting - $40
- EERI-RU General Meeting (Navya Vishnu)
  - Funded - $240
- CEVE Summer volleyball tournament (Sabarethinam Kameshwar)
  - Funded - $250

Upcoming Events

- ROPE (Rice Outdoor Program and Education club) Coffee Break - Next Monday (July 27th) 3pm to 5pm
  - Orientation - August 19th
    - T-shirt design finalized
    - Need more volunteers - especially international students
      - Training and food provided
      - Also get free food and beer at picnic
      - Time requirement are generally minimal
        - One training meeting (~1 hr)
        - Breakout sessions (~1.5 hr)
        - Coffee Break Mingle (~2 hr)
- Discover Research - August 27th
  - Looking for more presenters
    - Posters are not required
      - Encouraged to use discipline appropriate presentation material
  - Sign up here: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/118_5KLAL5YjCZLkhfo6CwnG_6nOC6ApK25i7Kj-f1ZA/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/118_5KLAL5YjCZLkhfo6CwnG_6nOC6ApK25i7Kj-f1ZA/viewform)
  - Professional photographer will be taking headshots of participants
    - Photoshop touch-ups included
  - Dinner with the Dean of Graduate Students, Seiichi Matsuda
○ Owlympics - Beginning of January 2016
  ■ Program to encourage exercise by logging exercise and accruing points
    ● Exercise recorded by intensity (mild, moderate, or intense) and then duration
  ■ Labs and departments can compete
  ■ Designed to give more points for working out with friends and for beginners
    ● Hope to get all grad students involved with exercise, not just the currently exercise
  ■ App will be ready for small pilot program in late August
  ■ Postdocs and faculty included in program

● Past Events
  ○ Wellbeing Coffee Break
    ■ Very successful
    ■ Coloring mandalas and was well received
  ○ Pride Picnic
    ■ Very successful
    ■ Facepainting was well received

Meeting closed: 7:08pm