GSA Council Meeting Agenda
Tuesday, January 21, 2014, 6:00 pm
Captain Lounge, RMC

Minutes

Representatives in attendance. Hannah Fullgraf (Art History); Mauro Rinaldi (Biochemistry & Cell Biology); Alex Tatara (Bioengineering); Lauren Popp (Chemical & Bimolecular Engineering); Andrea Schlather (Chemistry); Chris Nguyen (Computational & Applied Mathematics); Milind Chabbi (Computer Science); Michael Farner (Earth Sciences); Rodrigo Paula (English); Vlad Soare (Linguistics); Marissa Knowles and John King (Master of Liberal Studies); Miriam Kuzbary (Mathematics); Travis Boyer (Mechanical Engineering & Material Sciences); Chris Dohna (Philosophy); Jacob Wahlen-Strothman (Physics and Astronomy); Connie Foo (Professional Masters in Science); William Rothwell (Sociology).


1. New Business

1.1. 90-Second Thesis Competition. Representative Travis Boyer (Mechanical Engineering & Material Sciences) introduced himself as a coordinator for this year’s 90-Second Thesis Competition. He encouraged participation in the event.

1.2. Update on officer positions.

1.2.1. The Council voted to elect Representative Lynn Fahey (Sociology) as Interim Publicity and Marketing Chair. Lynn replaces Michelle Downey, who is on parental leave.

1.2.2. The President informed the Council that officer elections are scheduled for the March meeting.

1.3. Humanities stipend increase. Humanities Graduate Student Association (HGSA) President Kelly B. Weber announced that, thanks to the support of Humanities Dean Nicholas Shumway, the graduate students in the School of Humanities will receive a stipend increase in the 2014-15 academic year.

1.4. Update on Keck Hall lawn renovations. The Council voted to allocate $7,500 to fund renovations to the Keck Hall lawn to ensure that the University will install the planned storage unit and grills before Beer Bike. The GSA budgeted $35,000 for Fondren Library and Keck Hall lawn renovation initiatives. The University paid for the Library renovations, so we shifted our funds to Keck Hall. A campus beautification fund has awarded $400,000 to renovate the lawn, but this funding won’t arrive until March. The Council agreed to pay for renovations required for Beer Bike costing $7,500 from our budget. The University will reimburse us for $4,000 after March.
1.5. *Update on graduate food options.* Graduate students frequently complain about the limited food options available on campus. This year, the GSA worked with Food and Dining to make available 200 meal plans for graduate student use at lunchtime. The President announced that he is working with the Cohen House Faculty Club to add another lunch option. The plan will offer a subsidized take-out dining option for graduate students. The GSA will launch the pilot program in February. The Cohen House offers healthier food options and is open in summer. Students will still have to pay the membership fee to join Cohen House.

1.6. *Changes to the GSA constitution and bylaws.* The President presented his proposed changes to the GSA constitution and bylaws to the Council. The Council will vote on the proposed changes at the February meeting.

1.7. *Open Forum*

1.7.1. Beer Bike Coordinator Travis Boyer solicits Beer Bike themes from the Council.

1.7.2. Representatives observe that the shuttle service between the BRC and the main campus, which runs every 30 minutes, is inconvenient. They propose Transportation consider revising the long route the shuttle takes through the Medical Center.

2. *Past Events*

2.1. The GSA/OISS International Education Week Coffee Break took place on November 20.

3. *Upcoming Events*

3.1. The Brazilian Coffee Break, a collaboration with Brazil@Rice and LAGSA, will take place on January 29 from 3:00 to 4:30 pm.

3.2. Graduate International Cultural Night (GICN) will take place on February 28.

3.3. The Graduate Lifeshack luncheon will take place on February 14. Representatives from the Wellbeing office will offer advice on setting goals for daily life and the long term.