GSA Council Meeting
Tuesday, February 18, 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); Michael Farner (Earth Sciences); Kim Vincent (Ecology & Evolutionary Biology); Suraya Khan (History); Miriam Kuzbary (Mathematics); Travis Boyer (Mechanical Engineering & Material Sciences); Chris Dohna (Philosophy); Jacob Wahlen-Strothman (Physics and Astronomy); Ornsiree Junchaya (Professional Masters in Science); Debshila Mallick (Psychology); Nathanael Homewood (Religious Studies); William Rothwell (Sociology).

Guests in attendance. Katherine Vance (Math Department/Rice AWM); Eslam Elshahat (EEB); Sarah Kim (Computer Science); David Ramírez (RGSH); Robert Likamura (ECE); Sal Tijecina (KTRU); Seiichi Matsuda (Dean of Graduate Studies); Travis Boyer (MEMS).

1. New Business

1.1. Visit by guests from the office for Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS). Dean Seiichi Matsuda, Associate Vice Provost Arnault Chevallier, and staff member Sherri Vanderslice visited the meeting to introduce themselves. Ms. Vanderslice takes care of graduate student issues and manages the Succeed workshop series. Associate Vice Provost Chevallier received his PhD in mechanical engineering from Rice. He works on strategic problems and day-to-day operations. Dean Matsuda notes the unusual place of graduate student administration on campus. The GPS office governs all the graduate programs, but the office has no formal oversight. He works on long-term projects and is welcomes recommendations from the GSA for opportunities for partnership.

1.2. Funds for lounge renovations. The Council voted to allocate $15,000 to fund renovations to the Captain Lounge from rollover funds. The current officer team will begin the renovations, which the incoming officer team will complete.

1.3. Funds for conference funding and perpetual savings account. The Council voted to open a dedicated savings account with $20,000. The Council further voted to allocate $15,000 from the rollover to establish a new grant program to fund graduate student travel to conferences. Donors Jennifer and Purvez Captain have awarded a $10,000 annual match for this purpose for a total of $25,000 funds for the first year of the program. The incoming officer team will draft the program guidelines and implement it.

1.4. Amendments to the constitution and bylaws. The Council voted to approve edits to the GSA constitution as follows: 1) to bypass the proportional vote; 2) to remove proportional voting
language; 3) to preserve Article Eleven, Section Two, by replacing 5% with 20 members; 4) to approve all other proposed edits. The Council further voted to approve all proposed edits to the GSA bylaws.

1.5. **Grant requests.**

1.5.1. The Council voted to award $1,000 to KTRU Rice Radio for its 23rd Annual KTRU Outdoor Show.

1.5.2. The Council voted to postpone consideration of the grant request submitted by the Rice Chinese Student and Scholars Club until the March Council meeting pending receipt of a financial report of actual income and expense for its 2014 Spring Festival.

1.5.3. The Council voted to award $175 to the Association for Women in Mathematics for its Pi Day Celebration.

1.5.4. The Council voted to award $250 to the Association for Women in Mathematics for its Salary Negotiation for Mathematical Jobs panel discussion.

1.5.5. The Council did not vote on the Rice Iranian Society’s application for its Norouz (Iranian New Year) event because no representative was present.

1.6. **Call for Project SAFE graduate participants.** Project SAFE (Sexual Assault Free Environment) is a Rice program offered by the Student Wellbeing Office that educates students about sexual assault and trains them in techniques to prevent violent abuse. The Wellbeing Office seeks graduate students to serve on the advisory committee that oversees the program. Interested students should contact Michelle Sneck.

1.7. **Summer internship for Dulles High School students.** Dulles High School seeks STEM departments at Rice to host their students in summer internships. Last summer the Ecology and Evolutionary Biology department hosted a two-internship program for them. It was a great opportunity to get teaching experience. Departments interested in hosting Dulles High School students this summer should contact Michelle Sneck.

1.8. **Foundations in Personal Finance course.** Community Service Chair Cherrie Thompson has organized a series of courses on the theme of “Foundations in Personal Finance” designed to help graduate students learn skills to manage their personal finances.

1.9. **Update on BRC-main campus shuttles.** BRC administration is satisfied with current transport options from the BRC to the main campus, but they will consider affordable ways to improve service. They eliminated the segways because they were too expensive to maintain.
2. Past Events

2.1. The Brasil@Rice-LAGSA Carnival Coffee Break took place on January 29. The event was a success.

2.2. The Obligation Overload Time Management Seminar took place on February 14.

3. Upcoming Events

3.1. The February Coffee Break has been cancelled.

3.2. Submit nominations for GSA Awards.

3.3. GSA Officer Information Session Lunches will take place on February 20 and March 5. Rsvp to gsa@rice.edu.

3.4. The Foundations in Personal Finance class series will take place on Saturdays from February 22 to March 22.

3.5. The March Blood Drive will take place from 9:00am to 1:30pm on March 13.

3.6. The next GSA Food Bank Trips will take place March 3-6, 7-8, and 15.

4. Final Remarks. The president notes that new officer elections will be held at the March Council meeting. He thanked the representatives for their support.

5. Open Forum

5.1. Representative Suraya Khan (History) seeks feedback for the Honor Council regard graduate student policies.