I. CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Rackham Student Government General Board Meeting was held on Wednesday, March 16, 2011, at 7:40 p.m. at the Rackham Graduate Building. *The meeting time was changed to 7:40 p.m. due to the Division III/IV Town Hall that took place at 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. at the Rackham Graduate School.

RSG President Michael Benson called the meeting to order at 7:41 p.m.

Members Present: Michael Benson, Mayela Montenegro, Mindy Waite, Yu Zhang, David Cottrell, Bob Nyambati, Alex Emly, Josh Bow, Eli Eisman, Phil Esposito, Katherine Fisher, Tien-Huei Hsu, Alex Toulouse, Ethan Eagle, Lily Mancour

Guests: Dorothy Pirtle, Elections Director
         Garret Goh, Student

II. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Josh motioned to approve the RSG Board Meeting minutes of February 23 and March 9. Motion is seconded. Minutes approved.

III. OFFICER REPORTS

a) PRESIDENT

MICHAEL:
Thanks to all who attended Division III and IV Town Hall. Division II Town Hall will be on Friday.

Rackham has approved funding for SAGE trip.

Northwood Apts will be closed to be restored and re-opened to make more room for undergrads. Will discuss issue next week.

b) VICE PRESIDENT

MAYELA:
Thanks to Tien and Josh for the Town Halls.

c) TREASURER

MINDY:
We have $25,000. And a funding request that came in today.
IV. ELECTIONS UPDATE

DOROTHY:
Email went out on Tues announcing a candidate file extension. Two events for candidates – no one attended either. Didn’t have banner or visible sign. Teamed up with Josh and Tien to target non-RSG people at the Town Halls. It is my hope that non-RSG members will attend Friday’s Town Hall. Suggests that a banner saying “RSG” is purchased for the future.

$195 in Elections Budget remaining. Not sure remainder of funding will be used.

LILY:
Suggests a tent with RSG printed on it.

MINDY:
We’ve discussed funding. Some funding can also come from the Communications Committee.

ETHAN:
Suggest that we engage with IT to have an elections announcement on cTools the week of the elections.

V. BALLOT QUESTIONS

MICHAEL
No one at Rackham actually knows why we have a 9-point scale. We can perhaps add a ballot question “Do you support changing Rackham’s 9-point GPA scale to a 4-point scale?” In order to move forward, Board has to approve putting this on the ballot.

LILY: Would students know about the 9-point scale?
MICHAEL: We can direct students for more info.

Bob motioned to include the conversion of a 9-point GPA scale to a 4-point GPA scale on the ballot. Mayela seconded the motion. No objections.

AYES: 12
NOES: 0
ABSTAIN: 3
Motion passed.

VI. FUNDING REQUEST

MINDY:
Representatives from Black Scholars and Professionals will be presenting on their funding request for the event “Saturday Morning Conversations: Work and Faith,” scheduled for March 26th. Will give a 5-minute presentation about event, and Q&A.

[ENTER GUESTS: Black Scholars and Professionals]
Jonetta Johnson
Terry Wood, 2nd yr postdoc, Public Health
Amy Williams
JOHNSON:
Held by Black Scholars, new group at UM. Caters to students of African descent, but open to everybody. Christian-based, affiliated with Inter-Varsity, an umbrella Christian organization.

WILLIAMS:
Panel members who are professionals in the area, some are faculty members. Dr. Griffin is professor at Public Health; psychology professor; business school faculty who teaches diversity; professor of peace and global studies; another professor; a pastor; an attorney and alum of UM and associate pastor.

Wanted to have diverse faculty and professionals from the community. Possible serve as mentors and be used as resource for minority Christian grad students.

WOOD:
Has been successful in securing funds for the facility. Is requesting funds for food, and speaker honorarium - $20/gift card for each panelist.

JOSH: Why do you expect an increase in attendance?
JOHNSON: Before, the even hasn’t been opened to the entire campus.

KATHERINE: How do you plan to advertise?
WOOD: Using personal networks and advertising to Emerging Scholars Interdisciplinary Network, advertised through SCOR. Using word of mouth and increasing type of communication.

ELI: You’d be willing to co-sponsor an event for all religions not just Christianity?
WOOD: Is hoping that more events like these will continue which will engage other faiths.

LILY: Feels like you’re being ripped off with food.
WOOD: Thinks food is inviting and the food will be fine, based on menu items selected by the group.

ELI: Have you considered reaching out to local churches for funding?
JOHNSON: No, has remained on campus. Came because RSG may provide funding for food, which other student orgs don’t.

JOSH: You say you’ll have the event anyway, so where will you come up with $800?
WOOD: May not offer food then.

MINDY: Can you go to a cheaper place if we partially fund you?
WOOD: May get cheaper food package.

BENSON: Is there only 1 professor who’s not from UM?
WILLIAMS: There are 3 who are not.

BENSON: Is your event education or religious focused?
JOHNSON: Education focused, to enhance the lives of grad students and reach out to potential mentors.

[GUESTS EXIT]
JOSH: Feels that 87% of budget going to food is too much.

ALEX E: Seems like they're advertising to their own group and to departments of their own students. Also, hesitant about funding for Christian food instead of inter-faith event. Also they applied last week for funding and are waiting for our money so they can advertise.

MICHAEL: They had originally emailed form to Cherisse a week ago.

ALEX T: Can we suggest to them that they have their event during the week so we can get a room for them at Rackham, so cost of food is minimal.

DOROTHY: Suggest perhaps a reduced amount for food, but not change their mission or their event.

JOSH: Has no problem giving funding to Christian event because we'd give funding to Muslim or Hindu group as well. Has issue of the large expense of food. Would feel more comfortable funding facility, like MSA, but not food.

ETHAN: You can't bring in outside food from third party vendor.

Josh motions to fund $205 ($105 for honorarium + $100 for food) for the event “Saturday Morning Conversations: Work and Faith” sponsored by the Black Scholars and Professionals.

Mindy motions to fund $305 ($105 for honorarium + 200 for food). Ethan seconds the motion.

Phil motions to fund block-grant of $350 with encouragement that they spend some portion of the money for advertisement. Eli seconds the motion. Josh objects.

Speaker in favor: PHIL: Thinks amount is compromise with what they requested. Helps to increase profile of the event. They said there’s an option for cheaper breakfast, and it’s for them to figure out. It’s a gesture of good faith and covers our bases.

Speaker against: JOSH: We give them money for advertisement and 1 ½ weeks isn’t enough, so they’ll spend $5 for advertising. We’re being nice solely by considering to fund this request. $305 is more than enough.

Vote on Phil’s motion to fund $350 with encouragement that they spend a portion of the funds for advertisement.
AYES: 10
NOES: 4
ABSTAIN: 1
Motion passed.

VII. TOWN HALL UPDATE

TIEN:
We just had 2nd town hall meeting, Div III and IV. Thanks to all who participated and attended. Counted at least 10 non-RSG people who came, but didn’t actually stay. Please each Rep step up and encourage your constituents to go.
Next Town Hall is Div II this Friday. Div II Reps please start advertising.

CHEN:  
Has gotten questions from peers about why one should go to the Town Hall.

TIEN:  
Rackham offers services and funding for students, so students know what Rackham offers.

MICHAEL  
We’re doing a better job in reaching out to students than has been done previously. If you don’t know the answer to a question, please ask. If you don’t know why the Town Hall is important, ask Reps and Exec. It’s up to you as Rep to convey to people in your program and Division on why it’s important.

Next week, we’ll begin handing out RSG business cards for everyone.

JOSH:  
Bring people to the Town Halls!

TIEN:  
Thanks to Mindy for being in charge of the food!

LILY:  
Suggests that we ordered catered food instead of individual orders, for our RSG meetings.

MICHAEL: Let’s discuss this next week.

VIII: SAGE WHITE PAPER

MICHAEL:  
Please take a look at the White Papers. If you have suggestions/edits, please email exec. Will be asking for the Board to approve the SAGE items.

IX: COMMITTEE REPORTS

a) ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Josh motions to approve the Academic Affairs meeting minutes. Mindy seconds the motion. No objections. Minutes approved.

TIEN:  
Ethan, Mindy, and I have been meeting with GEO about their unionization efforts. Has list of questions (in agenda packet). Ask people to read it and send me comments about changes you want to be made.

MINDY:  
Especially concerned about phrases being neutral for each party.

MICHAEL:
Wants to ensure there is information that students want to know about. Email Academics Committee with your comments by this Friday.

ELI:
Can I show to my constituents and colleagues?
MINDY: Yes, no problem.

b) BUDGETARY

MINDY:
Just went through a proposal. Another proposal will be discussed next Tuesday at the Budgetary Committee meeting.

c) COMMUNICATIONS

MAYELA:
Nothing

d) ELECTIONS

DOROTHY:
Should we host one more event hoping that people will show up?

RAHUL:
There’s no point of doing an event if it won’t be done right. Don’t want to beg people to run. We should organize an event if we can figure out some activity where we can attract the candidates who want to participate, not only because of the free food.

DOROTHY:
If not hosting an event next week, then hire a part-time graphic designer. Problem with RSG emails is that they all look the same and need more graphics. Has suggestion of a person who can work on website and do graphic design.

e) LEGISLATIVE

MICHAEL:
There will be a meeting next week with some people from MSU and Wayne State, and meeting with their membership in a few weeks.

f) STUDENT LIFE

RAHUL:
Tomorrow is the St Patty's Day. Email was sent out to student body. It’ll be at Alley Bar. Will give out 30 free shirts, first come, first serve.

MICHAEL:
Will coordinate to providers in the future so providers can sell t-shirts directly to students and we don’t serve as intermediaries.

X. INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS
RAHUL:
Project of branding. Wants to take over Facebook account.

ALEX T:
We should have a weekly email about our events. Should be taken with Communications Committee.

Alex T. motions that the Communications Committee meet next week. Alex E. seconds the motion. No objections. Motion passed.

XI. ADJOURN

The Rackham Student Government General Board Meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Meeting minutes prepared by: Mayela Montenegro, Vice President