RACKHAM STUDENT GOVERNMENT
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
7/11/2013, 6:00 PM
RACKHAM GRADUATE BUILDING
2ND FLOOR WEST CONFERENCE ROOM, NORTH ALCOVE

I. CALL TO ORDER:

II. ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Members: Chris Tom, Michael Benson, Phil Saccone, Janakiraman Balachandran, Alexander Gutierrez, Kaitlin Flynn, Brooke Horton, Ryan Roberts

Present:

Excused: Kaitlin Flynn

Unexcused:

III. OUTSTANDING ACTION ITEMS

a. [Michael] Email Phil about Assistant Registrar contact information
b. [Phil] Email to Registrar about why course evaluation information is private

IV. UPDATED ACTION ITEMS

V. UPDATE ON MEETING WITH JANET WEISS

a. Graduate student bill of rights
b. Conflict resolution
c. Background checks on incoming graduate students
d. New action items for committee

VI. CONFLICT RESOLUTION RESOURCES

VII. RESOLUTION FOR ACCESS TO INSTRUCTOR REPORTS

a. [Michael/Phil] Talk to Janet during meeting about course evaluation privacy

VIII. OPEN DISCUSSION

IX. ADJOURNMENT:
X. APPENDIX

a. Ram’s resolution:

A Resolution to provide view access to past three Instructor reports through Wolverine Access

Voluntary course evaluations are provided by the students to course instructors at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

These individual course evaluations are consolidated into Instructor reports by the Office of Evaluations and Examinations.

As an unstated policy, these Instr reports are made available only to the Faculty and the department staff.

These evaluation reports are also considered confidential by the Departments and are not available to view for students.

This lack of these evaluation reports severely disables the students from making an informed decision about crediting a course.

Such lack of information fuels a culture of lack of transparency which is anathema to a public educational institution as University of Michigan.

The availability of evaluation reports through wolverine access would enable students to make informed decision about crediting a course.

Further the availability of the course evaluations will also motivate the instructors to perform well in their teaching commitments which is occasionally lost in a research university like Michigan.

The availability of course evaluations will also motivate the students to provide thoughtful comments regarding their course experience.

Due to these advantages we propose to provide view access to at-least three previous instructor reports (preferably with comments) for all the courses through wolverine access during the enrollment period.

The President of the Rackham Student Body in conjunction with the RSG Academic Affairs Committee shall work with the Office of the Registrar to set these changes in place.
Resolution to create a class-bank system

Whereas classes are a critical, mandatory component of the majority of graduate student education at the University, and

Whereas some upper-level classes are offered once every two or three years

Whereas these classes may prove to be advantageous for advancement

Whereas the current Rackham system for PhD candidates only allows for a single class to be taken free of charge per semester

Whereas a second class can be taken for a substantial fee to the student or the advisor

Whereas fellowships and training grants often require additional classes to be taken; these classes can negate the cost-benefits of candidacy and other training grants, therefore,

Be it resolved to convert the current Rackham system to a class-bank system in which graduate students are allowed (with their advisors permission) to take as many classes as desired, up until the class bank is depleted is met, at which point students are permitted to enroll or audit in one class per semester.

Be it resolved that this bank shall contain X classes/credits

Be it resolved that the President of the Rackham Student Government on behalf of the Rackham Student Body is instructed to work with the Office of the Registrar and Rackham Graduate School to implement these suggestions.
RESOLUTION TO EXPAND THE UNIVERSITY NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

WHEREAS, The Non-Discrimination Policy within the University of Michigan Standard Practice Guide1 exists to protect the diverse range of individuals employed by and attending the University from discrimination, harassment, and violence; AND

WHEREAS, the Non-Discrimination Policy states that the University “will not discriminate against any individual because of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status,” AND

WHEREAS, “gender identity” is interpreted to refer to the self-identity of the individual2; “gender expression” is interpreted to the actions of an individual to realize their gender identity3; AND

WHEREAS, the American Psychological Association defines sexual orientation to be “an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions to men, women, or both sexes4;” AND

WHEREAS, sexual orientation refers to the nature of the person or persons that an individual is emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions; AND

WHEREAS, University protects the subject and the object of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions through its Non-Discrimination Policy; AND

WHEREAS, the Non-Discrimination Policy does not protect the actions between the subject and object that are the primary means to sexual and physical fulfillment; AND

WHEREAS, “sexual expression” would thus refer to the actions of an individual to realize their sexual identity; AND

WHEREAS, “marital status” is defined as “never married, married, widowed

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1 Michigan Standard Practice Guide (sect. 201.35)
2 Jackie Simpson, Head of the Spectrum Center, adapted from personal communication on Feb 13th, 2012.
3 Dr. Charlie Glickman, Adult Sex Educator in San Francisco, adapted from personal communication March 31st, 2012.
and not remarried, divorced and not remarried, married but legally separated, de facto union⁵; AND

WHEREAS, “marital status” does not protect a diverse range of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual relationships that can occur outside of, and coexist with, the institution of marriage; AND

WHEREAS, it is known that individuals can and have been discriminated against for their methods of sexual expression and non-marital relationship status⁶; AND

WHEREAS, without explicit protection from discrimination, there may be the threat of implicitly sanctioned discrimination; violence and related hate crimes can accompany the lack of explicit protection⁷

NOW ON BEHALF OF THE STUDENT BODY OF THE HORACE H. RACKHAM GRADUATE SCHOOL, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the section 201.35 of the Standard Practice Guide of the University of Michigan be amended as follows (without emphasis):

“The University, in its employment and human resource policy and practices, will not discriminate against any individual because of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, relationship status, sex, sexual orientation, sexual expression, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status, except as allowed by the need for bona fide occupational qualification. Reasonable accommodation will also be provided to persons with disabilities, to disabled veterans, and to accommodate religious practices;” AND BE IT FINALLY

RESOLVED, that the President of the graduate student body is empowered and directed to work with the Administration of the University of Michigan to put into place policies that reflect the will and intent of this resolution.

AUTHOR

Christopher Tuck Mung Baker Tom
Representative (Division 1), Rackham Student Government
Co-chair, Academic Affairs Committee

⁶ National Coalition for Sexual Freedom, Incident Response Report records
⁷ Rebecca Stotzer, PhD. Comparison of hate crime rates across protected and unprotected groups. Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law. June 2007.
ATTEST
By Signing below, I certify the this resolution was dispatched by the RSG Board under the rules as prescribed in section IX of the bylaws and that the vote count appearing at the top of this resolution is accurate.

____________________________________
Kaitlin Flynn
Vice President, Rackham Student Government

PRESIDENTIAL ACTION

I, Michael Benson, President of the Rackham Student Body, do hereby approve / veto this resolution on this the ________ day of _____, 2012.

____________________________________
Michael L. Benson
President, Rackham Graduate Student Body