Rackham Student Government
Board Meeting: August 17, 2011
Agenda

I. Call To Order
II. Approval of Agenda
III. Approval of Previous Minutes
IV. Officer Reports
   a. Graduate Student Body President, Michael
   b. Graduate Student Body Vice President, Josh
   c. Graduate Student Body Treasurer, Mindy
V. Executive Orders
   a. Creation of a Post-Graduation Career Opportunities Committee
VI. GSRA Unionization Initiative Update
VII. RSG Fall Logistics
   a. Board Meetings
   b. Committee Meetings
   c. Office Hours
   d. Events
VIII. Committee Reports
   a. Academic Affairs
   b. Budgetary
   c. Communications
   d. Elections
   e. Legislative
   f. Student Life
IX. Committee Progress Review
X. Open Discussion
XI. Adjournment
I. Roll call of members at 7:16pm  
Present: Kaitlin Flynn, Mindy Waite, Tien-Huei Hsu  
Excused absences: Eli Eisman, Grant Mandalino, Anne Fitzpatrick  
Unexcused absences: David Cottrell  

II. Special Business  
• Town Hall  
  *We discussed alternatives for the forum and decided to keep with Lunch with the Deans idea. The worry was initially because of a fear of low attendance. However, we believe that having it during lunch hour will actually boost attendance; not many people want to spend their evenings with the Dean. Format of the TH will be discussed in the future once we determine the date for the events.  
  *We are still having problems with scheduling the Deans for one day. Alternatives will be: either go with the dates we’ve already set (putting more pressure on the Dean’s secretaries to schedule an available date), or have 2 Deans present on one date and the other Deans on another date.  
  *Once we have an available date set, we will set up a registration page for the event(s).  
• Graduate Student Bill of Rights  
  *Kaitlin will send Tien the updated version to post onto the RSG website. We will work to solicit feedback from students.  
  *Mindy suggested including the information about the GSBR on email to be sent out regarding current situation with the GSRA unionization.  
• Unionization/GSRA forum updates  
  *Mindy writing the GEO/GSRA unionization update  
  *We support RSG holding a GSRA joint forum because:  
    There is a need to inform students and provide accurate information  
    We will work towards getting both sides to agree to format  
    This will give students from smaller departments or departments that are not having GSRA forums the opportunity to attend one  
• SMART Goals  
  *Bill of Rights: We’re on track  
  *Town Halls: Lagging a little because of delays in scheduling date for THs  
• Improvements for next semester
*Attendance: we may be enforcing an attendance policy next semester*

III. Open Discussion

V. Next meeting: August 25\textsuperscript{th} 2011, 7pm

VI. Adjournment: 7:38 pm
I. Roll call of members at 6:05 pm
Present: Kaitlin Flynn, Tien Hui-Hsu, Mindy Waite, Sam Rola, Christine Andres
Excused

Updates:

1. **Federal level**: The Congress and administration moved on the subsidized loans issue for graduate students much sooner than anticipated. We were expecting the issue to be a part of the 2012 budget process but it was included in the debt ceiling deal. As of last week's deal, **subsidized loans for graduate students will no longer exist as of January**. The SAGE coalition will be looking at alternatives, including the new IBR program as a mechanism to ensure that graduate education is still incentivized by the federal government.

2. **State Level**: MERC recently ruled that **GSRAs do not have the ability to unionize**. There will likely still be a vote by GSRAs to determine if they want to unionize. How can we best go about communicating this information to the students in an unbiased manner?

3. **Local Level**: Ann Arbor held its party primaries last week and had a relatively low turnout. There are contested races in the general election, and are hoping to plan a candidates' forum / debate for sometime in October

**Goals/objectives for the candidates forum:**
- engage with the local political community (and encourage local residents to attend)
- Get local politicians engaged with graduate students on issues relevant to our experience
- Provide information for graduate students living in these contested race areas so they can make informed decisions

**Other discussion points:**

1. PILOTs. We ask everyone to forward their state reports to Michael or Kaitlin ASAP. We’ll be compiling the reports into a usable format for use at the state level in September. This issue pertains to how we might gain revenue for the local emergency response agencies without directly affecting the University budget.
2. IBR research. We’d like everyone to have a basic understanding of IBRs for our next meeting (in 2 weeks)

**Open discussion**
- general discussion regarding the possibility of RSG hosting a GSRA information session for
the entire graduate student body. Many members agree that it is our responsibility as an organization to ensure clear, unbiased information is disseminated to the students from a neutral source.

Meeting adjourned 6:40pm
**Smart Goals**

*Academic Affairs Committee*
- Finish Graduate student bill of rights will be finished hopefully by end of summer.
- Also organize Lunch with Deans for fall.

*Legislative Affairs Committee*
- Having a Candidate’s forum before the upcoming primary election.
- Pursuing the issue of funding for fire departments. Research and formulate a plan.

*Student Life Committee*
- Follow through on all events

*Communications Committee*
- 100 likes and 100 followers on Facebook and Twitter.
- Weekly newsletter running.
Executive Order: EO-11-3

AN EXECUTIVE ORDER CREATING THE RSG CAREER OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

WHEREAS, The Rackham Student Government (RSG) serves as the conduit between the graduate student body and the university at large; AND

WHEREAS, Graduate students, including members of the RSG Board, have requested that the University of Michigan or RSG provide post-graduation career advising beyond academic careers; AND

WHEREAS, The University’s Career Center does not offer direct career guidance for graduating masters and Ph.D. candidates; AND

WHEREAS, A group of graduate students has come together to fill this missing need; AND

WHEREAS, Addressing the post-graduate career needs of 8,000+ graduate students is a very large endeavor; AND

WHEREAS, The Michigan Graduate Consulting Club (MGCC) is committed to bringing consultants to campus to help graduate students explore consulting opportunities after graduation; AND

WHEREAS, Numerous types of non-academic employment opportunities exist for graduating graduate students beyond consulting; AND

WHEREAS, Article 4, section A, subsection 1i explicitly grants the president the power to “create, charge, and oversee Ad-Hoc committees for special projects and interests”; NOW THEREFORE I, MICHAEL L. BENSON, AS THE DULY ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE RACKHAM STUDENT GOVERNMENT AND BY THE POWER VESTED IN ME BY THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STUDENT BODY OF THE ANN ARBOR CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN AND THE BYLAWS OF THE RACKHAM STUDENT GOVERNMENT DO HEREBY ORDER THE FOLLOWING:

Section 1. That a post-graduation career opportunities committee (PG-COC) be created, effective immediately.
Section 2. That the PG-COC’s composition, leadership, charge, and operating procedure shall comply with the RSG bylaws as well as section 3 of this order.

Section 3. SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

A. Composition. The SOC shall be composed of a minimum of 1 member of the RSG Board and a minimum of 2 members of the Michigan Graduate Consulting Club (MGCC). Any member of the Rackham student body, or the broader university community may join the committee.

B. Quorum. A quorum shall exist when half plus one of the committee members are present.

C. Charge. The PG-COC will work collaboratively with the MGCC and RSG’s Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) provide a diverse array of information and events to help educate the graduate student body about the multitude of non-academic career opportunities. Career paths and opportunities should span the range of the graduate school, and at least one career path customarily tied to each Rackham division should be offered in a given academic year.

D. Leadership. The PG-COC will be co-chaired by RSG Representative Patrick Roony (Mathematics) as well as MGCC Co-Presidents Jia Sun (Chemical Biology) and Samantha Liang Zhang (Chemical Biology). The committee may internally elect a vice-chair, a secretary, and as many project managers as they deem necessary to meet their charge. The Board may remove a co-chair of this committee with a 2/3rds majority vote.

E. Budget. The committee is eligible for a budget. The RSG Treasurer will contact the committee chairs in the course of the normal RSG budgeting process to devise a funding plan, including collaborative funding with the AAC, other entities within the University, and external organizations, as appropriate.

F. Renewal. The Board may, by a simple majority vote extend the timeline for the BRC up to the end of the 2011 calendar year. Any motion to extend the timeline of the board must include a new dissolution date.

G. Reports. The PG-COC will submit regular reports to the Board on its progress and will seek feedback from the same.

H. Dissolution. The PG-COC will exist through December 31, 2011.

IT IS SO ORDERED.
Michael L. Benson
President, Rackham Student Government
University of Michigan Graduate Student Bill of Rights

1. Graduate students have the right to fair and equal treatment from university administrators, departmental staffs and faculty free of discrimination based on gender, race, age, sexual orientation, gender expression, disability, religious or political affiliations, country of origin, and citizenship.

2. Graduate students have the right to refuse to perform tasks unrelated to the requirements of their individual academic or professional development program.

3. Graduate students have the right to specific and concrete requirements for achieving an advanced degree, which should be communicated clearly upon entrance to the program and accessible in written form thereafter.

4. Graduate students have the right to change their faculty advisor(s) and the right to alternative supervision, external to the institution if necessary, in cases where the student’s primary faculty advisor departs from the university after the student’s coursework and dissertation have begun. If a degree program is to be discontinued, provisions shall be made for students already in the program to complete their course of study.

5. Graduate students have the right to objective evaluation, regular feedback and guidance concerning their academic performance and progress towards an advanced degree. Evaluations should be factual, specific and should be shared with the student within a reasonable period of time. The following should be available to the student in writing: annual progress reports, split decisions on qualifying examinations, and unusual or additional program requirements.

6. Graduate students have the right to correct or remedy deficiencies in their academic performance prior to dismissal from a program. Any intent to dismiss a student from a graduate program for academic reasons must be preceded by specific, written performance information well in advance of actual dismissal.

7. Graduate students have the right to access professional training courses and seminars as needed. This should include but not be limited to information about professional associations and conferences, mock interviews, job opportunities and publishing articles in journals.

8. Graduate students have the right to be informed of financial support for the duration of their study from their respective programs upon
entering an academic course of study. Should this support change at any
time during the course of study, graduate students have a right to be
informed in writing of such changes in a timely manner.

9. Graduate students have the right to participate in all political
processes of the academic community without fear of retribution. Graduate
students should have representatives on all campus-wide administrative
committees that affect graduate students, with voting privileges where
appropriate. In addition, all departments and graduate programs should
include graduate student representatives in committees that make
decisions affecting graduate student policies and academic requirements.

10. Graduate students have the right to a non-biased arbitration process
if and when seeking to resolve a violation of these rights. Official academic
grievance procedures and informal complaint procedures should be clearly
defined at the graduate division and at the department or graduate program
level. These procedures should be presented to graduate students at the
time of entry.

11. Graduate students have a right to be informed of these rights upon
enrollment, and to be free of reprisals for exercising these rights.

Errata:

c. A graduate student’s performance or behavior should not be discussed by
a professor with other students or staff without consent of the student.
d. Discussion of students among faculty should be of a professional nature,
and limited to academic performance.

a. A student should not be exploited to the personal advantage of faculty
members.
b. Students should not be coerced into performing tasks in grievous excess of
other students because of characteristics that are vulnerable to discrimination.

a. Requirements should be communicated clearly upon entrance to the
graduate program.
b. Graduate students have the right to accurate information in selecting a
major professor and other members of their committees. Graduate students have
the right to change their advisor if necessary. If a graduate student’s advisor
departs from the institution once the student’s work is under way, the program shall strive to provide the student with alternative supervision, external to the institution if necessary.

c. No changes to degree requirements should affect students previously accepted into the graduate program or academic focus except at the option of the student.

d. Prospective and currently enrolled graduate students have a right to know the normative and average times to degree within a specific graduate program.

e. Prospective and currently enrolled graduate students have a right to know a program’s and/or emphasis’ attrition rate and predominant reasons for lack of program completion, unless providing the information would be in conflict with an individual’s privacy rights.

• All graduate programs and/or emphases should implement a structured training program for their teaching assistants and teaching associates.

• All graduate programs and/or emphases should outline the expectations of a graduate student teacher, and the ways in which those expectations can be achieved, for their teaching assistants and teaching associates.

• The reasons for unsatisfactory performance on programmatic examinations should be stated clearly to the student in a written evaluation.

• Any intent to discontinue an advisor/chair/mentor relationship with a graduate student must be preceded by a warning within a reasonable period of time.

a. Departments should provide an accurate description of availability and the likelihood of ongoing financial and resource support within their programs.

b. Prospective and currently enrolled graduate students should be provided a thorough description of the requirements and qualifications necessary for academic employment, training, and financial support within their departments and at the university.

c. All policies concerning support of graduate students should be implemented in a consistent and understandable way.

d. Graduate students who also hold positions as employees of the university deserve to be protected by the same rights as other university employees.

e. Consideration should be given to provide students with adequate space to conduct their scholarly work.

f. Graduate students have a right to the access to adequate material
resources for their work (e.g. printers, telephones, computers etc.)

a. The graduate student population reserves the right to form and maintain a governing body that is free from coercion.

b. if their rights are infringed.

a. Students with grievances should be given the opportunity for arbitration before actions are taken against them.

b. Arbitration should occur before a body, at least half of which should consist of their graduate student peers.

c. Students deserve to defend themselves at the hearings if reasonably possible. When a formal hearing is required, a graduate student has a right to the following minimum procedural standards to assure a fair hearing:

   i. The opportunity for a prompt and fair hearing, upon the request of the student at which the University shall bear the burden of proof, and at which the student shall have the opportunity to present documents and witnesses and to confront and cross-examine witnesses presented by the University. No inference, however, shall be drawn from the silence of the accused.

   ii. A record of the hearing; an expeditious written decision based upon the preponderance of evidence, which shall be accompanied by a written summary of the findings of fact.

   iii. An appeal.