RACKHAM STUDENT GOVERNMENT  
BOARD MEETING  
May 27, 2014  
RACKHAM GRADUATE BUILDING  
2ND FLOOR WEST CONFERENCE ROOM, NORTH ALCOVE  
7:00 P.M.

I. CALL TO ORDER: 7:10pm
   a. Present: Representatives Stefan T, David M, David B, Michael B, Patrick P, Mike Hand, VP Mbagwu, President Saccone
   b. Absent: Matt W, David W, Alex G, Malcom T
   c. Excused: Chris Tom, Sidney E, Kyle L, Pier D, Matt K

II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
   Motion to approve by David M, seconded by Michael B. Approved unanimously.

III. APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES
   Motion to approve by Pat P, seconded by Michael B. Approved with 1 abstention.

IV. Representative Appointment
   Phil: Mike Hand was a former rep and student life chair, served the board very well. He left during a very busy semester (prelims and other commitments). I would very much like to welcome him back to the board and recommend his appointment.
   
   Phil nominates Mike H for a half-term seat. Motion to approve by David M, seconded by Michael B. Roll call vote.
   
   Approved with 6-0-1

V. OFFICER REPORTS
   a. President Phil Saccone
      
      Phil: It’s been a busy week, we met with various members of the university administration. We will discuss what role we want RSG to play in these issues. First met with Assistant Dean Shelly Connor regarding the imminent background checks at UM for GSAs. Attached are the Standard Practice Guide documenting the current policies for background checks at UM. Will discuss this in detail during that agenda item.
We also met with Jill McDonough to discuss student philanthropy and graduate student culture of giving. Some things like this already occur at the undergraduate level. Only $30 Mil of the $4 Bil for the UM fundraising campaign is going to graduate students.

We will also be meeting with

b. **Vice President Chuky Mbagwu**
With regard to background check, RSG should play a role in this issue. The deans office has been great.

c. **Treasurer (Vacant)**
Refer to page 8—and let Chuky know if you have any questions. We have about $20,000 in the account. The unallocated funds will total around $15,000. We ran very under budget.

Questions?

Michael: Out of the funds that can be redeemed under budget, how much of that can still be redeemed? Where does the difference between redeemed and awarded come from?

Mike Hand: Why is there a discrepancy between awarded and funded? Were groups underfunded?

Chuky: Student groups did not use all the funds so it has stayed in the BC budget.

Michael Benson: Mentions supreme court case that says we must consider funding based on merit and try to rank order funding.

VI. **Budget**

Chuky: Looking at the budget for summer/spring. We run on a leaner budget than we do in the fall and winter. The budget is consistent with other years for this time period. It is usually SLC heavy, with the Fall Picnic being the most significant.

Michael: Given that the fall budget is changing, is the amount in the budget significant?

Phil: RSG’s portion for the fall picnic should remain the same.

Chuky: The budget can be amended.

Michael: Motion to adopt the budget, seconded by Mike Hand. Roll call vote.
VII. Background Checks
Phil: I’ll give the best summary I can, and then proceed to hear thoughts of the Board. Some people have guessed that the push for this check is the Sandusky case, or the pedophile incident, but there is no strong evidence the reason draws from there.

Who is getting checked? Faculty and staff have been getting background checked as standard practice. For students, if you are currently appointed or have previously been appointed as a GSA, you are “grandfathered in” and do not have to take any BGCs moving forward, barring a leave of absence from the university. The next group is current students who have not yet had a GSA appointment who will receive a BGC upon their first appointment. The organization doing the background checks is GIS, and while there is no “great” org to do this, GIS isn’t the worst and is the fairly reputable. BGC needs residency info for the last 7 years, misdemeanor or federal convictions.

What happens if something comes up in BGC? It will be reviewed on multiple levels where things will be decided whether the student may proceed as a GSA. Student inclusion in this discussion is being emphasized. Whether or not the student is cleared from any hits on the BGC, this information from the BGC is not shared with faculty, etc so as to not unnecessarily influence those relationships.

Chuky and I would like to put together an FAQ sheet regarding facts about the BGCs to create better understanding and reduce uncertainty and speculation. Potentially pass a resolution to let people know where RSG stands on this issue. I would like to open this up to conversation with the Board.

David M: There seems to be no transparency whatsoever. What do they want to catch or prevent? Where does this help with improving quality of students attracted? What sort of attrition is expected by this implementation? What is the data or the findings that will result from this?

Phil: They will not be nitpicking. They will be trying to focus on “severe” cases, but I don’t know what the specifics will entail.

Pat: The wall between the BGCs and other faculty/staff needs to be concrete, either it is walled or it is not. If I fail a BGC, am I still obligated to receive funding some other way? I am not comfortable with the idea that I may not be able to see my own BGC, withheld information. Also, if a Marijuana misdemeanor shows up, it can affect unrelated fellowships such as NSF, which can be revoked.

Phil: While it’s not spelled out explicitly, it did not strike me that there is any obligation that the university will report to outside groups.
Pat: NSF requires the university that accepts its money to report any type of drug misdemeanors. NSF language states usage of drugs during period where funds are being received.

Mike H: If you have one of these type of fellowships, can they be voided retroactively? If on a fellowship, should not be affected by the BGC.

Michael B: The university has some historical knowledge (for x number of years) of whether or not you have a conviction. In specific cases the University must report those instances.

Phil: Good points, we can definitely bring this up with Tim in General Counsel.

Michael B: Perhaps we can invite some of these people to a future Board meeting to discuss with us. I agree with Pat. Generally speaking BGC isn’t the worst thing in the world. I definitely think we should have access to our BGC records, and that it should be explicit with whom this information is shared. The policy should require each program who sees that info. It should also be universally specified how long the records should be kept.

Motion by MB to extend debate for another 7 minutes; seconded by Mike Hand. Approved unanimously.

Phil: Dean Connor is working on a process that students can see exactly how they are progressing through the BGC. There are walls between HR and the academic records, and that’s part of the issue in even properly setting up this system in the first place.

Mike Hand: One thing I would like to raise about FERPA, GSIs were considered as protected under FERPA. Implementing this as a condition of admission would be the simplest way to do it. At some point, all students will fall under this umbrella.

Phil: My understanding is that that is how they will proceed in doing this as early in the program as possible.

David M: Given the focus on GSA, someone could skirt this check by choosing to fully fund themselves.

Phil: We also haven’t covered the effect on international students, who if they do not have a social security or complete residency, they simply get approved and don’t go through BGC.

I think it’s best that we should invite Dean Connor to speak with the Board at the earliest availability.

Also think about any resolutions you feel like you would like to take one, whether non-binding or binding, etc.
Michael B: I will email out the two templates for resolutions to the Board. Explains specifics of resolution procedure and policy language.

Phil: There is also a sense from administrations is that this has been decreed from the Regents and that’s it. However, we may have a little more flexibility with what we can discuss or push back with the regents. It’s also best that those we collaborate with don’t let there be significant lapses in communication. If we can get Dean Connor sooner, we will have more time to draft up language.

VIII. **Student Philanthropy**

Phil: We met with Jill who speaks with us regularly regarding philanthropy, fundraising, branding and perception, etc.

There are things in Rackham that remain underfunded, including scholarship funds and other stuff. The office is not looking for students to make large donations, but rather to get students to identify as Rackham students and understanding the supporting role Rackham plays, as well as to establish a culture of giving and open door for donations as alumni.

Phil: Do your home colleges send you information about donating back to the school? How do we feel about inculcating fellow grad students with this “spirit of giving”?

Mike H: I haven’t been contacted that much from the college (Michigan), but from what I’ve gathered people have issues with receiving fundraising requests while they are still students and paying tuition. There may be some bitterness with that approach.

Michael B: I get a lot of donation requests from my alma mater (Northeastern). I agree with Mike that it’s difficult to ask current students. Creates a knee-jerk reaction that is not always positive. The more important issue is getting graduate students to identify with and develop an affinity for Rackham. That in itself will lead to an awareness and more donations down the road.

David M: Rackham suffers a brand identity issue. They are not doing a great job of helping students buy into or understand the support system that Rackham stand for.

Mike H: A more winnable battle for getting more donations would be having Rackham work specifically with the graduate departments. It’s difficult because I don’t see this “Rackham identity” actually materializing.

Phil: The purpose they are really going for is just to establish a behavior or culture of giving, because they are cognizant of their identity issue. They are considering whether they can attach optional donations to Rackham Emergency Fund to various social/Rackham events. I feel that if Rackham wants to better establish a brand or philanthropy is to clearly provide more services to the greater student body. For example,
students in humanities may not always feel connected, etc. I offered for Rackham Development to come in and participate at events such as the Fall Picnic.

Mike H: What if we attach it to something that a lot of people are already filling out, perhaps when they apply or when they vote on something, that they can fill a check-box to donate to a specific fund. Something along those lines, visible and optional, would be the best way to make this tractable.

Michael B: Perhaps with a GSA appointment, you could check a box for withholding some amount for specific funds, maybe pre-tax would be a way to target grad students and be clear as to what they’re donating.

David M: I’m not sure if it’s affordable, but perhaps setting up a 401k or 403b equivalent that someone can put money is as they see fit. If people feel like their financial destiny is intertwined with an institution, then they are more likely to be supportive.

Pat: In addition to sending me solicitation while a student, I’m also not a fan of sending me things when I haven’t yet found a job. First contact should be about how you are doing, what is your status, point alumni to useful resources. I’m adamant about this.

IX. COMMITTEE UPDATES

Motion to reopen committee assignments, remove Chris T from all assignments (@ midnight), appoint Mike H to Comm and SLC, move Kyle L from LAC to AAC, by Michael B. Seconded by Pat.

Approved with 1 abstention.

Phil: I would like to ask the following people to email and meet with their committees and start working on the list of priorities from our previous meeting. The listserv will be updated tonight so you can start tomorrow.

Send emails-- David B for AAC. Michael B for LAC. Malcom T for SLC, Chuky for BC, and Phil for Comm.

a. Academic Affairs Committee

b. Budgetary Committee
   Members will be hit up with an application VERY SOON.

c. Elections Committee
   N/A

d. Communications Committee
e. Legislative Affairs Committee

f. Student Life Committee
There are still a few tickets available, email Phil if you want one to be reserved. Day in the Park is coming up on June 28th. Big event, family friendly, very fun time. There may potentially be a Fuller Pool event later in the summer.

Phil: Had a conversation with Mark Kimura, and their willing to take a significant contribution in hosting a Rackham Formal in the Rackham Building w/ alcohol (!) This idea has been floated before, but this time it looks much more likely to come to fruition. Time frame looks like early September, but dates are flexible and can potentially wait until next spring.

X. OPEN DISCUSSION
Michael B: Even though not everyone is here, the discussion we had today was one of the better that I’ve seen in a while. If a subject comes up that you’re passionate about, feel free to jump in!

Phil: Michael also sent out an email about the Sense of the Board and Binding Resolutions.

XI. ADJOURNMENT at 8:25pm.
Motion by David M, seconded by Mike H.