Rackham Student Government
Board Meeting: April 8, 2015
Agenda

I. Call To Order
II. Approval of Agenda
III. Guest: Darlene Ray Johnson, Rackham Resolution Officer- Discussion on student’s with disabilities
IV. Approval of Previous Minutes
   a. March 18, 2015
V. Officer Reports
   a. Graduate Student Body President, Phil
   b. Graduate Student Body Vice President, Chuky
   c. Graduate Student Body Treasurer, Abneris
VI. Certification of RSG Winter 2015 election results
VII. Michigan Campus Climate Survey
VIII. Philanthropy
IX. grants
X. Committee Reports
   a. Academic Affairs
   b. Budgetary
   c. Elections
   d. Legislative Affairs
      i. SAGE recap
   e. Student Life
      i. Publication event
XI. Summer planning
XII. Open Discussion
XIII. Adjourn
I. **CALL TO ORDER**: 6:05pm
   
a. **Present**: Representatives Matt G, Katie F, Nate H, Chris T, Kyle L, David B, Brandon P, Buke H, Michael B, President Saccone, Vice President Mbagwu, Treasurer Rodriguez

b. **Absent**: 

c. **Excused**: 

II. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**
Motion to approve by Abneris, seconded by Kyle. Approved unanimously.

III. **APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES**
Motion to approve by Kyle, seconded by Michael. Approved with editorial changes, unanimously.

IV. **OFFICER REPORTS**
   
a. **President Phillip Saccone**
   
I met with Steve Grafton, president of the UM Alumni Association. Lots of good things were discussed. We are looking to contact more graduate students with the faces of alumni and donors. We are also looking to put together grad student development with alumni and relevant resources.

Looking to put an ad-hoc committee together for targeted graduate student development generally.

b. **Vice President Chuky Mbagwu**
   
I have returned from my travels safely.

c. **Treasurer**
   
Balance in the account is ~$35,000.

V. **COMMITTEE UPDATES**
   
a. **Academic Affairs Committee**

b. **Budgetary Committee**
   
We met and funded 2 more applications. 2 are pending.
c. **Elections Committee**

Buke: We have extended the deadline for nomination submission to this Friday, Mar 19.

We are also looking for more participation for Division IV and seeking ideas of how to do so.

Chris: We could contact people from GEO.

Michael: Another thing we can do is also scrape Maizepages for individual student orgs.

Brandon: Please forward us any contacts you have in those areas.

Buke: Because of timing and the SAGE trip, we do not think that the video recording will be possible.

Brandon: We also want to do a little more audio/visual with our stuff. Include video blurb introductions of the elected candidates.

Phil: Good job Buke, Brandon, and the committee for such good work.

d. **Legislative Affairs Committee**

Michael: Today is the last day that we can put a non-binding question on the election ballot. Let’s discuss what things we might want on there.

Board discusses questions to include in ballots.

Motion to approve 3 non-binding questions for inclusion in ballot in determined order by Michael, seconded by Buke. Roll call vote:

Matt: Yes
Katie: Yes
Brandon: Yes
Nate: Yes
Chris: Yes
Kyle: Yes
David: Yes
Abneris: Yes
Chuky: Yes
Buke: Yes
Michael: Yes

11-0-0 approved unanimously.
SAGE stuff:

Phil: Included in the packet are two of the four white papers for SAGE. Please read through them. Chuky did great work in putting together the Student Debt and Taxation paper. The Immigration white paper is in work but at the moment is approaching 3 pages in length.

One more thing that will be added to the Debt/Tax paper is the FICA exemptions.

There is one last white paper on Campus Climate, but that has not gained much traction in work. It’s primary talking points deal with the McCaskill bill.

The final versions of all documents will be forwarded to Board/committee once they have reached completion.

e. Student Life Committee

Nate: We had the bowling event and it went very well, people seem to enjoyed themselves.

Michael: Traditionally St. Patty’s is one of our more popular events, but this year we had about 75 people attend. We have T-shirts leftover. We are going to discuss more about why it may have been less attended this year (holiday timing, location/time, technical details and email spam).

Phil: Sometimes it goes up and down, Bowling went well so we’re happy with that. We have salsa night coming up, and a meet and greet.

Matt: I have also been working on meeting with CStar, regarding the value of the statistics we hope to get out of the survey. One of the concerns that we are trying to control for is ‘responder bias.’ Lastly, I’m not clear on how we are going to send this out, all at once for about 200 questions?

Phil: Ideally we would like to break this into smaller sections and get data from the different divisions. We could also add global questions (alumni association, career services, grad mentor/mentee support).

i. Community Outreach & Social Action subcommittee

VI. OPEN DISCUSSION

Michael: I would strike the career services question because of formatting questions, and potentially put it in a Gazette.
Motion by Michael to strike the question for logistical purposes, seconded by Buke. Approved unanimously.

VII. **ADJOURNMENT** at 6:45pm.
I. Call to order 5:16pm
   A. Present: Katherine Forsythe, Nathan Harada, David Malewski, David Barton,
      Treasurer Rodriguez, Vice president Mbagwu, President Emeritus Benson
   B. Absent:
   C. Excused: President Saccone

II. Michicagoan (Andrew Foster)
    Abneris: This is a linguistics conference held by Rackham students and for Rackham
    students. Their keynote speaker will be Prof. Winfried Nöth from University of Kassel.
    They are only asking for speaker travel.
    Benson: Since this is a rare event and we don't see much funding applications for events
    from division 4 I would move that we fully fund this event.
    Katie: Since we usually fund speaker travel and that is what they are asking for I agree
    we should fully fund this event.
    Motion seconded. No objections. Motion carries.
    Funding for Michicagoan: $750

III. ACS-Poly Seminar Series (Yasmine Doloyres)
     Abneris: this event fall under the same scope of last weeks seminar series. They are
     asking for speaker travel, speaker lodging and food. Since we have funded events like
     this in the past I move that we fully fund this event.
     Chuky: I move that we fund this event’s speaker travel and lodging and a portion of the
     food.
     D. Barton: Friendly amendment that we fund $500 restricted to speaker travel and
        lodging and the remaining amount ($150) go towards food.
     Vote
     Second motion carries with amendment.
     Funding for ACS-Poly Seminar Series: $500 with the mentioned restrictions

IV. ACS-Poly Volunteer (Yasmine Doloyres)
    This application raised several questions and since it is not in the interest of all students
    of Rackham, only a select few will participate, the unanimous decision was to not fund this
    event.

V. Michigan Graduate Consulting Club (Sunny)
This event raised several questions and the committee decided to table it until we could meet with Sunny and answer all of our concerns.

Move to adjourn. Adjourned at 5:50pm.

RACKHAM STUDENT GOVERNMENT
BUDGETARY COMMITTEE
March 23, 2015
CAPITOL HALL, WASHINGTON DC
4:00 P.M.

I. Call to order at 3:58pm.
   A. Present: Abneris, Phil, Chuky, Nate, Katie, Michael

II. Thai Assn.
    Michael: I'd support funding the posters and flyers, room rental, and some portion of the food.
    Abneris: I'd agree and would like to fund up to half of the food ($350 / $700 )
    Phil: I'd agree but I'm concerned that they're charging $12/person to come in. With that said, I can see myself able to support between $300 and $500. I don't think it would be a responsible steward going above that.
    Abneris: Could you go to $600 with a limit of $300 for food?
    Phil: I'd like to make a motion to fund $500, the advertising, room rental, and office supplies. Seconded by Michael
    Nate: Would it be friendly to make it all of room rental and then $200 unrestricted.
    Abneris: I'd like us to also consider $500 unrestricted. No objections.

Vote
   $500 with $300 restricted to room rental
   Phil, Chuky, Katie, Nate

   $500 unrestricted
   Michael, Abneris

The budgetary committee has allocated $500 to the group with the listed restrictions.

III. Domestic Policy Council - Education Policy Initiative
    Nate: Motion to table until Wednesday and to direct the chair to contact the group to seek further information regarding the proposed use of the $500 being requested. Further to determine what percentage of graduate students will be in attendance. Seconded by Chuky.
    approved Unanimously.

Michael moved to adjourn. Nate Seconded. Approved unanimously at 4:15pm.

RACKHAM STUDENT GOVERNMENT
I. Call to order 5:16pm
   A. Present: Katherine Forsythe, Nathan Harada, David Malewski, David Barton, Treasurer Rodriguez, Vice president Mbagwu, President Emeritus Benson
   B. Absent: 
   C. Excused: President Saccone

II. This meeting's purpose is to discuss with Sun Hei (Sunny) the Michigan Graduate Consulting Club funding application. In this meeting all of the Budgetary Committee’s questions and concerns were addressed by the president of the student organization. After this meeting we reconvened and discussed the following.

Abneris: Now that all of our questions have been answered do we have a motion?
Nate: I motion that, pending the information he gives to you today of how many students at the event will be from Rackham, we should fund the welcome luncheon (because it will be attended by all the students participating) and the in conference programs. In total $215. $175 luncheon and $40 for programs.
D Barton: Seconds motion
The motion passes unanimously.
Funding for MGCC: $215 restricted to welcome luncheon and conference programs.

Later on that evening the information given to the treasurer fits the requirements for the motion to carry. $215 were granted for this event.
Election Results

Here are the results of the elections you are authorized to view. The "Weighted" column is the sum of the weights assigned the preferences that each voter chooses when voting. For example, if a vote allows 4 levels of preference, then selecting a candidate as your first choice will assign 4 points to them. Selecting a candidate as your last choice will give them 1 point.

Exception ballots are ballots cast by voters not known to be eligible for that particular election. If they are later shown to be eligible, their votes can be marked as valid. If you would like to look at and approve your exceptions, click on the "View and Validate Exceptions" link for that election.

Note: Number of Voters may be different from the sum of the votes for a given question, as voters were allowed to not vote for individual offices and questions. It is also possible that some voters submitted a blank ballot.

Index

- Graduate Student Body Election
- RSG - Biological and Health Sciences
- RSG - Humanities and the Arts Election
- RSG - Physical Sciences and Engineering Election
- RSG - Social and Behavioral Sciences Election

Graduate Student Body Election

Number of Voters: 283

Graduate Student Body President and Vice President – 1 seat(s)

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<tr>
<th>#</th>
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<th>Votes</th>
<th>Exceptions</th>
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### RSG – Biological and Health Sciences

Number of Voters: 121

#### Representative – 3 seat(s)

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#### Are you satisfied with your program / department's career services resources?

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#### Does your academic program have mandatory yearly written evaluations?

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### RSG – Humanities and the Arts Election

Number of Voters: 15

#### Representative – 2 seat(s)

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Does your academic program have mandatory yearly written evaluations?

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View and Validate Exception Ballots
View Graphical Results for this Election

RSG – Physical Sciences and Engineering Election

Number of Voters: 148

Representative – 4 seat(s)

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Does your academic program have mandatory yearly written evaluations?

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Are you satisfied with your program / department's career services resources?

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View and Validate Exception Ballots
View Graphical Results for this Election

RSG – Social and Behavioral Sciences Election

Number of Voters: 82

Representative – 2 seat(s)

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<td>4</td>
<td>Jimmy Schneidenweind</td>
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Does your academic program have mandatory yearly written evaluations?

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Are you satisfied with your program / department's career services resources?

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View and Validate Exception Ballots
View Graphical Results for this Election

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Hi Phil,

Happy Monday!

I wanted to forward the grant information below in case RSG was interested in pursuing either of these. We can have a larger conversation about what this could mean in terms opportunities to open the Rackham student body to fundraising in some form or another.

Can we look at dates for an RSG meeting to discuss some ideas to collaborate and give you an update on our initiatives?

Thanks,

Sheila

Sheila Nicholas
Alumni Communications & Annual Giving
Rackham Graduate School
915 E. Washington Street
Ann Arbor, MI  48109
734.764.5536
I AM RACKHAM  Rackham on Facebook

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: Kat Walsh <katwalsh@umich.edu>
Date: Tue, Mar 31, 2015 at 12:29 PM
Subject: Grant Opportunities for Michigan Students
To:

Dear Colleagues,

In an effort to support University of Michigan students and student organizations in their philanthropic behavior and community outreach projects, the Office of University Development Student Philanthropy team has established the Forever Go Blue Program and Research Grants.
As many of you work with individual students and student organizations, we would appreciate you passing along this information to individual students and/or student organizations who may be interested in fundraising, promoting or researching philanthropic thinking, or raising awareness around philanthropy.

Each year the Student Philanthropy team awards several grants in two categories

1. **Forever Go Blue Program Grant** - A grant of up to $700 available to student groups that plan to promote philanthropic thinking, inspire collaboration around altruistic endeavors, and engage in charitable projects that benefit U-M. **Deadline for Submission: April 20, 2015.** If you would like more information OR are applying please go to this link.

2. **Forever Go Blue Research Grant** - A grant of up to $1,000 available to individual students who plan to engage in research that seeks to explore the relationship between philanthropy and citizenship, enhance the community's understanding of philanthropic behaviors, and inspire new approaches to fundraising. **Deadline for submission: May 1st, 2015.** If you would like more information OR are interested in applying please go to this link.

If you know of a student or student organization who would be interested in applying, please feel free to pass along the grant application. If you have any questions, please contact Melissa Burns, Student Philanthropy Program Assistant, at melisbur@umich.edu.

Best

Kat Walsh,
Director, Student Engagement
Office of University Development

--

Kat Walsh I Director, Student Engagement
Office of University Development
University of Michigan I 3003 S. State Street I Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1288
p. 734.647.6071 I e-mail: katwalsh@umich.edu

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**Phillip Saccone** <sacconep@umich.edu>  
Mon, Apr 6, 2015 at 9:23 AM
To: Sheila Tillman Nicholas <sheilani@umich.edu>

Hey Shelia,

Thank you very much for passing this along! How does next Wednesday at 6p look?

Thanks!
Phil

[Quoted text hidden]

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Phillip A. Saccone
PhD Candidate, Department of Pharmacology
President, Graduate Student Body
University of Michigan Medical School
Laboratory of James H. Woods, PhD
Medical Sciences Building I, Room 3415
T: 734-615-5012
Sheila Tillman Nicholas <sheilani@umich.edu>
Mon, Apr 6, 2015 at 9:34 AM

Nope - my kids birthday...
Next date?

Sheila Nicholas
Alumni Communications & Annual Giving
Rackham Graduate School
915 E. Washington Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109
734.764.5536
I AM RACKHAM Rackham on Facebook

Phillip Saccone <sacconep@umich.edu>
Mon, Apr 6, 2015 at 9:37 AM

Hey Shelia,

After that, RSG is in recess until May at which time Chuky Mbagwu will be the new president. I have cc'ed him on this email. It would be best to coordinate with him.

Hope all is well!

Phil

[Quoted text hidden]
The outstanding student loan balance—$1 trillion according to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau—surpasses credit card debt. 69.6% of graduate students hold student loans with an average cumulative debt of $47,503. The reduction in many student aid programs in addition to the increase in the cost of education is making the financial burden of an advanced education overwhelming.

Key tax code reform will improve the quality of life for graduate students, as well as increase their ability to repay their educational loans. Currently, confusing and contradictory policies unduly burden graduate students, who frequently come to their graduate programs saddled with the additional debt of their undergraduate education.

The U.S. economy is dependent on groundbreaking research at leading research universities. If the U.S. is to remain a global leader in innovation and technology development, Congress should maintain or increase federal funding of graduate research, which produces cures to diseases, new technology, and a more powerful workforce.

Domestic universities are global leaders that attract the best and brightest international students in pursuit of graduate and professional degrees. SAGE believes that changes to our visa system should be enacted to lower the barriers to permanent residency and incentivize international graduate students to stay in the United States permanently.

**SAGE Recommends:**

**IBR Reform:**
- Amend the new IBR rules to apply to all outstanding federal student loans.
- Make IBR installments regionally sensitive to cost of living.

**Tax Reform**
- Consolidate the AOTC, Hope Credit, and tuition reduction, but not the LLC
- Retain section 117(d) which excludes tuition waivers from the overall tax burden;
- Continue FICA withholding exemption for qualified students

**SAGE Recommends:**

- Congress should maintain, if not increase, federal funding of research.

**SAGE Recommends:**

**H-1B Visa Reform:**
- Establish a moving cap based on demand for H1-B visas, grant work permits for spouses of visa holders, exempt students earning an MA or PhD in a STEM field in the U.S. from the numerical limits on EB visas.

**F-1 Visa Reform**
- F-1 visa reforms to include the lifting of work restrictions and authorization of dual intent.
The 21st century economy requires a diverse workforce with highly specialized skill sets, which often require graduate-level training and education. Graduate students are the visionaries, job creators, and leaders who provide the foundation and framework for the economic and innovative advantages that the United States maintains across the globe. Approximately 25% of Ph.D. students, and 6% of Masters students, receive waivers for institutional tuition/fees. These waivers should not be taxed as earned income.

The SAGE coalition represents over 140,000 graduate and professional students at the leading public research universities across the country, and is committed to the affordability of higher education for all graduate students.

SAGE further recommends supporting the following provisions to help incentivize graduate education and mitigate the deleterious consequences of student loan debt that is hurting economic growth:

- Simplifying income-driven repayment programs for all federal direct loans: set students’ annual repayment limit at 10% of borrower’s discretionary income up to $25,000, plus 15% of income greater than or equal to $25,000
- Include provisions for loan forgiveness in cases of extreme economic or physical hardship, in addition to loan forgiveness under the public service employee loan forgiveness program

S.85, the Repay Act of 2015, would simplify the currently confusing Income-Based Repayment (IBR) programs landscape to make loan repayment more accessible. SAGE Recommends:

- Consolidate the American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC), Hope Credit, and tuition reduction, but not the Lifetime Learning Credit; support a lifetime dollar cap as opposed to the four-year limit
- Increase the student loan interest deduction and restore federally subsidized loans for graduate and professional students
- Amend the federal bankruptcy code to protect students and allow education loans-or obligation to repay funds received as an educational benefit, scholarship, or stipend discharge-to be discharged
- Streamline the tax code to enhance consistency with tuition fees and waivers received by students during the course of a graduate education: retain section 117(d), which excludes tuition waivers from the overall tax burden; continue FICA withholding exemption for qualified students

Additionally, SAGE supports the consideration of regional sensitivity when calculating IBR repayments.
In order to remain a world leader, the United States economy depends on groundbreaking research conducted at top research institutions. This scholarship, which contributes to the development of innovative technology and its practical application, depends on federal research investment. Thanks to the deferment of sequestration the last two years, the U.S. has been able to largely continue to fund groundbreaking research.

However, if the trend in the lack of emphasis on research continues, the U.S. will lose our global lead in technological innovation. These decisions carry long-term consequences for job development and economic growth throughout the nation, not simply at our universities.

We urge Congress to expand federal investment in basic research, which leads to cures for diseases, new technology, and a more powerful workforce, all which keep the U.S. globally competitive.

Continued improvement for American quality of life is directly and indirectly due to investment in R&D. The United States is currently one of the largest investors in R&D, but federal investment in these programs has remained flat the last few years. Other countries are steadily increasing their investments. While we appreciate that R&D has not been ravaged by spending cuts, the stagnation of investment by the U.S. government inhibits economic growth. Halted growth is harmful to Americans and to the global community.

We must increase our spending in R&D to create jobs and continue to grow our economy.

Furthermore, SAGE explicitly endorses the funding of Social, Behavioral & Economic research at the NSF. We also ask that Congress reinstate and ensure future NSF funding for all types of Political Science research. Advanced degrees in the social sciences and humanities teach students how to think critically and communicate in our increasing interconnected world. This knowledge is utilized in their future jobs, often as professors, executives of nonprofit companies, and careers in a variety of fields. SAGE recommends funding the NSF as a whole entity and allowing the Foundation to determine the best way to allocate the money.
Restrictive visa policies limit our ability to retain the level of highly-skilled workers and innovators that a global, high-tech economy demands. SAGE supports visa reform that will keep students who have benefitted from an American education, and often federal funding, in the U.S. job market. Retaining the highly-trained students educated at our universities is paramount to maintaining the world’s most competitive workforce and protecting our investments in education and research and development.

- The profiles of H-1B applicants are particularly attractive: In 2012, 72% were between 25-34 and 47% hold a Masters or Doctorate degree.
- More than 50% of PhDs in many STEM fields are awarded to international students.
- In 2014 the number of H-1B visa applications exceeded the yearly limit of 85,000 in a single week.

The temporary nature of the H-1B visa makes it ideally suited to adjust to market demands, but the caps currently placed on H-1B visas are not tied to the business cycle. The cap should be adjusted to meet market demands, and allow American business to benefit from the highly-skilled, professional workforce trained at U.S. Graduate institutions.

For those graduate and professional students that choose to contribute to the American economy long-term, employment based (EB) visas should be the route of choice. Offering graduates a clear path to residency provides a clear path to knowledge retention and further innovation within the U.S.

**Highly-skilled visa reform: Allow talented international students to contribute to the American workforce**

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For those graduate and professional students that choose to contribute to the American economy long-term, employment based (EB) visas should be the route of choice. Offering graduates a clear path to residency provides a clear path to knowledge retention and further innovation within the U.S.

**SAGE recommends:**

**Non-immigrant visas:**

- Exempt from H1 visa caps ALL students with Master’s degrees or higher awarded from U.S. institutions.
- Pass S.153, the I-squared Act – The I-squared Act would increase the H-1B visa cap according to market demand and protect the work authorization of H-1B visa holder spouses.

**Employment-base immigrant visas:**

- Eliminate per-country numerical limits for graduates with an advanced degree from U.S. institutions.

**F-1 Visa Reform: Remove work restrictions for F-1 visa holders’ spouses**

The F-1 Visa is the primary visa for foreign full-time students used to access education in the United States. Unfortunately, work restrictions on spouses of F-1 visa holders place an undue burden on graduate students and their families. F2 visa holders are not eligible to work, they cannot apply for a social security number, and they cannot enroll in academic programs. To continue attracting the talented international students in face of rising tuition costs, it is particularly important to allow spouses of international students to hold jobs and help support their families.

The DHS has set a new precedent for granting the spouses of educated professionals work rights by issuing H-1B visa holder spouses (those in the H-4 category) work eligibility in the U.S. affecting over 80,000 families per year. By extending those rights to spouses of F-1 visa holders (those in the F-2 category), we can improve the lives of over 20,000 graduate student families at the foundation of America’s most talented professional workforce.
MISSION—“Dedicated to creating a community of student leaders from the preeminent public research universities in the United States that is committed to bettering their own student bodies and promoting educational access, quality, and opportunity nationally.”