I. CALL TO ORDER: 6:16pm
   a. Present: Representatives Matt G, Nate H, Katie F, Buke H, Kyle L, David B, Michael B, President Saccone, Vice President Mbagwu, Treasurer Rodriguez
   b. Absent: Chris Tom
   c. Excused: David M., Brandon

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

III. Guest Darlene Ray Johnson (Resolutions Officer): Discussion on students with disabilities
   Round of introductions.

   Darlene: In 2012, GEO negotiated for a central office for graduate students with disabilities. Rackham was designated as that space, and I have jurisdiction over that piece. I’m interested not only in employment accommodations but also climate, etc. A big agenda item right now is about accessibility and mobility for disabled students around campus. Students with mobility impairments that participate in orientation must notify the University ahead of time, and then they are given a different route from the tour. Leaves a feeling of being singled out, etc. Much of the discussion at this meeting was focused on undergraduates. One of the ideas that came out of it was a type of “concierge” type role where one person helps the student navigate campus over the course of their time at UM. Another concern is that not all students disclose their non-apparent disabilities, etc. I want to hear from you as to whether students, peers with disabilities feel represented and welcome and equally mobile around campus. We want the graduate student voice in the planning process for improving the experience of students with disabilities on campus.

   Phil: We are actually in the process of putting together a graduate student body wide survey where some of the questions tackle these topics. We will have that sometime by the end of the year.

   Abneris: I have spoken with a number of students with disabilities, and one source says that it could be up to 30% of Rackham students living with disabilities. Considering a campaign for the empowerment of students with disabilities through video and social
media. There is also a student group (in individual programs) that discusses some of these issues (but not specifically for grad students). I can put you in contact with them.

Michael: Focusing on mobility and accessibility is important, but there are other disabilities that affect graduate students more broadly. The numbers of accommodations for students with disabilities around campus are very lacking. I would encourage you to look at the number of applicants (to the university) that have or claim disabilities.

Phil: It’s true that there is a discrepancy between the number of students with disabilities than those who file (with some entity [SSD]) about there disability. But even in that number, not all of those issues are addressed, or are more hidden, and students end up simply dealing or compromising with day-to-day issues (such as more time for exams, or special accommodations for classes, etc).

Darlene: Some students may not be aware of the services where they file their disability, and sometimes this hesitancy to claim their disability has to do with fear of their perception.

Kyle: I echo the comments mentioned before. SSD (services) is good, but very much course oriented. When it comes to things like quals and prelim exams, things are much more subjective. For example, 2 years “should” be enough time to take and finish the qualifying exams, barring any special needs. I think that faculty can be and have been supportive verbally about accommodations for many types of disabilities. However, this sometimes fades when it comes to actionable items.

Phil: Some of this might also have to do with bystander mentality. People sometimes just don’t want to get involved even if they see some unfairness or lack of accommodations.

Michael: Rackham could possibly create a program, where if there is a student with a disability, the stringent requirements of his program be revised and left up to perhaps a committee in the program, etc. I’d also like to note that there is no flexibility for faculty either, given a journal deadline, grants, etc. and they do not receive accommodations for any potential disabilities. It’s a culture shift that may need to be addressed, but is likely also a factor in their accommodations of their students’ disabilities.

Phil: Once we get the survey back and speak to other groups, I think we will also be made aware of other non-obvious issues. I would expect much of it would fall under the advisor/mentee umbrella. There is also likely a good chunk that will fall under mental health as well. It’s important that we find the right ways for Rackham to insert itself and look out for students in this (and any) situation.

Darlene: I also cognizant of what’s going on in the programs, but I am also concerned about the general services and mobility around campus, para-transit, etc. For example, the late night bus services range of operation, etc.
Katie: I’m wondering if they could focus on clearing the ADA ramps, to buildings and facilities before clearing stairs. It could really make a difference for students.

Darlene: I also want to discuss how to improve awareness about the services (SSD). We are thinking about adding a sentence or section about SSD in the admissions letter.

Katie: In my orientation, we had CAPS come and speak to us. So those settings would be a good place to give out information.

Matt: We want to make sure that we have that in the survey, perhaps ask if students have a disability.

Michael: We need to be important with what we ask in the survey, phrasing is important.

Buke: I think the orientation method would be better than a direct question asking in the survey.

Katie: I’m wondering if for Rackham and/or RSG events, if we can make a small gesture by putting a symbol for “ADA accessible,” etc.

Phil: I think that would be a good idea, and can let us show a little bit of solidarity as well.

Abneris: I agree that the discussion is heavily focused around undergraduates, and that experience is very different for graduate students. I think one of the important things that Rackham can do is simply provide a space for students with disabilities to meet and create solutions for their own campus issues. We can discuss all we want here, but without disabilities of our own (known and unknown) we can only do so much.

Katie: There is a university committee that deals with graduate student disabilities already, so instead of starting from scratch it would be a good idea to start there and have more grad representation on the committee.

Kyle: Going back to services, I think there are sometimes too many and no clear direction of which services to use and when. It would be nice to have point people to help navigate inquirers in the right direction.

Darlene: Please contact me with any other information you wish to pass along; this was very helpful!

IV.  APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES
Motion to approve by Michael, seconded by Buke. Approved unanimously.

V. OFFICER REPORTS
   a.  President Phillip Saccone
This is our penultimate meeting, and next week will be my last meeting as President.

Buke, you’ve been great elections director!

SAGE in my view was lots of work, but a huge success. The final versions of the white paper are in the packet, I encourage you to look through them. I also want to focus on our congressional newsletter and use the white papers as a template.

b. **Vice President Chuky Mbagwu**
   We are in dire need of a newsletter. There will be one last one for the term involving quite a few items.

c. **Treasurer**

VI. **Certification of RSG Winter 2015 election results**
   Phil: There have been no reports of election fraud (haha), so I will turn it over to Buke.

   Motion to approve/certify the results of the winter 2015 elections by Buke, seconded by Michael (w explanation of the results). Roll call vote:

   Nate: Yes
   Katie: Yes
   Buke: Yes
   Kyle: Abstain
   David: Yes
   Chuky: Yes
   Michael: Yes
   Abneris: Yes

VII. **Michigan Campus Climate Survey**
   Phil: This is coming from the AAU survey. Let’s include it in a Gazette as well as an individual email. Perhaps incentivize it.

VIII. **Philanthropy Grants**
   Phil: Please take a look at the student philanthropy info included in the packet. Due date is April 20\(^{th}\). If someone wants to take a lead on this and bring ideas for the grant, feel free to put something together and send to me or Chuky.

   Michael: Putting on my advisor role, I don’t think we should do this. We have a pool of money and should leave it to other groups that may need it more. We can include it in the Gazette instead.

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

b. Budgetary Committee

Motion to approve minutes by Abneris, seconded by Michael. Approved unanimously.

Abneris: We have funded 17 organizations.

c. Elections Committee
d. Legislative Affairs Committee
e. Student Life Committee

i. Community Outreach & Social Action subcommittee

X. OPEN DISCUSSION
We will organize an end-of-term banquet.

XI. ADJOURNMENT at 7:10pm.