RACKHAM STUDENT GOVERNMENT
GENERAL BOARD MEETING
NOVEMBER 17, 2011
RACKHAM GRADUATE BUILDING
7:00 P.M.

Call to Order

1. Call to Order 7:06pm
2. Attendance:
   a. Present: President Benson, Treasurer Waite, Representatives Eisman (1), Hsu (1), Flynn (1), Emly (2), Sakhamuri (2), Toulouse (2), Pedini (2), Rooney (2), and Cottrell (3)
   b. Excused Absence: Representatives White (2), Fitspatrick (3), Gillezeau(3), and Ramos(3)
   c. Unexcused Absence: Vice President Bow, Representatives Mandarino (4), and Hutchinson (4)
   d. The chair declares a quorum present and the RSG Board proceeds to its agenda.
3. Approval of the agenda: Motion moved by Alex E, seconded by Tien. Mindy objects and says that we should move the speaker up from item 3 to number 1. Motion is seconded by Patrick and approved unanimously.
4. Guest speaker: Michael Zabriskie, Director of Housing Information Office at the University of Michigan.
   a. Michael Z raises the problem of housing shifts in Northwood. This is because there will be significant shifting around with residence halls. The U will be looking at a space crunch for undergrads, which will change what we’re looking at in Northwood for graduate student housing.
   b. Michael Z is curious how we can change the leasing of the apartments, via a term contract or by semester. The payment would be a ‘beginning of the semester payment’ and that might be of issue to graduate students. These apartments would be offered to grad students after filling Northwood with undergraduates. Particularly, would it be easier or feasible to have a one time payment or a monthly payment?
   c. Brief introductions of the board and whether we do or do not live off campus or specifically in Northwood.
   d. Eli has a question about the amount of rent and what is or is not included in rent (utilities etc). Cable is separate, but everything else is included for about $600 a month for a 1 bedroom in Northwood V. The average cost is about $600 per person, even in larger buildings. Eli asks what square footage is and if they’re primarily apartments. Michael Z says that there are multiple units to each building with a variety of layouts and configurations.
   e. Mindy asks what programs deliver stipends in lump sums. Most programs do not offer a lump sum. Fellow members of the board indicate that a lump sum payment would be a problem for most graduate students. Also, Rahul brings up that Master’s students aren’t funded and work hard on campus and only make money for rent.
   f. Michael Benson brings up that we are providing fewer options for graduate student housing and that makes finding housing very difficult for new graduate
students. There are also issues with summer housing (PhD students will be here during the summer) and the prevalence of undergrads in their housing community.

g. Heidi brings up the timing of if Northwood I and II were available after undergrads were placed there, for instance, when would it be known that there were available spaces. Michael Z answers that they would have a sense of the stock of housing in March and April, then I and II would be targeted to incoming graduate students.

h. Michael Benson brings up a March/April timeline is good for incoming students, but he thinks the issue is that quality of life, including bussing, will be a challenge. Another thing Benson brings up are the undergraduate lifestyle and to offer leases that are appropriate for Master’s students and others to encourage providing housing security for these students.

i. Kaitlin brings up the background of these projects: why are we losing so much space on campus? The quads will be shut down one by one for remodeling. Each quad hosts 900 students at least.

j. Alex E. asks what the requirement for housing is here. The University guarantees housing for freshmen and that makes a problem when the incoming classes are larger than usual.

k. Rahul brings up that already there are 25 year old grad students living near 50 year old grad students. There are problematic issues on lifestyle and he asks about having specific areas for families and otherwise. Michael Z brings up that families are protected under fair housing status and as landlords they can’t steer people in different directions.

l. Kaitlin asks if there would be RAs for the freshman in these areas. Michael Z confirms yes.

m. Tien asks regarding numbers in Northwood I and II and Michael Z says that predicting student behavior is difficult and it’s hard to guesstimate how many students would be moved there. Michael Z says that the current graduate students in Northwood I and II have been notified that they would not have that much space in the following year. This means at maximum capacity this houses 474.

n. Michael Benson says that it would be ill-advised to discourage graduate students from living on campus.

o. Many members of the board bring up that graduate student housing on central campus would be really great. Michael Z says that there haven’t been any movements to house graduate students on central campus. Some members object and indicate that there would be strong demand.

p. Kaitlin brings up the point that freshmen might like the Northwood area more if there was a unique community drawing them there. Michael Z agrees and says that primarily the bussing system is the biggest disadvantage and qualm for the undergraduate students. Unfortunately this problem will only escalate.

q. David asks if we’ve compared our housing situation to other large scale universities. Michael Z says that they have but there is a decrease in family living across the nation on campus and many Big Ten schools do not have proper infrastructure in place.

r. Logistics for bussing would be hard at certain demand periods. PTS is coming to meet with RSG soon and we’ll have to ask if they’ll increase the
bussing at Northwood. Heidi brings up that AATA shuffles their system around in the fall winter. AATA will also be visiting RSG to discuss these things.

s. Patrick asks if there has been temporary housing for graduate students as they enter. Michael Z says they do offer some short term housing and it’s not as utilized as it could be.

t. Michael Z leaves at 7:41pm.

5. Approval of Previous Minutes
   a. We don’t have minutes from November 3 so we cannot vote on them. Heidi is wondering where the student body Vice President is and how he has not been attending meetings. Board members murmur in agreement. Michael Benson agrees that this is an issue that needs to be addressed. There have been personal life issues and busy grad student issues that have been dealt with by the VP.
   b. Various things, including elections, communications and otherwise have been dropped. Mindy has really stepped forward as an executive and we all appreciate that. Michael says that he will have a meeting with Josh and give Josh options for what he should do, either stay and step up as executive or resign. Michael will address this issue in his following executive report in two weeks.
   c. Approval of the minutes from November 10. Kaitlin notes that the attendance is not going to be correct. Michael says with the caveat that the minutes will be corrected, can we approve the minutes. The date and attendance being the caveat, the movement is made by Eli and seconded by Chris. Heidi has a potential amendment regarding her statement in III c) to change to ‘Heidi expresses concerns from the chemistry department…’. Heidi moves to postpone this for a week contingent upon changing of the phrasing. Kaitlin seconds this. Postponing is approved unanimously.

6. Officer reports
   a. Mindy says we have $21,300. We have not started to pay out the allocated funds yet to individual student groups.
   b. Michael says that the elections are going very well and the voting prizes are chosen randomly from each division. The prizes are gift cards to various places around campus (that do not serve alcohol). Alex E suggests that we give more prizes to more people to incentivize voting. Eli moves to increase elections committee appropriation to 20 prizes for voting. Motion seconded by Alex E. The motion is approved unanimously. Michael gives an update on how many people have voted by division. Serge has resigned and Michael has accepted it. No one in the board objects. This opens up a half term seat for Division I.
   c. A discussion about available seats ensues.

7. Committee Reports
   a. Academic Affairs- Tien has a motion to approve the minutes, objection by Chris for him not being marked as attending on November 7. Minutes are approved. Grant also has not been showing up to meetings and thus will be removed from the committee per the expectations set by the chair at the beginning of the term. They have been working on the Grad Student Bill of Rights.
   b. Budgetary- 2 budget requests
   c. Communications- meeting really quickly afterwards today, nothing otherwise to update. If anyone wants to take over the Newsletter, please contact Mindy.
d. Elections: they are going great.
e. Legislative: under budget for the SAGE fall summit for 4 people to attend. A survey is going to be sent out for SAGE and we should answer them by the next meeting.
f. Student Life: Alex E has organized a karaoke event at Circus from 9-11pm on Dec 8 at Circus. The money that was going to be used for the trivia night has been moved to this.
g. Bylaw review committee has met and the motion to approve the agenda by Heidi and seconded by Rahul, approved unanimously with the exception that Chris was not included in the attendance and this will be amended.
h. CoSAC- first event for natural area preservation last Sunday. They met up with APO and did a park cleanup. It went over very well. Another event will happen in the Spring in March. Upcoming events: local food bank events. Eli suggests that we donate blood for the blood battle. You can donate blood through next week.
i. CoNaCo- there was an event last night that was a success.

8. Second reading of the board resolution F-01-11: Creating Student Advisory Committees for the Rackham Associate Deans.
   a. Moved by Rahul and seconded by Heidi. Discussion: Alex E likes it still. In line 32, Eli suggests that some typos be fixed. In A, associate has been misspelled.
   b. Mindy is now chairing. Movement to approve the document. By a vote of 9-0-0 this is approved. Michael hereby approves this resolution.

9. International Student concerns
   a. John Godfrey will be joining us at our meeting in 2 weeks as he is the assistant dean for international affairs at Rackham and also is a policy writer at Rackham.
   b. Michael suggests we reach out to other international students and what their concerns may be. Godfrey also asks that we create an advisory panel as we’ve done with the deans.

10. Winter logistics
   a. We will be having meetings in the winter. The representative elects will be announced tomorrow. A Doodle poll will be sent out soon and by December 15 to set up meeting times and speakers.

11. Visioning by Winter 2012
   a. Michael lays out a few suggestions for things we might do: work with AATA and parking transportation, working on implementing the GSBOR, Educational symposium with MSU, social events (bowling and ice skating), a de-stressing event during finals, Red Wings game (December 8), also working for a joint event with MSU student council for a box event at Yost.

12. Adjournment: motion to adjourn by Rahul and seconded by Alex E. Adjourned at 8:20pm.