RACKHAM STUDENT GOVERNMENT
BOARD MEETING
4/23/13
RACKHAM GRADUATE BUILDING
2ND FLOOR WEST CONFERENCE ROOM, NORTH ALCOVE
7:34 P.M.

a. CALL TO ORDER: 7:34pm
b. Present: Michael Lang, Dan Trubman, Chris Tom, Kaitlin Flynn, Michael Benson, Phil Saccone, Ram Balachandran, Pete McGrath, Ryan Roberts, David Barton, Lauren Knapp, Elson Liu (visiting student)
c. Absent:
d. Excused:

II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
a. Motion to approve the agenda by Lauren, seconded by John. Approved.

III. APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES, 4/9/13
a. Motion by Michael Lang seconded by Ryan to approve the minutes from 4/9.

IV. PUBLIC HEARING
a. W-13-06 Semi mandatory course evaluations: Elson agrees that incentivizing course evaluations sounds great! It will help against the selection bias for Graduate Student Instructors evaluations.
b. W-13-07: PhD candidate course bank: Elson is here and discusses his difficulties with taking courses as a candidate after his advisor passed away. He had to retool for his new PhD and was restricted to taking one course per semester. This would have helped the progress on his degree.
c. W-13-08: Michigan Stadium football ticket policy: Elson shares that there was a time not too long ago when graduate students were going to be disadvantaged under priority seating. There were resolutions by RSG and CSG to change this. Once again however, the Athletic Department has made a decision without asking students. He suggests that if they’re going to make a decision they should at least ask us as students and perhaps consider listening to us as well. He encourages us to continue to voice our displeasure to the Athletic Department.

V. OFFICER REPORTS
a. President Michael Benson. Very proud of the SAGE delegation and their trip to DC last week. It was very productive. The new board members will take over on May 7. Congrats to the AAC for hosting two very successful town halls over the past two weeks.
b. **Vice President Kaitlin Flynn.** Final newsletter going out either this week or next week. Doodle poll shows that next Tuesday April 30 at 7pm will be the best time for our banquet.

c. **Treasurer Phil Saccone.** $23,720 in the account, we are fiscally healthy. Receipts from SAGE, AAC, COSAC

VI. **Director Report**
   a. **Events Director, Ryan Roberts:** Post graduation bar night in the works.

VII. **SAGE DOH Spring Conference Delegation Report**
   a. As a group, SAGE met with over 150 offices around the hill. The organization agreed to stick with the three main issues of increasing research funding, changing student indebtedness,
   b. Participant comments:
      i. Phil: thinks it was very successful. Having graduate students going and knocking on doors of Congress and telling personal stories are really important. He looks forward to working with the other schools as we move forward. Phil also found it very informative to hear what the opposition to research funding increases.
      ii. Michael Lang: he enjoyed visiting the budgetary chairs office and having him explain why research funding was being cut.
      iii. Kaitlin: It was also a really exciting time to be in DC because immigration reform legislation was being announced. It was very interesting to see that certain offices that in the past that were not for immigration reform had begun to warm up to the idea. Many conservatives were also increasingly concerned about student indebtedness, which was a less-supported issue in past years.
      iv. Michael Benson: More comments, but specifically that SAGE is being recognized more and more. Additionally, we will be looking to quantify the impact of sequester on the SAGE schools.

VIII. **Committee Updates**
   a. **Academics:** Two town halls went well. Lower turnout than last year unfortunately due to poor advertising. Stayed under budget by about $200. Some issues raised were the value of graduate education, campus safety and evacuation, mentoring, and so on.
   b. **Budgetary:** Met
   c. **COSAC:** cleanup in Detroit over the weekend, unfortunately the turnout was affected by the weather. About 20 people came out and really enjoyed their experience. Phil asks about transportation.
   d. **Elections:** Ram suggests that we announce the winners of the elections giftcards as a motivation technique. Motion by Ram and seconded by Dan, it’s approved.
   e. **Legislative Affairs:** Very productive semester—looking forward to the summer and next year. Dan asks about the leasing forum that was planned. Michael mentions that next fall will probably be the best time for that. Dan asks also about the taxi ordinance. Michael gives some updates regarding nefarious drivers who’s
licenses have been revoked and other issues the taxi cab board meeting is working on.

f. **Student Life:** Post-graduation bar night in the atmosphere. Student life had a visitor from the Michigan Argentine Tango Club and we will be co-hosting the dance event.

g. **JCOM:** Not met.

 IX. **SB Resolution: W-13-05: RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT**
   
a. Representative Ryan Roberts is the lead author on this. Discussion: Ram asks if ‘fossil fuels’ includes natural gas fracking. Ryan mentions that there is a timeline for the issues that are presented from this group. He comments further on his resolution. Phil’s concern with the resolution is that we have been moving too quickly and we don’t have any opposing or administrative opinion. He is not sure if he can support it going forward without hearing more from those people. Lauren asks if we have town halls often for these resolutions. John asks if the students and the organization came to us. Phil answers that the $900 million investment is a serious amount of money and he does not feel totally up to snuff on how this change will impact the University, or graduate students as a whole. Kaitlin agrees and supports a tabling of this resolution until we can get more information. Michael mentions that after a brief discussion with President Mary Sue Coleman, she is concerned about the effects of investment on the investors and on tuition. Dan mentions that it might be nice to have the chief investment officer to come and have an idea of the impact of these issues. Additionally, Dan suggests that we have a nonbinding question on a ballot to get a sense of the student body. Phil mentions that he would not like to see the resolution defeated and we should discuss. Ram suggests that the wording of the resolution changed to reflect the importance of natural gas and fracking to protect this growing energy industry. Dan makes the point that we don’t have control over the endowment and we could command the full electorate. Kaitlin motions to table this resolution until we can get more input from both sides. Phil seconds. By a vote of 7-5 the resolution is tabled. Dan voted no with rights and mentions that we should take this seriously and that climate change is one of the most important issues moving forward.

 X. **Resolution W-13-06: SEMI-MANDATORY COURSE EVALUATIONS**
   
a. Motion to approve by Chris and seconded by Ram. Chris mentions that he has modified the resolution slightly to further incentivize filling out of evaluations. Michael Lang mentions that these are hugely important for students who want to go on to teaching colleges. Kaitlin mentions that out of a class of 30 she got 4 evaluations last year. Dan poses the question to the board of how long we should or should not wait. Michael proposes a change after comments from Ryan that grades are visible immediately after completing the evaluation. This is a friendly amendment. Line 18 “Be it further resolved that for the entire period where a student is prohibited from seeing their grades, they will have access to submit the requisite course evaluations and upon successful submission they will have immediate access to their grades.” <- the language of the friendly amendment. Motion by Pete and seconded by Dan to allow the executive board to modify the
language as needed. It’s approved with one abstention. David expresses concerns about the quality of the evaluations we might receive if we force students to wait one month. David moves that we amend the resolution at line 16 and change to within a period not less than 14 days before the end of the semester. Phil asks if this is long enough. Michael Lang and Chris feel that 30 days is appropriate. The discussion continues on how many people will submit “trash”. Ryan argues that two weeks is definitely long enough to rescind grades from undergraduates. Amendment to switch to 14 days instead of 30 days: roll call vote and it fails. To approve the resolution: the resolution passes. Approved 9-1-1.

XI. Resolution W-13-07: PhD Candidate Course Bank
   a. There are no questions or points of discussion. Kaitlin mentions that Elson’s comments were greatly appreciated and his anecdote should be included somehow when discussing this issue. Approved 9-0-1.

XII. Resolution W-13-08: MICHIGAN STADIUM FOOTBALL TICKET POLICY
   a. Kaitlin opens discussion and explains the number of issues surrounding the change of the ticket policy. Principally, the students were not contacted regarding this change and that represents a high level of disrespect to the fans. Additionally it creates a number of safety issues. John makes a motion to strike lines 35 and 36. Discussion: John feels that we should take it out as we don’t need to discuss people drinking. Kaitlin feels that it’s important because it’s a huge safety concern. By a vote of 3-6-3 motion fails. Dan mentions that his constituents are totally opposed to this and explains why. He also feels that it divides programs and that it is unsafe. Pete agrees with Dan and Kaitlin, with the drinking and the mob aspect. This change was rammed through without any communication with the students. Phil agrees and is equally incensed about this being changed without any input. He also reminds us that the school is not here to uphold the athletic department. By a vote of 11-1-0 it is passed.

XIII. Open Discussion: Outgoing board members give thanks and thoughts. Motion by Dan Trubman to thank Michael. It’s approved with one abstention.

XIV. President’s comments: Michael came here in Fall 2007. He has considerably altered the course of the board and contributed a lot to the change. He acknowledges that what happens could not have happened without all of the board members and their hard work. RSG has gone on to do great things and gone from a ‘joke’ of an organization to being taken very seriously. We’ve accomplished so many things: GPA change, expanding building hours, added a community focus, town halls, graduate student advocacy, brand recognition, more events, etc.

XV. Adjournment: Motion to dissolve the Winter 2013 board by Chris and seconded by Michael Lang. Adjourned/dissolved at 9:40pm.