Rackham Student Government
Board Meeting: September 18, 2013

Agenda

I. Call To Order
II. Approval of Agenda
III. Approval of Previous Minutes
   a. September 4, 2013
IV. Officer Reports
   a. Graduate Student Body President, Phil
   b. Graduate Student Body Vice President, Kaitlin
      i. Newsletter
   c. Graduate Student Body Treasurer, Chuky
      i. Finance update
      ii. Committee Budgets
V. Committee Reports
   a. Legislative Affairs
      i. Leasing forum
   b. COSAC/Student Life
      i. Munger Update
      ii. Presidential search update
   c. Academic Affairs
   d. Budgetary
VI. RSG Priorities for Fall
VII. Open Discussion
VIII. Adjournment

Included in packet:
RSG Board Minutes September 4, 2013 (page 2)
AAC Minutes September 17, 2013 (page 5)
Budget Memo (page 7)
Budget Template (page 8)
Munger Letter (page 9)
RACKHAM STUDENT GOVERNMENT  
BOARD MEETING  
9/4/13  
RACKHAM GRADUATE BUILDING  
2ND FLOOR WEST CONFERENCE ROOM, NORTH ALCOVE  
7:06 P.M.

a. CALL TO ORDER: 7:06pm

b. Present: Kaitlin Flynn, Phil Saccone, David Malewski, Michael Lang, Yiting Zhang, Julian Bahr, Chuky Mbagwu, Alex Guiterrez, Michael Benson, Ben Sweeney, Erin Sullivan, Chris Tom, Ryan Roberts.

c. Absent:

d. Excused,

II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

a. Motion by Chris Tom and seconded by Michael Lang. Approved with one abstention.

III. APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES, 8/28/13

a. Motion to approve by MB with the amendment to add the rest of the attendance and the date change. Seconded by Yiting. Approved with two abstentions.

IV. OFFICER REPORTS

a. President Phil Saccone:
   i. Welcome and introductions.
   ii. We have appointments to make to University Committees and we will be sending out applications to the student body next week. At the Rackham information fair, 100+ students signed up as wanting to participate in RSG. We will be targeting them for attending committees soon. We have a few open RSG seats that we are going to work hard to try and fill.
   iii. Fall picnic update: it was a huge success. Over 950 students attended!

b. Vice President Kaitlin Flynn.
   i. We got our shirts in. If you still don’t have one, stick around after the meeting to pick one up.
   ii. Website is going up soon thanks to MB’s help. If you haven’t already, please fill out MB’s form for your website information. I work mostly with communications. We will be having a newsletter go out next week. Please let me or Julian know if you know of items to include.
   iii. Thank you all for filling out the committee polls. The committee slate can be found on page 5. After discussion, Kaitlin motions to approve the slate of committees and seconded by ML. Minor spelling comments need to be changed. Approved 18-0-1.

c. Treasurer Chuky Mbagwu
1. Finance update: $19,600 not including the Fall money coming in. Still a few things that need to be sorted out but overall we are in great financial health.

2. Committee Budgets will be due at the end of next week. We will approve a budget by the third meeting per the bylaws.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS
   a. Legislative Affairs:
      i. RSG Bylaws (second reading): step by step walkthrough of the bylaw changes. A reminder that after this reading, if adopted, these bylaws will be in effect as of tomorrow. If substantive amendments must be made, the bylaw amendments will be pushed back to first reading. After points of clarification and going through article by article, MB motions to approve the Bylaws giving the executive board editorial authority and charge the executives to update the list of eligible programs. This is seconded by MH. Roll call vote. Approved 18-0-1.
      ii. Other areas of business: looking forward to meeting with the new members of the committee. Ann Arbor City Council election forum will likely take place in November and host candidates as well as discuss city council issues.
   b. COSAC/Student Life:
      i. Big thanks to everyone for your help with the Fall Picnic.
      ii. Munger Resolution—trying to get a forum to get input on the Munger housing situation. It might be next Wednesday during board meeting due to scheduling issues. In the event of this, all representatives would be required to attend that forum. Will be starting the advertising early. Phil asks that we approve a budget for this event. Phil suggests $400 for refreshments or renting a room. Motion by Ryne and seconded by Chris Tom. Kaitlin asks about setting aside money for advertising. Discussion ensues about this. Phil suggests attaching the sense of the board resolution to the newsletter. ML asks when the meeting will be held, probably 6-8, or 7-9. We will also be inviting people from the administration. Kaitlin asks about the format of the forum. Phil says that it will be the administration pitching their idea and then he will moderate. Ryne mentions that we should also have a list of questions for the moderator in case of dead airtime. Chris mentions that we should solicit questions from the student body as needed. Other discussion ensues about the donor and what he knows. Approved with one abstention.
      iii. COSAC River clean up with the city parks and rec department was organized well but unfortunately it was cancelled due to a sewage leak so this event was cancelled ☹.
   c. Academic Affairs: Phil met with the registrar to organize the course bank resolution and the registrar’s office is on board with creating the course bank as well as publishing the course evaluations and instructor evaluations for all courses. AAC is also working on the graduate student bill of rights.
d. **Budgetary:** Motion by Chuky and seconded by Kaitlin to approve the minutes from the

VI. **RSG Priorities for Fall:** postponed until next week.

VII. **Open Discussion:**
   a. Bar night after next week’s board meeting (if the Munger forum is not next week), spouses and friends invited.
   b. If you don’t have a t-shirt, wait until next meeting because they are not in the building.

VIII. **Adjournment:** Motion by DM and seconded by MB, adjourned at 8:38pm.
I. CALL TO ORDER: 7:09 pm

II. ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Members: Chris Tom, Phil Saccone, Janakiraman Balachandran, Alexander Gutierrez, Kaitlin Flynn, Brooke Horton, Ryan Roberts, Erin Sullivan, Julian Bahr, Chuky Mbgawu

Present: Chris Tom, Phil Saccone, Janakiraman Balachandran, Alexander Gutierrez, Kaitlin Flynn, Brooke Horton, Erin Sullivan, Julian Bahr

Excused: Chuky Mbgawu

Unexcused: Ryan Roberts

III. OUTSTANDING ACTION ITEMS

None

IV. COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP

Chris Tom and Brooke Horton elected unanimously as co-chairs.

V. COMMITTEE BUDGET

a. Town halls (Lunch with the Deans). Two separate town hall meetings (North and Central campuses) like in the past. Budget: $1200 for food – Approved unanimously. Chris actioned to contact “dean scheduling lady.” Time frame: sometime in October or early November.

b. Total budget: $1200

VI. GOAL & AGENDA SETTING

a. Journal of Visualized Experimentation (JOVE) – schedule presentation
b. Bill of Rights – finish revision and bring to board
c. Town Halls – organize
d. Forum on Women’s Issues – organize and collaborate with other groups
e. Nondiscrimination of Sexual Expression – pass nondiscrimination policy
f. Course Evaluations – work with Registrar to complete

g. Course Bank – meet with Registrar and Janet; get Rackham to vote

h. Students with disabilities / Assistive Technology – follow up on progress; potentially get Laura Patterson to speak

VII. BILL OF RIGHTS READING
Read latest revision on Google Drive. Make comments by next Tuesday. Chris and Brooke will consider comments and change

VIII. OPEN DISCUSSION
None

IX. ADJOURNMENT: 7:58 pm

X. ACTION ITEMS
[Chris] For town halls, contact “dean scheduling lady”
[All] Make comments on latest GSBOR revision online by next Tuesday

XI. APPENDIX
a. Student ombuds application: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1c-i2zWTrRJ3iSEpGsIYu3ph7yVVVjr_e2y1UleKFW4/viewform
Memorandum

From: RSG Executive Board

To: RSG Committee Members

RE: Instructions for completing Committee Budget Request forms

Date: September 17, 2013

Please prepare your budget requests using the attached form and submit to the RSG executive board no later than 9/23/13 at 11:59am. We understand that certain details in the budget may need revision as planning for the event evolves. The Treasurer is committed to resolving these issues as they arise. Please do your best to produce an inclusive budget, but please don’t hesitate to contact the Treasurer if an issue arises.

As for the justification of different budget items, we want to balance everyone’s desire for a simple and streamlined process with our fiduciary responsibility. There is no need to provide extensive justification for common sense items. We recommend that committees focus on providing justification for items that are of significant monetary size and/or for items that might not have a clear purpose from an outside-of-the-committee perspective.

Please feel free to contact Chuky with any questions at rsg-treasurer@umich.edu.
Please return to RSG Treasurer by September 23, 2013 (11:59 PM)

Committee Name:

Committee Chair (Please include contact information):

Total Amount of Funding Requested:

For each event, please address the following:
(Note: It is not necessary to physically/electronically duplicate this form for each event. Please format the budget request in the following manner: Event 1, response to prompts 1-5, Event 2, response to prompts 1-5, etc.)

1) Approximate date of the event.

2) Very briefly, how does the event fit the mission of your committee as defined by the RSG by-laws?

3) Detail the specific items that the committee is requesting, the dollar amount, and provide a brief justification for the expenditure.

4) Event co-sponsors and an estimation of their financial contribution, if any.

5) Is this the first time you are holding the event?
Dear Regent:

My name is Phillip Saccone and I am honored to represent over 8,000 Master’s and Ph.D. students as the President of the Rackham Student Government. On your agenda this month is the final authorization for the University to begin construction on a new residence project for graduate students, the Munger Graduate Residence. I am writing you today to express our concerns with this proposal.

The proposed graduate residence, which was made possible by the generous donation of University alumnus Charles Munger, will provide housing to approximately 630 graduate and professional students. Mr. Munger’s stated goal of creating a trans-disciplinary housing community enjoys the wide support of the graduate student body. There is certainly a need for expanded graduate and professional student housing, especially on Central Campus. We are very grateful for Mr. Munger's gift and the considerable effort on behalf of the University’s administration to preserve and expand Michigan's place as a leader in graduate education. However, many students have expressed reservations over both the proposed design and the projected rental cost.

On Friday August 2nd, the University Housing's Residence Education Division hosted a select group of approximately forty graduate academic and professional students to provide feedback on the common spaces contained in the proposal. The students provided passionate feedback on many aspects of the project, including the architectural design and the estimated cost of living—University Housing officials estimated the rental cost to be in the range of $1000 to $1500. Overall, a strong consensus emerged that the proposed design will not be attractive to or affordable for most graduate students.

In response to this feedback, the Rackham Student Government along with the Law School Student Senate and the Public Health Student Assembly sought to solicit feedback from a wider range of graduate students to evaluate if the response from this small sample was generalizable across the larger student body. RSG held three fora, two online and one in person, over a ten day period beginning last week. The most recent online survey was conducted between September 16, 2013 and September 17, 2013 and was made available to all 8,000+ Rackham students. In this survey, students were asked if they would choose to live in the Munger Graduate Residence given the current proposal: yes or no. 233 students responded to the survey and 96% indicated that they would not choose to live in the Munger Residence. Respondents also had an opportunity to leave a written comment. Almost all of the students cited the proposed design and the rental cost as the most significant barriers to living in the residence. These results mirrored the previous online forum that had ninety participants, and the in-person forum that was attended by thirty students.

In all three of the fora, students expressed concern over the proposed layout. Most graduate and
professional students are adults in their twenties and thirties and many observed that they would not choose to share living space with six other people. Several students went on to say that the design feels too much like existing undergraduate dorms. In general, graduate students value their personal space and would prefer to interact with fewer roommates in a more intimate setting.

While many students expressed concern about the layout of the Munger Graduate Residence, most identified the projected monthly cost as the most significant impediment to living there. Regardless of whether they support the proposal, students overwhelmingly agreed that $1000 per month was not financially feasible for the majority of graduate students. More importantly, the projected rental cost will severely limit the socioeconomic diversity within the residence undermining one of the core values of University of Michigan. Every effort should be made to ensure students from diverse backgrounds have the opportunity to live and learn in any student housing environment.

In its current form, we believe the Munger Graduate Residence is unlikely to fulfill the personal and professional needs of most graduate students. While the University may well find students to live here, the current design and projected cost make the Munger Residence a less-desirable alternative to current graduate residences on-campus, or off-campus housing in the surrounding community. We are concerned not only that students would not be engaged, but that the ultimate goal of the building will not be realized.

Nevertheless, we appreciate that the University and Mr. Munger are willing to innovate and try something relatively unprecedented. While we have seen reason to be skeptical, nothing would make us happier than to have the project be a great success. It is clear that redesigning the layout of the apartments may not be logistically feasible, and carries the added risk of disrespecting the donor’s vision. We feel most strongly that if the project continues without alteration to the physical plan, it is imperative that everything be done to keep the cost in line with the financial reality of graduate student life.

The graduate student body is tremendously thankful for everything that you have done to preserve Michigan’s place as one of the world’s leading academic and research institutions. As a result of the Board’s leadership, and that of President Coleman, the University of Michigan has expanded its reputation as the state’s premier institution of higher education through extraordinarily difficult economic circumstances. During that time, the University has grown the endowment, raised a record $3.6 billion in the last capital campaign, and expanded infrastructure across its three campuses. The students at the University of Michigan are the greatest beneficiaries of this effort. Thank you for helping Michigan continue its tradition of excellence!

Sincerely,