

# MIT GSC Vice Presidential Statement of Purpose

Kevin McComber

Submitted March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Thank you for your interest in the GSC officer elections.

I have been involved with the GSC for nearly four years. In 2005, I served as a volunteer with the GSC Off-campus Subcommittee as an event organizer. I was elected to chair that subcommittee in 2006, and in 2007 I became one of the co-chairs of the Activities Committee. I have maintained this position since. My accomplishments with the GSC include starting the Two Dollar Tuesday dinner series, starting the off-campus brunch series, developing the Leadership BBQ events, and helping develop the Leadership Evolution for Graduate Students workshop series, as well as hosting a number of other events and overseeing groups' funding requests throughout the years.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my tenure in the GSC and I feel that now is the time to step into a larger role in the organization in the form of the GSC Vice President. Because the role of the Vice President is relatively small as it is defined in the GSC's bylaws, the elected candidate for any given year has substantial freedom to take on various additional responsibilities as they see fit. The additional responsibilities I wish to assume can be summarized by the acronym CALM, as presented below.

**Connections:** The MIT GSC is uniquely positioned to be a leader among graduate students in the Boston area, New England, and the United States. To this end, I plan to continue increasing the connections we are currently building with other Boston-area schools through our newly-formed Boston Graduate Leadership Organization (BGLO), an alliance of seven graduate schools. Using this as a starting point, I will work to increase our presence in the National Association for Graduate and Professional Students (NAGPS), a national organization of which MIT is a lifetime member. We have already begun efforts to bolster membership of NAGPS in New England; this fall, we will attempt to place students from New England schools on the national board of NAGPS to ensure that our voices are heard in this organization. A stronger graduate student coalition in the Boston area and across the nation can serve as a unified voice for student advocacy as well as a useful platform for sharing best practices and networking.

**Alumni:** For the past year, the GSC has maintained a task force, the Task Force on Alumni Relations (later the Task Force on Community Engagement), which was charged with the jobs of investigating the relationships between MIT

and its graduate alumni and coordinating new partnerships. Though this task force will only exist through the end of the GSC year, I feel strongly that continuing to liaise between the GSC and graduate alumni is pertinent for both the GSC and MIT in general. Strengthening our ties can increase alumni giving rates, provide resources for graduate students, and serve as a way to smoothen the transition between MIT and the rest of the world. I have already begun to liaise with the MIT Club of Boston (the local alumni club) and will continue to do so while looking for other opportunities to engage interested alumni and graduate students.

**Leadership:** As mentioned above, I have been a part of the GSC leadership initiative since 2007. The GSC is taking more of a personal development role in the Institute, and this direction is also fervently supported by the MIT administration. This initiative can have a strong positive impact on how students perform in their roles while at MIT and afterward. Inspiring leadership, teaching leadership fundamentals, and empowering and connecting leaders at MIT will have far-reaching impacts if programs to do so are maintained diligently. For this reason, the current GSC Vice President, Nan Gu, and I are proposing the creation of a new Leadership Subcommittee of the GSC to serve as a permanent role for oversight of GSC leadership programs. I will work with the chair of this position in its inaugural year to define the role and set a course for its future. Should this position fail to be voted into creation, I will personally continue to support the GSC's leadership development initiatives in any ways necessary.

**Membership:** Currently, about 20 out of a total of approximately 80 GSC representative spots are vacant. Having a strong and diverse membership allows the GSC to more effectively advocate on behalf of graduate students. While it is extremely optimistic to hope to fill every single representative spot, I believe it is the duty of the Vice President to ensure that at least one representative is found from every department and living group. To this end, I will personally meet with groups who have no representatives in the Council and work with them to either find representatives or set up methods to find representatives. Currently, five departments have no representatives on the Council, and I believe getting at least one person from each of those departments is feasible in the first three months of my term.

Again, thank you for taking the time to read this document, and I encourage you to contact me with any questions.