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MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY GRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL

General Council Meeting March 4th, 2015, 5:30 PM Agenda and Minutes

1. Quorum Check
 - a. 55 present, 29 needed, quorum reached
2. Approval of Agenda
 - a. Placard voting, approved
3. Approval of February Meeting Minutes
 - a. Placard voting, approved
4. Introduction of New Faces
5. GSC Committee Updates
 - a. Academics, Research, and Careers (ARC) Committee
 - i. EnergyBar Networking Event
 - ii. Tax Advice Seminar from the MSCPA
 - iii. Advising Initiative
 1. Approval of document regarding rights and responsibilities of graduate students
 - iv. Legislative Action Subcommittee (LASC)
 1. Spring DC Trips
 - a. Science Policy Initiative
 - b. NAGPS
 - v. GWAMIT
 1. New Executive Co-chairs: Alex Toumar and Nora Xu
 2. Spring Empowerment Conference
 3. GWAMIT social in mid-March
 - b. Activities Committee (AC)
 - i. Taste of Singapore, March 10th, 5:30 – 7 pm
 - ii. Grad Gala ticket sold out – ticket exchange on 3/9
 - iii. Battle of the Bands – 5/2
 - c. Housing & Community Affairs (HCA) Committee
 - i. Cost of Living Analysis
 - ii. MIT iREFS Program

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- iii. Q: Can the Saferide shuttles get bike racks on them?
- iv. A: Possibly. We'll look into that.
- d. Association of Student Activities (ASA)
 - i. Election of ASA Board Members
- e. Muddy Charles Pub
 - i. We are open after our renovations!
 - ii. Reopening party: March 19th, 6-9pm, Walker Memorial
 - iii. Come for drinks after the GCM at the Muddy!
- 6. Officer Updates and Board Reports
 - a. Officer Nominations Background
 - i. Nominations are held today
 - ii. Officer positions are voted in rank order: President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer
 - b. Officer Nominations
 - i. Nominate Levi Lentz for president, seconded, accepted
 - ii. Nominate Raphael Dumas for president, seconded, respectfully decline
 - iii. Nominate Boris Braverman for president, seconded, respectfully decline
 - iv. Nominate Ina Kundu for president, seconded, accepted
 - v. Nominate Michael McClellan for vice-president, seconded, accepted
 - vi. Nominate Chris Aakre for president, seconded, respectfully decline
 - vii. Nominate Francesco Bellei for president, seconded, respectfully decline
 - c. Funding Board
 - i. Nominations for open Funding Board position
 - 1. Nominate Jay Sircar, seconded
 - 2. Placard voting, approved for position
 - ii. New application
 - d. Director of Library (Chris Bourg) and Associate Director for Research and Instructional Services (Tracy Gabridge)
 - i. Introduction of new MIT Library chair: Chris Bourg
 - ii. Charge for MIT Libraries: start conversations with different community members about what MIT libraries should look like in the

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next, digital age. Graduate students are key stakeholders in this conversation.

- iii. Q: Is there a trend that the Stanford libraries is going through?
 - iv. A: There has been a focus on helping researchers in digital humanities and the computational social sciences.
 - v. Q: I think that there's a hole in special collections at MIT relative to peers such as Stanford and Yale. For advanced scholarship, I think that this is incredibly important.
 - vi. A: I think there's a two-fold answer. The first is raising awareness of what we do have, and the second is raising capital so that we can acquire more items.
- e. Soliciting Feedback on Forming an External Advocacy Committee
- i. Comment: I think it would be interesting to have a regular series that covers what is occurring in DC that is relevant to graduate students. You could also think about working with AC to co-host a coffee hour to discuss these issues.
 - ii. Comment: I think it'd be great to hear from lawmakers or policy makers directly, for example, hearing directly from the NSF why they aren't getting more money.
 - iii. Motion to extend discussion for 5 minutes, seconded, passed by placard voting
 - iv. Straw Poll #1: How important is it that GSC advocate on behalf of MIT graduate students externally?
 1. Very Important: 37
 2. Somewhat: 10
 3. Neutral: 6
 4. Not important: 2
 - v. Straw Poll #2: Are you in favor of the proposal to create a new standing committee on external advocacy?
 1. Yes: 32
 2. No: 4
 3. Undecided: 19

7. Service Awards

- a. Colin Buss
- b. Idan Blank
- c. Shaiyan Keshvari

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8. Discussion – Need-based Childcare Grant

- a. Q: What types of services would be provided:
- b. Kendall: The process would involve showing your financial need, applying to the fund, and then receiving funds based on your need.
- c. Q: Are there any parents in the room? Would they be willing to share their thoughts?
- d. Comment from graduate student parent: There are a lot of high quality people that have to choose between being a parent and being a graduate student. I'm not sure how this would be funded, though.
- e. Kendall: One possibility is to find an outside donor to contribute the funds. Another would be to find a donor to create an endowment, and use the proceeds from this endowment to fund the program each year. A final possibility is to use funds from the GSC and hope to receive matching funds from the administration.
- f. Q: Also, what is the number of students who would like to have kids now, but are deferring having kids due to financial concerns? I'm not sure how we could measure this, but it would be interesting to know.
- g. Q: Are there daycare services on campus, and are graduate students paying for them?
- h. Kendall: From my understanding, it's very difficult for graduate students to get spots in daycare, and the cost is also equal approximately to a graduate stipend.

9. Old Business

- a. 61.gsc.8.1 Resolution to update the GSC's legislative platform
 - i. Motion to vote, seconded, approved by placard voting
 - ii. Passed (40 yes, 0 no, 7 abstain)
- b. 61.gsc.8.2. Amendment to the Bylaws on Initiatives Fund
 - i. Q: All excess funds in the future will be put into this fund?
 - ii. A: Yes. And any use of these funds will have to be approved by the Council or the Executive Committee.
 - iii. Motion to vote, seconded, approved by placard voting
 - iv. Passed (49 yes, 0 no, 1 abstain)

10. New Business

- a. 61.gsc.9.1 Amendment from Governing Documents Committee
 - i. Review of proposed amendments to Bylaws

11. Open Floor

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- a. Kendall: Next month's meeting is elections! But since we have the Governing Documents item on the agenda, were going to hold a special General Council Meeting on March 18, at 5:30 pm. Please attend.
 - b. Janelle: Quick poll, who has seen the sign-up link for Battle of the Bands? (Three hands raise).
 - c. Comment: If we want to get parents in here, can we invite them next time for a discussion?
 - d. Kendall: Yes, we can definitely make time for them to talk about the issue.
 - e. Comment: What are other ways that people have dealt with childcare? For example, a childcare share with other parents?
 - f. Chris: There are problems with liability for childcare if it's held on the MIT campus. For example, the providers need to be licensed.
 - g. Comment: Another alternative is to form a relationship with a local childcare facility to get a discounted service for graduate students.
 - h. Comment: I was under the impression that Westgate has a babysitting program of some kind. Is that true? Also, I don't think that we're the right crowd to discuss this topic, since we currently have so few parents represented on the GSC.
 - i. Comment: It may make sense to have Anna Haggman attend the meeting in addition to other parents, since she knows so much about this topic.
 - j. Comment: Another topic of interest is graduate student dental coverage. What is the status of that?
 - k. Boris, HCA co-chair: This topic comes up a lot. The only way to make it substantially cheaper is to make enrollment mandatory for all graduate students. If we want the administration to pay for it, that's another discussion.
 - l. Comment: In the discussion on mental health, Kendall mentioned that he would bring forward a report. What is the status of that?
 - m. Kendall: I'm currently going through the archives to gather information on this topic. I hope to get the report out soon.
12. Motion to adjourn, seconded, passed by placard