



Graduate Student Council of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Report of Engagement and Recruitment Task Force May 4, 2016

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Convened by Michael McClellan, 62nd GSC President

Section I: Background on Task Force and Report

The Presidential Engagement and Recruitment Task Force was charged, in Resolution 62.gsc.6.1, with exploring ways in which the GSC may “better represent the wealth of viewpoints and opinions within the entire MIT graduate student body,” and “suggest structural or cultural changes to the GSC that will better ensure that highly motivated graduate students are able to take on GSC leadership positions”.

To this end, the members of the Task Force conducted two surveys of Council Representatives at GCMs, to quantify demographic information about Council membership, opinions on GCM format, and the state of GSC operations. Members also met with the leaders of other student groups to discuss the perception of the GSC among the rest of the graduate student community, and identify ways to strengthen ties between groups.

Based on the findings from these surveys and conversations, the Task Force has identified several chief issues facing the GSC. Accompanying these is a list of recommendations, varying in scope, feasibility, and complexity, which address one or more of these issues. In contrast to previous Task Force reports in this Council, the strategies and outcomes here are intentionally vague. It is our belief that these recommendations are interconnected and can be combined and implemented in many creative ways. Overly specifying details of their execution may impinge upon these creative solutions, and limit their effect. We emphasize that this document is intended to be the start of a conversation, and encourage any and every member of the GSC, and the greater MIT graduate community, to join the conversation, and lend a hand in making changes to the GSC.

Section 2: Issues identified by the Task Force

- **Representation:**
 - International students and minorities are underrepresented in the General Council
 - Several Council Rep spots are empty, including the entirety of some departments
- **Recruitment:**
 - Difficult to fill Executive Committee positions
 - Committee membership fluctuates year-to-year
 - Advisors may not be supportive of their students' involvement in student government/extracurriculars
- **Engagement of Council Reps:**
 - GCM format sometimes long and unproductive
 - Council Rep fund underutilized
- **Lack of knowledge of GSC scope:**
 - Among the non-GSC graduate student population, there is a lack of knowledge of GSC's activities outside of Orientation/Gala/Ski Trip

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- o Not everybody knows that Committee membership is open to all students (not just voting council representatives)

Section 3: Recommendations of the Task Force

3.1: Internal to the GSC: GCM Format, Committees, People

1. Create an International Community at-large Council Rep
 1. Possibility of expanding to a subcommittee of HCA, ARC, AC, or Excomm
2. Repurpose dinner in a productive manner: Targeted discussion with a student group (or Committee) from 5-5:30, with follow-up as the first item of business
 1. Replace the guest speaker with a section focused on current issues and student groups working on those issues
 1. For example, the BGSA recommendations to the Institute could have been discussed during the February 2016 GCM
 2. Include Institute Committee reps, based on interest of Council or relevance of topic
 3. First GCM of the fall semester: a crash course in Robert's Rules of Order
 4. This also provides an opportunity to involve outside student groups in pre-dinner focused discussions (with resolutions possibly coming out of this process)
3. Communication with graduate programs:
 1. Especially for departments without a grad student government, GSC Officers need to communicate to the Graduate Officers (<http://odge.mit.edu/gpp/oversight/officers/>) the value of having their department represented in GSC
 2. Mention the Council Rep fund and convey that their department is missing out on hundreds of dollars for community building by not having students on Council
 3. Offer to come to Departmental Orientation. This would be an annual way to touch base with each department
 4. Along this line, communicate with department grad student governments directly
4. One-month legislative schedule: a "markup" resolution document is sent to Council ahead of the meeting (two weeks) on a collaborative platform (eg. Google Docs, comments enabled). Council has the option of tabling the resolution if investigation is needed or if questions remain
 1. This would require an amendment to Bylaws V.C.2. We suggest Council vote to suspend Bylaws to test this timeline, before making amendment
 2. Resolutions from the GCM floor would need two-month schedule, to go through markup period on Google Docs
 3. Like legislative markup, amendments could be freely added according to the discretion of the authors/working group in this period. Once introduced in GCM, it is "frozen" and amendments must be voted on individually



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5. Encourage subcommittees and committees to bring legislation directly to the GCM. This diversifies the pool from which legislation is brought forth, since it was mainly Officers and Excomm this year
6. Print placard-back Council Rep cheat sheet
7. Provide more opportunities to make friends in the GSC
 1. Post-GCM Social at the Muddy is currently not well attended
 1. Make sure we have tables reserved ahead of time
 2. Ensure event is inclusive to newer Council members
 2. Other social events: Holiday party, Leadership BBQ
 1. End-of-spring-semester party?
 3. Meet new people at General Council Meetings
 1. Discussions, encourage more people to talk to each other
 2. Hold GCMs in smaller rooms, where students sit closer together

3.2: Building relationships with student groups and constituencies

8. Build closer ties with cultural student groups, including the large international associations (ISA, ROCSA, CSSA, Sangam), BGSA
 1. Utilize at-large student representative positions to institutionalize these ties
 2. Ensure these groups understand the role of GSC, how to utilize the connections and resources
 3. Announcements at ASA meetings. Treasurer and graduate student representative(s) attend these meetings already
9. Work more closely with Sloan Senate, and especially showcase areas where there may not be a similar outlet at Sloan. Some examples of points to highlight:
 1. Advocacy in DC on behalf of Graduate/Professional students through NAGPS
 2. Ability to run a bar through the Muddy Board
 3. State and local government connections through EAB
10. Increase non-GSC student membership in committees
 1. General advertisements for GSC as an organization

3.3: "GSC PR"

11. GSC Highlights from the year: Highlight what GSC does for the graduate community
 1. Request CMM to make a series of GSC advertisements for no event in particular, but rather on achievements (stipend increases, Costco shuttles) with our logo and name displayed in a prominent location
12. Promote the GSC better during orientation
 1. Advertising materials to show the scope of what the GSC does beyond Orientation
 2. Hold the first GCM of the school year closer to the Open House, maybe the second week of September
13. GSC Advertisement (banner, contact info) at EVERY GSC event. It should be clear the GSC is running all of its events and programs.