



# Graduate Student Council

of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

## General Council Meeting Minutes July 6, 2016, 5:30 PM

Meeting Chaired by Arolyn Conwill (President)  
63.gsc.3 Chaired by Orpheus Chatzivasileiou (Secretary)  
Parliamentarian: Daniel Curtis

- Meeting starts at 5.34PM
- Introduction of new faces
- Quorum check
  - 36 present, 5 not present
  - Quorum is 35
- Guest: Dana Riechman, ISO
  - Dana Riechman is the International Student Programming Administrator & Advisor
    - 75% of job is to develop programming for students, 25% is immigration advising
    - Role: Partnering with other officers & departments and act as a liaison to student groups
    - More than 40% of grad students are internationals.
  - International Council
    - Started 1960 and ISO wants to bring it back.
    - We want to hear from intl. students and hear their issues.
    - Want somebody from GSC, but not on executive board.
    - Anyone can attend.
    - Want to talk about issues. Want to hear your voice and see if you want to collaborate.
  - Reorientation
    - All students in general overwhelmed at orientation, want to remind students of things they may have missed. Working group on international student support recommended spreading orientation over the year.
    - Have event open to undergrad/grad. Publicize events happening during semester.
    - A list of possible issues/workshops was presented. Events to be spread between winter/spring.
    - E.g.: Renting, ombuds, career networking, classroom expectations, how to do small talk.
    - Discussion:
      - Q: We need to know where we are/aren't allowed to work. A session on that would be good
        - A: We have immigration sessions on working. It's a good idea.
      - Q: Renting in Boston to be as soon as possible
        - A: Sure
      - Q: Westgate: Have lots of children. Helping them get their kids to public schools

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#### **Treasurer**

Lisa Guay

#### **Funding Board**

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### Committees

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#### **Academics, Research,**

#### **& Careers (ARC)**

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#### **Affairs (HCA)**

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#### **Muddy Charles Pub**

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#### **Orientation (OC)**

Sarah Goodman

James Kaczmarek

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### Staff

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- A: Perhaps we could partner with “Spouses & Partners”
- Q: Do you talk about SSN and banking
  - A: Financial Literacy. We have the social security office come and talk to students. Will check it up more.
- Q: We need more information on taxes. E.g. fellowships
  - A: We have a session in Feb/March. Will look more into it.
- Q: Will you also cover “how to dress for winter”
  - A: Yes
- Q (Dana to council): Suggestions on how the format should be?
  - A1: Some are dependent on outside factors (e.g. taxes).
  - A2: Some intl. students go home over Christmas/IAP.
- Dana: Thinks about having a mid-orientation for all students. Perhaps we need to figure out exactly when it will be.
  - We will send out Dana’s contact information to GCM.
    - Q: In Feb. a small subset of people arrive then, some are lost during this time.
      - A: We will look into it.
- Guest: Suzy Nelson, VPSL
  - We welcome the new VPSL on campus, invite her to speak to the assembly and let us know of her plans and ideas.
  - Suzy:
    - I feel like a newcomer.
    - I appreciate the work you are doing. I’ve been a grad student. Mother of 4. Graduated at 50. Had to work during PhD program.
    - I understand the challenges grad students face. Know you don’t have lots of time. Had different priorities. E.g. daycare is very close to my heart (and it was quite expensive).
    - Had a good mentor: “Helped me tremendously”.
    - She had changed job, moved, had feelings of anxiety. Connected with another grad student who was a mentor. She pushed through.
    - 2 important things are important in grad school
      1. Stress related to coursework
      2. Need to balance everything
    - I mostly worked with undergrads in past. I want to make sure I listen to you, your priorities and needs. I know that undergraduates are a bit louder.
    - I want to make sure that we work together, that we support students. You have got good ideas, let’s work together.
  - Discussion
    - Q: How have the first days at MIT been?
      - A: Very disorienting. MIT is big. People have been very friendly. Hard: You’re on your own in figuring some things out. Nobody is going to smooth the road for you. Undergrads do not want to be restricted. VPSL wants to be helpful.
    - Q: What are the best ways for students to reach out to DSL?



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- A: Emailing me may not be a very effective way. Coming to student groups is good, but some feel disenfranchised. What do you think would be useful?
- President: Please let us know what things you can do, let us know of your purview, so that we know when to reach you. Holding office hours would also be useful.
  - A: I will do this.
  - A: Reach me at my email [Nelsonsm@mit.edu](mailto:Nelsonsm@mit.edu). Come to my office. Happy to have face time with everyone.

## •Committee Updates

### ○ AC

- 3 events
- 1)Harbor Islands trip this Sunday
- 2)Middlesex falls hiking trip or paintball
- 3)Outdoor movie screenings in October.
- Updates: Finalized location for ski trip

### ○ ARC

- Professional development grant is ready to start for this academic year. Covers cost of registration for conferences.
- We also approved a big increase for travel grants.
- How to find a good postdocs. Let us know if you're representing a group that has postdocs as a career option and we will include you.

### ○ EAB

- Steady stream of updates on research
- 2 meetings to update the legislative platforms
- Q&A on Mass Clean Energy Bill (June 29th)
- Tomorrow: Federal affairs subcommittee meets
- NAGPS leadership summit in August
- Voter registration. Recruitment for orientation
- Ivy+ & NAGPS coming up

### ○ HCA

- Looking for another HCA co-chair. Have election on July 18th. We invite you to come and stand and be elected. As a chair you can accomplish thigs. If you are passionate, come talk to him.
- We're working on the parental leave.
- Q: Is off-campus included in HCA?
- A: Yes, it's a subcommittee.

### ○ Muddy Charles

- Will prepare a white paper on "Muddy in the 21st Century"
- Apply to be on the new board of advisors
- Want to make Muddy more event-driven.
- Muddy Mondays for cultural groups – get in touch with muddy-activities@mit.edu, we leverage the money you commit 5:1

### ○ OC

- A lot going on
- We're getting ready for orientation



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- We are waiting on some services (CAC) to tell us if we have finalized spaces/dates
- Had first OC meeting on June 22nd
- 15 attendees, several new event coordinators
- July 20th next meeting we have free food.
- Dorm event funds allocated.
- Theme: OneMIT
- Met with the diversity/inclusion officer. We want to bring a theme on diversity (cultural/racial) vs all schools together this year.
- We're finalizing the Logo for us to put on our swag. We'll be able to get moving with the website so that we can email the grad students.
- Gift: Reusable shopping bags: Recently can't get plastic bags: Useful, put our logo on a large thing.
- OC fellow: Looking at past events. Putting together standard operating procedures. Make people slightly less intimidated. We're implementing Slack event management.
- We need event coordinators. We absolutely need you. We really need coordinators.

### • Officer Updates

- Welcome Suzie Nelson
  - We put together document putting together our priorities which we gave to the new VPSL.
- We wanted your suggestions for career fair and we got great responses, we want to hear from you, especially Architecture and Humanities.
- Nominations board: Will report back in the next week or so
- Funding board: Funding allocations are out. Appeals due by July 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Piloting limited, off-cycle funding for timely events.

### • Resolution 63.GSC.3

- Creates a task force to look into revising Funding Board operating procedures.
- Description of current situation and necessity.
  - Lots of separate applications and confusing, high effort for students. Many separate applications sifted by different people. Timelines are not ideal. Little or no funding available mid-cycle.
  - We need a task-force to address changes.
  - Funding board can technically make changes to its own operating procedures. But some changes may require bylaws change. Also want feedback from students. We need to have all the information we need to coordinate reviews between processes.
  - We need to assemble people by this month. Will report by October.
  - Will be chaired by Treasurer, have president as member.
- Motion to accelerate voting timetable as per Article V, Section C, Point 13 of the bylaws
  - 32 Yes, 2 No, 5 Abstentions. It passes.
- Motion to vote on the resolution
  - 33 Yes, 2 No, 5 Abstentions. It passes.



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### • Open floor

- Secretary: We are thinking of amending the bylaws to modernize them. Reach out to [gsc-secretary@mit.edu](mailto:gsc-secretary@mit.edu) if you want to help.
- Kyle Kotowick: I would like to propose that every vote will require Yes and No to add up to quorum
  - Will you write specific language to that effect?
    - No

### • Meeting Adjourned