



Graduate Student Council

of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

General Council Meeting Agenda

December 6th, 2017, 5:30pm-7:30pm in 32-155

1. Tax Cuts and Jobs Act – Potential impact on MIT and graduate students (5:30-6:00)
 - a. Outlook from DC: MIT Washington Director David Goldston
 - i. What we're hearing from DC
 1. Senate passed their version early Saturday morning.
 2. House & Senate reconciling. Work probably began Saturday afternoon. Republican leadership and WH working on it. May have a deal by this weekend, or they might hit snags.
 3. You need to be vigilant.
 4. If we keep the pressure on, the Tuition exemption for students may not be in the final bill.
 - a. It's not in the Senate version
 - b. House probably didn't think about the way it would hit grad students.
 - c. Nobody is really speaking in favor.
 - d. Unclear on what will happen on regular employees who can now receive tax-free tuition benefits.
 5. The endowment tax will probably stay in the bill in some form. Clearly an effort to target a small number of elite universities (25-30). Our arguments:
 - a. It's not serving any public purpose, just taking money away.
 - b. It's not creating significant revenue.
 6. There are other provisions that affect us, but we're not the target of those provisions.
 7. SUMMARY: Optimism on tuition, pessimism on endowment tax.

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- b. Details of the Bill: Vice President and General Counsel Mark DiVincenzo
- i. We've formed a team to look into it.
 - ii. We're talking to friends/alumni/donors to understand changes, influence the outcome.
 - iii. We're studying the provisions of the bill as far as how students, employees, Institute would be affected.
 - iv. We're worried about trickle-down effects, trying to understand financial packages/restrictions, cost sharing, trying to be creative.
 - v. We're still trying to figure out the impact on individuals, we're putting together different people profiles.
 - vi. We continue to work on communication both internally and externally.
 - vii. There is good news in that hopefully the tuition exemption provision will not be eliminated. However, unpredictable process.
- c. Q&A: Chancellor Cindy Barnhart, Vice Chancellor Ian Waitz
- i. Q: If endowment tax happens, how does it affect departments, students?
 - ii. A: It could have an effect on the budget, we're still studying it, goal to minimize impact on students.
 - iii. Q: If the tuition provision passes, do you have a timeline on how this is going to affect us?
 - iv. A: We're working as quickly as we can, we've got a team together, we're acting as if the law has already passed in our analysis. Also, if it passes in its current form, it has a January 1 effective date, which complicates things.
 - v. Q: Would we be able to work with you where we can put in our individual information, so that we can use it for advocacy?



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- vi. A: Good idea, we're already talking to politicians about the impact on students. Obviously, the more specific the better.
- vii. A: We're looking into how to minimize the impact to graduate students.
- viii. Q: Can't you just make graduate tuition "free"?
- ix. A: David: It's not clear whether it's even legally possible. That's why we're studying it so much. House itself didn't realize how it affects grad students.
- x. Q: When you're coming up with profiles, are you taking into account tax treaties? Some international students can label some things as scholarships vs fellowships.
- xi. A: We're looking into that, we can reclassify some sources of money, but not all.
- xii. Q: Who put these provisions there and why?
- xiii. A: There has been an effort to regulate/tax endowments for several years. Some Republicans think they're just hedge funds and endowments raise other political issues concerning elite universities. We had been doing work in advance telling people to keep it out. Unclear exactly who wants it, but there's a vague negative feeling against us. Also, there is some sense that private foundations are taxed, so universities should be treated the same. Concerning the tuition remission, it's not just grad students, it's in general about taxability of forms of compensation. It's the perception that tuition remission is a kind of taxable income (that an employee could take advantage of it), it just caught students too. The original idea was remove deductions, lower tax rates. That's not the way this bill works.
- xiv. Q: Are you collaborating with other universities?



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- xv. A: Yes, even before the bill was introduced. We've been having conversations and coordination daily. What you did, going to DC, phone banks, op-eds, has been impactful. Keep at it. We can use all the help you can provide.
- xvi. Q: What are the systemic effects? Potential ramifications for state & local taxes. Any chain reactions that you can foresee. Have you talked to MA about changes to state local taxes?
- xvii. A: Not yet, the consequences would be huge, but if the tax bill goes through we'll talk to MA.
- xviii. Q: Do you think that the tuition exemption is out because of our efforts or due to a different consensus in Senate?
- xix. A: Senate started differently, but the media reaction did have an effect in keeping it out of the Senate version and in getting the House to reconsider it now.
- xx. Q: Coordination with National, Military labs?
- xxi. A: We haven't talked about it yet, they're not allowed to lobby, they'd have to be very careful about that.
- xxii. Q: Tech industry was able to lobby, can't the GSC talk to the companies that come to CF to lobby for us?
- xxiii. A: Universities have been reaching out to them. Go for it.
- xxiv. Q: Can't we just change the way the "full-load" is considered?
- xxv. A: It's in discussion.
- xxvi. Q: What can those of us who living in Massachusetts do since our officials are already against the bill?
- xxvii. A: Go for it, it still matters because they can still echo your opposition in D.C. If Congress hears from anybody at home, it's still useful.



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- xxviii. Q: What's the worst-case scenario? What will your response be?
- xxix. A: We've talked about what the worst case scenarios are. We'll do our best to minimize the impact to our students. But it is going to be a cumulative effect. There's a lot of other provisions. There's all sorts of implications.
- xxx. A: We are committed to our students. We will work really hard to do everything we can, we are on your side. We're reaching out in every way to try to fight it. The more you guys can do, the better, we'll try to minimize the effects of the bill. It's important that we keep informing each other, and even after it passes, we'll fight for changes.
- xxxi. A: We're communicating with you about what's happening and about our approaches.
2. Quorum Check (6:00-6:05)
- 53 present
 - Approval of November GCM Minutes
3. Future of Diversity and Inclusion Working Group (6:05-6:20)
- Arolyn Conwill and Michael McClellan
 - Past presidents
 - At some point we tried to address issues about the GSC representing everyone, make sure it's a welcoming place.
 - We've spoken to people on Diversity & Inclusion.
 - We're proposing to bring together to help bring together this aspect of the GSC and increase this feeling of inclusion. Determine what sort of changes we should make.
 - Outlook to have sustained efforts to have it be successful.
 - We looked at the GSC history and we determined that there are some structural barriers, we're trying to lift them.
 - We don't want to be failing communities we're representing.



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- i. We've met with people who are interested in diversity, including DIS people.
 - j. We want to pull everyone in. First meeting at 1pm in the GSC office. Pull in everyone who wants to shape this. We're going to figure out how frequently we'll meet, what topics we'll cover.
 - k. We're going to be talking about topics
 - i. Relationships with student groups/institute reps
 - ii. Membership within the GSC
 - iii. Communication
 - iv. Advocacy
 - l. We'll report to you at the February GCM, we may potentially extend it. We don't want it to be a rushed job.
 - m. What we want from you:
 - i. Come to WG meetings
 - ii. Stay in touch: gsc-fdiwg@mit.edu
 - iii. Share the information with your constituents
 - n. Q&A: Q: How does this overlay with the things that the UA is doing, the 10-yr cycle the GSC had, what the administration is doing?
 - o. A: No connection yet. We have a grad student focus, we want to make sure there are connections/interfaces
 - p. Q: Is it your expectation that this is going to culminate in legislation, presentation? What do you envision?
 - q. A: That's going to evolve over time as the WG moves forward. We'll come up with some steps. Maybe it will be legislation if these steps will need to be enacted. The outcome of this WG will be determined by the group itself. There are some changes that need to be made. Hopefully we can take some lessons from the 2007 GSC task force, see what it led to etc.
4. 64.gsc.4: A Resolution to Update the Policy Platform of the Graduate Student Council (6:20-6:30)



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- a. We're adding a civic engagement section (voting rights too)
 - b. Motion to end discussion early passes.
 - c. It passes 47-1-1
5. Officer Updates (6:30-6:55)
- a. Student funding reorganization
 - i. We've been working on student funding reorganization for a long time.
 - ii. The stakeholders are GSC, UA, SWE, Senior Class, other Class Councils.
 - iii. 3 main funding sources
 1. Career Fair (GSC, SC, SWE)
 2. Student Life Fee (UA, Class Councils, other uses)
 3. GIB (GSC, UA)
 - iv. We need to look into the whole thing comprehensively, holistically
 - v. Career Fair proceeds split between GSC, SC, SWE.
 1. It used to be 3 career fairs, in the 90's we combined them.
 - vi. Student Life Fee
 1. \$312 per student
 - a. Based on 10,000 students
 2. Goes to DAPER, Medical, UG resources, grad resources (OGE), joint resources
 - vii. We launched the Student Funding Working Group in Spring 2017
 1. All stakeholders, including DSL, OGE, OUE involved
 - viii. Our goals
 1. Transparency
 - a. You can find our budget. Not necessarily the case for other student organizations
 2. Accounting for the SLF funding



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- a. Discrepancy between the 10,000 (assumed for SLF) to the actual number of students
3. Centralization and simplification
 - a. Putting the funding sources together and then distribute money. Increase
4. Increase equity for grad/undergrad
 - a. We've been able to make some progress
 - b. We've got an offer to have our orientation fully funded by administration in addition to our full budget
 - c. SWE, SC budgets to be reduced
 - d. Movement of UG funding to joint resources
5. Sustainable & fair process for changes.
 - a. Annual budgeted submissions
 - b. 3-year review
6. We also want to have a broad professional development (not just Career Fair) discussion
 - a. Career Fair WG
 - b. Graduate Housing Implementation Team
 - i. We need people. Help us figure out the changes we should make.
 - c. Reaccreditation
 - i. We're looking for 2 people for 2-year terms
 - d. Council Rep Funding
 - e. Holiday Party!
 - i. Friday 5.30PM, Za Restaurant, free food and other things.
6. Committee Updates (6:55-7:10)
 - a. AC
 - i. Taste of Spain
 - ii. Arts Gala happened on Nov. 17th



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iii. Ski Trip ticket sales closed (400+ people, ticket exchange is now open)

iv. Grad Gala Mar. 24th, 2018

1. We're trying to get a live band.

b. ARC

i. Profs on tap

ii. De-stressing your dissertation January 8-12th

iii. Leadership certificate

1. We're trying to develop a Prof. development certificate. GEL teaches leadership and prof. development to undergrads, we want to expand to grad students.

2. It's all useful life skills

3. Q: If we offer a program like this, when should it be?

4. A: During IAP or Summer

5. Q: Part of it for credit. How much?

6. A: 3-6-12 credit? Probably 6

7. Q: Workshops for 2-3 years over IAP/Summer or Fixed number of courses that you can plan out?

8. A: Unclear

9. Q: Would you be interested in pursuing it?

10. A: Yes

11. Q: Would your advisor take issue with you taking a non-research related class?

12. A: 50-50 Yes-No

iv. We're going to have somebody come over at the next GCM.

c. ASA

i. We're doing the approval for new groups.

ii. We're going to be doing space reallocation. Trying to look into repurposing the space in W20.

iii. ASA going to be doing focus groups



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d. EAB

- i. Tax act: 4 people went there
- ii. NAGPS helped us coordinate with tax act
- iii. City Council Election happened.
- iv. We just updated policy platform. We're working on more stuff too. Please give us ideas
- v. Statehouse visit in February

e. HCA

- i. We're strongly considering changes to COSTCO shuttle. Not very well utilized for first 2 runs.
- ii. We're gearing up for the stipend recommendation team.
- iii. Diversity & Inclusion Subcommittee has been working on conduit assembly.
- iv. IREFS might bring a dog at their next meeting and are recruiting
- v. Sustainability subcommittee is also doing well.

f. Muddy

- i. Please fill out our survey
- ii. 50th Anniversary next year. Get excited, we're looking for coordinating.
- iii. Help us run Muddy Monday.

7. Open Floor (7:10-7:15)



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Secretary

Orpheus Chatzivasileiou

Publications & Publicity Board

gsc-secretary@mit.edu

Treasurer

Krithika Ramchander

Funding Board

gsc-treasurer@mit.edu

Committees

gsc-excomm@mit.edu

Academics, Research, & Careers (ARC)

Activities (AC)

Patrick O' Shea

Richard Zhang

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Activities (AC)

Karthik Akkiraju

Yijin Wei

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Assoc. of Student Activities (ASA)

Sabina Chen

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External Affairs (EAB)

Peter Su

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Housing & Community Affairs (HCA)

Malvika Verma

Nicholas Triantafillou

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Muddy Charles Pub

Alex Genshaft

gsc-muddy-chair@mit.edu

Orientation (OC)

Akshata Krishnamurthy

German Parada

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Staff

Administrative

Lauren McLean

Elizabeth (Betsy) Granese

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GSC Office

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Room 50-220

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<http://gsc.mit.edu>

Upcoming GSC Meetings

Academics, Research, and Careers (ARC)	
Activities Committee (AC)	Thursday 12/7, 5:30 pm
External Affairs Board (EAB)	TBD
Events Subcommittee	TBD
Federal Affairs Subcommittee	TBD
Public Outreach Subcommittee	TBD
State and Local Affairs Subcommittee	TBD
Development Subcommittee	Friday 12/8, 6:30 pm
Housing and Community Affairs (HCA)	Monday 12/11, 5 pm
Off-campus Subcommittee	TBD
Sustainability Subcommittee	Wednesday 12/13, 4:30 pm
Transportation Subcommittee	TBD
Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee	Thursday 12/7, 6:30 pm
Muddy Charles Pub	Monday 12/11, 6:30 pm
Orientation Committee (OC)	TBD
Executive Committee (ExComm)	Wednesday, 1/31 6:30 pm

*Unless otherwise indicated, all meetings are in the GSC Office (50-220)

Upcoming General Council Meetings (GCMs)

Note: Dinner starts at 5:00pm and meetings start at 5:30pm.

February General Council Meeting	Wednesday 2/7, Location TBD
March General Council Meeting	Wednesday 3/7, Location TBD