



Graduate Student Council

of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

General Council Meeting Agenda

April 3, 5:30 PM in 6-120

Minutes taken by Katie Shulenberger, EAB Chair

- I. Introduction, Dinner, New Faces (5:30 – 5:40 PM)
 - a. Called to order 5:42
 - b. Quorum Check
 - i. 43 present; Quorum is met
 - c. Approval of March GCM Minutes
 - i. Motion to approve and seconded; passed
2. Elections (5:40 – 7:40 PM)
 - a. President
 - i. Nominations: Peter Su (seconded), Siyu Sylvia Dai (seconded)
 - ii. Peter Speech: Serving last year was an honor
 1. I am running as a back up plan
 2. Sylvia comes from AHEC and seems highly qualified
 3. GSC's purpose is to be the best advocate possible for grad students
 4. Issues with consistency year to year
 5. Culture, Structure, Communication with student body make an affective and consistent GSC
 6. Strive to make improvements ie HCA, website, regardless of role
 - iii. Sylvia:
 1. 3rd year Mech E
 2. Broader grad student community
 3. Previous leadership experience- AHEC Chair
 - a. Restructure AHEC Internal management to be responsive to student concerns
 4. President GAME
 5. Mech E department head search
 6. Advisor-Advisee relationship working group
 - a. Motivation for running for GSC office because it is a core issue to all students

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7. Goal: Improve advisor-advisee relationship in all departments
8. Goal: Professional development
9. Goal: Strengthen bond within committees to work towards mutual goals

iv. Questions

1. What do you think are the main road blocks to GSC involvement in student-advisor relationships and mental health initiatives
 - a. S: Bring ideas to departments after GSC ARC restructure
 - b. P: Advising is hindered by MIT structure, decentralized. Power comes from students within individual departments asking for change. Mental health primary road block is money and advising issues. Solving advising would help mental health.
2. Looking back at the past year, what events/activities were best and worst, and how would you have done it differently?
 - a. P: well- Activities Committee has been very successful in innovation and turn out. Poorly- Issues getting organization of HCA done all year. Should have started dividing the work way earlier.
 - b. S: well- activities and orientation because of visibility of events. EAB Chinese student Visa work. Not well- not familiar enough with ARC, but do not recall what they have done, so improve visibility.
3. What strategies do you have to get Grad students involved in GSC, particularly ExComm?
 - a. S: Communication is important. A lot of students do not know what GSC does. Info session/speech during big events ie at Taste of. Description of open roles/opportunities in orientation packet.
 - b. P: Personal outreach. Get to know the relevant other bodies working on stuff. Reach out to people already with interest and work on an issue.



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le dorm governments or REFS for HCA. Provide the right structure for intro level roles to get a bigger pipeline of students coming through for elevation to leadership.

4. It is the nature of organizations to do more than they should. How do you make sure GSC doesn't fall into the bureaucratic trap of expanding without considering shadow costs?
 - a. P: A lot of that comes down to structure. A structure is not sustained if it is not useful. Financial limitations help. It is up to leaders to identify high priority issues any given year, and wind them down as issues are solved. Also, very driven by personal interest.
 - b. S: How to identify what are the issues people care about. One way is GCM for people to propose ideas. Structures will evolve to address major issues based on interest and crises.
5. I like your Advisor idea. Being a single chair is hard. Would you support AC?
 - a. S: A lot of people know AC because they host events. Definitely very important. Add permanent volunteer positions. Would help with consistency. Representatives from other committees.
 - b. P: Every committee gets an officer liaison as support. Informal structure of support is also present. Could do a better job advertising for recruiting volunteers.
6. You have both been in a number of leadership roles and talk of the importance of communication. Can you give specific examples how you took steps to improve responsiveness to constituent needs?
 - a. P: Recently we revamped GSC communication avenues. Anno. Resource round-up. Presidential memo. Gsc-feedback. Gsc-help. Communication is a two way street. We have worked GSC→



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students. Website. We need to improve the other direction too.

- b. S: Suggestion box in Ashdown. AHEC responsiveness shift to ensure emails are replied to.
7. Sylvia why President not ARC Chair? Peter why not Secretary?
 - a. S: I didn't know about ARC until I ran for president. Can help with restructuring from the presidential position.
 - b. P: If Sylvia is elected President I will run for Secretary. Is important and overarching, but has not been worked on in a consistent manner. President has more (soft) power in culture and structure. Officer team is a team with equivalent power even if president is figurehead.
8. How do you make sure people subscribe to and read anno? How do you confirm people are actually going to participate and not there for free food?
 - a. P: Every grad student is subscribed to the anno. How many actually open it? Inherently large and difficult to parse. This is why we break it into sections. I don't have a clear way to make it better. We are already at our size limit. Perks for volunteers such as eat first at taste of.
 - b. S: I actually think people around me read it. It is quite well structured as is. Incentive or something on title. We do interviews with Ashdown and you can tell if someone is enthusiastic and has ideas. Volunteer stamp card which has prizes.
9. A large part of the president role is meeting with admin and advocating for grad students. Describe experience doing so.
 - a. S: Not with MIT administration, but have worked with Mech E faculty. Trying to convince them issues they bring up are real in the department.



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- b. P: As an officer, I have been in a lot of meetings with administration. Solid collaborative relationship. Met with and got feedback on stipend presentation from Waitz beforehand even. Solid working relationship. Administration has not been too confrontational this year. I had experience in confrontation with administration during housing issue last year. Even though there was disagreement, there was mutual respect and maintained relationship.

10. Assuming you are not elected president, what is your plan b?

- a. P: Secretary
- b. S: VP. Officer team has equal influence in projects. Or ARC Chair because I am passionate about that.
- v. Closed session
- vi. Vote: Peter/Sylvia; Sylvia/Peter—Peter is elected GSC President
- b. Vice President
- i. Nominations: Alex, Sylvia
1. Sylvia Speech: Do not need to repeat entire speech. Major goal: Advisor-Advisee relationship, restructure to create more teamwork between committees
2. Alex Speech: No crazy promises. Why I think the VP role is important and why I want to be an officer. GSC advocates for students. First line against “ideas” of MIT. Important to have your own opinion, but also take in the opinion/expertise/advice of those around you. Have experience to make everyone happy and work well together as a team. VP is not about working alone. Looking forward to chairing Nominations board as that is a crucial functioning of GSC. Important that we work together to implement ideas. Need to be pragmatic, because great ideas are just ideas. Looking forward to scrutinizing all arguments made in discussions with me and working with the officer team.
3. Questions:



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4. What is your understanding of the responsibilities of the VP role and why do you think you are well equipped for that role?
 - a. A: Chair nom board. Probably the most important role. Probably the hardest part of the job to find good matches between personnel and positions. Lots of meetings. Communication and making sure nothing is lost in the process. Reacting to crisis. Well suited because pragmatic and solution focused.
 - b. S: Similar responsibilities as Pres. Since officers are a team. VP in charge of GSC representatives. Hosting elections. Freedom to implement initiatives you are interested in?
5. What steps would you take to achieve your most important goal?
 - a. S: Recruiting the right people who are passionate about this issue. Such as restructuring ARC. Start with better people then collect data on the issue. Prioritizing important issues from that list and deliver to departments to convince them this is an important issue to get them interested in working with us. Connect different departments to discuss ways to solve. Then ensure department implementation.
 - b. A: Commencement and GSC funding. MIT puts a lot of emphasis on undergrads and tends to forget about grads. Advocating for ourselves and making sure we as a whole function. Communicate between committees as a GSC. Do not want to send mixed messages to administration.
6. What are your thoughts on grad student unionization?
 - a. A: There is already a lot of success in what grad students are achieving when they unionize such as salary. I think we are students. I do not think a union is the best way to push for what we want. The GSC already does a lot. GSC is collaboration,



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a union is more confrontation. That being said I have not looked into a lot of details about unions and will follow-up.

- b. S: I also do not know too much about unions. Seems to be typically fights with employers. The right way to go should be more collaboration rather than fighting. That could backfire the issue. Better if they want to change rather than have to.
7. What way will your work be influenced by being international, if at all?
 - a. S: In terms of GSC work, I do not see a direct influence. I will not be limited by being international. Adds diversity of opinion and experience but does not prevent anything.
 - b. A: There are several points where it is important to have more international student representation. Vista is already a good change in this direction. Inspire more international student involvement. It makes a difference I wasn't educated in the US. I do not take anything for granted. I question everything and try to improve.
 8. How do you see our by-laws, how would you work with them as a living document?
 - a. A: Our needs change and it should be a changing and evolving document. I am focused on processes because they are important for efficiency, especially in big organizations. It is important to have guidelines on how to handle discussion. I have read them and am willing to invest the time to improve them.
 - b. S: Important source for learning about institutional knowledge of GSC. Work on how to incorporate committees into these documents. Results are the most important thing, and doing so efficiently.
 9. Two or three other important issues for graduate student?



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a. S: Providing good events for distressing, mental health support, community outreach/volunteer work.

b. A: Advisor-Advisee relationship obviously important. Housing. Implementation team is getting there, but not quite yet done. Needs follow-up. Funding, especially for families, and in particular international students where spouse cannot work.

10. If you don't get VP, what else? Why you?

a. A: I want the job because it is important and I want that responsibility. I will not run for another officer position, but will be more engaged such as with HCA. I think my skill set is well matched with the VP position.

b. S: ARC Chair. More leadership experience, makes it a better fit.

11. Why is VP plan A?

a. S: Being on the officer team you have more exposure to administration, and more power to structure and recruit ARC.

b. A: A lot of the work the VP does is communicating in teams, being in meetings, hearing all the different opinions of participants. I have done that in a number of occasions. I have experience doing so: high school student government, 70 Amherst. Drafted 70 Amherst constitution. Work solution oriented to get the best result overall.

12. Year in your PhD next year

a. A: 3rd

b. S: 4th

ii. Closed session

iii. Vote: Sylvia/Alex, Alex/Sylvia—Alex is elected VP

c. Secretary

i. Nominations: Naveen (seconded)



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- ii. Speech: Primarily a technical role, was president of AICHE and tau beta pi. Both were very stagnant societies, and I helped revive those societies, and implemented better record keeping and initiatives to work on professional development.
 - I. Do you have any pet projects?
 - a. Importable broadcast calendar system, revamping the website.
 2. CAPD is not well known, Richard is working with CAPD, how do you make sure grad students know and use resources? CAPD is trying to conduct survey, how do you improve yield of survey responses?
 - a. A lot of this is perception from student body. I am not an expert in survey yield. I want to listen to people and aggregate their ideas to implement.
- iii. Closed session
- iv. Naveen—Naveen elected secretary
- d. Treasurer
 - i. Nominations: Robin (seconded)
 - ii. Speech: I've been attending for two years. Each meeting I get to see an example of passionate devoted people to make student life better. I am a nuts and bolts person. I want to see infrastructure to support that passion.
 - I. With the restructuring of funding, what are your views on what it should be?
 - a. R: No longer funded through career fair, from student life fee, but not sent on a per capita basis. I intend to stand up to admin on this and find a solution which is fair and equal to grad students.
 2. What is your familiarity with GSC funding procedures?
 - a. I am not an expert, but am eager to learn. I have been a treasurer before, but want to spend the next month learning the ins and outs.
- iii. Closed session
- iv. Vote: Robin—Robin elected treasurer
- e. External Affairs Chair
 - i. Nominations: Jack Reid (seconded)



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- I. Speech: Qualifications- involved with EAB for a while, most recently as university liaison working with NAGPS. Organized monthly meetings with other Boston area schools. State house visit will have other schools involved. Was president of SPI last year. Future: Continue Boston area collaboration. DEI liaison and an international student concerns chair. Host NAGPS northeast regional conference. Mentorship advocacy. Being more proactive rather than just reactive.

- ii. Closed session

- iii. Vote: Jack 42—Jack is elected EAB Chair

3. Officer Updates (7:40 – 7:45 PM)

- a. gradSAGE—good to have pressure from student groups can be very helpful. Want to maybe do this in other schools or departments
- b. Increasing focus on advising from admin—chem and chem e developing program for junior faculty, gradSAGE pushes for advising philosophies on websites
- c. Corporation recent alumni election—only people graduating this year or the past two years. We tend not to vote. Please vote on this and keep it in mind.
- d. Spend your money

4. Committee Updates (7:45 – 7:55 PM)

- a. ARC—road to academia
- b. GWAMIT—leadership conference at end of April, lots of events already setup. Email at gwamit-exec@mit.edu. Events open to all community
- c. AC—Battle of bands, taste of Louisiana, paint night. Upcoming: grad gala, gradrat order by April 19, decorate easter eggs, taste of Lebanon, grad arts showcase, paint night
- d. ASA—elected new officers, kerfuffle because they are trying to update bylaws. We would need to approve them. Think about if the changes are good for your orgs.
- e. DIS—Working on vision/structure for next year, CoC feedback,
- f. EAB—Lots of stuff. Fed visits, state hours upcoming, NAGPS northeast regional
- g. HCA—stipend recommendation. Focusing on different graduate students, not just the average student (ie family, international students)



Graduate Student Council

of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Officers

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President

Peter Su

Executive Committee

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Vice-President

Orpheus Chatzivasileiou

Nominations Board

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Secretary

Richard Zhang

Publications & Publicity Board

gsc-secretary@mit.edu

Treasurer

Nicole Moody

Funding Board

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Executive Committee

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Activities (AC)

Xueying Zhao

TBD

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Muddy Charles Pub

Matthias Ginterseder gsc-muddy@mit.edu

Orientation (OC)

Somesh Mohapatra

TBD

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etc). Identify the students really struggling and providing funds to them.

Meeting next week. Elections/restructuring.

h. Muddy—spring pub night April 16

i. OC—making steady progress!

5. Open Floor (7:55 – 8:00 PM)

6. Adjourn 8:25



Graduate Student Council

of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Upcoming GSC Meetings

Academics, Research, and Careers (ARC)	TBD
Visiting Students Association (VISTA)	Every Monday, 7:00 PM
Activities Committee (AC)	TBD
External Affairs Board (EAB)	TBD
Federal Affairs Subcommittee	TBD
State and Local Affairs Subcommittee	TBD
Public Outreach Subcommittee	TBD
Development Subcommittee	Every Friday, 5:00 PM
Housing and Community Affairs (HCA)	Wednesday, 4/10, 6:00 PM
Off-campus Subcommittee	TBD
Sustainability Subcommittee	TBD
Transportation Subcommittee	TBD
Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee	Wednesday, 4/17, 6:00 PM
Muddy Charles Pub	Monday, 4/8, 7:00 PM
Orientation Committee (OC)	TBD
Executive Committee (ExComm)	Wednesday, 4/24, 6:30 PM

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

Upcoming General Council Meetings (GCMs)

Note: Dinner starts at 5:00 PM and meetings start at 5:30 PM

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