



Graduate Student Council

of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

General Council Meeting Agenda

December 4, 5:30 PM in 32-155

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Vice-President

Alex Joerger

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- I. Introduction, Dinner, New Faces (5:30 – 5:40 PM)
 - a. Quorum Check
 - i. 48 people attending – quorum reached.
 - b. Approval of November GCM Minutes
 - i. Minutes are generally on the GSC website and sent out in email after meeting.
 - ii. Motion approved and seconded – passed.
2. Alumni Association Overview – Erich Caulfield (5:40 – 6:00 PM)
 - a. Whitney and Erich from the Alumni Association are here
 - b. Erich and Whitney speaking
 - i. Whitney is the CEO of the Alumni Association; because of our work, you will be able to connect with MIT alumni after graduation.
 - ii. There are 24 members of the board.
 - iii. Today, we have the president (Erich Caulfield) here.
 - c. Erich speaking
 - i. 125th president of AA
 - ii. Served as president of the GSC
 - iii. The GSC is important and what you do for MIT is important
 1. Who are RA's or TA's here? None of you pay for health insurance. This is because the GSC worked on that. Many of you who want to start families here, esp. if you are a woman, MIT's maternity leave policies are influenced by GSC. If you take Tech Shuttle to campus, the GSC added that route.
 2. The things we enjoy as Grad students today are things that the GSC made happen.
 3. As someone who loves the grad community, I mean it when I say thank you for what you do for MIT.
 - iv. There's a straight line between the AA role that I'm in now and my role in the GSC.
 - d. Alumni Association overview



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- i. 139,000 alumni – 53% are grad degree exclusive. Many of our alumni are dual degree holders. Everyone is able to be a member and come to reunions.
- ii. Peter is an invited guest on the board of the AA
- iii. Why do we engage with Alumni?
 1. Every American university does this
 2. A healthy and connected alumni population ensures a healthy institution. You are the institute embodied in the world for the rest of your lives.
- iv. Strategic plan (beginning thoughts)
 1. When Rafael Reif thought about orienting MIT towards better activities, he envisioned students, faculty, and staff working together. We also interact with the outside world – *including* MIT alumni.
 2. He asked Whitney to figure out how to amplify the alumni network in more helpful ways.
 3. The goal is to increase the interests of people in the school and alumni.
 4. In our strategic planning work, our statement is “to engage and inspire the MIT community to make a better world”.
 5. We’re working with various groups, including you guys, to help define that.
 6. How is it that we as a community can make the world a better place?
 - a. For any other school in any other place, such a bold goal (make the world a better place) would be too ambitious.
- v. MIT is a world-class institution, so the AA should be too.
- vi. Want to strengthen philanthropy and ensure everyone is working together.
- vii. I know people call you “students”; but at the AA, we recognize that you are “proto-alumni” – you are already a part of our community, and we want to welcome you early.
- viii. Some strategies we looked at early through our strategic plan:
 1. Make sure Tech reunions are exceptional and inspiring
 2. Make sure what we do is relevant for the community



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3. Make sure that we do philanthropy based on engagement first (being of service to members)
 4. Make sure that staff and volunteers work together in a way that helps us accomplish our goals.
- ix. Over the last 8 years, as we kicked off the capital campaign, we find 8 out of 10 of alumni have been touched in some way.
- x. What does the association do and how active are we?
1. More than 1100 events occurred last year; we have clubs all over the world, so on any given day, 3 events were happening somewhere in the world sponsored by AA.
 2. The Infinite connection had more than 55,000 people engaged that way.
- xi. Work we do with grad students
1. Infinite connection accounts – gives access to advisor hub and directory.
 2. Sendoff events after people get admitted to MIT
 3. GSC alumni relations committee
 4. GradRat
 5. Recent graduate elections to Corporation
 6. Work with specific grad student groups
 7. Partner with offices on campus, e.g. OVC, Chancellor's office, CAPD
- xii. Aside from that, we do:
1. Tech reunions
 2. Family weekend
 3. 24 hour challenge
 4. Grad gathering – as proto-alumni, are invited! This is an opportunity for alums to come back to campus and connect.
- xiii. In addition to events, AA is an open channel of communication between all our alumni and the institute
1. E.g. when administrative or policy changes on campus
 2. This year has been a particular issue around the Epstein matter
 3. The AA is a part of that as well
 4. Help make sure that leaders in the field have their voices funneled to leadership.



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5. One of the most important manifestations of this have been over the past 4 months – to make sure that the voices of Alums are heard in the matter. We tried to make sure the Corporation heard the alumni opinion.

6. We've been intentional to make sure the AA/Corporation relationship is strong

e. Questions

i. No questions

ii. You don't have to wait to be an alum to engage with the Alumni association.

iii. Contact information: alum.mit.edu

3. 66.gsc.4 - Bylaws Update (6:00 – 6:20 PM)

a. For any legislation, we have a 5 min introduction from the speaker.

b. You can motion to table legislation, extend discussion, amend legislation, terminate discussion, etc. Once all motions are clear, we can have a vote.

c. No questions on legislative process.

d. If enough of you abstain, legislation will be automatically tabled.

e. Any questions? (None)

f. (Peter shows 66.gsc.4)

g. Robin speaking:

i. Two main purposes: to eliminate stabilization fund and rely on reserves, since our funding source is now SLF rather than career fair; implement changes to ASA.

ii. First amendment removes stabilization fund requirement completely and formalizes our replacement requirement (i.e. we have to maintain reserves of a certain size; usually must contribute a share of budget increase to fund). We added a quorum requirement for ExComm.

iii. Changes to ASA: they are restructuring their board, to have specifically designated positions, and by formally designating a space chair or groups chair, they can more effectively assign tasks on their board. Additional people can get voted in if there's interest in particular subcommittees.

iv. Any questions/feedback/suggestions?



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1. Question about bylaws (kind of off-topic): is it part of the bylaws that we approve minutes? Do we actually have to do it? Peter: we can discuss that later.
2. Does anyone actually refer to Warehouse as NW30? (Warehouse supports this.)
3. 10% seems low for building up reserves
 - a. Robin: the reserve is already full up to the 30% limit. If there is a circumstance where our budget drastically changes, it's basically a situation where the budget is being cut for good. If that's the case, the fund will be an emergency fund to transition to a different scale. We don't expect to get hit unless we are in a situation where the fundamental nature of the organization is going to change in a significant way. If that happens, we can reconsider this.
- v. Robin motions to approve; crowd seconded.
- h. Discussion on motion
 - i. Should we re-alphabetize the Warehouse in the list?
 1. No
 2. Long-term solution is to do a more general way of defining the dorms.
 - ii. Do we need to enumerate all the grad dorms?
 1. That's basically what it should be
 2. Robin: my inclination is to deal with situations where undergrads were living in grad dorms and vice versa. Grad dorm is an ill-defined term, so that's why we enumerated the dorms.
 3. Alex: when we saw 70 Amherst and Site 4 become grad dorms, it's not common for the number of dorms to change. Just at the moment it seems common for dorms to change, but it really isn't that comment.
 4. Peter: The section being shown is the entire 3b Housing section.
 - i. Are there any objections to making this amendment?
 - i. No objections – now in the actual legislation
 - j. Any other additional discussion on main bylaws change?



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- k. Motion to end discussion and vote was seconded. Approved with one abstention.
- l. Clicker vote
 - i. Results: 42 Yes, 1 No, 3 Abstain
 - ii. Passes
4. Redesignation of At-Large Minorities seat (6:20 – 6:30 PM)
 - a. Was created before this year; the diversity and inclusion subcommittee had this seat.
 - b. Now that DEI is a committee, there is a vacancy for this seat.
 - c. We still like the idea of this seat, but we might want to make it broader than just minorities, and rename it to at-large diversity seat.
 - d. This is something that council must designate or agree to.
 - e. We can discuss this now, right now it's an open seat and we would like some input.
 - f. There are 5 at-large seats (TEEC, GWAMIT, Minorities, At-large, Families)
 - g. Thoughts
 - i. Can we have a written definition of minority anywhere?
 1. No
 - ii. What is the difference between minority and diversity?
 1. Anyone who wants to fill this seat needs to identify as a minority. It might be easier to identify as a diversity group.
 2. On campus, the LGBTQ community is big, but underrepresented. We would like to have them represented.
 3. In 10 years or so, if the international student population becomes a minority, maybe we'd be ok with having that seat open to an international student.
 4. It is significantly a semantic difference.
 - iii. Would designating someone as a member of that seat, would it require a whole council vote?
 1. If the position isn't filled in October, one would apply to be an at-large member, and if you have the support of the constituency, you don't need a council vote. If the seat is contested, you need a council vote.
 - iv. Any other comments/suggestions/questions?
 - h. Placard vote



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i. Unanimously approved without abstentions.

ii. First goal is to reach out to BGSA or LGSA.

5. GSC External Mediation (6:30 – 6:45 PM)

a. We (officer team) received some feedback that there's no mechanism for giving feedback to officers if they feel uncomfortable confronting the officers. This results in some missed opportunities to improve the GSC.

b. We are thinking of having a 3rd party (from SAO) provide feedback to the officers and provide the officers' response. This lets an actual person be a mediator.

c. Any thoughts on setting something up like this? Do you want a mechanism for this? Is this meeting your needs?

i. Can you have this *and* an anonymous feedback form?

I. Yes

ii. Why does it have to be someone from administration? Why not have non-GSC student groups?

1. Leah from SAO has institutional knowledge – very often, problems that come up might be easier addressed if you have more context.

2. Another point is that if you have a student-organized system for this, it is entirely contingent on student interest. But we don't want to have a system where providing feedback on officers relies on students being interested in providing feedback to officers.

3. Question asker: I think the administration should not be involved, since students will just go to administration for every conflict among students on campus.

a. Becca: the GSC literally is the oversight group for grad students; this system is literally just a 3rd party feedback system

b. Alex: The goal of this mechanism is not to enable students to approach the officers (any student can reach out to their rep and they can bring the issue here); but if you have an issue with something we did here, there should be an avenue for feedback. E.g. if we handled something badly. (It's not trying to channel every feedback from grad students.)



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4. Question asker: I think it's good to have a feedback mechanism, but putting administration in the middle of the feedback system causes trouble since they can interpret issues differently, and can lead to more problems.
- iii. The Outing club had this problem and I am strongly in support. Having a student group only go to administration when necessary is something worth striving for.
- iv. Is there a way to have an anonymous google form instead of a third party?
 1. A google form has no feedback
 2. Follow-up: Could you guarantee that an officer provide public feedback? The reason for anonymity is for the person raising the issue to not be known, so anyone raising an issue can have their issue answered publicly.
 - a. If ExComm chose not to respond, then the only option you would have to raise another complaint is the original one. The goal is to have some forcing power.
 - i. Why give forcing power to the administration?? We should be handling that issue internally.
- v. I get not wanting to go to the administration – this could just be a last resort. For the Google Form, perhaps you can use a tracking number type of system?
- vi. Nicole: Why not just have a Piazza page for more open discussion?
- vii. It's possible to privately message people on Piazza.
- viii. With the acknowledgement that even an anonymous Google Form can be filled out by people in this room, are we uncomfortable with that going to ExComm? Maybe we're going too fancy and it might not be necessary.
- ix. Why not get an ombudsperson to be a third party?
- x. Alex: on bringing things to council, we might not want people bringing up every issue to council. For small issues that aren't a big deal, having this kind of system can help. We generally want



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to increase the total amount of feedback we're getting, esp. from people who wouldn't typically voice a concern.

- I. Audience: the deciding group for what the GSC should do should be the GSC.
- xi. Peter: Straw poll
 - I. Who is uncomfortable involving any non-student staff member? (One placard raised)
- xii. Audience member: there is a difference between uncomfortable and unnecessary. The administration shouldn't have a role in this.
- xiii. What if we have an alumnus do this?
 - I. Audience member: It's unnecessary. It's nice to have an ombudsperson within our group. We shouldn't go high-level for minor issues! Major issues should be raised at GCM.
- xiv. Nicole: I understand that you want direct conversation, but not necessarily everyone is ok with that.
 - I. Audience member: I agree with having an ombuds; however if we have any interaction with administration, we can complicate the issues.
- xv. Audience member: I am slightly uncomfortable about giving staff members more work than they already have.
- xvi. Audience member: this seems like it would encourage going to a third party.
- xvii. Audience member: this initiative would only cover rare situations – if it's more that if it's being used often, there are bigger issues at hand.
 - I. Alex: If we elect someone from the GSC as an ombudsperson, they essentially become a part of GSC admin.
- xviii. Let's distinguish between personal issues and GSC issues. For GSC issues, we're giving power to someone from outside GSC to tell GSC what to do. This makes things murkier where if I think that something should be different in how ExComm operates. If there's a personal issue, it can be anyone.
- xix. Peter's proposal: have a GSC-elected ombuds and a staff ombuds. We could make one of the I-refs the ombuds.



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Academics, Research, &

Careers (ARC)

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Meicen Sun

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Activities (AC)

Henry Tran

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(ASA)

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Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

(DEI)

Bianca Lepe

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External Affairs (EAB)

Jack Reid

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Housing & Community

Affairs (HCA)

Mohammad Islam

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Muddy Charles Pub

Richard Park

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Orientation (OC)

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- xx. Becca: have an anonymous feedback form on the GSC website, and mention that the I-REFs can also be a resource for conveying issues, just to advertise that those resources exist.
 - xxi. You could provide a space for an email response on your feedback form, if someone *wants* a response.
- d. Any final thoughts?
- i. Peter: we should publicize a Google Form, let people place a contact email in, talk with REFs to be a sort of student avenue to get feedback, and talk to ombuds and see what they say about potentially be a staff avenue.
 - ii. We'll let you guys know how this progresses.
6. Officer Updates (6:45 – 7:00 PM)
- a. Nominations board opening – we want to fill it at this GCM. You can nominate yourself or someone else.
 - i. Quick recap: the nominations board nominates students for all committees that are interesting to the GSC to advance the needs of students. E.g. you might have seen the big call for applications in May. Effectively, the Nom board has to make sure that students are chosen who can best represent the grad student body. There's a good chance you won't have work to do until May/April. Sometimes things come up where it's important to have the Nom board there.
 - ii. (Waiting for nominations)
 - iii. If no one wants to step up, we'll continue with one seat short. If no one stands up, we'll sit here for 5 min at each GCM.
 - b. Orientation is looking for next chair. If interested, contact gsc-oc@mit.edu. Elections will be happening soon!
 - c. One of the student committees – the Ad Hoc Committee on Guidelines for Outside Engagements is looking to gather input on guidelines for whether MIT should engage in outside engagements. Will be Sunday at 2pm and Tuesday at 7. Please RSVP if interested. It would be great to have all of you there – we want to capture as broad of a view as possible if you can make either time.
 - d. Gift Process Committee is looking for feedback on gift process
 - i. Starter questions. If interested, contact Mahi Elango at melango@mit.edu. She's the UA president and is in charge of getting feedback from ALL students.



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- ii. How many of you have actually helped your professor apply for grants or take part in the fundraising process?
 1. Mahi is looking for feedback from you guys.
 2. Do you have any feedback on how the process of seeking funding can be improved?
 - a. No placards raised.
 - iii. Has anybody actually been directly (negatively) impacted by the way MIT processes gifts?
 1. One person's advisor didn't apply for grants, so graduation is off time.
 2. It's an extremely timely/stressful process and harms productivity. You need to hand things in 7-10 days in advance to MIT to make sure you comply with fundraising policies. The 7-10 days are added to the deadline, making you overestimate how long you have to submit.
 3. It's not clear where grant money goes before it goes to me. Apparently it can be confusing to faculty as well...
 4. It's crazy how the provost covers 50%
 5. There's fundraising and grant giving, which are different.
 - iv. If you have additional thoughts or feedback, let Mahi know.
 - e. Winter Holiday social next Thursday!!
 - i. You're ALL invited! Please join us! Good way to relax before finals and kick off holiday season!!
 - ii. It will be 5:30 next Thursday, please come join us!
 - iii. Let us know your dietary restrictions!
 - f. Apply to council rep funding!!
 - i. Please use it. Every term, you're eligible for \$150 as a council rep for events that benefit your constituency. If you're more involved in GSC, you can get additional \$100. If you collaborate with other constituency, you can get additional \$150 for both reps.
 - ii. Email gsc-vp@mit.edu if you have questions.
7. Committee Updates (7:00 – 7:15 PM)
- a. ARC
 - i. We had committee meeting on Nov 21, next meeting will be February. Postdoc panel coming up. Jan 6-10 is thesis lounge, with breakfast/lunch/beverages for attendees.



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- ii. Alumni relations had fireside chat and alumni on tap.
- iii. VISTA had Thanksgiving event.
- b. AC
 - i. Taste of Turkey had a lot of food
 - ii. Coffee Hour past Monday.
 - iii. Paint night – had dinner and an instructor; painting is simplified version of Boston skyline.
 - iv. Hiring an art event organizer. Job is to organize paint night and art showcase. There will be an art gallery tour. You get free tickets and free food and fun. If you are enthusiastic about art and running events, let us know. GradRat holiday party next Wednesday at 6th floor of Media lab from 6-8pm.
 - v. Next AC meeting on the 13th. Will be short, with Bertucci's.
 - vi. Taste of <somewhere> on Jan 13. If you know your cultural group is interested, let us know, otherwise we'll just choose a random place. You can do ski trip exchanges now.
- c. ASA
 - i. We voted to approve our operating guidelines changes. Will be announced next few days. We got no comments on our document. Some tweaks to memberships
 - ii. Almost done with student group applications
 - iii. LEF and ARCADE applications closed. We will be accepting late applications through next Wednesday.
- d. DEI
 - i. Received funding from MHH to start GSC-DEI fellows program to do a grad community dialogue series.
 - ii. We will train grad students to mediate dialogue on issues such as racial justice.
 - iii. Will select 30-40 grad students; look out for email about applications.
 - iv. GSC Institute Research GCF (Grad community fellow) has been publicizing a request-for-data form.
 - v. Upcoming events: pizza social on Dec 10 from 5-7pm (RSVP by this Friday); next committee meeting coming up.
- e. EAB
 - i. Next meeting Dec 11 (Wed at 5:30)
 - ii. Had a couple conferences and trips



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- iii. Ben Lane (Fed Affairs Co-Chair) is northeast region director of NAGPS.
 - iv. Good turnout for Cambridge Muni election
 - v. Planning Advocacy 101 for IAP
 - vi. Hosting NAGPS Northeast conference on April 4.
- f. HCA
- i. Had our November meeting before Thanksgiving. Main topics were creating a guide for dorms to make things clear for house government transitions.
 - ii. Also planning to update bylaws; will have vote during December meeting.
 - iii. Washlava change caused change for all on-campus washing machines; resulted in delays. We discussed how that system's been working in different dorms. We've been looking over new floor plans for new Eastgate site, which will bring 200 new efficiencies to grad student pool.
 - iv. Next meeting is Dec 11th. Ian will come and talk about on-campus rates for upcoming year, and how that fits into the bigger picture of student financial support.
 - v. We also will have the committee on campus planning come in. It will be a long meeting, but will be quite interesting.
 - vi. Last thing to mention: big project is stipend recommendation. Will do over IAP to help alleviate financial distress for those who are struggling. We'll look over cost of living survey from 2017 to understand the expenses of different grad students and do a competitive analysis as well. If interested, email gsc-hca@mit.edu.
- g. Muddy
- i. Jazz brunch happened
 - ii. VISTA-Muddy talent show is happening
 - iii. Join Muddy
8. Open Floor (7:15 – 7:20 PM)
- a. Motion to adjourn; seconded and approved.
9. Post-GCM Social @ the Muddy



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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, 12/11, 6:00 PM
Off-campus Subcommittee	TBD
Sustainability Subcommittee	Thursday, 12/12, 4:00 PM
Transportation Subcommittee	TBD
Wellness Subcommittee	TBD
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)	Tuesday, 12/10, 2:00 PM
Muddy Charles Pub	Monday, 12/9, 7:00 PM
Orientation Committee (OC)	TBD
Executive Committee (ExComm)	Wednesday, 1/29, 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

February General Council Meeting	Wednesday, 2/5, Location TBD
March General Council Meeting	Wednesday, 3/4, Location TBD
April General Council Meeting	Wednesday, 4/1, Location TBD
May General Council Meeting	Wednesday, 5/6, Location TBD

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