

MINUTES

Board of Directors Meeting - Graduate Student Council
Thursday, January 6th, 2005, 12:00 – 1:15 pm
Winnett Club Room (Above the Red Door)

Directors Present: Alex Brown, Graeme Smith, Deniz Armani, Emily Schaller, Laurence Yeung, John Bender, Catherine Ward, Marco Latini, Alexei Dvoretzkii, Sidharth Jaggi, Amir Sadjadpour, Neena Kadaba, Justin Boland

Guests: Jerry Houser (Career Development Center), Alex Chacon (Alumni Fund)

I. PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

A. Call to Order

Deniz, who was filling in for Amir, called the meeting to order

B. Introduction of Guests

Alex Chacon is assistant director of the Caltech Alumni Fund. Jerry Houser is the director of the Career Development Center.

C. Modifications to the Agenda

A social committee update was added to the updates section

D. Approval of the December Meeting Minutes (See Attached)

The minutes were approved

II. ACTION ITEMS

A. Steering Committee (Amir Sadjadpour)

1. Alumni Fund Event for graduate students (Neena Kadaba)

The Alumni fund is looking to sponsor an event for graduate students in order to increase their name recognition and get people interested in potentially donating to the fund after they graduate. They're trying to increase participation (not necessarily large donations) and so want to build familiarity with students (they have undergrad events as well). Alex Chacon in the alumni fund office is looking for suggestions on types of events that might attract a decent number of graduate students. The Alumni Fund is open to providing food/alcohol/entertainment/etc and would like to have the event in the springtime- and if possible to make it an annual type event.

Alex Chacon was recently hired to get more recent alums and students involved with the alumni fund. He is trying to promote and market the alumni fund to all members of the Caltech community including graduate students. He wants to get recent (last decade) alums more involved. He does not want to ask for money from this group – more concerned with getting people involved so they know the Alumni Fund name. Alex said that he is searching for a new idea and willing to put in \$250-\$300 for any event that would bring students from the graduate level to interact with alums. He is planning on moving forward on such an event soon. He asked what kinds of events grad students are looking for – and if the GSC had any ideas.

Andrea asked if Alex had considered doing something in conjunction with the career center/postdocs. She asked if we could bring in recent alums who have broken into academia. Alex said that that is what they are looking for and that it is in the beginning stages. Alex said that they want to promote the name “Alumni Fund” so that there is name recognition among graduate students. Students are very excited to meet with alums and vice-versa so we would like to get the two sides together. Graeme thought that there was a yearly event some time ago. He explained that people would go to alumni house and have dinner. Marco asked what the Alumni Fund pays for. Alex said that they fill in gaps when something falls through the cracks. Deniz noted that they gave money for gradators. Alex explained that there is a big disconnect between young and old alumni. Andrea said that alumni used to have a team at gradators. Alex wants to create a good network of people to speak on their experiences at Caltech and after. He wants more of a mixer and noted that people yearn for networking opportunities. Graeme suggested events like lunch with x or drinks with x, where x is an alumnus/a. Andrea mentioned a previous event where students were able to interact with alums. Several students sat at a table with an alum and had lunch. During the lunch, the students rotated tables to sit and chat with different alums. Jerry said that there were 20-25 alumni and 8 students at each table. They had about 130 students show up. Alex said that he would take these ideas back to his office. Marco asked what is the timeframe is for the event. Alex said he hoped to have it in the spring or summer.

2. Lunch with VP Margo Marshak

This month’s lunch with VP Margo Marshak will be on Monday January 24th at noon in Parsons Gate 112.

Nine people indicated that they would be able to attend.

Discussion ensued about what topics we should discuss at this meeting.

- Lack of a raise for graduate students
- Report of the deans

We need to decide what things the GSC wants to push for as far as changes in the dean’s office – need GSC feedback as to what to push for. This can be done over email.

3. Graduate Review Board (GRB) desperately needs more members!

Currently, graduate students who have a case before the GRB are left in limbo until GRB has quorum. Deniz asked how many more people are needed. Sid explained that right now the GRB is at 10 they need at least 10. This means that everyone must be present which is difficult. Catherine asked if people would ask people in their labs. She reminded everyone that the honor code is what makes Caltech Caltech, so please ask people to join the GRB. Marco said he would send an email out to his department. Sid said that it also helps to ask people personally.

4. Temporary Pizza Czar needed

Andrea Martin will not be able to be at next month’s meeting. Therefore we need a person to order pizza and drinks.

ACTION: Graeme will be next month's Pizza Czar

B. Budget Committee (Alex Brown)

1. CPA workshops

The Caltech Postdoc Association has asked us to sponsor two of their workshops "how to choose a postdoc" and "how to survive grad school" which are brown bag lunches. These events appear to be designed for graduate students and not postdocs and are estimated to cost \$150 each. We do not have the budget of these events yet, but we would like to ask the BOD authorize the budget committee to give up to \$150 for each event.

ACTION: 13 directors voted to authorize the budget committee to sponsor these two events at up to \$150 each.

C. Publications Committee (John Bender)

1. DVD Library Funding

Graduate students were granted usage of the ASCIT DVD library last year through the auspices of the MHF grant they received. In order to procure ongoing graduate student usage of the library, the GSC should contribute funds to its operations. Generally, these funds go only to the purchase of new DVDs, which tend only to last a few years before they need to be replaced. ASCIT would like us to contribute a proportional amount to what they contribute, annually adjusted by the ratio of DVDs checked out by graduate students versus undergrads. This year they are spending \$2750 on DVDs (up from \$2000 last year), and last year's graduate student usage rate was 2:1 less than the undergrads; hence we are asked to contribute \$1375 this year. Presumably they are willing to allow discussion in the future on the total amount of funding (so they aren't effectively setting our budget for us). Certainly they welcome our input and suggestions for operational matters.

If we want to continue to use the dvd library we need to pay. Next year we could advise them about the kind of money they are willing to give.

Alexei noted that ASCIT owns the dvd's that they buy and we do not.

John said that dvd's get used and so they need to be replaced

John also said that it helps them they're getting graduate students to use the coffee house. Soon it will be where the red door is. Justin said that we shouldn't just say no. John said that getting usage of the library is a good thing. There were 2500 total rentals 850 by grad students so we should be spending a third. Alexei asked if we can haggle with them. John asked why we should get it for less than they do.

Deniz said we're buying equity. He asked if we are going to have a vote or be able to tell them what dvd's to buy? John said that there is a form on the web where you can make suggestions. John said that we are paying half of what they are paying – we are paying proportionately to what we use. He said that all of this money goes to buy dvd's. Graeme asked if we got the drop box? John said that it has been purchased. Sid said that more advertising should be done.

ACTION: The board voted to give ASCIT \$1375 this academic year for graduate student privileges to the DVD library, with the intent to contribute a proportional amount of ASCIT funding in future academic years. The motion was approved with 12 directors voting to approve, 0 opposed, 2 abstained.

III. UPDATES AND REPORTS

A. Publications Committee (John Bender)

1. *Technique* / *little t* collaborations

We are meeting with ASCIT people and the outgoing editors of the *little t* next week to discuss the possibilities for collaborating and combining elements of the *Technique* and the *little t* to improve both publications, especially the websites. If you are interested in joining this discussion, email gscpubs.

B. Quality of Life (Jonathan Galownia)

1. Recruiting

QoL is losing several members this year, and we need new members. If you are interesting please email gscqol. The committee chair position will become available very soon.

2. Health Insurance

We are meeting with Angelica Santana and the Chickering representatives again this January 11. We will discuss general health insurance information. If you have any feedback or comments, please email them to QoL.

We will also start talking about dental insurance soon.

C. Housing Committee (Interim Chair: Steve Pracko)

1. Avery Board Plan

The Housing Committee has been contacted by an Avery resident who informed us of the general dissatisfaction many grad students living in Avery have with the present board plan. The mandatory charge this year is \$828 per term, and any leftover balance is lost at the end of the year. The grad residents conducted a survey regarding the board plan last year and ask Student Affairs to come up with a different system, but in the end nothing changed. The committee will look into this matter and see what we can do.

2. Family Housing

The Housing Office is waiting for recommendations from the committee on what we would like to see in the way of housing for grad students with families in the wake of the changes that were made to the lease property priority system last year. As there seems to be consensus on the major points of designating certain properties as “family only” (to avoid the legal problems with the old system) and trying to eliminate the need for a time limit on residency (now proposed at two years), the

committee will ask the grad students who originally contacted us to take the lead in negotiating with the Housing Office, so that the final system is to the satisfaction of those who will be using it.

3. Housing Office Customer Service

Following up on the letter to the editor in the October 2004 GSC Newsletter regarding customer service dissatisfaction with the Caltech Housing organization, the committee is still considering how best to collect feedback from Caltech residents to see how common these sentiments are. We will discuss this topic at our monthly meeting on Friday, January 7.

4. Catalina Ethernet Charge

The Housing Office has decided not to start charging Catalina residents for Ethernet until the new housing contract period begins this fall. The reason for the delay is that Housing did not inform incoming first-year residents about the mandatory charge and Housing was uncertain as to when the installation would be complete at the time when last year's contracts were drafted.

5. New Housing Committee web site

The Housing Committee has redesigned our web site for better navigation. In the future, we plan to add more housing-related documents and links.

D. Social Committee (Graeme Smith)

1. Cooking Class

There is still space in the cooking class if anyone wants to come.