



May, 2007 (contact:gsc-treasurer@mit.edu)

GSC 2006-07 1st Annual Treasurer Report and Recommendations by Jehanzeb Noor

It is difficult to show the full year financial operations (\$380K), but below is a summary.

I. GSC Committees (<http://web.mit.edu/gsc/www/committees/>) – a year of new ideas

This year, GSC was able to finance a record number of events to enhance its on-campus programming and support for graduate students, with the highlights presented as follows:

a. The 1st Annual Grad Gala: it is a pleasure to report that GSC's single largest event this year is well on its way to also be its most successful one, with a 700-ticket sell out! Befittingly, sharing of more details will be left to the lead organizer Eva Kassens and her Activities (AC) co-chair Shahriar Khushrushahi. Funding next year's Grad Gala should be one of the priorities in the new budget, starting at the same level as last year of \$30K and increasing the amount accordingly if GSC enjoys another successful career fair.

b. Travel Grant Reinstatement: ARC's travel grant was fully reinstated, funded and disbursed on a regular basis under Shiyun Ruan and Biraja Kanungo. It proved to be a popular idea. Next year's Travel Grant should be funded again at a minimum of \$10K.

c. Off campus and Spouses/Partners: The GSC, for the first time, allocated direct funds to include spouses and partners in events organized by the off-campus sub-committee. Also, a new budget (in consultation with stakeholders including off-campus representatives) was devised at ~\$17K for next year to reflect the true need of off-campus students, who have traditionally been disowned by the GSC in the past for all practical purposes. The only support given to HCA's off-campus subcommittee is GSO's ~\$7K in grants, with no direct support from GSC despite its independent revenues. While the new budget has been presented to the Dean of Graduate Students and a pledge of his support received, the GSC ought to commit at least \$3K support to the sub-committee's programs.

d. Dorms: Quite on the contrary, dorms continue to receive considerable amount of direct and indirect funding and support from the GSC, despite the fact that a majority of MIT graduate students live off-campus. For instance, events like Orientation (under OC) or Harvard-MIT parties (under AC) enabled the use of ~\$15K at a single large dorm last year. On the other hand, other dorms (large or small) do not receive any such programming or benefits. At the same time, only a couple of large dorms take advantage of AC's funding for regular dorm events/collaborations (\$1.5K expended) To improve next year, the level and evenness of funding that is channeled to dorms should be restricted to \$1.5K. In fact, this was the amount deemed useful by AC Chairs in any case. Any extra funding above a \$1.5K for dorms through Committees should go to off-campus.

e. Other new ideas: The GSC successfully funded new ideas, such as diversity and a spring orientation gathering. Ideally, these ideas would be continued and supported next year as well. The publishing efforts for GSN were given all support necessary to maintain the high quality of content (shown consistently and accessibility of free mailings).

II. Funding Board (<http://gsc.mit.edu/funding/>) – expanded by \$24K of GSC funds

As shown by the results of our survey, GSC FB had an innovative and successful year.

i) New Policies and Approaches: Though more work, the FB doubled its number of cycles from two to four this year to enable better service to student group needs. Also, collaborations between groups were encouraged that resulted in several largely attended and successful events such as Chinese New Year and Latin Conference at MIT. In addition, FB administered three full fellowships for public service and human rights ideas.

ii) Successes with Applications and Allocations: Through coaching and meetings,



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the quality of applications increased substantially. Moreover, new or inactive groups were encouraged to apply and rewarded for previous successful events. Consequently, allocations steadily increased from ~65% of total request by groups to over 92% recently.

iii) Negotiations and Support for Small Groups: Cultural groups representing countries with few students at MIT or special interest groups (e.g. sports) were very well supported. In addition, several negotiations with MIT administration were mediated; e.g. hourly Z-center pool rental rates for a resource constrained group were reduced by 75%.

iv) Medium Event Fund: New ideas exceeding \$1K in budget were also supported. However, because this sort of a Fund usually benefits large groups and makes for easy/lazy funding, an annual Fund level of more than \$10K is not recommended at all.

v) GSC Recruiting: Groups that helped (for at least ten hours) with special GSC projects were given a recruitment incentive of \$250 discretionary funds for an event of their choosing. Student groups including smaller dorms benefited from this opportunity.

vi) Effective Representation at LEF/ARCADE: Through assistance to groups in preparing their applications and advocacy at LEF/ARCADE in collaboration with Obrad Scepanovic (Board member), allocations to graduate groups increased by 15% this year.

vii) Process Failure: Despite high allocation amounts for first 6 months, a single group did not comply with the FB policy of account disclosure and sought to create a parallel funding board. This challenge was seen through. The new FB should be steadfast to any 'big kid on the block' mentality, be it from a large dorm again or another group.

III. Priorities Ideas for Funding: Based on the experience and results from this year, sustaining the annual Grad Gala event and supporting off-campus students through direct GSC funds (on top of GSO grants) are recommended as priorities. Special initiatives such as service and human rights fellowships and holding of National Association of Graduate and Professional Student conferences on campus again should be continued next year too.

IV. Policy Suggestions Non-AC Committees e.g. HCA ought to focus on key advocacy issues and not seek to overlap with AC. GSC would do well to balance the benefit it gives to dorms with more impact on off-campus student life. Also, funds expended on events at large dorms should be redistributed to benefit resource-constrained dorms (without house tax or room rental revenues). Using the Funding Board as the major disbursing of funds to dorms (as opposed to Committees) helps. Our idea is not to limit or undermine the value of dorms to student life, but more about fairness. In addition, a closer look to the revenue-side of GSC is warranted. Over-reliance on career fair or grad rat sales is quite dangerous.

V. Future Direction: The value of GSC to graduate students is to provide with events or resources that the MIT administration does not: execution of a successful orientation, large events that build community and future alumni spirit such as the annual Grad Gala, fellowships for travel or service and a forum to present student concerns in a unified manner. However, this is simply unsustainable without more support from MIT Deans. With the impending increase in student life fees, inflation that has increased the cost of events, and a legitimate expansion in GSC programming (as discussed above), it is time that we receive support. GSO and DSL are requested to increase their annual funding of GSC by at least \$30K and of Funding Board by at least \$24K and to provide enhanced administrative staffing; so that programming is not affected starting this year. Thank you.

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