RGSA Meeting Minutes – April 8, 2014 | 10:30 – 11:20

Present: Sarah Pears (SP), Clare Crosby (CC), Christine Peterson (CP), Jeff O'Donnell (JO), Sam Parker (SPA), Rezwana Zafar (RZ), Jessica Espenshade (JE)

RGSA Elections

CP – How are the nominations looking?
JO – We have two nominations each for President, Aiken Chair, Treasurer, and Communications, and three nominations for Social Chair.
CP – We should send a last call e-mail for nominations. JO will contact nominees later this week to inquire about their intent to run.

CP – How do we want to vote? JO – Last year a UVM online survey was used.
CC – A UVM survey would be anonymous.
RZ – We should make sure our settings for the survey only allow one vote per e-mail address.
JO – Agreed. We’ll look into how to make that happen.

Social Update

CC - Com-PIE-tition was well-attended by graduate students, faculty, and staff. 14 pies were entered: 9 sweet, 5 savory. Results: Savory – 1st Place: Tyler Goeschel, 2nd Place: Maddy Morgan. Sweet – 1st Place: Laura Yayac, 2nd Place: Jeff O'Donnell

CC – Next year we should consider having just one category (sweet) with savory entries as an optional addition. CC had to round up savory participants and urge them to bake savory pies.
RZ – Could we make a bigger advertising push? CC – That would be a good idea.
JO – Competition was well-attended. Unfortunately, having most of the Park Studies lab at a conference impacted attendance and the number of pies baked.

SPA / CP - The Com-PIE-tition raised $130.
SP – Which charity should we donate to?
CC – Someone at the competition suggested New Farms for New Americans. Clare supports this idea.
SP – Let’s do it. We can donate to their “Sponsor a gardener” program, which provides seeds, compost, and a garden plot for $60. All agreed.

Professional Development

RZ - How can RGSA support professional development, for example very minor things like having access to UVM business cards to something like networking opportunities specifically for RSEN students. Is this something RGSA can support?

SPA – Yes. This type of thing is in the RGSA bylaws. We’re going to include something about ranking the importance of RGSA activities / events / initiatives in the end-of-the-year survey, and professional development can be included.
SP – Anything else to add to the “ranking” question? We can add professional development and others.
CP – Making business cards available would cost a lot. Maybe we could do a workshop on designing business cards?
SP – The idea of professional development is a good one. Professional development events to inform grads about: 1) business cards are available, 2) networking in NR, 3) specific things more targeted towards NR grads.
SP – Could RGSA professional development initiatives be dovetailed to what Carolyn is doing? Add it to the end-of-the-year survey ranking list.

JO – We should create and maintain a few RSENR-specific professional development grad info sheets?
CP – We need a way of tracking graduate alums. If graduates don’t leave a forwarding e-mail, they get lost. We could suggest or encourage the Dean’s office to keep better track of graduates.
SP – What if we had a professional development chair in the future? The next Exec. Committee could appoint someone next year (similar to Fall Seminar chairs).

**Budget Update**

SPA – We’re definitely ahead. Sam’s computer crashed, so he doesn’t have numbers today, but we have a generous surplus. Sam will e-mail the latest budget to Exec. Committee once his computer is back up. SP – We do need toner cartridges.

SP – To review: $400 for BBQ, $150 for social event, $60 for com-pie, but it only cost $50, $130 for toner (per cartridge) – There is only one toner in reserve right now. We should pick up 2, 3, or 4. That would leave us with a $300 surplus. Can we kick the surplus into next year? SPA – Nope. It’s use it this year or lose it.
SP – What should we do?
CP – Could we transfer the additional funds into the RSENR internal grant program? The money would go to support grad students.
SP - Will talk with Kimberly about this possibility.

**Social Events**

SP – In the new UVM policy holiday parties are explicitly listed as not fundable for faculty, staff and student gatherings.
RZ – We could raise money through the cook-offs for holiday parties.
CC – We won’t be able to raise enough. We could raise prices, but folks won’t like that.
SP – There was a low turnout at the holiday party, do we need to continue it?
CC – Clare thinks turnout was pretty good considering there are a limited number of people who are around and active grad students in RSENR.
SPA – Agrees. The RSENR website list over 100 grad students, but many people aren’t active. We need to keep that in mind when considering turnout.
RZ – Also, there are different dimensions of being social.

CC – Do we want to try another faculty breakfast? The first one was well-attended by faculty. Clare thought it was a good event. Faculty seemed to like the open discussion format.
SP – We should improve the food served and do more outreach.
SPA – Thinks we should focus on planning social meetings with just grad students. Doesn’t see why we need to solely focus on bridging the faculty-student divide.
SP – We’ve received feedback from grad students about not wanting a happy hour-type event focused around drinking.
SPA – Networking amongst grad students in a business purpose.
SPA – Let’s pick a morning and provide Myer’s Bagels and coffee free to grad students. Send an e-mail the night before. CP / JO – Agree with this study break idea.
CC – If we do a faculty breakfast, let’s leave it more open, pitch it as an opportunity to connect with faculty.
SP – OK with just billing it as a breakfast with faculty.
CC – April 17th is on the schedule for our next social event. What should we do? Clare understands that there are some people who don’t like formal social hours downtowns, but there are a bunch of people who like traditional social hours like we did last year.
SP - Will talk to the business office about doing a social hour to double-check that grad student networking will pass muster with the new rules. Let’s go ahead and set up a regular social hour with food. We could try to pick a venue that has more food / dessert options. Also, let’s do another faculty breakfast.
JE – Jess doesn’t really drink, but she still goes to social hours to socialize.
CC – Doesn’t think there’s enough time for two social events in April.
SP – Let’s plan on a social hour (w/food) on the 17th. Also, we’ll invite faculty to the BBQ.
SP – This should leave us with $400 extra to kick into the internal mini-grant pot. Next meeting is 4/22. We’ll need to talk about BBQ.
CP – Mentoring Update. An end-of-the-year survey will be going out.
JO – Should RGSA have a Twitter account?
All – None of the Exec. Members or Jess are on Twitter. Facebook would be better. We will recommend to next year’s Exec. Committee that they start an RGSA Facebook account.