Minutes for BoD Meeting, August 3rd, 2011 – Schlinger 101

Attendance: Dan Bower, Luke Boosey (minutes), Jelena Culic-Viskota, Maggie Osburn, Megan Dobro, Terry Gdoutos, Allison Kunz, Gloria Sheng, Jacob Sendowski, Rob Craig, Dmitriy Tseliakhovich, Brett Cornell, Lauren Edgar, Danielle Bower.

1. Motion to approve the minutes (by Luke Boosey). Seconded by Dan Bower. Vote approved unanimously.

2. Committee Reports
   
   a. Advocacy – looking for new people to transition into the Advocacy Committee (both as Chair and as members). Contact Megan to discuss various goals and tasks performed by the Advocacy Committee.
   
   b. Social – Gradiators this Saturday, 11am to 6pm. Could use help to transport equipment from the dungeon storage to the Beckman Lawn. GUSH on the 17th, Stone Brewery Festival on the 20th, run by the Strong Ale Club. Term Party Sat Sept 24th
   
   c. Academics – email Cory to find out the latest from Academics
   
   d. Sustainability – not much to report. ESW is doing the solar challenge. If anyone is interested, contact Jelena. Megan – can we talk to the Diversity center about not using Styrofoam. Jelena – yes, please send me the details.

3. Proposal for the Dissolution of the GRB—see Appendix

   Maggie – effort has been ongoing between the honor code advocates and Felicia. Mostly started because, in Maggie’s opinion (having been on the board) the system is broken – issues were not being reported, the faculty were trying to deal with things on their own. Proposing to dissolve the GRB and create a new body – the Graduate Honor Council to reeducate people on the process, to work together with the Graduate office and the faculty. Attached is a summary report on the proposal (this is not the actual proposal). The first step before moving forward is to dissolve the GRB.

   Dmitriy – what will be the role of the Graduate Office? Maggie – technically will be under the Graduate Office, so that it will be part of the Institute. Then if the Board is sued, Caltech is the one to defend the board and will provide the lawyers. Instead of having the board members (students) This will allow investigations to be a little more transparent, so that when there are extenuating circumstances (ongoing investigations by the grad office that may affect the resolution of the case) the case will be considered with all of the relevant facts. The communication at both the front end and the back end will be much improved.
Jacob – what will prevent the faculty from ignoring the new body?
Maggie – being under the grad office, rather than the GSC, adds a little bit more legitimacy, and starting with a new platform, gives us a chance to get faculty input and try at least to get them to follow the correct procedures. It will be easier to do speaking from the Grad Office than from the GSC.

Megan – we should stress to the faculty as well that a failure to report an honor code violation is also a violation.
Maggie – Having the Dean’s support is crucial.

There are two advocates right now.

Megan – how long between the dissolution of the GRB and the start of the GHC? Will there be a period in which neither is operating?
Maggie – No, there is a mechanism in place to deal with this.

Jelena – have there ever been any lawsuits against the GSC or against Caltech regarding Honor Code violations?
Maggie – it has occurred.

Motion. "I move that the GSC officially dissolve the GRB by eliminating Exhibit A, > Article II of the GSC bylaws, thereby supporting the newly formed GHC as > described in our written proposal."

Motion by Maggie Osburn, Seconded by Rob Craig
Vote – approved unanimously. Proxy votes were received from Lauren Edgar on behalf of Alex Lockwood (yes), and Becky Tucker (yes), and from Dan Bower on behalf of Artemis Allianou (yes). There were two abstentions (by the Honor Code Advocates) – Maggie Osburn, Rob Craig.

4. Budget Proposal

Terry - About a month ago, came up with the new budget from 2011/2012. Some minor changes and comments have been made. One was to add a line item for mentoring to the Advocacy Committee. Other than that, the budget is the same as what the Budget Committee agreed on three weeks ago. Terry sent out the proposed budget then. During the meeting he passed around the budget along with the current budget for comparison purposes. The new Bootcamp program was placed under Academics. Publications, Social and Academics received slight increases in funding. The Grad Office has not seen the latest version, although Anneila has seen the original proposal and seemed to be on board with the objectives. Lauren – Term Party/Formal funding – question to discuss with Terry (to cover Sept Term party).
Terry – longer term, sustaining three term parties and a formal may be difficult.
Discussion re funding for Social Committee Term Party line item.

Motion – “I move that we approve the budget with the change that the Joint Undergraduate Social Events for $400 will be removed and $400 will be added to the Term Party line item under Social Committee.”
Moved by Terry Gdoutos. Seconded by Dani Bower.
Vote – approved unanimously.

5. General Business

Terry – latest version of event funding request procedures. The suggestions Should send a proposal 3 days prior to the GSC BoD meeting. Then give a 5min (max) presentation at the BoD meeting. Then a 5min max discussion (in private) by the BoD and a decision.

Meeting adjourned at 12:43pm.
Appendix

Proposal for formation of the Graduate Honor Council

Introduction

The Honor Code is and shall be the fundamental principle of conduct for all members of the Caltech community. It applies to all academic, social, and professional activities. As members of the Caltech community, graduate students are obligated to uphold the honor system. The Honor Code (HC) states that “No one shall take unfair advantage of any member of the California Institute of Technology community.” To this point, potential Honor code violations have been handled by a student led council functioning as a part of the Graduate Student Council. Here it is proposed to alter the procedures of this council, its structure and legal affiliations for the purpose of fixing major inadequacies and inefficiencies that plague the current system.

Over the course of the preceding two academic years, the implementation of the honor code system, as it applies to graduate students, has become increasingly burdensome on the graduate student population and as a result, ineffective. Some of the major inadequacies include a lack of interest in the Graduate Review Board (GRB), lack of reporting of honor code violations, and inconsistent procedures between individual cases. In the winter of 2011, a series of consultations between Graduate Student Council, the Graduate Review Board and the Graduate Studies Office made clear that the process for holding students accountable to the honor code needed to be improved. To do this, the Graduate Studies Office and student leaders of the GRB and Graduate Student Council (GSC) have developed recommendations for changing how the Institute manages the HC for graduate students.

This document proposes the formation of the Graduate Honor Council (GHC), a new student-run body aimed at educating the graduate population and handling honor code violations. The formation of the GHC, outlined below, effectively dissolves the GSC associated GRB. The GHC has been designed to increase consistency in dealing with HC violations, limit the legal liability of the GSC, and increase graduate student acceptance and support of the HC at Caltech.

The Graduate Honor Council (GHC)

GHC structure and membership

The Graduate Honor Council will function as an independent, student-run entity, with funding and resources provided by the Graduate Studies Office. Council representatives will be members of the Caltech graduate community. Representatives will be required to be in good academic standing and will be appointed in numbers not to exceed 21. While a broad distribution of academic interests is ideal, no specific option requirements will be enforced for nomination of the council. Existing members of the GRB will be grandfathered into the GHC and subsequent nomination procedures will be outlined in the new GHC procedures. GHC members will be required to attend a training session run by the GHC co-chairs with presentations from the Graduate Deans office. Additionally, council members will participate in graduate orientation and act as representatives of the honor code within their divisions.
There will be two chair-people of the GHC who will be elected yearly. These chairs are leaders of the student honor code process for graduate students and who advocate for the honor code within the GSC and the community. The duties of the chairs include scheduled monthly interaction with the dean’s office, case participation, and organization of honor code related orientation activities. Graduate students must be in good academic standing to hold these positions. In the event of a chair becoming temporarily unable to fulfill his/her duties a substitute will be chosen from the council members.

Case process

Any member of the community may report a potential honor code violation to the co-chairs of the GHC. Contact information is available on multiple websites. Reports should not be made to faculty, the Graduate Studies Office, teaching assistants or other community members. Failure to report an honor code violation or interfering with the reporting process are honor code violations and are subject to prosecution by the BoC, GHC, or provosts offices depending on subject affiliation.

The chairs of the GHC will receive the information regarding a suspected violation and meet with the Associate Dean (AD) to discuss the accusations, determine the scope of the issue and develop an appropriate timeline for hearing the case. Co-chairs will then conduct an investigation and meet with people relevant to the case. At the same time, the AD will investigate issues associated with the case that may be important to the GHC’s process (enrollment, policy violations, previous honor code infractions, etc.)

A second meeting of the GHC co-chairs and the AD will take place to determine if the case will proceed and to determine if (a) the evidence continues to warrant a GHC case and (b) the case indeed falls within the scope of the topics handled by the GHC. Together with the AD the GHC will determine the routing of the case. Most cases will go strictly to the GHC unless otherwise complicated. In some limited cases, investigation may go to the Graduate Studies Office or be shared by both bodies. Also, the precedents from previous cases with similar issues will be discussed in order to maintain the consistency of investigation and sanctioning across cases.

Typically, a GHC hearing will take place to determine if the HC has been violated and if so, which nullifications are appropriate. In the event that the GHC votes that the HC has not been violated, all records of the case will be destroyed. In the event of a conviction, a report for the Dean of Graduate Studies will then be developed and delivered by the co-chairs. The Dean will read the report of the GHC and review the process for making the recommendation. The Dean will also see the recommendation and have final authority over the acceptance or revision of the recommendation. The dean will consult with the GHC and the AD on the issues if there are concerns about the outcome. The Dean will also address any outstanding concerns before rendering final decision. If necessary, he/she will charge the co-chairs with investigating new or remaining issues and they will bring this information to the dean and consult with him about how it impacts the recommendation. The dean will inform both the GHC and the accused of the final decision. Divergence from these set procedures will be applied at the discretion of the Chairs of that council and the Graduate Studies Office.

Interaction with the Dean’s Office

Early and frequent interaction between GHC chairs and the AD is critical to smooth
handling of potential honor code violations and for education of the graduate community regarding the HC. During cases, these interactions clarify extenuating policy issues that affect the case and ensure an educated process by the chairs. This relationship should also foster communication that is critical for larger scale education efforts including but not limited to orientation and faculty education.

Role of faculty

Cooperation of faculty with the GHC and honor code system is the single most important facet of preventing violations and ensuring proper reporting and functioning of the HC. Members of the faculty are obliged to follow the honor code in their own behavior and in relation to the students they teach. Some of the specific roles of the faculty include: creation of a collaboration policy for each class they teach, distribution of that policy to students at the start of every term and to the registrar as a matter of record, reporting of suspected violations to the GHC in a timely manner, and cooperation with the GHC during the case process. Faculty members that report suspect violations from their classes will be informed of the outcome of every case in a timely manner by the Dean if a violation was found to occur or by the GHC chairs if the case is not carried onto a GHC hearing.

Comparison to GRB honor system

The GHC differs from the GRB in a number of key ways:

1) The GHC operates out of the graduate deans offices instead of as a subcommittee of the GSC thereby limiting liability of the GSC and simplifying the case process.
2) Membership procedures of the GHC will differ from those of the GRB in both maximum membership (21 instead of 40), removal of the option requirements, and creation of the co-chair positions.
3) The quorum level and voting requirements for cases handled by the GRB have drop from a quorum of 8 and 3/4 majority for the GRB to quorum of 7 and 5/7 majority for the GHC.
4) Operating procedures of the GHC differ significantly from those of the GRB as the GHC is now responsible for its own management and will no longer be subject to voting procedures as determined by the GSC. In addition to attending cases, GHC members will vote in annual elections for chair positions, help organize orientation events, and participate in training.
5) Outlined better communication between dean and co-chairs to ensure consistency and efficiency during cases is new to this proposal and has been applied in an ad hoc manner previously.
6) Members of the faculty have a more defined role in the GHC system and continued outreach and education by the GHC will continue to improve this relationship.
7) The GHC will also have an outlined procedure for publicity/education about the HC that was lacking previously in the GRB system. This will help to strengthen the HC in the graduate student community and ensure the system will overcome the current negative image that has become associated with the GRB.

Implementation and timeline

The formation of the GHC is contingent on a vote of the GSC BoD to remove Article II of the Appendix from their bylaws, thereby dissolving the GRB. Article I of the appendix stating the honor code, should be retained by the GSC bylaws. After this point
GRB members will be appointed GHC members at the first meeting of the GHC and education of the community regarding the changes will begin. The process should be fully functional by the time of new student orientation so that the incoming graduate students learn only of the new system.