

Student-Led Evaluation & Development Committee Charter

The current SLED committee: Dave Ortiz-Suslow, Sharmila Giri, Pete Finocchio, and Christina Pasparakis

September 1, 2016

This document describes the roles, responsibilities, and maintenance of the Student Lead Evaluations & Development (herein SLED) committee.

Historical Background

IT IS IMPORTANT TO DESCRIBE the foundation of this body, as this provides a justification for its existence and motivation for its endurance. This committee was organically formed out of an open forum discussion during a RSMAS Town Hall meeting in Fall 2013—the topic of discussion was how to improve mentorship on campus. The question became, how do you improve student-mentor relationships effectively? And how do you achieve this without compromising the integrity of the mentor-mentee relationship, specifically safe-guarding students who are a vulnerable party in this discussion? The then sitting Student Representative (herein SR) to the Graduate Academic Committee (herein GAC) solicited for volunteers to form a student group¹ to answer these questions and propose some action to the RSMAS administration. This group (headed by the SR to the GAC) decided that a new RSMAS award that recognized outstanding mentors would celebrate the efforts of some faculty members and provide some role models for student and faculty alike. The group also wanted to glean information from the student body about the status of mentor-mentee relationships on campus. A broad survey aimed at collecting quantitative information on the various aspects of student-mentor interaction² was developed and administered to the student body. These two student-lead initiatives were conducted during the spring semester of 2014 and by spring 2015, the then sitting SR to the GAC incorporated the maintenance and chairing of this group into the formal responsibilities of that position.

¹ The original group was made up of 4 students from MPO, AMP, MGG, and MBF. An attempt was made to make this ad hoc committee as representative as possible

² Response time to paper drafts, frequency of face-to-face meeting, support for conference attendance, etc.

Roles

SLED IS A STUDENT-LED GROUP that represents the academic interests of graduate students at the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science (RSMAS). The primary focus of SLED is evaluating the state of mentorship on the RSMAS campus and developing tools and resources for the administration to use in order to effect broad and long-lasting impacts on the programmatic success of student-mentor relationships. This committee is also charged with having a role in facilitating professional and academic development of the RSMAS graduate student body.

Maintenance

It is the responsibility of all SLED committee members to maintain the integrity of this body as a student initiative committed to having a vested interest in the academic and professional well-being of the RSMAS graduate student body.

Committee Chair

The SLED committee chair will be occupied by the current SR to the GAC.

Committee Body

The SLED committee members will be representatives from active RSMAS graduate programs and a position on the committee is reserved for a representative from each program³. Current SR's to the different programs, i.e. student academic program committee representatives, will be given the opportunity to sit on the committee. If committee positions cannot be filled by going through the program SR's, the SR to the GAC will open a solicitation for volunteers to the wider RSMAS graduate student body. In the event that there are two or more volunteers for the same committee position, the seat will be in contest. A contested seat will be decided by simple majority vote, the voting will be done by all the graduate students in the corresponding program. The members' obligation to their seat on the committee will be 2 years.

³ First year graduate students can only sit on the committee if no other eligible graduate student is available and/or willing to be a representative.

Faculty Advisor

The SLED committee will be assigned a faculty advisor.

Oversight

The SLED committee is answerable to the Senior Manager of the Graduate Student Office and the RSMAS Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.

Information and Data Archiving

A safe and secure data repository will be maintained for archiving data.

Responsibilities

The execution of the following initiatives are the prescribed duties of the SLED committee.

RSMAS Outstanding Mentor Award

This is one of the primary responsibilities of the SLED committee, which is responsible for the successful execution of this initiative on an annual basis. An eligible recipient of this award is a RSMAS faculty or staff member who displays excellent mentoring qualities and is nominated via student recommendations. Award candidates are judged on the quality and quantity of their recommendation letters. Past awardees are eligible for renomination after 5 years.

The success of this program is determined by the satisfactory completion of these components:

1. The solicitation⁴ for nominations to the RSMAS Outstanding Mentor Award will be carried out every spring semester of every academic calendar year.
2. The solicitation will be made open⁵ to all RSMAS graduate students.
3. The solicitation will not be made open to RSMAS faculty, staff, or non-RSMAS, University of Miami faculty or staff.
4. The solicitation will not be directed towards nor targeted to University of Miami undergraduate students.
5. The solicitation will be made via anonymous, University of Miami-hosted online survey software⁶
6. The solicitation open period will be for a time period long enough to reasonably allow all students who wish to participate the possibility of participating.
7. The date and time of the solicitation open period will be directly communicated to the student body and be made available on the award website: rsmas.miami.edu/academics/graduate-programs/rsmas-outstanding-faculty-mentor-award/.
8. The solicitation period will precede the spring semester student Town Hall Meeting (herein THM).
9. SLED will act as the award Selection Committee along with the awardee from the previous year who will also sit on the selection committee .
10. No SLED member may submit a nomination for the outstanding mentor award.

⁴ The solicitation is the "call for nominations".

⁵ The "open" period is the time period when nominations for the award may be given.

⁶ e.g. Qualtrics is the current university-wide software used for administering surveys. It generates a browser link, which can be made available to participants. Exceptions to this condition can be made at the discretion of the SR to the GAC with approval from GSO and the Associate Dean of Students, if SR to the GAC can demonstrate that the alternative maintains students' integrity and does not compromise the success of this initiative.

11. The Selection Committee will deliberate after the solicitation period closes and before the spring semester THM.
12. All Selection Committee members must be present during the deliberation.
13. The Selection Committee will name one awardee. If the committee deems it necessary and/or appropriate they may decide to also award an "honorable mention". The mentor who receives the honorable mention is still eligible to win the award the following year.
14. The awardee must be selected via unanimous vote.
15. The awardee will be announced no earlier than the spring semester THM. At some time post-THM, the awardee will give a seminar on mentoring and a RSMAS-sponsored reception will be held in their honor. The awardee's name will be engraved on a plaque which will be displayed on RSMAS campus. The awardee's name will appear on the website along with previous awardees.
16. No information regarding nominees or RSMAS students provided to the Selection Committee through the solicitations or deliberation process will be shared, made available, posted, or in any way direct or indirectly communicated to RSMAS faculty, staff, administrators, students, or non-RSMAS University of Miami affiliates outside of the sitting Selection Committee⁷.

RSMAS Student-Mentor Relationship Survey (SMRS)

This is one of the primary initiatives of SLED, which is responsible for the successful execution of this initiative on an bi-annual basis. The success of this program is determined by the satisfactory completion of these components:

1. The SMRS will be administered via solicitation to the RSMAS graduate student body⁸ during the Fall semester of even numbered years.
2. The solicitation will not be made open to RSMAS faculty, staff, or non-RSMAS, University of Miami faculty or staff.
3. The solicitation will be made open⁹ and will be completed preceding the Fall THM.
4. The solicitation will be made via anonymous, University of Miami-hosted online survey software¹⁰.
5. The solicitation open period will be for a time period long enough to reasonably allow all students who wish to participate the possibility of participating.

⁷ Exceptions to this include sharing anonymous quotations or selections from recommendation material that highlights a nominee's strength as a candidate. This type of information could be publicly shared in the event of an award announcement or ceremony.

⁸ Ph.D. and Ms, not MPS

⁹ The "open" period is the time period when students can participate in the survey.

¹⁰ e.g. Qualtrics is the current university-wide software used for administering surveys. It generates a browser link, which can be made available to participants

6. The date and time of the solicitation open period will be directly communicated to the student body and be made available on the award website: rsmas.miami.edu/academics/graduate-programs/.
7. The SMRS will cover a broad range of questions geared towards quantifying and describing the state of student-mentor relationships on RSMAS campus in all of the major areas of student-mentor interaction.
8. The SMRS will always contain available space for students to provide survey feedback or open-ended comments.
9. The SLED committee members will perform the necessary data analysis.
10. Non-SLED committee members will not be given access to the raw data files¹¹.
11. The SLED committee will make their findings publicly available to the RSMAS graduate student body and the RSMAS academic administration.
12. No information that is not directly related to quantifying or describing the results of the SMRS or that could in anyway identify a SMRS participant will not be shared, made available, posted, or in any way directly or indirectly communicated to RSMAS faculty, staff, administrators, students, or non-RSMAS University of Miami affiliates outside of the sitting SLED committee members.

¹¹ It is possible to link survey responses to the IP address used to login into the secure website, this information could theoretically be used to find out the identity of the responder. Also, there are cases where responders directly or indirectly identify themselves and it is unclear to the SLED committee if this is intentional. In order safeguard students', the SLED committee will not make any of this information accessible to outside persons.

Facilitating Professional Development for the RSMAS Graduate Student Body

In addition to the above prescribed initiatives the SLED committee will play an active role in fostering the professional development of graduate students on campus. Due to unforeseen changes in campus life and the graduate student population, this may be done at the discretion of SLED and its members, but this could include helping with student travel fundraising, recruitment activities, and maintaining/improving the web-based media.