



PROJECT TITLE: GradGames

PROJECT TAGLINE/CAPTION (160 characters):

Promoting wellbeing and integration among graduate students through social events centered on tabletop games.

IMAGE:



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Primary Contact Department: Computer Science

Name of Group/Organization: GradGames

PROJECT DETAILS

Provide a description of the project.

GradGames seeks to promote graduate student well-being by organizing regular social events centered mainly on tabletop games. Events are free and open to the entire Rice community, with the intent of providing a social environment where students can relieve stress and meet other members of the community with shared interests. Socials feature a selection of board games, mainly provided by the organizers and attendees, which people are free to pick up and play for the duration of the event. Particular socials also feature additional gaming options, such as video games or poker, while others promote outdoor or cultural activities such as outings to parks or museums. Refreshments are also provided. Self-funded events in this format have been held throughout the past academic year and have been very successful.

Timeline: If the project will take place at a specific time and place, please give details. Is it a one-time event or a series?

Socials will be held regularly during the academic year, with the expected frequency being every two weeks, alternating between Friday evenings and Sunday afternoons. The socials will usually be held in the Captain Graduate Student Lounge, in the basement of Rice Memorial Center. Occasionally there will also be outdoor events including visits to parks and museums in the Houston area.

Audience: Who is your target audience? (e.g. program-specific, interdisciplinary, or university-wide? Will undergraduates, faculty, staff, or postdocs be involved? Any off campus participants?)

The events will be mostly targeted toward graduate students from all departments, with the goal of promoting a healthy social life and fostering a sense of community among graduates. However, they will be open to all members of the Rice community as well as outsiders with ties to Rice.

How many people do you anticipate will participate?



Based on past attendance, we expect between 10 and 20 people per event.

Marketing Plan: How do you plan to publicize the project?

Every social will be advertised by posters displayed in Rice Memorial Center and in different departments across campus, as well as advertised in the GSA Weekly Announcements and the GSA Facebook page. Attendees of the socials will also be able to sign up for the GradGames mailing list to receive email announcements for upcoming socials. A word-of-mouth component also exists, as those who enjoy the events might bring friends to future socials.

ADVANCEMENT

What are the goals of the project?

GradGames seeks to promote graduate student wellbeing by offering regular social events centered mainly on tabletop and video games, and to build a community based on these common interests. We intend for this project to help in reducing stress among graduate students, as well as encouraging social interaction with students in different departments and facilitating the social integration of new students. Additionally, since social events targeted specifically to graduate students often tend to involve alcohol, GradGames also serves to offer non-alcohol-based social events for members of the graduate student community who do not drink.

Briefly explain the need for the project and how it will promote excellence in scholarship, training, and/or development?

A healthy balance between work life and social life is essential to the wellbeing of graduate students. It is not uncommon for graduate students to struggle with mental health issues due to stress and academic pressure, and these problems are only enhanced by isolation. GradGames intends to improve quality of life among graduate students by providing a supportive and open social environment where students can relax, engage in leisurely activities and form meaningful relationships with other graduate students. In this way, GradGames can serve as a complement to the resources provided by the university for student wellbeing.

If this is an existing project/event or a similar one exists, describe how the project/event is being expanded or enhanced.



GradGames socials have been run informally since Fall 2016, with expenses being mostly paid out of pocket by the organizers, a model which is not sustainable in the long run. Furthermore, so far the socials have depended on the organizers and attendees bringing their own games, which makes availability limited. Starting the following academic year, GradGames will have official club status, which allows for more funding opportunities. Besides being used to purchase refreshments for the socials, funds obtained by the club will also allow the purchase of a board game collection, which will be a property of the club independent of the members. With better funding, it is also our intention to organize larger events and increase collaboration with other organizations at Rice. We have already had socials in collaboration with the Graduate Student Association and Rice Graduate Apartments. In keeping with our goal of promoting graduate student wellbeing, we are pursuing ideas about collaborating with the Rice Wellbeing and Counseling Center as a way to make students aware of the resources available to them.

If your proposal is for a pilot project, suggest how it might develop over a three-year period.

GradGames is a new student organization that fills a niche that was not previously catered to in the graduate student community. We expect a growth in attendance of the socials over the following years, as visibility increases among the students. As the project develops, we would like to increase its presence within the university, through collaboration with other interested organizations as well as by hosting larger-scale events that go beyond the regular attendance of the socials. A successful pilot to such events was our collaboration with GSA at Beer Bike this year to host the Root Beer Kart gaming event during Willy Week.

Describe how you will measure the success and impact of this project. Please, provide quantitative targets, if possible.

The principal metric which we will use to measure the success of this project is attendance of the socials, including both the numbers for individual socials and over time. Related information can be derived from attendance as well. For example, diversity of departments will allow us to judge our reach, and repeated attendance by individuals can be used to evaluate member retention. As a more qualitative metric, we will also rely on feedback by attendees.



BUDGET

Itemized Budget

Please, provide an itemized budget. List each item, a description, and the anticipated cost.

We plan on holding a total of 8 socials in the Fall semester. Out of these, we plan for 5 to be regular events, 2 to be larger events, possibly in collaboration with other organizations, with additional costs on food catered from particular stores and decoration, and 1 to be a large-scale Halloween-themed event for 30-40 people. We provide example budgets from similar events held over the past year as an estimate of the expenses of each event.

Example budget of a regular social:

Item	Description	Cost
Food		
	Black Tea Bags	\$3.64
	Green Tea Bags	\$3.64
	Deli Ham	\$4.97
	Hummus	\$2.38
	Deli Turkey	\$4.97
	Croissants (18 count)	\$5.96
	American Singles Cheese	\$2.77
	Oreo Thins	\$2.98
Advertisement		
	Printing fees for posters	\$0.65
Total Expenses		\$31.96

Additional costs for larger events (based on Spring 2017 Mardi Gras social):

Item	Description	Cost
Food		
	Breaded Bone-In Wings Party Pan	\$24.99
	Muffins	\$4.99
Decorations		
	Masks (package of 12)	\$5.99
	Tablecloth	\$1.99
Total Expenses		\$37.96



Large-scale event (based on Beer Bike 2017 Root Beer Kart event in collaboration with GSA):

Item	Description	Cost
Food		
	Pizza	\$182.50
	Soda (2 cases of 35)	\$20.96
	Chips (1 box of 50)	\$11.66
	Water (1 case of 40)	\$4.88
	Plates	\$5.26
	Cups	\$2.56
	Napkins	\$3.49
	Silverware	\$9.97
	Orange Juice	\$13.98
	Ice cream (2 tubs)	\$22.60
Prizes		
	Gift cards	\$40.00
Total Expenses		\$307.86

Estimated expenses for the Fall 2017 semester:

Item	Description	Cost
Base expenses for 7 socials		\$223.72
Additional expenses for 2 larger socials		\$75.92
Halloween event		\$307.86
Total Expenses		\$607.50

Funds from other sources

Please, provide any information on funds from other sources that you have secured or potential funds that you plan to apply for.

We intend to apply to the GSA Student Activity Grant in order to fund the Halloween-themed large-scale event.

Source	Status	Cost
GSA Student Activity Grant	Plan to apply	\$250

GRAD starter

Total Amount		\$250

If the project/event has been offered in the past, how was it supported?

As mentioned above, the project was mainly self-funded during the Fall 2016 semester, with games provided by the organizers and other attendees and the refreshments paid out of pocket. In the Spring 2017 semester, the events were partly funded by a Student Activities Grant of \$250.