

Attendance

Daniel, LGC
Robert, IFC
Trevor, IFC
Jack, IFC
Michael, IFC
Courtney, Panhel
Meredith, Panhel
Caitlyn, Panhel
Susan, McCormick
Sarah, Senior House
Erica, Burton-Connor
Meredith, Next House
Sarah, New House
Isaac, Random
Piper, East Campus
Alana, MacGregor
Yuge, Simmons
Billy, Maseeh
Liz, Baker

Meeting is called to order at 7:30 PM by President Matthew Davis.

I. Attendance

II. Approval of Minutes from December 9, 2016

The minutes from the last meeting, December 9, 2016 are approved 18-0-1

III. State of the UA Report

Matt: Welcome. I had the opportunity to meet most of you one-on-one... I want to update everyone... we had a Thursday meeting last week... we went over the new principles and each committee member wrote a measurable goal, as well as each officer... new initiatives...

Diversity working group... Kyle Archer, Sophia Liu, Raul Boquin, Rasheed Auguste... Alyssa Napier, and a few other people... Sophia is leading an initiative to getting a new website... we looked at it at the last Cabinet meeting...

Advising... so this is undergraduate advising... Dante Delaney, who is the head of our Academic Advisory Group is working on a Task Force... two to three recommendations working with Dean Freeman... working on reinstating the faculty board... the UA used to have a faculty board... it fell apart... we're definitely gonna have it in place by the end of this year.

Next thing is the career fair... I met with GECD, Class Council Presidents, SWE president, GSC President... there are 13 main categories that we heard... in general, those have to do with recruitment processes... diversity of majors and companies... general logistics...

Next one is one that we've been working on for a while... 50/50 it happening this semester... 75/25 a chance of it happening next year... getting a brass rat for every sophomore... we've been working with the Chancellor's Office.

Our special projects committee piloted a program last semester... to bring food trucks to campus. And then two new things that you'll see rolling out soon... two new things for new freshmen to get when they arrive in the fall... 101 tips sort of thing... second project... trying to bring back something akin to the Hitchhiker's or How to Get Around MIT guide...

Two resignations... secretary, Alex Zele... Dang Pham, chair of Resource Development Committee.

Two projects... resilience project... inside the Tech in the opinions section, each cycle there has been a different person highlighted... been run by our Student Support and Wellness Committee. The second thing is the Dorm Electricity Competition that will be started in February by our Sustainability Committee... the goal is that your dormitory saves as much electricity as possible. Memory from New House President... we got \$5,000...

Any questions?

- Sadun: How do I get in on the guide?
- Matt: You can talk to me for now.

IV. Discussion of and vote on the UA Budget

Alekhya: I think Matt said that he had gone over the budget with most of you... for the retreat... I'm just going to go through the overview of it and highlight committee breakdown. As you can see from the overview, our available balance right now is around \$238,000 and that's from our Student Life Fee from last semester... gets deposited at the beginning of each academic year. We underspent by a lot for our committees last semester... Our committee expenditures, which are represented by the second tab, total to this \$14,000 right here... Our FinBoard expenditures total to around \$200,000... this is how much we're allocating for... the spring and the winter cycle. We're allocating around \$87,000 for the winter cycle and \$100,000 for the spring cycle. This is based off of last year's numbers. Groups underspent by about 61% and we took 61% of what we spent last year... this is an extra amount we had... we end up with a surplus... we decided to put more than half our surplus back into student groups... for student-faculty dinners, we budgeted about \$12,000... we don't expect to exceed \$12,000... we lowered the cap from \$25 to \$20 a person... we should see around the same kind of spending... finally, Fresh Fund... our fund to help new student groups get off the ground... especially if they're between cycles... we allocated \$3000 for that... I think we won't reach it... last semester we allocated only about \$600... but it's good to have that... We get around a \$10,000 surplus at the end. Does anyone have any questions?...

Okay, so the committee breakdown... we're not going to go through every line item... we've divided it into committees, as well as our portion of the ASA... last semester we got that reimbursed by the GSC... but this semester, we are paying for our share... total committee spending is around \$14,000... we're keeping to our no food for internal meetings rule, so this money is going straight to student benefit...

The last tab we have is for UA General Operations, which is coming out of Sophia's Bush fund... any questions or concerns?

Matt: Just some feedback from the past... I'm just going to give everyone 30 seconds to think of questions... any questions?

[None]

The next item is to vote on the UA Budget (*explains voting procedure and how abstentions work*).

Robert moves to pass the budget. The budget passes unanimously.

V. Break into small groups:

During this period, councillors/undergraduates will break out into small groups of their choice (4-5 people per group) to discuss and construct ideas and plans on how to proceed with various topics of interest. These topics are brought forward by councillors and undergraduates. The discussions will last for thirty minutes, after which each group will present out to Council for discussion. Councillors are also encouraged to spend time at multiple groups if they are interested in multiple topics.

A. Withdrawal Policy

This group will discuss concerns with and questions around the current withdrawal policy, and create recommendations around what should be discussed about them as well as ideas for how to improve the policy;

- People who are away from MIT... there's a lot of communication problems... people don't know what the policies are exactly, what they need to be doing
- When people do take time off, it's unclear who the lines of communication are... for some people who take time off, it's clear, but that's not true of everyone... you should have someone you can reach out to should you need to
- This is talking about all academic withdrawals and voluntary withdrawals, under the purview of the CAP
- We also discussed a bit about S^3 and having some sort of feedback system, or complaint system, that sort of thing
- Lots of issues with housing and rooms being filled in the fall semester and empty spots in the spring... when you come back it's really important that you are living with people

Alekhya: What is the difference between involuntary and voluntary?

Tamar: It's essential take voluntary withdrawal or we will force you to take involuntary withdrawal. The terms of leaving and coming back are different... so it's in your best interest to take voluntary withdrawal...

Obasi: I'm on CAP... the terms of coming back are not technically different... as it stands now it's the same process for all... the form you fill out and the person it goes to is the same in all cases

Dante: For clarification, is it different... I know it's different for medical vs. academic... what if you want to take time off for an internship...

Obasi: So, for informational purposes... there are three types of practically used withdrawals... academic non-medical voluntary... voluntary when you realize you are failing everything... voluntary medical withdrawal with a certification from medical... there is required withdrawal, which is the CAP saying that you need to leave for academic reasons

Sarah: What about the... where the CAP basically told them they had to leave... and they gave them less than a week to move out of their dorm and they had nowhere to live for two months...

Tamar: So, that is an issue that's definitely been spoken about... disclaimer, I'm not on the CAP... they have produced a report and it's going to be released soon, so I hope that that will answer some of the questions.

Taylor: Can I ask about the policy, or, more the way the policy is framed that makes a lot of students feel like they cannot come back to campus or connect to students on campus and what sorts of ramifications that has?

Obasi: I do not want to speak for the committee on academic in public forum... everything is on the table about our current withdrawal process, including the things told to people before they leave, and the process surrounding why they are withdrawing...

Tamar: There are definitely reasons for people involved in the process for a student on withdrawal to be separated from MIT... because you probably need separation...

Isaac: Are the people who are saying this medical people?

Tamar: Yes, S^3

Dante: Are there any accommodations made for international students?... Visa requirements?

Tamar: I don't have the answer.

Sophia: I don't think there are.

Obasi: When CAP is considering someone, everything is considered... we care deeply....

Susan: I think that things do happen and it should be reconsidered... I have an international friend... and one thing is... you need to get your classes and submit a transcript and in this situation, they couldn't say give him the visa number to come back until they received his classes... etc. There are a lot of things at play that could be reconsidered.

Yuge: Does anyone have numbers on current rate of people who take withdrawal whether voluntary or involuntary?

Obasi: Those numbers are not public and I cannot disclose them... you should email Stephen Pepper or Charles Stuart...

B. Bylaws

This group will discuss bylaws amendments that have been created by the Bylaws Committee last semester, review them and make recommendations on how to move forward;

Olivia: The UA has a constitution... Council also has bylaws... and they have a lot of different issues associated with them... a common one, relevant to the document at hand... the documents assume students are students for four years without breaks... The work of this committee has been to fix holes like this and with the governing documents... It's also extremely important for the Judicial Review Board to refer to these documents when nothing else is working. We discussed this amendment with Piper... in the case of

a JRB tie or there's a complaint against the JRB, to implement a jury and a random panel of undergraduates decide on the issue opposed to having the JRB work on that. The entirety of our discussion was presenting a pretty significant change to the governing documents.

Matt: ... we will have another section discussing all the other bylaws at some point... this is not very attractive... but exceedingly important, so we do have three vacant Council spots that need to be filled by councilors.

Olivia: Just... the JRB's entire job is, when nothing in the UA is working... to take charge... most of the time everything goes fine... this is important, in having documents that allow me and the JRB to do its job... it's also important for undergraduates to know of this body because it can file a complaint against the UA to the JRB... if we make a decision, everyone has to follow that decision... those are things we are fixing in these bylaws... if all of Council is against a decision, they can stop that from happening... you received a poll, that Matthew sent, to ask you when your house meeting time is... it is crucial for you to fill it out... so that I, the JRB, and Matthew, can come to your dorm and have an effective mechanism for the UA to be checked.

C. Student Group Recognition and Funding

This group will discuss what types of student groups should be recognized, and the general strategy by which the UA should fund student groups moving forward.

One thing we talked about were running an audit on all the student groups that receive FinBoard funding, 5% of those student groups, to make sure the budget they put forward is actually being used for the correct things... suggestions each quarter...

A lot of the reasons... there's some inequity in funding... especially in the percentage of funding that they ask for and receive... new treasurers may not know how to write a compelling budget... a mandatory training for new treasurers at the beginning of every quarter that only new treasurers would have to attend, to make their job easier and also to make it such that earnest effort to add to the MIT community are properly funded... without this training, FinBoard funding would not be allocated.

Isaac: I think the treasurer not showing up means you don't get funding is a bit too harsh... people get listed as treasurer... get sick...

Liz: Our thought there... is that treasurers already have a mandatory SAO training... this workshop would take two different dates, and also if you couldn't attend you could send a representative... the point is... that these people... we're going to tell them what they need to know... so they can allocate things... making it mandatory will make the whole process easier

Gabi: Often, people plan for this money and start spending... poor planning... it's best because the better their budgets are the more they're going to get funded

Obasi: In my experience, the mandatory training is technically mandatory and not functionally mandatory...

Gabi: They would be the ones to enforce mandatory...

Liz: Our point is that if you don't attend this training you don't get FinBoard funding

Mary: SAO has been talking about moving their trainings online...

Obasi: Presidents... and up to two additional non-officer signatories... can be financial signatories...

Alana: We want to reduce the disparity between groups... people who review this can do it a lot more efficiently if budgets are appropriately written... this is not for asking a purchase or for making a reimbursement, it's for submitting a budget

Liz: We would have a database keeping track of who has done this training.

Paul: How large is FinBoard? Would they have the power to do 5% audit on student groups?

...

Matt: An alternative mechanism... a week period 10 student groups... etc.

Liz: This is all *FinBoard* groups, not ASA student groups

Gabi: Somewhere between 170 and 190 student groups... each person is responsible of 20 groups... if we had to audit them, it wouldn't be that hard...

D. Career Fair

This group will discuss the current state of Career Fair, construct an idea of what the goals of an MIT Career Fair should be, and recommend changes for future Career Fairs;

Problems and Concerns

- Diversity of majors, a lot of course 6
- Diversity of opportunities, even within majors, we're trying to get different companies to come
- Unenthusiastic staffing... the people who pay a lot of money do not staff

The Ideal Career Fair

- Direct path to job opportunities
- Exposure to smaller companies and nonprofits
- Exposure to alternative career paths

Changes

- Booth randomization, a lot of the times various companies that are similar are together
- Tech in Rockwell, everybody is going to visit them... why do they also get the best spot?
- Better advance logistics, the nametag thing was a bit of a snafu this year

Taylor: So, I actually worked at a really tiny branch of the department of education... but not enough people came and say hello... so they no longer want to spend x thousand dollars and take % of their people out of their office...

Robert: A lot of times it may be location...

Isaac: Last year, career fair was during classes... this made it a lot harder to go to career fair and reduced the value

Matt: That is something we are working on and will not happen again

Obasi: One of the reasons that tech companies have the most prominent place is that career fair is a revenue generating company... as long as the paradigm remains that career fair is a revenue generating

entity, the paradigm of rich tech companies getting prime positions will also remain... career fair also pays for a lot of things, including senior week...

Robert: I think that's true for a number of companies... but for a lot of tech companies, no matter how much they pay, are still in the ice rink.

Taylor: ...would it be possible for offering reciprocity to share career fairs with potentially Harvard or Tufts?

Githui: I worked at career services last year and they're very protective of the MIT brand and who they let into the MIT career fair... maybe... but probably no...

Isaac: Would it be possible... there are smaller career fair like things, like X Fair and whatnot... would it be possible for some of these changes be accomplished through a separate event?...

Dante: For major related career fairs, we just want to get a listing... we got mostly silence or, "the people who we want to be at this event are already at this event..." we were thinking about an alternative career fair... different, unconventional career paths... you can leverage economies of scale... here are these other things... you increase the likelihood of people coming across something that they like

E. Diversity

This group will discuss diversity within student government and MIT as a whole, and recommend a path forward to increase awareness amongst the student body, as well as how to involve under-represented minority students in student government.

- Different points of view, backgrounds
- Diversity @ MIT is relatively good, diversity in student government? In UA?
- People self select into homogenized groups
- Cultural housing... how does this impact diversity at MIT?
- There's no hang out spot on campus... no place to meet new people... people are segregated by dormcourse/FSILG... how does geography affect this? We need a new community center... kresge lawn... and killian... easy over the summer, harder over the winter....
- Why aren't we talking about this? No easy answers... not necessarily a glaring problem... because MIT as a whole is diverse... cannot be solved overnight
- Imposter syndrome contributes to lower confidence... class councils are elected early on, and because it's so early... they're having a carryover of their confidence from high school.

Dante: The housing aspect... I understand diversity is important... what I don't think is helpful is imposing diversity... or imposing diversity... or radically restructuring... some of the terms put me on edge... a community center... a place where everyone can gather... you want to go home to people that you can relate to... people who have similar experiences... but who we are as a person beforehand affects the experiences that we have... I don't think that forcing people who may not be able to help you as much is beneficial to the student body as a whole.

Isaac: This is something I've discussed with my housemaster... allowing people to form the groups that they want to is good... the problem happens when groups are excluding people from joining... breaking up groups I don't think is helping... but looking into... making sure groups aren't being exclusionary...

Sadun: I'm curious as to why people are jumping to the housing systems so rapidly... do you think we're going to see radically different problems of diversity? There seems to be a concentration of non-diversity as

government... it's probably just as bad at other universities... housing is a red herring of things we could really attack to attack this problem.

Yo: I'm not sure I buy your explanation for lack of diversity in student government... I'm sure imposter syndrome is a part of it... I think a lot of it has to do with the social systems that lead to student government... the people that are informed of the roles and what they entail... are people that have been part of a social group... I think that there are other phenomena that we can look at...

Sarah (New House): We were just brainstorming ideas.

Sarah (NH): You're only seeing one or a couple of faces that represent each individual government... if you go around to each dorm you'll see a lot of diversity... it's not just the one person representing

Yo: For those of you in DormCon... we'll be talking about this soon...

Obasi: My experience with IFC in general... and the 5 or 6 exec house board that I know are not largely more diverse than Council...

Sarah (NH): If some dorms are more diverse... there's still... why are all the presidents not diverse? We could still have diversity here...

Obasi: I would also, think that in general... we should be sure what we're talking about when we say diversity... actually I've read several magazine and internet articles and a couple of blogs... at Ivy League universities at Harvard... racial diversity is not the only issue via inclusion

Taylor: MIT living groups and clubs are much more socioeconomically diverse than racially diverse... we see much less of a dichotomy in those categories.

VI. Small Group Presentations and Recommendations

(See notes above)

VII. Adjournment

New Ideas for FinBoard

- Audit small amount (~5%) of student group spending
 - penalties? finding suspension for one quarter?
- Train new treasurers of student groups in addition to SAC training
 - make the treasurer transition a smooth

① expand to include...

Food for thought

- * number of student groups keeps increasing ~~but~~ by SAC but the budget stays the same
- * corporate sponsorship may create unwanted ties to large companies

DIVERSITY

- Different Parts of View, Backgrounds
- Diversity @ MIT ✓, Diversity in UA?
- Self-selecting into homogenized groups?
 - ↳ can be
 - ↳ reduce
 - ↳ Over time and exposure?
- Cultural training - how does this impact diversity @ MIT
- No "hanging out" spot on campus
 - ↳ there are places to meet non people
 - ↳ segregated by dept/course/FSLC
 - ↳ how does geography affect this?
 - ↳ NEW COMMUNITY CENTER
 - ↳ KONGYI LOUNGE / KILLIAN
 - ↳ the place to hang out in the winter?
- Why aren't we talking about this?
 - ↳ too easy answer
 - ↳ not necessarily a glaring problem for MIT as a whole is diverse
 - ↳ No radical restructuring of social system, can anything be happen?
 - ↳ Diversity ~~then~~ does not change overnight
- Do URM's feel confident enough to run for leadership positions (i.e. class pres)?
 - ↳ Imposing structure (or) for URM's

Class Council - Carryover of confidence?
↳ Is MIT "asking" confidence?

View, Backgrounds

✓ Diversity in UA?
Self-selecting groups?

! success that
TUM to promote diversity with

copy me
copy me

Withdrawal

- major concern: lack of support for people who have withdrawn
- major concern: people feel coerced into "voluntary" withdrawal
- knowing about 2L or leaving policy well in advance of submitting form
- placement in housing upon return
 - ↳ can people returning be placed at top of upperclassman transfer list? If not in fall, then spring?
- specific policies for readmission?
 - ↳ strict requirements tie people's hands
- when you leave, knowing what you need to do + who to talk to
 - ↳ clearly communicate that MIT ~~prefers~~ prefers students take as much time needed to get well, as opposed to getting students back ASAP
- dispel discouragement for students who don't get admitted the first time you reapply
- making options like medical 'light-load' well known
- consolidating and better organizing information about resources
- currently no system for reporting poor experiences w/ S²

CAREER FAIR

PROBLEMS + CONCERNS

- ① diversity of majors
- ② not representative of diversity of opportunities
- ③ unenthusiastic staffing

IDEAL CAREER FAIR

- ① direct path to job opportunities
- ② exposure to smaller companies / nonprofits
- ③ exposure to alternative career paths

CHANGES

- ① Booth randomization
- ② Tech in Rockwell
- ③ Better advance logistics