42 U.A.S. 13

Minutes from March 14, 2011

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm.

1. Guest Speaker: Chancellor W. Eric L. Grimson, PhD '80

Eric: So, I appreciate the chance to come and meet with you. Vrajesh suggested that what I might do is tell you a little bit about me, a little bit about what I hope we can accomplish. I'm sure you have questions, and I'm happy to take questions to give you a sense of what I hope to do and what I hope to do with you.

Just a tiny bit of background. I was born and raised in a small town in Midwestern Canada. I moved south for the weather, moved for the weather. The town was so small it was a lie. I grow up in a city…well the rules are any gathering of more than 5000 counts as a city, and there are only 6 of them. I did my undergraduate at a place you've never heard of. We'd say the University of Virginia. I came to MIT to do my graduate work. I came in 1975; so I'm an old timer. When I came here, I spent the first term, maybe two terms, waiting for somebody to come up and tell me: "We're really sorry; but your folder was supposed to go to this pile, but we accidently put it here in this pile." I'm convinced everyone else was smarter than me. I still think that's true, but I just don't care anymore. We're so full of smart people, one of the things we have to do is help people get over that.

I got my PhD in 1980. I spent 4 years in lab. It's part of CSAIL. I joined the faulty in 1984. I've been on the faculty for 27 years. I have to admit, I wasn't thrilled when one of my graduate students pointed out that my thesis was older than my grad students. You may have seen this written up in the paper. It is a correct number. I calculated it for the Dean: I have lectured something north of 10000 students. For those of you that have heard about it, it's sort of the legendary 6.001 class. I like to keep introductory classes. There are a few folks here that have me in 6.01. I've also taught Intro Signals to students. The 10000 students, I can't remember them all; so, please don't ask me for all of those names. It's part of what I like being at MIT for. Also, a lot of graduate students, I have completed or help supervise. I'm one short of 50 PhD students. When he graduates, I'll have to find another one.

My research area is CS. For the last 20 years, I've been primarily focused on medical originalities. I've helped build systems to help surgeons do surveys better. I've served on a bunch of committees: CAP, GIR Taskforce, CIP (the Committee on Intellectual Property). We've had a committee a year and a half a year ago, I was looking at S^3. Then, the other one I've done for a long time. I've been a Chair for Commencement. I've been on for many years. This is my last year. I made a deal, this will be my 21st. I'm a big fan of commencement. I think it's a great opportunity to celebrate a lot of hard work. I hope to see people march across the stage. You'll get a chance. I know the ceremony feels long, but, the first thing is every student walks off the stage with their diploma in their hands. Second, we make sure that every student gets their name read out. We have a professional reader. We average a name every 1.6 seconds. You'll find that most of them will ask you for very detailed pronunciation. Some of them will actually set up a phone system so you can call and say your name. The last one is…some of you may wonder about the speakers we get. Sometimes, we have people that turn us down. We don't give out honorary degrees. We never had, and we never will. We don't give them away; you've got to earn them.

You're all learning them the hard way. There are two. We've made them an honorary member of the faculty. We don't give degrees, to important people. They earn them the hard way.

You haven't lived until you've been through the fixed point – the point where the Fahrenheit and Celsius are the same.

What are my priorities? First question I get asked; what does the Chancellor do? The job description was very simple – all things students. Anything that deals with the students has to flow up through my office. So priorities:

My first priority is to listen. I know sometimes when people come into a new job, what are you going to do right away. My first job is to stand around and listen. I need to hear from as many voices as we can. I don't want to start making quick decisions until I had a chance to listen to people. I'm on the listening tour.

My wife is very pleased with this new job, since I've started. I've been home for dinner once. We used to split the cooking; it says something about what she thinks about my cooking. I really need to hear from as many groups as I can. Certainly leadership, but I want to say random collections of people. I said at one point I wanted to hear from the average students. We have average students at MIT. I wanted to hear from the exceptional students, because we have that.

I want to work with as many student groups to try and figure out ways to improve all channels of communication. I'm sure we can do more of this. One of those things I have to figure out is where those opportunities are. Communication channels are open from me. We don't have to listen to each other. Trying to listen to the viewpoint perspective and hopefully have enough respect for each other to move onto the next big issues. The one that's going to take the most amount of time.

One of the reasons I took this job. We have a community to have to think about strategizing a plan. What the next 20 years of education ought to look like at a place like MIT. What is it? Duh, there's an obvious statement right. I just realized you're transcribing everything. I sound like Homer Simpson. For somebody like me who's been here for so many years, the change is dramatic. It's particularly dramatic. For a long time, we had a lecture-recitation/tutorial model. 450 of your closest friends in 10-250. One of the things faculty observed is, it's generally not attended. We don't have 8 o'clock recitations. We don't have 9 o'clock. The 10s are fading. A better way of saying it is, students learn differently as technology evolves. I'm not trying to pick on recitations, but I'm using it as an example for what education should look like at MIT. How can we use credible changes and ones that we can't predict to find out what this experience should look like. What should our role be in terms of preserving residential-based campus experience and going of to do global things? What's our obligation to provide education experiences outside of 02139? I have ideas, but I want to listen to people at all levels. There are some very inventive faculty and students here. I want to get a sense of what it's like. MIT needs to stay at the very forefront of education. That's where we are now. If we're complacent, we're going to turn around and realize we're not anymore. We've got to realize not just the incremental things. For a long preamble, I wanted to give you a sense of who I am. When I say those are 3 priorities, they're obviously not the only ones, but I'm sure you've got questions; so, I will turn them back over to Jonté to try and respond to question you'd like to ask.

Anyone figure out the fixed point? It's between -40 and -41. I hope you never have that experience.

Jonté: I just wanted to go ahead and thank you for coming and giving your advice. Since this is the beginning of the relations for the next few years, maybe many decades, I would like everyone to introduce yourself. Say your name, position, class year, and maybe something else about you at the table.

Senate and the audience introduce themselves.

Allan: I thank you again for showing up tonight. The last part of what you introduced, the moving changing facets of education, struck home with me. I sit on the Student Online Study Group. We're working on the problem. I'm curious what your thoughts are on online education. Are you moving in that direction? Do you think lecture-recitation is still valuable for the next 20 years?

Grimson: It's a good question, I want to be careful how I answer it. Like I said, we have to think about all options, but I will tell you my own reaction, and my reaction for the last 10 years. I think there are aspects of being here, joking aside, there's an aspect of being here, sitting literally with a bunch of your friends in a class, sitting at hours in classes, no UROPs, doing the problem sets, that are part of the experience. I think social networking can help with but can't replace. I'm not on the record encouraging you to stay up for all hours of the night. The point is to build connections that can only be in a residential setting. I don't think it can be completely online. I'll give you something on an experiment.

Having said that, there are clearly aspects online we have to take advantage of. OCW is one. You're part of a group. You're spending 6 weeks in the other Cambridge, or 6 weeks in Singapore; how can we make that easier for you to do so while still keeping up with what's going on with campus. There's a place where I think online can have an impact for us. That's just one example. I don't' see us moving away from residence based. It's too much apart from what we're going to do. You didn't ask this, but I don't see us anytime soon. I don't see us moving aggressively to traditional year abroad. I think we should do other things; there's too much to what you need to learn here to be important.

I'll give you the quick story. One of the ways to make progress is to think of experiences. One of my colleagues. I could give the best lecture of the world, by the end of the term, I might have 50%. No matter how great a lecture I give, only 50% of the students would show up. We tried an experiment, 10-12 lecture online. We didn't video tape them. We made them audio annotated slides. We had a detailed printout. We tried an experiment where we literally cancelled lectures, and we expected students to listen to lecture before they came to recitation. We tried for 4 turns, and what we discovered is that students perform at least as well on that system then under another system. But, we went back to lectures. In listening to students: I know I can watch that lecture at any time, but there is something to the experience of sitting and watching somebody live in 10-250, making mistakes on the board. That's part of the experience, and I think we have to think about it.

I learned two really interesting things when we can track when students listen to lecture. Just get a sense of it; they're interesting. The first thing is the peak hour to listen to 6.01lectures online…can you guess it? 2 AM. The second thing I learned was there was no hour of the day where somebody wasn't listening to my voice. The one that really got me bothered was, I was walking down the Infinite, talking to a colleague, and they both shuddered when they heard my voice. It was like a nightmare on 6.01 lecture. I wanted to move away from that. Aside from silly stories, I think that's something we should think about carefully, not something quick.

Tim R: You mentioned that you wanted to open channels of listening. I just want to know, where do you see the students in that, reforming of communication channels? Do you see us as a group of students that should be brought in further? Should we have our current committees? Should we add more people?

Grimson: I'm going to give you a couple of answers. I'd like to see us, how should we bring in students. There are certain things where I have to go listen to other faculty. I need to understand all the people in DUE. I knew what most of them thought. There are some things I need to figure out. A big part of my job and my mind is to actually listen to student groups. One of the things I've done in the first couple of weeks is coming here. The UA. I've had a meeting with Panhel, and I've had a meeting with GSC Exec and IFC president. I need to understand those communities and a little of their priorities. I haven't quite answered it. Part of my job is to listen to a lot of those groups. I'd like to hear from collections of students. I've been toying with ideas and ways I might do that.

Tim R: You're referring to random collections?

In terms of other committees, you guys understand your priorities. I look forward to talking to leadership of different student groups, to have a dialogue about how are those channels doing? Are there other things we can do to try and improve those channels. I've been trying to figure out, is there some way to pick a day of the week? Say I'm in Forbes Café having lunch.

Offices hours encouraging people to just come by, not just when they have an issue. Somebody walking by saying how terrifying it is, I just want to have lunch with a chancellor at MIT, talking about if the Red Sox are finally going to do it. Yankees fans are going to throw things at me. My experience in the past is that people only come to chat when they have a particular issue. I'm toying with this idea. If you have thoughts, tell me about it. If I offer to buy lunch, I'll get a lot of people. I haven't figure out this one yet. To come back to your question, communication has to be a dialogue; it has to be as many voices as I can find time to hear.

Betsy: So, you've been here for a number of years. I'm wondering if during the past years you've seen more effective models of student engagement. Are there times where you can learn on the past?

Grimson: That is a great question, and as always, I'm going to give you two parts to it. The first part is, I've seen times when I think the level of trust has been better than I'm concerned it's now. That's both sides. That's part of my concern – to try and rebuild that. You get times when things don't work. The level of trust. People on my end of the campus should assume that in general, students have the best interest of the institute. They want to make this a great place for students. I would hope that we can get one stage where students would make the same course of action when someone in the admins will take action. They have the interests of the institute. It's not quite answering the question; we need to get back to that. Are there better models? I've certainly seen things in the past. I'm going to have to do some thinking. What was it about that I can learn from the previous models. I'm going to have to think about it, but it's a good question.

Sivakami: I was wondering what are your thoughts on the academic advising system at MIT and is there room to grow? And my second question is how do you think MIT will be able to provide the same quality if enrollment increases.

Grimson: Academic advising. I'm thinking about the undergraduates. It comes, as you know well, in two flavors. There's the first year experience and then the transition into the departments like so many things at MIT. Departments have a fair amount of autonomy. There's probably a fair range of advising, and

there's a place where I think, as an institute, we can learn from some best practices. I've already been talking to some of the staff in the DUE, gathering data about what works and what hasn't worked.

Pardon me from doing this, I'll take my own department. 6 years ago when I took over the department, one of the things I did was to look at the Senior Surveys. One the things that jumped out at me was the advising was not working well it had in the past; so, we did some focus groups. Students, faculty advisors, etc. I'm delighted to say that last year's survey, advising has gotten significantly better. It's not perfect, but we incorporate the associate advisor system used in first year advising. Sometimes the best advice you get is coming from somebody that just came through that class. I, as a senior, can tell you. Don't take it from so and so, take it from this person. Departments, I'd like to see why we can't all work with and learn from each other. I think we can always learn from best practices. I really want to cut down on the number of students that leave here saying, "My academic advisor won't see me at all. They have no idea who I am. I've only seen them once or twice. I'd really like to get them to a point where they become an asset."

For the freshman year, we have challenge. There are a lot of great people who volunteer to do others. I'm concerned that staff members aren't completely clued into the academics of the place. I would really like more faculty. It's a challenge. It's a challenge for a variety of reasons. Every faculty member has to give advising the departments; so, what can I do? I can find some carrots. I can find some sticks. In a way to demonstrate to faculty why it's important, President Hockfield and the Provost and I will all do freshmen. I don't know if I'll do a seminar yet. I have 24 undergraduate advisees in Course 6. It's a way to try and remind faculty it's important. I haven't told you how we do it, because I'm not certain. I have to make sure the freshman advising really captures the academic experience, and it really hands off.

We are, we the institute has committees regrowing the undergraduate class back to the way it was 20 years ago. 4500 students at undergraduate level. There have been a lot of people within various offices already looking at where are the places that are going to get pressure. I'll give you a quick example. TEAL, 8.02 is taught in a particular format. We need to make sure we can accommodate that. I need to make sure we can handle it that way. It is not on the academic side. It can be S^3 funding. All of those things, there are people looking at that. There are a number of groups; then, the Provost and I, and the President, will be having conversation about: where are the growths that we need to do? We can't grow on one end without limiting the other. The point is, we have to look at all of those aspects because we can't undercut the quality of education and miss a few things. I think people have been looking at every aspect of student life. On the places it comes up with, we did a study. We were looking at things like increasing the number of transfer students. Part of that study was they understand what additional load the departments take on. I think the general sense is that the departments can probably absorb what is going to be 10%. The exceptions will be some of the big departments. A 10% increase in Course 6 is an extra 70 students. We have to think about it. Long answer made short is: yes, we're trying to look at it.

Will: One issue going around is Walker Memorial. I'm going to use it as an example. In this case, we have student groups set for students, but there's also an issue of being renovated, deferred maintenance, overall idea of money and budget of MIT, etc.; we have money making sure MIT is efficient. Interest of students, which can be harder to qualify are being compromised. How do we, going forwards, make of these special cases?

Grimson: I'm not quite certain I understand your question.

Rachel M: Something where the students' interest are at play, and there's a lot of finances at play. Say, fundraising for repurposing the building. There you have the potential of income. How do you evaluate that in comparison with the students?

Grimson: I think, let's generalize it away from Walker. There's going be lots of places where this is going to come up. A little bit apples and oranges thing, though. I don't want to put a monetary value – I can't put one on student activity. You can on some parts but not others. I think the principles the institute has been trying to use in recent years are things like…those activities, I want to say those are better; if there are activities that could easily be relocated to other places, those are easy ones to deal with. And they become an easy part of the decision processes. If there are historical reasons why it has to be in a particular place, that's where it gets challenging. I think the principles. We don't want to shut things down. Let's not do Walker. We need to find homes for places. Sometimes there's going to need to be a compromise. Can we find you at homes? In those cases I think those are interesting ones to deal with it. I don't want you to come away with thoughts that this is clearly driven by finances. So, the best answer I can give you is, we've got to balance it. What are the pieces of that that have to be dealt with? I wish I could give you a numerical option. We understand some student groups have been here a really long time; we honor history as best as we can. We also have to figure out, how can we move forward? Every optimization function – not everything can be optimized at the same time.

Tim J: One of the things that, when it comes to an issue for students…you can kind of ask us what are your opinions, and there's kind of a range of ways we can come back and respond to it – anything from this is what we think and why we can think it. I think communication is very important forunderstanding why we have the beliefs that we do. I feel like there can be a balance for students. Let's stay students hate it's 1.5 miles long and in the shape of a rectangle – make it into a circle. We can say we hate it's a rectangle, or we can draw architectural plan to make it a circle. Where would it be most useful for you? With any place from ideas to a finished model for. How we would do it as students?

Grimson: The answer is very much a function of issue. If there's an issue that a lot of student care passionately about…I want to remind you that you know this. You have Dean for Student Life, Undergraduate Education, and other sources of issues. Again, everything eventually flows through me. What's the level? Sometimes the situation can be as simple as letting me know there's an issue. I'll give you an example. An example that might be a concern to us is safety on SafeRide. Some of that is just, letting me know that's an issue. Let me go to John DiFava. I'm talking now to students, and they said they're really worried about this. Letting people that are pros about this. We've got an issue with SafeRide in a particular area. We're not serving Lexington. It makes it easy for me to get at home late at night. What I'm saying is use your own judgment on that. Where I don't want to go is to have you, you as a generically as group of students, put a ton of effort into something only to have them say, "We can't do that for reasons that are not apparent to you" because you just wasted/spent a lot of time on something. It's frustrating when you're undercut on that issue. That's why I think it has to be the communication. Come and talk to me. For each case, we'll make a judgment. "Great by the way; there's a committee over her working on that. Let's get you others to work on this." Part of the reason I want to do it is I want to be careful that…you guys are very smart; you guys have some really interesting ideas. I've been on a lot of committees. I've seen great ideas, but I'm also, if you don't mind, a little more experienced. Some other folks have been on it to; sometimes, you have the right solution, and the experience is wrong. But, sometimes they really do have other factors. We don't want you to put a ton of energy into something, and it doesn't happen. That's a politician's answers. I hate that answer.

I'll remind you I've been using this a lot of the time. When I think of MIT, I think of this place as a meritocracy. It's worked. I really believe it. When I go to talk alumni, I ask them what makes them proud of wearing a brass issue. I got in here because of what I can do. The second most common answer, by the way is, OCW. The other places I really think meritocracy is…this place that values good ideas. Certainly I had in my years a group of 13 grad students sitting around, and I had a sophomore bring a meeting to a halt with a really good idea, where everybody stopped and thought about: "You know what, that as a really good idea." I hope that students can also understand that gray hair does come with a little bit of extra experience that sometimes says it is a good idea.

Leonid: S o you mentioned a few times that life is an integral part of MIT experience, I'm curious, do you plans to get to understand the dorm culture? Do you know it well?

Grimson: This is one I can answer easily. While I have some experience with many of the difference places on campus. I'm not knowledgeable about all of the various dorms. I'm not trying to sound like all of the politicians. I'm trying to get a sense of what are the different aspects to understand the differences between them; so, that we can figure out ways to get as many of them as you can. I need to look at it before I can give you clear answer.

Alex J: Can you maybe tell us about a time in your 6 years as head of the department, where you had to enforce a decision you didn't agree with, and how you handled it?

Grimson: I'm going to answer it. The trick, if you phrase it this way. The answer would've been. I want to take a slight variation on your question. Anybody, whether a department head, lab director, Chancellor, one of the things I think you have to do in this job is be willing to make hard decisions and stick them through. That's not quite what you asked cause I'm trying to still think of an example. Department head for 6 years, really big department. I had to 6 times tell a faculty member: "You're not getting tenure." I really liked them, but, at the same time, the department had to make a decision. If you're like, "There's no good news to not getting tenure," it's not like you're unemployed, but I think when you make that decision, you have to stick through, and you have to find ways to move forward. One thing, on a very difficult tenure decision we decided not to do…it was not unanimous with personnel or department heads, but having made the decision, everyone was on board. That's what you have to do. If you're publically still debating, that's the closest example I can give to you of times I had to make a decision that was a hard one but did it.

If I may I'll wrap it back around, if you're going to do this, part of what we have to do is to communicate. It's not a fun conversation I can have with somebody. For me, you'll do it in support to a manner that you can. You can assume at some point down the road, hopefully not tomorrow, I'm going to make a decision that we're not going got completely agree with. Before we do that, I hope we can have that dialogue face to face and figure out how to move forward.

Almas: In the beginning, you mentioned that MIT has to be great. MIT has to continue to be great. Historically, MIT has always balanced its roles as one of the educational intrusions and top research institution; do you think anything should be done at this point in order to maintain the balance?

Grimson: I don't see current problems with the balance, and if there is an issue, I'd like to hear about it. The nuance is, we've got some faulty who probably focus more on their research and less on their teaching than I like. That's going to be part of the game. That issue falls to department head to kind of readjust. I'll come back to that in a second. I think most faculty that I know here set those two parts of

the equation as equally important. We talk about mens and manus. It really matters. We don't require Latin as an entry to the institute anymore. I actually think it's a really valuable slogan for the institute. We don't just do theory; we do theory grounded in impractical thinking. I think it really interweaves. I think those two are really important. […] I think most departments really try and balance both aspects of it. I think these are equally important.

Can I finish with a 30 seconds statement? Some of you heard me say this before. Not all colleagues on the faculty agree with me on this. I got here many years ago by an alumnus. What was the EECS product? I think you can ask the same question as the institute. Interesting question, I haven't thought about this as manufacturing plant. We do many things extremely well at MIT. We are a world class institution. We generate unbelievable ideas, and we are a great source of entrepreneurship, you can take the statistic. All of the companies. We think we are the 11th largest in the country or the world. We do really good research. We do great entrepreneurship. We have superb faculty. Fundamentally, in my mind, the primarily products of this place is our students. We have to figure out who to make makes sure we polish you up enough. Not too many scratches on the surface. We're not doing our job, if we're not promoting great students.

I will leave with this last one, which is, anybody been through the fixed point? Occasionally there's somebody from Wisconsin.

Humphreys: Top of Mount Washington. 40 below; did not know what that was.

Grimson: I'll give you my record, and if you can beat it… My record in still air temperature, wind chill in a second, for still air is -60. With the wind chill, -114. You know how if you walk on really frozen snow, it creeps? I was really curious; so, I went outside on the grounds. It was frozen so solid that it creaked.

Recess Begins: 8:41 pm; Recess Ends: 8:49 pm.

2. Guest Speaker: Henry Humphreys

Humphreys: Thank you for your time. I've only been here for all of 5 months. It seems a little bit longer. My title is slightly misleading, I also received the FSILGs as well as all retail catering, pubs on campus, graduate housing, and undergraduate housing; so, I have a lot. One of the first things I did when I arrived here back in November was to tour every residence hall and dorm to see how students live. That's why I came to talk to you. Vrajesh and I have talked about this. I've spoken with a couple of senators. I think at least Betsy, as well as some of the DormCon presidents. Obviously, as some of you are actually aware of this. I've been talking about dining halls. What has not been talked about, which needs equal consideration, is the cook-for-yourself communities. That's why I'm here to speak to you all.

One of the things I noticed, in going through cook-for-yourself. They're as valuable as the communities where we will have residential dining. One of the things I noticed was, this institution has not done an accurate job for the cook-for-yourself communities. Most of what I see are the kind of stoves you buy that I buy for my own home. There is not proper ventilation for cooking, dishwashers, cleaning facilities, proper counter surfaces, etc. I'm talking from the 40,000 foot level right now. There are several different types of cooking communities. What I'm intending to do is, beginning in June of the next year, once commencement is over, we're going to take one of the buildings and start renovating them. I have to develop a schedule and a budget. The budget is going to determine how much money we're actually looking at to design the kitchens. My plan is to work with groups of students to have a general design. As we move forward, we're going to need to be able to design for specific buildings. We're going to

have a template to help us form a budget. We're going to have to design for each of the other facilities, because each are different.

What I need to do is, what is the best way for getting ideas? I'm also meeting with DormCon on Thursday to solicit ideas from them. I'm not asking you to provide answers tonight. What might be best, as a collective group, is to talk about it and bring it back. Share with me what you think are the best ideas. I do need to move fairly quickly because if we're going to start construction in June, we're going to need to work it out with the architects in early fall to price it out. We need to put it out to bid and have it ready in June. Even though it may sound like it's a minor thing to do, the renovation of the kitchens project, after about 3 months, it will take us a good part of the summer to get the proper equipment to those communities. I mean everything from stoves to countertops. We put garbage disposals in. We need to have all of those discussions; so, what I'm asking from all of you. I won't limit it to just the people that live in cook for yourself communities. I'm asking all senators for feedback and a group of students to work with. That is my request for all of you.

I know at this time, student engagement is a very important issue. I should let you know, Jonté and I were talking about this, I come from an institution where you beg for students to be involved. Obviously, I don't need that here, but I need to know the proper way to do this. As I tell this to everybody, I know I have a lot of great ideas, but I need to be talking to the end users. That's where I know it's going. What I would like to do is just put it out for you to discuss at one of the meetings and to take feedback on how to proceed forward. I'll do the exact same thing when I meet with DormCon presidents on Thursday. Any immediate questions?

Ashley: I live in Senior House. I actually looked at our kitchen situation recently, and I think our biggest problem is lack of space; we have 25 people sharing our kitchen and 2 refrigerators. Everyone has a mini fridge. We have to buy them, it's financially inefficient, and it wastes resources, but we need a place to put our food.

Humphreys: I think that's one of those things we have to work out with an architect: if the space is or is not appropriate for what we need to do, if we are limited by the structure of the building, how do we make the most efficient services, what do we do, and so forth. The architects...this is their specialty. But they should not just be relied upon. Someone like myself...yes, I can design kitchens, but I'm not the users of them. The very thing you are talking about, though, is what I saw, and that needs to be corrected.

Leonid: I'm from EC. I love our kitchens. You said every dorm is different. I think a clear way is to ask the dorms what they want. Would you be open to a dorm deciding they don't want a dishwasher? I'm just curious.

Henry: Yes, it would be. I might think a dishwasher makes sense, or you can propose an argument. I can say I really don't want them, but you can make an argument for yes we should have them. Yes, I think each of the dorms is unique, by culture, by the design of the building, by who designed it. I think we can have that. What is important to each?

Leonid: You'll allow each to decide by themselves?

Henry: Yes, the template are the absolutes that each kitchen needs. The type of stove, central ventilation system, proper sewerage draining, sinks, etc., but it becomes individuality for the community.

Jessica: I heard you mentioned the ventilation system. I know a lot of problems my constituents have is with our fire alarms. There is a fan they turn on, but we're not exactly sure if they actually spin. I really enjoy the fact that renovations will be going on.

Henry: Some of you that do have it, it's great. All they do is suck it up and throw it back at your head. It's not good, and, quite frankly as some of you know, the institution has been upgrading the fire alarm systems. They are extremely sensitive. We also need to fix how to calm down on the number of false alarms. The city of Cambridge has become very kind to MIT. As communities are being struck for money, a lot of times they're starting to charge for that. Not to mention, every time they jump on a fire truck, they're putting their lives on the line. It was a small fire, this one time. The fire trucks got there, the breaks broke, and the fireman got run over. We need to be, as responsible members of the community. We're doing everything to reduce the possibility of false alarms. I'm sure some of you either have family members that are firemen or know someone that does. We have to have safety equipment, but we also need to find a happy medium.

Almas: I'm from McCormick. Even though McCormick is a dining dorm, a large percentage of people that live there also cook for themselves. We have a really good kitchen, but the facilities in the kitchen are extremely out of date. There really hasn't been, they haven't been trying to fix them. We're supposed to be eating in the dining hall. A lot of people don't think you can change the culture of the dorm by not maintaining the kitchen or something. I was wondering what your thoughts are on that.

Henry: You cannot change it; you're right. As I said, we have to prioritize which buildings are going to get done first, but it has to be multiphased. Many people bought stoves and just put them in. It needs to be well thought out what type of equipment we need to provide.

I'm looking for a stove that automatically turns off. We have people who forget to turn it off. Maybe it can have a set of weight detectors and it automatically turns itself off. Maybe an MIT student can invent such a thing. We are providing cooking equipment; we need to make sure; no stove or refrigerator lasts forever. If you buy a better quality one, you'll get more years out of it.

I talked to Vrajesh about this, but if there are two different types of communities, one should not be lesser than the other. The equipment has to fit all the buildings and are different because the communities are different, not because what they are provided are less than something else they're supposed to have.

Alex J: I think the most obvious way to get good ways is to do a forum in every dorm. It's EC. I'll be in Talbot. Anyone interested should come talk to me about what they want in kitchens. Some other ways is to get dorm presidents to aggregate suggestions. Or, the space planning chair can do that. I live in Bexley, so I live in a cook for yourself dorm for a couple of years. I think a lot of people want more counter space. In some dorms, it's not as much. In other places, it is. Microwaves, I know we're not allowed to have them in certain places, and a lot of times they get passed down. Thankfully, we have a microwave. For dishwashers, I don't think we need them. I don't think we have enough space. If one dorm wants them, I don't think that will create a problem. Some have A/C. Others have elevators.

Henry: We need to look at the microwave issues. If we're going to have them, we need to make sure they are more recent models. There are more that are designed for industrial use.

Alix: So, you mentioned for space on kitchens to set up. What I encourage is number of users per kitchen should be smaller. There are towers of dishes in some places. In my freshman year, the four of us shared a kitchen. It was our kitchen; so we took care of it. There was a smaller pile of dishes.

Henry: If we want to do this, we need to commit personnel to help keep those kitchens up. I know from talking to Vrajesh, there are certain people who have that role in each dorm. If students are going to pay to live in a community, they should expect certain things. I also need to make sure we provide some services, that's an issue we have to talk about with the housemasters.

Karan: I'm from Next House. It's a bit more broad based, a lot of times. Renovations are implemented with a down-the-alley policy. Things just come down finally to MacGregor, New, or Next, four years after the proposal. Will this be on a needs basis or will it continue with the old policy?

Henry: That's one of the things I've heard this year. I went to visit the Housemaster in Tang in January or December, and they were just starting to pick up the leaves—they hadn't done fall cleaning. In answer to your question, it's going to be based upon needs, but it's also based on sensitive certain areas of campus. Both East & West have not gotten as much attention as they both need. I was in Senior House courtyard in mid-November, and leaves were piled up everywhere. I was back in January, and still with snow, the same leaves were piled up. The fact is that we have a responsibility to take care of all of our responsibilities, not just stupid ones; I know certain areas have been neglected. With anything that we do, it's going to be based on where the greatest needs are, we're going to determine what's going to be needed, and make sure that place has gotten what it should have.

Allan: I think I also want to hit on the point that Alex has made on the process. I think that's key, talking directly to the residents. It will be hard to find one person. When you come time to make your decision, I would highly recommend talking to the groups. If they are okay with what you're about to do.

Also, Random has dishwashers, and we love them. Please don't take them. Let's take that as a blanket statement.

Henry: I will tell you that it will be one of the processes. Once we take it as an architectural design, we get the pricing. Obviously, there are some things we have to cut out to make it fit in the budget. I will have the students be part of that conversation.

I do look forward to working with all of you in the future; so, thank you very much.

3.   Opening Remarks

Jonté: I think we just had two very great speakers who are both really for working with us. I think we have really great opportunities to have our voices heard, which I think comes as a surprise to some of you guys in the assembly, but I hope we don't squander this opportunity and that we really make use of it. That's what I have to say about those speakers.

I think we should discuss at the end of the meeting or on the mailing list after the meeting how we plan to put together our thoughts on the question of what Henry Humphreys put before us. That's all I'm going to say about that for now.

This is our last meeting before Spring Break. Hopefully you guys view Spring Break as an opportunity, not just for us, but also to recharge the opportunities and start the rest of the semester with fresh ideas and interviews. Aside, I added some discussion topics just because I think these are issues we should be discussing and we haven't.

4.   Guest Speaker: Exec Update

Vrajesh: So, I've got a couple of things. 1. Elections are this week, in case someone has been busy with exams are something. Please remember to vote, and remind constituents to vote as well. The way democracy works is when people vote. Oh, one other thing, you recall that Sammi mentioned during the Exec Update about brainstorming different structures for the UA. If you have interest in that topic, let one of us know. It's something we're going to be developing more over Spring Break. Hopefully we'll have something to come back with over Spring Break. I think Hawkins also has an announcement.

Hawkins: The housing committee is trying to gather information on facilities in dorms, but also other things like security and laundry. Just random things. I will be emailing out tonight if you guys can just look around your dorms. Talk to your dorm government and see what facilities you have. What kind of shape they're in. Things like what Alex said because there is a microwave. What things are there, what can be improved, what are the priorities for improvement as far as your dorm goes. Feel free to ask around about that. Shoot us an email.

Some conversation about sororities and facilities

Alex J: It's probably something that your Corporation or Alumni Association will invest in.

5. Guest Speaker: Approval of Minutes

Alec: I'm just going to go ahead and apologize that I'm still working on those, and it's taking some time. So, I take full responsibility and apologize.

6. Guest Speaker: Spring II Allocations for Student Groups

Emily: Over the course of last week, there was a period of ten hours where they view all of the funding allocations. This is funding meant to be spent from April to June. I apologize that the font is so tiny. It's also in your email. If you pull that up, you can see some of the comments next to each row. There's also several members. There's me, Rachel and Sivakami are the Senate reps, and Anika is there too as the treasurer. Leonid is here. If you have any questions, feel free to ask us. Otherwise, it is to be approved as a slate.

Rachel M: One question I thought I'd make clear. If you read the bylaws, basically we voted on all of those, but we didn't discuss them as thoroughly. The only question was events referred to as LEF. I think LEF also met this weekend. I don't know if they didn't get the message about applying, or they didn't actually think to submit the application.

Jonté: The floor is open for discussions and motions.

Jessica: I'm hoping people have already looked at it, since it was in the email; so, I move to call the question.

Slate is approved.

7. Guest Speaker: New Business and Discussion

Will: One of the members of the committee just submitted changes to the MBTA line.

Some discussion about postponing discussion.

Jonté: So, the first discussion topic put on here is Walker. We, as an assembly, haven't really talked about the issue. I think it's a big topic. There appear to be some new developments.

Will: So, I'm Space Planning Chair; so Vrajesh and Sammi were dealing with this earlier, since I'm going to be doing this from this point onwards. Basically, there was an UA newsletter that came out in December that details the process. They decided there should be student representatives on the UA and GSC. Subsequent to that, we've been negotiating over what is the goal and charge of the committee and how it's going to interact. What's been happening is there's an architectural process assessing whether Walker will meet the technical needs. Then, there's the process, evaluating how changes affect students. This is kind of focused on that. It's the last interface with the process. They're almost finalized. I think if things go well. We expect they'll be a public version of these changes. We expect they'll be a public version of what the groups is going to be accepted. The charge will be released, and that will be some point in the future.

Jonté: I just wanted to discuss if there's anything new. We're going to be in charge of looking at this student use in Walker. We don't know how we're going to deal with this.

Will: Talk to the Provost. We really encourage them to contact that team. Also, there's a lot of people that want to use Morss Hall. Otherwise, their concerns might not be brought up. They should definitely be in contact with the group.

Vrajesh: You're talking about combining UA and GSC right?

Betsy; You may have spelled this out, but the group is a UA/GSC thing or a committee they want to form?

Will: The GSC is also involved with this. We've been working together kind of. As students, we really want to have a group that has access to the information. We can really make an informed decision. Therefore, we're working with the Associate provost, Marty, and other administrators , also trying to get them on the community. This way we can see how we can affect student groups.

Betsy: Are there still those two branches? Arms?

Rachel M: There's an assessment group that's like everyone and a larger group.

Betsy: Who are the larger?

Rachel M: That's still being done. We're trying to establish the committee.

Will: We're going to help informs students. There's going to be a lot of work. 30 student groups. A lot of people use Morss Hall. There's definitely need for people that want to get involved and ways to get you involved.

Betsy: Is there a timeline?

Will: We hope so.

Rachel M: The way we put it is so student groups won't have to finalize the process earlier.

Betsy: Do you need anything?

Will: There's really no need for the Senate to come and say something. Once they're finalized, we don't' need to kind of talk and gather information and stuff. It's just a lot of information gathering and finding out, not really something that Senate can do.

Jonté: Further questions? Try and gauge how many students in your dorms are concerned about issues, and try and reach out to them. In addition to that, try and think about how, in terms of the meta-issue of student engagement, that might affect us in the future.

If there's no more discussion. I'm bringing up enrollment, which we base in Fall semester. 42 UAS 3.3, which we have here. We got our informal written reports. At least by 42 UAS 8, we had nearly all of them in. The piece of legislation also asks for an informal written final report at the end of IAP. We never enforced that. What I want to hear from you guys is if we still care about the topic. I kind of want to refresh everyone's memory. I don't know if you guys want to talk about anything that the committees are doing. If they're actively engaged, we should start talking about what things are important to look at. Do the authors of it want to say anything?

Will: We did actually create a fairly nice report. Chancellor Grimson seemed very interested in hearing about student needs. Is there a way we can present that, the conclusion of the report? I know SCEP came up with one.

Vrajesh: The results of what the committees came up with were communicated. We didn't bring it up in a meeting with the chancellor yet because we've only had a couple of meetings, but the recommendation from there were communicate to the appropriate deans.

Jonté: Did everyone have a chance to review these? I think the idea is we would provide comments, and we would have a chance to kind of follow up on those reports.

Jessica: If there was going to be an informal final report, it would have to be like what other issues are left? In most other parts, the issue I was thinking of was the GIRs. Most of them addressed except for, one of the subjects. Every committee presented problems and possibly solutions.

Vrajesh, Unless I'm mistaken, I don't recall the report being approved by Senate. We've communicated some recommendations; we have not presented them because they are not UA policy.

Jonté: I think my understanding was that this information was provided by Senate. But, based on these recommendations, we would do something about it. Did you guys see anything in those documents that make you want to do something?

Betsy: Did space planning and housing submit reports?

Will: I did not submit a report. I had a follow up meeting. I could push for the report. Basically, there are no changes to community study space. Other than Morss Hall. I can go and write a summary of that to send about Space Planning.

Jonté: What I have is: every group did a report on the meeting; so, all of those exist. I think all of these links work. There's SCEP, Housing, Student Life, and Athletics. I think they vary in length. This one is two pages; this is four; this is two; and this is 6. I'm not sure that we've linked them on the website, but they're where everything else I listed is. It's under meeting number 8 in the locker.

Is there any discussion? Otherwise, I'm going to recommend that over Spring Break, we review this and see what recommendations we have on actions. If there's an issue, I wouldn't want to think we had the change to address it and didn't. Is there further discussion?

I guess we'll move on to the MBTA letter.

Will: One of my committee members thinks we should consider this; so, I want to bring this to Senate. I was hoping that people would take the time to read the letter. Otherwise, I'd like people to take their concerns and email them to Plaz or ua-spaceplan, and we can incorporate that. I don't think it would be productive to have a regular day over this unless there are significant concerns.

Rachel M: Either you or Michael should elaborate on the purpose from reading through this. Do you close zero, one, or two? Are you going to let people know you're changing the signaling?

Plaz: I think it would be a good reason to propose changes to the #1 bus for the UA. I think another reason we should write a letter is to expand/enhance the UA's standing of the work that it can do to represent the students and the work it can have to assist student groups. It is important to say we do support the removal of these stops. We should let them know they're on the right track.

Karan: Are you saying we can bring up concerns now, or you don't mind that we debate that?

My concern is that the stop at Commonwealth is being removed. I know, in terms of FSILGs, a lot of people use that stop, and there's a lot of traffic there. Removing the stop could provide some problems.

Plaz: I think also the stop at Random Hall. Those are not stops I personally use. If you have a view that represents the community, I'd be happy to recommend them on the letter; so, we'll look at it.

Jessica: So, are you trying to remove stops or add spots?

Plaz: We're trying to support the MBTA removal of the stop at Memorial Dr, right at the bridge. They proposed the removal of the stop going in the other direction, heading to Boston. We're going to keep the stop towards Harvard. Because so few people use it, it's not much of a time difference. I think it still does add some time to the bus, though. We want to cut the stop and have them be further apart, because that is shorter waiting time.

Will: So, those two stops are what we're proposing changes to.

Ben: I was just wondering if you're trying to get more feedback before official endorsing it.

Will: That's why I'm bringing it here.

Leonid: You said people aren't getting off anyways. I don't see how getting rid of one stop is going to get rid of the problem.

Will: Presumably, they would get off where other people get off. Instead of the bus stopping and accelerating, this will make it faster. I agree the matter of time difference is low, but this is the idea of the proposed changes.

Tim J: One of the things I noticed is: if you miss the bus at 77, the bus stop at the next light…you can actually get on that bus.

Will: You're probably the one person that goes on.

Tim J: I think it's cool if you add something like we really like the stop next to Random Hall. That's next to my house.

Rachel M: I don't think we have enough data or expertise or knowledge of student opinion to make any kind of decision on that right now. The numbers on that, without any additional info, that's the ridership for one day two years ago. Maybe they did it somewhere in the middle of the summer. We don't know that that is representative. It would be premature for us to make a decision.

Plaz: This is my personal view. It holds in general for the UA representation of students. I was talking to Dean Humphreys about this in the hallway. I think there's…we can't run everything by survey. If we did, we would get dragged down and never get anything done. It sounds like there's few objections to the contents of the letter. To me, that sounds like students support the letter with the possible addition of supporting Random Hall.

Karan: I question the statement that we can do everything and that we can't do surveys or gather student feedback on every issue. One, I don't think necessarily all of the issues coming into this issue have been identified. Two, for us to say the 25-30 of us are qualified to make this decision is questionable.

Rachel M: My response around those lines are, even if we assume we don't get feedback, we haven't had time to think about this. I think my other points are, we don't have any kind of solid data to back up our plans. We don't have expertise. We don't understand why eliminating one of those is useful.

Will: there's going to have to be significant changes. You raised a good point. We can look at this. We can change the language. We also have opportunities to make strong opinions on this. I recommend that we end discussion. We can propose something in two weeks.

Anika: Point of information – what is the timeline we're looking at?

Plaz: They announced this in January. We want to get it done before the decision is made probably sometime in the summer. We have some time but not too long.

Jonté: He's closing discussion, any objections?

Janet: Can you guys explain what is happening with the crosswalk?

Will: If the bus comes, and the light is about to change from green to red, it will go through that light before it changes.

Jonté: Are there objections to closing discussion?

Janet: can we talk about kitchens again? We should discuss this.

Vrajesh: I wanted to make a clarifying comment. If you listen carefully, he's looking for a structure to work with. He wants a structure he can work with for the next year, plus a couple of months. He also wants it pretty fast. At least, that's what I inferred from what he said. I want to make sure we keep our comments specific to that.

Will: At some point, we can have discussion, but maybe this is more appropriate to have a committee look at.

Vrajesh: I think that's a great idea. We currently don't have a dining committee, though, and this seems like a great opportunity for someone to step up. So, I would suggest that, as one existing mechanism that is not being used for a variety of reasons, that someone take this up.

Ben: I was going to say more. Back on the process, it might be a good idea to recommend facility chairs. In New House, one of the main people in charge of cooking is the facility chair. They know the ins and outs of the kitchen. Things people have issues with.

Alex J: To echo something that Allan said, I don't think any one person is representative of their living groups. I don't think the dining committee is the best mechanism for this kind of feedback. I think it would be more appropriate for him to talk to as many people as possible. It seemed that he wanted to

work with the people over a period of time. Maybe the dining committee can serve as the structure, but we need more.

Rachel M: I would recommend some sort of dual structure. Almost, I was going to make a comparison to Walker, but, if we had a few main student representatives meeting along with him, sort of involved in formulating the template process…my concerns were that he can do whatever with it, and tell the dorm…you know.

Vrajesh: Generally, what Rachel said. But, I would also add that I agree that each of the individual dorms will be different and have different needs. Each dorm needs to be talked to. I don't know if he's trying to create a central template, which sounds like the process. Assuming we don't challenge that approach, he's going to need someone to work directly with. He can't do that simultaneously in six dorms. I agree with what Rachel said. If we can get something together to be part of that, I think that would be the best way.

Plaz: I concur.

Leonid: Just one small issue I have, this template, the things that he wants to include seem a little bit broad, he mentioned the ideas real quick. I'm not a very extensive cooker, but even if this, if there's reasons why we can't use gas stoves, the people who want them would be very upset. I think that this committee would be to, not only create a template, but be ready to defer to dorms.

Jonté: It sounds to me like we're envisioning a process, there's one central committee, this is what they're working on, and they're working very closely with Dean Humphreys, and there is a process that is then followed to get feedback from each of the individual constituencies. Maybe they're there to see what the dorms actually want or to get feedback.

Karan: Just one thing, which is to be careful about not making this structure. I agree having two layers is a good idea. There are so many different voices that nothing ends up getting done. By getting lost in layers of students and students in more layers, we lose that kind of flexibility.

Will: I do think, though, it seems like we need a dining committee to listen to all of these opinions. So, Senate, if we do want to reinstitute the dining committee, is there anything that Senate should do?

Vrajesh: Yes, for committee chairs, we normally do a campus-wide search. It's Senate, so straw polls aren't allowed, but I think, unless Sammi has a gigantic objection, I'm going to assume that if this is something important, it at least makes sense to have a structure to keep an eye on this. We can put out an application for dining chair and go from there. An alternative is to put out an application to all undergraduates and go directly for that approach. Also, if you're particularly interested, I think as always, we should make sure that you're involved.

Allan: Just a comment for Senators. I think you gained a very valuable skill set; I'd be very happy to see one of your step up and take this role. If you want to do something that's really hands on instead of sitting around this table and wanking, do it. You'll enjoy it a lot more than Senate.

Alec: I'd encourage everyone to be careful about the recommendations they're making. Forums, dorm facilities chairs in a group, etc. it sounds very familiar to something we disapproved of earlier this year. Let's try and stay consistent.

Will: There seems to be agreement on the committee.

Vrajesh: In case you guys haven't noticed, both of us really value individual initiative. For example, if you come and ask us, "I want to be part of the Senate Admin Dinner, I want to have dinner with John Reed," we look very favorably upon that, and we usually find a way to make it happen. We find a way, or somebody takes the effort to say.

Alan: When would this application be coming out?

Vrajesh: Soon.

Rachel: Are you doing a formal application.

Sammi: We want you to e-mail us.

Vrajesh: We're usually available after the meeting. I don't think you need to be from a non-dining dorm to be a part of this group. If you're interested in this sort of things,, you don't live in one of these, I don't see a reason why you still can't be involved.

Jonté: Any further discussion.

8.   Guest Speaker: Closing Remarks

Jonté: We're on schedule. I think, keeping a list of things you guys should be thinking about over Spring Break. The list of things I've gotten so far throughout the entire meeting, if you're interested, you should talk to someone about the structure of the UA, feedback for the housing committee on facilitie for the form. You guys should also be trying to figure out in what way your constituents are concerned about Walker, whether it's the specific issue or a meta-issue on Student Engagement. You guys should be thinking and hopefully reviewing the reports on enrollment, and the whole topic in general about the idea of the renovations of the kitchens for the cook-for-yourself communities—about how that process is going to work.

In addition to that, since it's got a comment, there's a dining referendum that's going to be on the ballot this week. Because of that, I also put it on the list; I want to hear from you guys because the question has been posed to me—do we want to have links on the ballot about the dining plan, what students have been thinking? Do we want to have links to the Tech, do we want to have another fact sheet. About bias, I think that's a discussion we should have here or on the mailing list perhaps. I think we're going to revert and break the rules, then. Do we need to have a formal discussion on this?

Some confusion.

Sammi: You can't put anything else on there without introducing bias. It undermines any legitimacy on what was on the ballot.

Will: What she said.

Rachel M: If people don't know by now, the answer is what it's going to be.

Jonté: So the Senate Officers—myself, Janet, Almas, Jessica, and Ben, have been thinking of ideas on how to get people engaged. When we come back over spring break, we've considered having a mini-retreat. We're strongly considering it, and over the course of Spring Break, we'll be speaking with some more of the principal officers. By mini-retreat, we mean that we would spend a day on campus or very close—at the Hyatt or something—sitting down with everyone in the UA, Senators, Committee Chairs, Institute Committee Reps, Class Councils, Committee Members, so that we have a unified strategy and

sense of community, or being a member of the UA team. This is in addition to talking about issues and hopefully developing some skills that we could use throughout the remainder of the semester.

In terms of the mentorship program, we've been kind of struggling—we're thinking about a night when you guys who want to interact with them can come in and have dinner. You guys still can get to meet with them and ask any questions. Those are the things we're proposing. I might be proposing some legislation a next week's meeting; I think that's about all I have. Please use Spring Break as an opportunity to think about what you want to accomplish personally and think about the opportunities we have as an organization to make an impact on campus this semester. If there's anything else, I'll send it to the list. Please utilize it over Spring Break if you're not going to be relaxing at the beach.

Vrajesh: Right when you come back, we're having another awesome speaker, Terry Stone, the MIT Treasurer. Come up with questions on what to ask for. I anticipate that she does not come in contact with students as often as others might. It would be appropriate to consider a specific amount of appropriate questions for that meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:13 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Alec Lai
UA Secretary General