



AILG Annual Report to the Membership for 2008-09

AILG Annual Meeting

10 June 2009

The AILG undertook its most ambitious agenda ever this year, and thanks to the direct efforts of more than 60 alumni volunteers and expanded partnerships with MIT staff, we accomplished more than ever. The AILG Board wishes to thank all of the many volunteers and staff who contributed mightily to our success this year; among others, these include AILG committee members, accreditation review team members, educational program presenters, FCI staff, and MIT technical advisors and project partners.

We also wish to recognize the financial support for AILG programs provided by both the IRDF and MIT Division of Student Life (DSL): we thank Dean Colombo, the FSILG Office, the Residence Life team, the IRDF Board of Allocation, IRDF Grant Advisory Committee, and the many other MIT organizations for helping make our mission possible. And finally, we wish to acknowledge Bob Ferrara for his tireless work on behalf of the AILG and FSILG community. We would not have accomplished what we have without Bob's guidance, wisdom, and support.

AILG Goals for 2008-09

Last fall, in consultation with the Plenary the AILG Board established the following goals for the AILG this year:

1. **Accreditation:** Continue the Accreditation Program. Create more explicit criteria in evaluation process; further develop consistency in reporting; and work to explain the program to undergrads. (*Accreditation Committee*)
2. **Intervention Process:** Determine what role, if any, the AILG should play in intervening with alumni groups that are not meeting community expectations for their performance. (*Ad-Hoc Intervention Committee*)
3. **Educational Programs:** Continue to offer IAP programming. Create a durable Education Committee to study future goals. (*Education Committee*)
4. **Facilities:** Continue the SLI / BSF program. Improve safety within all FSILGs throughout the year. Help members adopt green features in their houses. (*Facilities Committee*)
5. **Advising:** Encourage more alumni advising and mentoring of undergrads. (*Alumni Advising Committee*)
6. **Risk Management:** Broaden understanding of RM policies and practices. Help recruit more alumni RM advisors. (*Alumni Advising Committee*)
7. **Finance:** Create a functioning Finance Committee. Perform a financial study of system. (*Finance Committee*)
8. **MIT Partnerships:** Build a strong, productive working relationship with the new DSL; continue to deepen engagement with FSILG Office, Residence Life, and Alumni Association staff. (*AILG Board*)
9. **Summer Housing Policy:** Team with MIT and students to create standards for summer housing policies and procedures. (*DSL Summer Housing Working Group*)
10. **Resident Advisor Policy:** Team with MIT and students to review and refine job description of the RA position. (*DSL Resident Advisor Working Group*)
11. **Web Content and Presence:** Improve the AILG website and provide more information about the activities of the AILG on line.



Progress Toward Goals

1. Accreditation Program

The Accreditation program is one of the AILG's signature projects and is believed to be unique in the American college experience. It consists of a peer-led review and evaluation process, in which each member organization is evaluated at least once every 2 years (more often if a concern, or reservation, is identified) by a visiting committee of AILG volunteers. AILG visiting committees conducted a total of 24 reviews this year, including 11 revisits for groups with reservations. 36 AILG member organizations are currently recommended for accreditation, of which 6 had one or more reservations. One member organization is not recommended for accreditation. The Board is pleased to note that despite the heavy schedule of reviews, all reports were completed in a timely fashion and were more consistent in format and reporting, as requested.

The Accreditation Committee met monthly to advise and support the Accreditation Coordinator, John Covert, who is largely responsible for the excellent execution of the reviews and the timely delivery of reports. The committee considered process changes, review team membership, expanded correspondence to alumni and other interested parties, lessons learned and best practices by living groups, interaction with the FSILG office and student groups, confidentiality, changes to the basic data form to improve the usefulness when reviewing sororities and ILGs, and criteria for recommendations.

The AILG Board wishes to thank each of the more than 30 volunteers who served on review teams this year, as well as Accreditation Coordinator John Covert and the other members of the Accreditation Committee. We also thank Dean Colombo and the FSILG Office for their financial, political, and logistical support of the program.

2. Intervention Process

A committee of AILG volunteers and MIT staff considered whether and how the AILG should intervene with struggling alumni/ae groups. The ad-hoc Intervention Committee arrived at the conclusion that rather than frame its involvement as an intervention, the AILG should establish a duty to assist struggling alumni/ae groups. More work remains to be done in this area, however; a process for engagement is still to be defined. The AILG Board also took an important step this year when it met with alumni leaders of one of our member organizations to discuss concerns with its chapter operations; this is the first time the AILG has directly approached one of our member groups about an issue within the organization's chapter. Both the committee's and board's work will continue next year.

3. Educational Programs

The AILG continued to provide its educational programs during IAP this year, and expanded them to include two new courses. In January, the AILG sponsored 6 short courses for undergraduates and alumni/ae of FSILGs: Treasurer 101; House Manager 101; IT/Telecomm 101; Alumni Affairs 101 for FSILGs; The Delta Factor: Effecting Change in your Chapter; and Building Effective Alumni Advisory Boards. The latter two courses were new this year. Most courses are designed primarily for FSILG undergraduate officers, although alumni and other MIT students are also welcome to attend. Overall, more than 100 undergraduates and 40 alumni/ae participated in one or more of the courses.

During each course, the participants received handouts of the course materials, which are now also posted in PDF format on the AILG's website for free download. We have already started to plan the courses for next IAP. *Please remember that these courses are only effective if they are attended; we urge you to encourage your members to take advantage of them next year.*

4. Facilities Program

The AILG Facilities Committee has continued to manage and lead the Safety, Licensing, and Inspection (SLI) and Building Safety Facilitator (BSF) programs, which collectively are another signature AILG program. The SLI program ensures that each AILG member organization's critical paperwork (inspection reports and certificates, licenses, etc.) are properly stored for ready access, and that all life safety system



are properly maintained. The BSF works with undergrads and alumni/ae members to ensure that good safety practices are maintained, and provides continuity and consistency between all AILG member organizations and the local municipal inspection officials. The SLI and BSF programs continue to be an outstanding success, with every member organization properly licensed and inspected.

Additionally, the Facilities Committee undertook a pilot program this year, funded by the IRDF and to be completed system-wide in FY2010, to use American Alarm's fire radio network for wireless alarm reporting, replacing the increasingly-troublesome analog phone lines. Two new efforts are also underway: A comprehensive property management manual is being prepared, which will capture baseline expectations and best practices for facilities management across the system. Besides being useful to member organizations that wish to assess the completeness of their own facilities management programs, this document will be a key part of the RA Committee's recommendations. An even more significant effort, with the assistance of the MIT Facilities Department and underwritten by reserve funds of the AILG, is the preparation of uniform egress plans for posting in all buildings in the AILG community, in accordance with MIT best practices. This effort will satisfy numerous recent requests from city officials and insurance inspectors.

The AILG Board is grateful to the committee's members for their leadership in this critical safety area; to Scott Klemm (FCI), Charley Mills (FCI), and Jay Flynn (BSF) for their work on our behalf; and to the IRDF Grant Advisory Committee and Board of Allocation for providing financial support for the SLI program.

5. Alumni/ae Advising Program

The new AILG Alumni Advising Committee was established this year with a charge to encourage the creation of an alumni/ae advisory board as a key feature in effective FSILG chapter operations. The committee's primary initial task was to provide content to interested FSILGs regarding the creation, development, and functionality of alumni/ae advisory boards. This content is targeted at alumni/ae of FSILGs that currently do not have any alumni advisory role, or that currently have an alumni/ae advisor but are looking to grow and become more effective. This material was presented as "Building Effective Alumni Advisory Boards" during the AILG's IAP course programming.

Additionally, the committee led a discussion with the Panhellenic Association's cabinet about sorority-specific advising strengths and needs. The committee distributed a survey regarding current advisory practices within the FSILG community, and continues to develop targeted methods of working with different stakeholders (undergraduates, house corporations, existing advisors, administrators, etc.) to increase and improve implementation of best alumni advising practices system-wide.

6. Risk Management Programs

Over the course of the year, participation in the AILG-sponsored Chapter Alumni Risk Management Advisors (CARMA) program increased, with trained volunteers from 15 FSILGs now participating. The program has been formalized and small stipend is now paid to each CARMA by MIT. This year, the CARMA program sponsored several seminars for the wider MIT community, including discussions with the Dean of Admissions on challenges of today's incoming students; presentations by students on what are they seeing on the ground today; discussion of student-staffed programs (Medlinks, EMS Ambulance Service, etc); and discussions of FIPG, best practices, and current risk management policies with IFC and Panhellenic student leaders.

In addition to the CARMA program, the AILG's Alumni Advising Committee seeks to publicize the importance of an active and involved alumni advising program as an effective risk reduction tool in FSILG chapters.

The AILG thanks the MIT Medical Department, DSL, and Associate Dean Trujillo for ongoing support of and assistance to the CARMA program.



7. Finance Committee

The newly-established Finance Committee undertook and completed a financial study of the entire AILG system, using standardized financial data submitted by the member organizations. The study was comprised of two parts: an Operating Expense Analysis, reviewing where AILG member organizations spend their money (utilities, insurance, etc.) and establishing a baseline to allow each group to compare its spending in these areas with the fraternity, sorority, and ILG averages; and a House Bill Analysis, studying how much it costs residents to live in FSILGs. The house bill study also compared AILG member bills to dormitory costs.

Participating member organizations will receive personalized reports in their FCI document lockers, comparing their organization's operating expenses and house bills to those of other AILG member organizations. The study was designed to preserve the anonymity of each organization's data, while providing an overall picture of the system.

Preparing this study has been a goal of the AILG for many years, and the AILG Board thanks the committee for finally making this invaluable effort happen. The board also thanks each participating AILG member group for trusting the committee with its financial information.

8. MIT Partnerships

Our goal this year was to further enhance and deepen the partnerships the AILG has built over the years with the many MIT entities with whom we engage, especially in light of the arrival of a new Dean for Student Life. Our work got off to a rocky start, as two significant risk management problems occurred in one of our member organizations just before and after Dean Colombo's arrival. This was not the introduction that we wanted Dean Colombo to have with our community.

But the AILG Board believes that we have made much progress in this area, and that the AILG's partnership with MIT is stronger than ever. The attendance of so many MIT staff members at our dinner tonight reflects the health and strength of our relationship; the following other activities are further examples of this cooperation.

9. Summer Housing Policy

The Summer Housing Working Group was charged by Dean Colombo to assess the current state of FSILG summer operations and to develop a list of best practices for summer safety and security. The AILG welcomed and encouraged this review, and saw it as another opportunity to partner with MIT to improve operations and practices throughout the FSILG system. The Summer Housing Working Group is composed of students, existing RAs, AILG volunteers, and is chaired by Marlina Martinez of the FSILG Office. In light of previous years' challenging summer terms, the working group met with a variety of undergraduate and alumni constituents to develop a series of best practices that could be applied to the entire FSILG system. The working group expects to have their recommendations for best practices, as well as areas of additional needed support, identified by June 2009, for implementation in summer 2010.

10. Resident Advisor Working Group

The Resident Advisor (RA) Working Group was charged by Dean Colombo to review the RA job description and include a property management role for RAs in the future, as a response to concerns about property management in some of the AILG's member organizations. As with the Summer Housing Policy review, the AILG welcomed this review and AILG volunteers played a major role in its work.

The Resident Advisor Working Group determined that RAs should not serve as facility managers but should play a role in the oversight of our properties. The recommendation to the Dean is that new and returning RAs will be trained in August 2009 for their new role. As noted above, the AILG Facilities Committee is now engaged in preparing facilities management documentation and training in support of the recommendations of this working group.



11. Web Content and Presence

The AILG strives to continually improve its web presence, by posting more documents to the Association's website and providing more information about the activities of the AILG on line. The board believes our communications have improved, but more progress is desirable, especially with regard to posting committee meeting times.

The Board wishes to thank Matt Condell for his ongoing volunteer work as our webmaster, and Scott Klemm of FCI and Bob Ferrara for their assistance in managing the AILG's documents and schedules.

Other AILG Activities

In addition to the work on specific goals, the AILG continued its ongoing efforts in many other areas, including the following:

IRDF Grants and Loans

AILG volunteers play a key role in the operation of the Independent Residence Fund (IRDF), serving on its Grant Advisory Committee and Board of Allocation. The IRDF continues to assume greater importance to our community, as more attention is focused on upgrades, renovations and much-needed deferred maintenance in the FSILG community's housing stock. All four IRDF programs saw increased activity in the past fiscal year. The low-interest loan program (the original IRDF program) issued several new loans as physical renewal continues. The Annual Educational Operating Grant Program disbursed in excess of \$300K to all but four members of the community. Every AILG member with housing is expected to participate next year.

IRDF Project Grants have proved very popular in recent years, especially for library renovations, which are completely reimbursed. Consequently the IRDF Grant Advisory Committee felt it necessary to impose moratorium on new grants, until new policy could be developed. Discussions with MIT legal experts have resulted in a new policy, which is expected to be announced early next fiscal year. MIT's lawyers have also approved full reimbursement of several specific safety and municipal code compliance activities, which will result in larger operating grants this coming fiscal year. The IRDF is also funding two community-wide programs: the network upgrade project (see below) and the Facilities Committee's initiative to replace fire alarm land lines with wireless radio systems.

With the recent success of the operating and program grant programs, IRDF outlays are now significantly outpacing alumni contributions. Additional alumni support to the IRDF will be necessary in the years to come to sustain these programs and the physical renewal of our facilities. *We ask all AILG member organizations to encourage increased giving to the IRDF by their alumni.*

IT Subcommittee / Community Network Upgrade

The AILG IT Subcommittee's focus for the past year has been the Community Network Upgrade Project. This project is another example of increased collaboration between the AILG and MIT: it is led by the AILG IT Subcommittee, funded largely by an IRDF community-wide program grant, with technical support and advice provided by an MIT IS&T project oversight team. After more than a year of study, design, and contract negotiation, the project began rewiring all FSILGs with state-of-the-art IT infrastructure in September 2008; it includes the upgrade of both wired and wireless networks in every building, and the optional installation or upgrade of their coaxial cable TV system. We anticipate project completion in the late summer of 2009.

Review of AILG Dues Structure

Responding to comments and requests from the membership, the AILG Board charged a committee of volunteers to determine whether any changes should be made to the AILG's dues structure, while remaining revenue neutral. The ad-hoc Dues Structure Committee discussed a wide variety of other possible revenue structures in an effort to determine if a more equitable dues framework could be established. Input from two informational meetings held during the summer of 2008 was also



considered. The committee did not recommend a change in the current dues structure—in which each AILG member organization pays an identical amount as basic member dues regardless of size, plus an SLI assessment determined by the number of properties it owns or manages—but unanimously recommended that the total dues assessment be reduced. After review, the AILG Board accepted the committee's recommendation and is proposing a decrease in basic member dues to \$400 per member for next year.

The committee also recommended that the AILG consider establishing a yearly monetary award to member entities which best further the purposes of the AILG; this issue will require further study by a future committee.

Alumni/ae Volunteer Program

The Volunteer Committee was not active as a group during this past year. Some committee members continued to work with FCI in the design of a new database to provide controlled, secure access on FSILG volunteer information. By agreement of all parties, the FCI was asked to design and manage this volunteer database, which will serve the FSILG Office, the Alumni Association, the AILG, and each FSILG's own needs. A web form will permit data update and rapid retrieval by authorized users. The RFP for this application has been produced and distributed, and it is anticipated that the application development begin soon and the new system become live in late summer or early fall 2009.

Insurance Program

With the administrative assistance of FCI, the AILG continues to manage the property and liability insurance program for most AILG member organizations. Under this program, the AILG purchases a policy to cover all participating members. Obtaining liability insurance in the open market is extremely difficult for fraternal organizations; very few insurers will write this coverage, and often only at exorbitant rates. The AILG program guarantees that all AILG members can obtain reasonably priced liability insurance, and that best risk management practices are shared by all AILG members. A new feature this year is the addition of Directors & Officers (D&O) policy coverage, made necessary by AILG incorporation.

The AILG Board thanks FCI for its assistance in billing and collection of premiums, MIT for providing working capital during the billing and payment cycle, and the MIT Insurance Office for its technical advice and support.

AILG Incorporation

The AILG Board is pleased to report that the Association of Independent Living Groups, Inc. was formally established this year and has obtained IRS designation as a not-for-profit corporation. All former members of the unincorporated AILG except one have formally acceded to membership in the new corporation, and the Board has established a formal process for admitting new members. We hope the Plenary will welcome two new members at the annual meeting. The old unincorporated AILG has now ceased to exist, and this project is complete.

More information about many of the programs summarized in this report can be found at <http://www.mitailg.org>.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chair: Steve Baker, '84, ΘΞ

Vice Chair: Stan Wulf, '65, ΦΔΘ

Treasurer: Jim Bueche, '62, ΧΦ

Clerk: Ernie Sabine, '66, SH

Director: Sara Pierce, '03, ΣΚ

Director: David Burmaster, '69, ΕΘ