

# Themes from AILG-Environmental Scan June 20, 2011 – second draft

## Group 1

### TODAY'S STUDENTS

- Students arrive at MIT with changing living skills, experiences & expectations
- Can we provide enough mentoring to satisfy student demand?
- Prevalence of “gap” years between H.S. and college. Getting older freshmen

### PRACTICAL LIFE SKILLS

- Increasing awareness/concern of obesity, health eating, exercise, etc.
- FSILG specific: how do you maintain chapter houses when no one grew up cleaning/ repairing at home?
- Students need to leave MIT with more than basic skill-set in field
- Students coming in with less “practical” life skills- cooking, cleaning, etc.- sense of “entitlement” to living quarters

### SOCIAL NETWORKING

- Use of social networks
- Social networking-> possibility of more, but less meaningful relationships, thru media/web
- Multiple ways to connect among students including electronic social networking
- Prevalence of web-based data and information overload may lead to students making important decisions before coming to campus – FSILG, classes, clubs, etc.

### AFFORDABILITY/ \$

- Can MIT DSL provide the kind of facilities to be competitive with its peer group? (desire for luxury)
- The collision between affordability and student desire for luxury
- Many older houses in need of constant repair
- Ongoing increased pressure on cost of living in Boston and Cambridge

### SOCIAL/ SOCIETAL COMMUNITY

- Retaining/recruiting sufficient alumni for house corps/ advisory boards

- FSILG still provide outstanding leadership and life skill development for students
- How do we leverage the civic /communal/ social spirit of today' students to strengthen student life?
- Students have different experiences regarding being a member of larger group/ organizations vs. active in our self interest.

### PERSONAL COMMITMENT

- Retention is an uphill battle – do they move in?
- Can we meet today's student expectations for their collegiate/social life experience?
- Are today's students so busy that they cannot be committed to anything?
- How do we encourage today's students to interact in ways that basic build lifetime friendship and commitment, when most don't even eat dinner together?
- Students are very brand conscious; MIT is a great global brand – can we leverage it more?

### ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

- Focus on interdisciplinary knowledge may require more real life job experience before graduating
- Longer academic preparations before joining workforce includes costs and dept
- More and more desire to study abroad, less physical time on campus
- Students wanting to study outside MIT's "core" areas and get an even broader education opposed to deeply focused

## **Group 2**

### TIME MANAGEMENT

- Increasing number of recreational and networking activities consume time/ complete with academic related time
- Challenge: evening classes make off-campus less appealing

### RISK MANAGEMENT

- little tolerance for rule transgressions related to living groups based on MIT post experience
- it's not my responsibility so I will not point it out/ address it
- trend: transfer of after-hours private partying from ILGs to dorms  
Challenge: perception of ILGs as party centers
- Entering Freshman bring recreational drinking and drug experience and "habits"
- Balancing MIT trend of enforcing more political correctness on student, and MIT's growing concern for risk elimination, how do we put in place systems to allow students to strike a

balance between benefiting from an open-minded learning environment with restrictive living rules?

### SOCIAL ISSUES

- Sense of belonging
- Individual responsibility
- Changing conversation around service @ MIT
- Peer relationship
- Digital communities replacing real world communities
- Desire to share information/ create knowledge bases
- Historical context
- How to create/transmit
  
- Cultural changes
- Upcoming 2012 elections
- Diversity of countries from which students coming
- Changes in hiring/job qualification (diversification is a trend)

### PHYSICAL PLANT/PROPERTIES

- Upgrading dining options in FSILG houses
- Acceptance of substandard cleanliness
- Property protection during off season (summer, holidays)

### FINANCE

- Economy (up and down)
- Gas prices
- Tuition costs
- Perceived costs vs. real costs
- Tight money, related to scholarships, room & boards, and poor economy
- Need to use houses more broadly to meet ongoing budget needs

### **Group 3**

### TODAY'S STUDENT

- Asian – interest Sorority/ other culturally – focused Greek letter groups that may increase their presence?
- Number of college students is increasing – especially women

- Students are less “hands on” in the traditional sense than before “ more working, less thinking”
- DSL - > focus on assessment
- Parents are more involved with their child’s college choices and enrollment
- “sense of entitlement” and fast rise to success is expected
- Students expect more “comfort” from their chosen university – better conditions with dorms, etc.
- Students are more involved with public services and serving others

### THE CHANGING STUDENT/CHANGING MIT STUDENT

- Student want their voices to be heard more than ever before
- Students are more “well rounded” and less “pointy”
- Student want to be leaders and innovators
- Challenge: diminishing, faculty communication with FSILGs

### DORM COMPETITION

- Adjustment to dining plan – how will it change student attitudes?
- Opening of Maseeh Hall
- Attracting students as campus life improves
- Evolution of dorm culture as students move out of dining-plan dorms

### CONFRONTING ADULTHOOD

- Time management problems
- Challenge: eliminating hazing
- Conversation moving to action on topics like civility and bystander behavior
- Trend: erosion of family support
- Trend: Devaluation of values
- Continued increase in accountability at student/ individual / and group level

### ONLINE EDUCATION

- Many students (esp. Juniors) want to do international trip/semester (Juniors provide key FSILG leadership)

### BUILDING COMMUNITY

- Building community with year/semester abroad as well as IAP/Summer activist abroad
- Needing more than just a place to live

### JOB PROSPECTS

- Economy
- Unemployment
- Challenge: post graduation employment

### MITIMCo

- Some MITIMCo leases coming to term
- Kenmore Square
- Sorority
- Financial Viability

### MONEY

- Increasing cost of tuition
- Costs continue to rise, unknown if financial aid will keep up

### MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

- Trend: ubiquitous electronic access to everything
- Challenge: Limiting bandwidth of data/communication between campus and FSILGs
- Communication and the last way to communicate with them is changing

### PERSONAL RELATIONS

- Increased use of Twitter/Facebook vs. email

### MAINTENANCE OF BUILDINGS

- Challenge: Increasing Regulatory Complexity
- Cleanliness, especially in fraternities
- Trend: Increasing financial cost
- Challenge: Increasing complexity of operating/maintaining FSILG residences
- Concern: fewer students have sufficient hands-on experience with house infrastructure

### DRUG ABUSE

- Trend: parties seen to require more hard alcohol

#### KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER (undergrad offices and alumni)

- Increased involvement if alumni advisory (vs. faculty-focused) boards
- Increased quality and quantity of alumni and student communication/interaction
- Keeping recent alums engaged with MIT now/ what is going on campus

#### ACTIVITY SATURATION

- Challenge of (continued) diversifying FSILG experience in large community with lots of options
- Challenge: building Community Life in the face of so many activities to be engaged in...
- Glut of highly- specific student organizations formed each year – can they all survive?