

The Dormitory Council

Massachusetts Institute of Technology
dormcon-exec@mit.edu



Minutes of First Meeting – Simmons Hall

16 September 2004

Attendance			
<i>Executive Committee</i>			
President:	Ian Brelinsky	Secretary:	Aayesha Siddiqui
Vice President:	Joshua Velasquez	Treasurer:	Seth Dorfman
REX Chairs:	Harvey Jones Mitra Lohrasbpour Shereen Chaudhry	JudComm Chairs:	David Nedzel Jacqueline Greene
Housing Chair:	<i>(absent)</i>	Webmaster:	Joshua Velasquez
<i>Dormitory Representatives</i>			
Baker:	Martijn Stevenson	New House:	Joshua Velasquez
Bexley:	<i>(absent)</i>	Next House:	Chris Hamond
Burton-Connor:	Nick Baldasaro	Random Hall:	Jeff Cohen
East Campus:	Jessie Austin-Breneman	Senior Haus:	Matt Brooks
MacGregor:	Aayesha Siddiqui	Simmons Hall:	Jennifer Wong
McCormick:	Raquel Escatel (<i>proxy</i>)		
<i>Also In Attendance</i>			
RLAs:	Sharon Snaggs (Patron Saint) Dan Kirsh	Freshmen i-pod Winners:	Daniel Campos Tony Cappart Dien Le
DormCon JudComm Representatives:	Veronica Andres (McCormick) Andrew Lukmann (Simmons)	Frshmen Gift Certificate Winners:	Alicia DeFrancesco Matthew Harrington Helen Moorman Zachary Nash
East Campus	Maria Schriver (REX Chair) James Wnorowski (Treasurer)		

Meeting called to order at 7:30 PM

REX discussion

Harvey's summary of events: \$10K spent on Stata with attendance of ~1300 people. The Kick-Off Party was poorly attended by freshmen, but upperclassmen presence (300-400) was great. Overall it went well and They (administration) will listen to us.

Presidents' opinions: The freshmen seemed more willing to look around, and there was just enough time for REX events and what needed to be done. Some early returns got burnt out though from the intensive schedule (e.g. Wednesday night through all of Thursday)

Tuesday Venue discussion

It was a good event to welcome the freshmen, even though it didn't accomplish any REX goals (which is fine, because it wasn't supposed to anyway).

Freshman's suggestion: It was fun but it didn't give a feel for each individual dorm. Maybe something like a Midway (with individual dorms hosting booths) would be good.

Possible Changes for REX 2005

There needs to be a *wider variety of time blocks*, throughout the day for instance. (Next House)

Possibility of rotating events throughout the night. (Harvey)

➤ Safety issue within the dorms: Freshmen throwing wild parties...

There should be *scheduled night time events*. Most early returns are those residents that are more heavily involved with the dorm. And because these upperclassmen are out working other REX events, they are not able to be in the dorm to monitor whatever 'mischievous' activity may be occurring. There's no order and no supervision, and that causes a problem. "When the cat's away, the mice will play." (Burton Connor, supported by Baker)

"What can we do about bored freshmen?" We are not directly responsible for freshmen behavior. And anything we might do may instead exacerbate the situation. The administration could make all the REX events mandatory so as to curb extraneous mischief.

Housemasters and GRTs need to be included in this discussion. They won't necessarily have to be a policing force during REX, but we should work with them, since they are vital resources within the dorms. Would we rather have Night Watch crack down on partying freshmen or the GRTs who are going to be *their own* GRTs in less than a week? (Snaggs)

Conclusion: This entire safety issue regarding freshmen-gone-wild isn't so much our jurisdiction. **We should allow the individual dorms to deal with this issue as they see fit, utilizing their own resources (i.e. housemasters and GRTs).** Dorms should take "small, preventative steps" since "a little bit of awareness goes a long way," (Burton Connor). Therefore, housemasters, GRTs, early returns, and all those involved and in the dorm should just be wary and mindful of the freshmen presence and the possibility of out-of-hand incidents.

Early Returns

Some early returns are unmotivated or don't fulfill their designated duties. **As a consequence of this half-hearted/truant behavior, early returns need to be held accountable** (fairly, of course). The contract they sign online should be more detailed, and there needs to be an early return meeting during which the rules are firmly set down. Fines are also a punishment possibility.

IFC Moving Day

Everyone felt IFC involvement was good and helpful.

Orientation Groups

We should get the freshmen to move around. There is a plus in having live in the same dorm and thus migrate together.

Because they are all in the same dorm, they get to know the upperclassmen there. But this benefits those that plan on staying in that dorm and does not encourage exploration. (East Campus)

Freshmen present expressed a mixed reaction. There was support for both intra-dorm and inter-dorm organization of orientation groups. Comments included:

- friends who meet in the dorm decide they want to stay together and remained in the temp.
- when someone really wants to move they'll make the effort to explore.
- frosh are encouraged to stay in the dorm if the orientation group is all together. If it were broken up into different dorms, people could go and visit their o-group members, talk, etc.

Action to be taken: **Solicit dorms for ideas and questions in regards intra-dorm o-groups.**

Orientation Events

Events were useful and attended. If want more attendance next year, advertise FREE FOOD blatantly as well as in Hitchhiker's Guide.

Freshmen sentiments:

- wished orientation ended earlier and REX started sooner
- felt burned out by mid-week

ARC will not put REX before Orientation, though that might be a better idea. We need to be careful of REX dying out altogether.

It was noted that the earlier part of the week (during Orientation events) served as a sort of 'informal REX' with freshmen eager to explore, hang out, ask questions, etc. (East Campus)

DormCon should meet with both Larry Benedict and Bob Redwine about scheduling of REX and Orientation next year.

REX Kick-OFF

ARC feels that nothing could have been done to avoid this year's situation.

We were not given the resources to advertise.

How Orientation Leaders play into the picture...

Orientation leaders did not return with freshmen to the Kick-Off. (And it was brought up – from inside sources, apparently – that the ARC “screwed up in orientation leader selection” in that they wanted new people for diversity instead of experienced people.)

Early returns already suck resources from the dorms, so where are we going to muster up the forces to sign up for orientation leaders? Freshmen commented that some orientation leaders weren't even motivated (possible examples include fraternity members).

REX/Orientation Schedule 2005

Key things we want for next year's REX/orientation include:

- **REX Kick-Off is solidified**
- **early arrangement of Tuesday Night Event**
- **different blocks of time for REX**
- **REX scheduled during meal times** (so we can actually feed *hungry* frosh)

If REX were held *before* Orientation, freshmen could be settled into their dorms and feel rested. But we have to be careful so as not to inspire an initiative to do away with REX altogether.

A possible source of support is a survey in which we ask the freshmen if they would like waiting a week to move. But, again, we have to be careful because this could just result in the campus-wide allowance of room-squatting.

Snagg's Insight...

The idea of REX *following* Orientation is supported by faculty members who stress "academics come first." We need to identify point persons in the faculty that wield influence over the ARC and who are actually saying this. [History lesson: We were given the excuse that because some of these important people were not present at meetings in which DormCon was present, DormCon initiatives couldn't be approved.]

The important faculty members need to hear from DormCon. We need to interface with the faculty chair, Redwine, Benedict, and Housemasters in order to expand our influence. They need to hear from us collectively, lest the ARC come out with the 2005 schedule without our knowledge and input.

JudComm

Steve Tyrell's replacement is in the process of being chosen – there are 3 finalists.

Currently, 8 people have been trained for DormCon JudComm and cases are now able to be heard. **Dorms need to have running JudComms within 1 month of new dean (November 1).**

To address in the following months: risk management issues, enforcement of rules, visitation/monitoring of events, etc.

Votes on DormCon Expenditures

VOTE: \$1000 discretionary fund to be utilized by execs. (unanimous approval by all present)

DormCon is considering taking away funding of individual dorm events. But if DormCon would continue funding such events, there need to be certain guidelines that the dorms must adhere to in order to receive funding, such as:

- campus wide advertisements
- talk to the executive board
- event open to the entire campus
- should not have limited number of seats

Key questions: If DormCon is not funding *dorm* events, and those dorms go to other offices seeking money, what are those offices going to think? What is the message that we are sending? If DormCon doesn't fund the dorms, why should they be funded at all? (Snaggs)

VOTE: \$1000 given to East Campus for 80th birthday party contingent on their adherence to the above stated rules and the tentative approval of such rules

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM