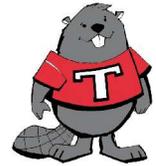


# The Dormitory Council

Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
dormcon-exec@mit.edu



## Minutes of Regular Meeting – New House

21 October 2004

Attendance			
<i>Executive Committee</i>			
President:	Ian Brelinsky	Secretary:	Aayesha Siddiqui
Vice President:	Joshua Velasquez	Treasurer:	Seth Dorfman
REX Chairs:	Harvey Jones	JudComm Chairs:	David Nedzel Jacqueline Greene
Housing Chair:	Richard-Duane Chambers	Webmaster:	Joshua Velasquez
<i>Dormitory Representatives</i>			
Baker House:	Martijn Stevenson	New House:	Joshua Velasquez
Bexley Hall:	<i>(absent)</i>	Next House:	Chris Hemond
Burton-Connor:	Shauna Moran <i>(proxy)</i>	Random Hall:	Jeff Cohen
East Campus:	Schuyler Senft-Grupp <i>(proxy)</i>	Senior Haus:	Matt Brooks
MacGregor House:	Aayesha Siddiqui	Simmons Hall:	Jennifer Wong
McCormick Hall:	Sandhya Sitaraman		
<i>Also In Attendance</i>			
RLAs:	Sharon Snaggs (Patron Saint) Dan Kirsh	Residents:	Katherine Leskin (Simmons) Stephanie Guo (MacGregor)
Simmons Treasurer:	Jennifer Liang	Freshmen:	Estevan Martinez (East Campus)

(Food selection: Thai)

### Treasurer's Report

Only two deductions from account:

East Campus 80<sup>th</sup> birthday party = \$1000

MacGregor/McCormick/Simmons formal = \$3000

### Meeting with Faculty Chair

Ian (president) and Josh (VP) met with Rafael Bras (head of the faculty). Bras felt that the focus of Orientation was going the wrong way and instead should be more focused on student life (i.e. more of a welcoming since 9 months of academics are ahead and that doesn't need to be the focus now). There was not much discussed regarding the scheduling of Orientation itself. He advocated a pro-student holistic approach though, with Orientation reform necessarily. The students should get the opportunity to meet the faculty in a non-academic way, possibly within the dorms.

## Security Discussion

As it stands, only Baker, MacGregor, Next, and Simmons have guest lists. Last week the idea of an all-dorm access card (for all MIT undergraduates) was proposed. Currently, the card office is having some major issues and so can't be called on to address this quickly.

Most agreed that an all-access card would be a good idea.

Random voices dissent: There is no need to open up *all* the dorms to *all* the undergrads. Guest lists should be in place and enforced. The operative concern is *outside* people.

Senior concurs with Random: The focus needs to be on front desk and making it more active.

(Later in the discussion, Burton-Connor commented that there needs to be a campus-wide deskworker training so that everyone knows what is going on and a uniform policy can be enforced. JudComm proposed that the campus police can do spotchecks and penalize/fine deskworkers who aren't doing their job. Housing Chair mentioned that a 30-page deskworker manual that had been emailed out, which he will forward to *dormcon@mit.edu*)

Random continues: Residents should be aware of what's going on and therefore not let people piggy-back. This all-access card will train residents to refrain from stopping piggy-backers because residents know everyone has access anyway.

New: There is less of a line and congestion when everyone has access.

Treasurer: Each dorm can choose whether or not they will honor the all-access card.

Dan (RLA): If there is to be a campus-wide all-access card, there might be problems with entering and changing access for each individual name, so everyone needs to be on board with the plan. The decisions of the dorms should be made at the beginning of the year and they should expect to be held to them.

*Questions regarding all-access card:*

- Would there be no more sign-in at front desk? (Snaggs)
- If an undergrad didn't know anyone at a dorm, would they still be allowed in? (Senior)
- What do the desks think of this change in the system – more/less difficult, effective? (Senior)

**Things to do:** compile security policies of dorms, survey deskworkers (what do they do vs. what they are *supposed* to do)

**Housing Chair (Richard Duane-Chambers) is the new DormCon liason to Housing Office.**

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## RBA Discussion

*Next gives a summary:* ARC instituted the program which they say is geared toward community building. Upperclassmen associate advisors live in the same dorm as their freshmen advisees. More dorm events are geared toward the frosh, and dorms with RBA receive extra money to fund such events. In addition to the associate advisor position, there is also a residential advisor who also plans events.

*Next acknowledges drawbacks:* The freshmen aren't allowed to move out of an RBA-dorm once they have been assigned to it. A switch would undermine the program and its goals. This ban on moving is mandated by the ARC. And though freshmen can theoretically move out (e.g. 6 moved out from Next at the start of Spring 2004), it is not advertised. Thus, RBA-dorms don't have a real rush like the others. The ARC is under the impression that all the freshmen in RBA are happy because almost none requested to move – but the problem is that most of them didn't even know that moving was an option! They think they can't move, so they just give up trying, even if there is an expressed interest.

RBA has expanded to its maximum at McCormick and Next, and there is a possibility that it can move to other dorms.

McCormick (RA): From an advising standpoint, RBA is good. The freshmen have easily accessible resources and feel comfortable.

JudComm: Despite the benefit of the constant contact, there is a problem of being 'locked in.'

*REX Chair turns RBA's argument against itself:* If RBA were to expand to the other dorms, the support structures already in place in those dorms would be compromised. There is no longer any choice in whose one's dorm-mates are, and this in turn undermines community (which is a professed goal of RBA).

*VP ties RBA into REX:* REX can be moved to the beginning of the week and advisor issues resolved at the same time. (This would avoid the conflict brought up by the present freshman that RBA is a 'locked in' program because advisors need to know who their advisees are before orientation)

*Snaggs suggests campus-wide RBA:* DormCon should invite Dan Chapman <dw>, who is the RBA point person in the ARC. He needs to explain conceptually what it RBA is and what are its goals, at least from the point of view of the ARC. And if there are substantial benefits, then is it not possible that RBA be implemented in *all* the dorms so that freshmen can connect with upperclassmen?

*Random cautions against campus-wide RBA:* It would be dangerous politically for DormCon to endorse the expansion of RBA to the other dorms. More dorms would be 'locked in' and this could potentially back-fire in the sense that REX would be compromised. (And when freshmen realize they have a chance to escape RBA, they are eager to know how.)

*Snaggs looks to the future:* Whatever is 'wrong' with RBA can be potentially fixed. It's natural for people to resist change.

*East Campus:* Some types of freshmen could benefit, while others might not. There should be flexibility so people can choose (e.g. meet advisors before Orientation ends)

*Random:* We shouldn't complicate the orientation schedule because this could potentially backfire. Early in the week the ARC can make the packets (hurriedly). We should not add constraints.

*VP:* We need to have a holistic approach to all this – we are aiming to change things around. We are considering how we interact and effect each other.

## Parties and Registration Issues

A Simmons party got out of control and three residents are being kicked out with possible COD (Committee on Discipline) charges. The Housemasters called the CPs who 'busted' the party.

But shouldn't Simmons JudComm have handled this before it got to the administrators? The question is: where is the line drawn where JudComm jurisdiction stops? It was a large event and there was a marked conflict of interests, so necessarily Simmons JudComm would not have handled it.

Another issue was that several levels of 'authority' were ignored (e.g. GRTs), in that the decision to act went directly to the housemasters. Whatever happened to *community*?

And are the residents even allowed to be kicked out? They could receive a warning and then eventually be expelled. There is actually a document being compiled to address issues such as these, although being kicked out of the dorm has not been specified yet.

Underlying issue with all this: **Party Registration**

Registration entails paperwork (usually due one week before the event), with signatures from SLP, housemasters, and the CPs. Larger events have a strict one week deadline because a CP detail may be needed.

Residents should understand that registration gives them leverage. They should also be fully aware of the process, and that process needs to be *workable*. Residents need to be informed of *how to register*, the *consequences* of not doing so, and that registration allows them to *take control* of the situation.

(Side note: Grad students have this process online. SLP currently has the forms available online, but they are thinking about rebuilding the site and improving online access.)

How to promote knowledge of registration among residents?

- talk to and work through the social chairs of each dormitory
- have SLP send out an email outlining the procedure, the benefits, and where to get the forms

## State of DormCon – Summaries etc.

REX was good. Financially we're good too. Bulletin board is full and good. All's good.

### ***REX Chair positions are open and elections need to be held ASAP.***

Harvey Jones will be the coordinator with the ARC and SLP, and will head the effort to create a DormCon document detailing our REX goals, wants, and reasons why.

**Housing:** work on policies & regulations as well as security

**Orientation:** Rafael Bras says that the academic emphasis should be done away with and dispersed through other media instead (e.g. i3). Orientation should be focused on student life. REX should be moved to the start of the week, so the freshmen aren't exhausted. The orientation groups can then have liberty to do what they want. And IFC is good to go with this. Josh and Ian meeting with the ARC next Thursday at 8:00am to draft Orientation goals.

**New positions:**

- Estevan Martinez is the new DormCon Liason to the UA.
- Harvey Jones is the new DormCon Orientation Committee big cheese.
- Richard Duane-Chambers is the new liason to the Housing and CPs (regarding security)

**Alcohol:** Danny Trujillo will discuss the SafeRide situation (people throwing up) with various student leaders.

**Security:** Housing Chair will send out the 30 page document regarding front desk duties. Summer training for desk workers is a potentially good idea. Random reaffirms that the undergrad all-access card should be implemented *dorm by dorm*. REX Chair asserts that *guests lists* are ideal. Housing Chair responds that the all-access card will undermine such guest lists.

**RBA:** Both the program *and* the advisors need to be *evaluated*. Next House to compile a Student Perspective Survey.

**Red Sox:** SLP wants to hold an event either in Kresge or the Student Center to keep people on campus so to avoid MIT deaths in any riots. But it was overall agreed that this would do nothing to prevent people from going to Kenmore/Fenway. What is important instead is the emphasizing education of the dangers that one may encounter in a violent mob. RLA Dan Kirsch will contact Cheryl Vossmer to put together a document to email out about what signs to look for, when to leave, and general safety issues. Making these suggestions a bulleted list and putting on the front page of *The Tech* is a good idea.

Maybe we want to put together a guide for residents? *Worst Case Senario: How to Survive College* suggestion by freshman (Estevan Martinez)

- alcohol poisoning
- mobs
- random dangers of college life

**Administrators:** REX Chair comments that we need to 'transition' the new president as well as Andy Ryder (who thinks people are using money for alcohol purchases, but we put his fears to rest.). Stay involved with the disciplinary cycle as well.