

DormCon Meeting Minutes
18 April 2013

Agenda

- (1) Dorms in the ASA Database**
- (2) Approval of Funding Methodology**

Attendance

Dorm	Representative	Absent
Baker	Andrea Gutierrez Marty	
Burton-Conner	Akhil Raju	
East Campus	Kelly Snyder	
MacGregor	Walter Menendez	
Maseeh Hall	Clay Goggil	
McCormick	Henna Jethani	Late
New House	Anna Ho	
Next House	Linda Seymour	
Random Hall	Jacob Hurwitz	
Senior Haus		Proxy: Rodrigo Lopez Uricoechea
Simmons Hall	Cosmos Darwin	Absent
President	Edward Mugica	
Vice President	Janille Maragh	
Secretary	Jacobi Vaughn	
Treasurer	Phoebe Whitwell	

1) Dorms in the ASA Database

- (Jacobi speaking, as ASA Treasurer) The ASA maintains a database of almost all of MIT's student groups. It holds information about the groups – ways to contact them, current officers, financial information, constitution, etc. The MIT administration – at least SAO, CopyTech, and the police – use this database to check who is authorized to spend funds for groups. One of the largest sets which is not in the database is Undergraduate Dorms, and thus SAO would like them to be included. The dorms will be added as 'non-group entities', which means they will not have any of the perks or obligations of being an ASA-recognized group. The dorms will need to keep their database page updated.
- Could dorms have multiple NGE pages? For instance, EC has multiple floors with different financial signatories and accounts for each.
 - Jacobi: I'll need to bring this up at the next ASA meeting, but probably.

2) Approval of Funding Methodology

- Why do we give money to DormCon at all, only to request it back?
- Ed: We can fund things that dorms would not be able to or want to fund themselves, ie promoting cross-campus or cross-dorm events. Smaller dorms

have a lot less money, while larger dorms tend to run large surpluses. DormCon can help redistribute money to allow the smaller dorms to do things effectively.

- Clay: It is worrisome for smaller dorms to be living outside of their means by requiring outside funding to run their CPW events.
- Plaz: The way DormCon gives out money is mostly arbitrary. We should have reasons for why we distribute money. It is a hassle for dorms to give DormCon money only to request it back. There is also some risk, for instance DormCon might change its funding policies in the future.
- Andrea: It is reasonable for people to assume that the money they pay from their house tax stays within their dorm. The system is unfair to larger dorms.
- Ed: Disagrees with the assertion that it is detrimental for money to not stay within the dorm. For instance, certain dorms have very effective CPWs but have difficulty funding them, and it helps MIT (advantage to all students) if those dorms get funding.
- Phoebe: Large events such as Steer Roast could not work without DormCon funding, but benefit the whole community. Admissions money is a rather special example. This only started a year or two ago.
- Some people believe that CPW is meant to allow dorms to show themselves off, to help the prefrash know where they should live. They also believe that dorms should be able to raise money from their own residents to fund their CPW.
- Jonte: One philosophical way to think about this is whether the money being paid in is being paid to dorms to run events to better the entire community, or to better the dorms themselves.
- Other issues:
 - Why is it in the dorms' interests to subsidize the MIT admission strategy?
 - Five dollars per person is far more than is needed to fund inter-dorm or campus-wide events.
- Ed: Roughly 60-70% of the DormCon budget goes towards inter-dorm events (including CPW).
- Alina: Analogy: There is a student life fee which every student pays, which goes to the UA and is finally allocated through finboard. Not all of this funding goes to student groups YOU are in, but this still helps student life in general.
- Rebuttal: We don't have any authority over student life fees, but we do have authority over DormCon taxes.
- The argument is about either the existence of these taxes, or how money from those taxes is allocated. People disagree on which we are arguing about.

- Jhurwitz: What makes MIT CPW different from other colleges is that everything is student run. The fact that it is decentralized means that there are hundreds of options, and having choice is better for students. Random runs a lot of events because it has a lot of people that like to run events, not just that they are trying to spend as much as possible. They need outside funding sources to cover all of their events. CPW is supposed to be more about MIT than for the individual dorms. Beyond CPW, maybe the larger dorms should focus on running the cross-campus events. But if people in Random want to throw those types of large events, they need outside funding. The money should go to dorms which have people who want to run events.
- NH Treasurer: It is not our job to be the MIT administration, it is our job to represent and aid dorms. The fact that we had an expensive retreat shows that DormCon has more money than we know what to do with.
- Ed: No, we really don't have tons of money. Our primary goal is advocacy for dorms. If possible, we should be spending more of our money on that.
- Catherine: It doesn't seem like the CPW money was going to inter-dorm events. People submitted a budget for whatever, and we didn't really make sure that everything was inter-dorm.
- Ed: My argument is that CPW as a whole is inter-dorm.
- Catherine: Disagree. CPW is for dorms to sell themselves.
- Ed: In my opinion, that is the wrong idea, CPW is a way for dorms to sell MIT as a whole. If most people do look at it the way you do, then maybe DormCon should not be funding CPW events.
- Clay: We should steer this conversation away from CPW, and we should talk about the tax as a whole. I don't think dorms should have to pay a tax to be in DormCon.
- Ed: It is clear what roughly 5 people think, can we see what everyone thinks? I want to ask a few questions of the dorms, and have a formal vote of their opinion. The first question: Should DormCon have a budget at all?

Dorm	Representative	Absent
Baker	Andrea Gutierrez Marty	No
Burton-Conner	Akhil Raju	Yes
East Campus	Kelly Snyder	Yes
MacGregor	Walter Menendez	Yes
Maseeh Hall	Clay Goggil	No (I think that Maseeh will secede because of this)
McCormick	Henna Jethani	Yes
New House	Anna Ho	No (we already have representation which is not DormCon, ie the

		UA, 4000 budget for the retreat was absurd)
Next House	Linda Seymour	Yes
Random Hall	Jacob Hurwitz	Yes
Senior Haus	Proxy: Rodrigo Lopez Uricoechea	Yes
Simmons Hall	Cosmos Darwin	Absent

- It is completely necessary to have DormCon meetings be separate from UA meetings. We should be grateful that we have as much representation on the UA as we have.
- Ed: It seems that there is a consensus that DormCon should have a budget. There are a lot of things that will happen if a dorm secedes from DormCon, and you should strongly discuss it with your entire dorm.
- New House Rep: We do not want to secede, but think that changes need to happen.
- New House Treasurer: I don't know what DormCon is going to do when I submit a budget. Over time, I have learned some of the ways which I can twist to get more funding. The fact that such twists exist shows that the current process does not work. We should hammer out an agreement for specific things about how we allocate funding.
- Phoebe: The handout which we are discussing is not a set of rules for is, it was just a set of notes which I wanted to discuss.
- Kelly: We should still look at things case-by-case, as the make-up of the Institute changes frequently.
- Akhil: There is a lot more here than just CPW funding. Funding for events like Steer Roast, Piano Drop, etc are rather important.
- Ed: To all of the dorm presidents: Should DormCon have a budget which is solely for inter-dorm events, assuming we have a budget?

Dorm	Representative	Absent
Baker	Andrea Gutierrez Marty	Yes
Burton-Conner	Akhil Raju	Yes
East Campus	Kelly Snyder	Yes
MacGregor	Walter Menendez	Yes (left after answering)
Maseeh Hall	Clay Goggil	No
McCormick	Henna Jethani	Yes
New House	Anna Ho	This is a forced question, but yes.
Next House	Linda Seymour	Yes
Random Hall	Jacob Hurwitz	Yes
Senior Haus	Proxy: Rodrigo Lopez	Yes

	Uricoechea	
Simmons Hall	Cosmos Darwin	Absent

- Ed: Also, Should there be an allocation in DormCon's budget for operating costs (food for meetings and retreats)?

Dorm	Representative	Absent
Baker	Andrea Gutierrez Marty	No
Burton-Conner	Akhil Raju	Yes, cheaper retreat
East Campus	Kelly Snyder	Yes
MacGregor	Walter Menendez	(Absent
Maseeh Hall	Clay Goggil	Absolutely not.
McCormick	Henna Jethani	Yes, cheaper retreat
New House	Anna Ho	Yes, but only for very low operational expenses (~300 for the retreat, but no for meeting food)
Next House	Linda Seymour	No
Random Hall	Jacob Hurwitz	Yes
Senior Haus	Proxy: Rodrigo Lopez Uricoechea	Yes, cheaper retreat.
Simmons Hall	Cosmos Darwin	Absent

- Jonte: First and foremost, there needs to be a group to advocate for the dorms. This group should probably be separate from the UA, as the UA focuses on policy questions and things that affect the entire undergrad body. You guys collect money, which means that you are a funding board. It is very strange for a funding board to not have formal policies.
- New House Rep: DormCon lacks some sense of purpose, this should be clearly defined.
- New House Treasurer: There should be a committee headed by Phoebe to discuss this issue, and to bring it before the whole body.
- Andrea and Clay: We think that DormCon should focus solely on advocacy, not on funding.
- Ed: I disagree for having money helps us with our advocacy. I am having a really hard time with the idea of not having any operating costs at all. The members of DormCon give lots of time and energy, and food is a cheap way to thank them. I like re-focusing our funding strategy on inter-dorm events, as a lot of dorms feel like that is an important part of what we are doing.
- Ed: At the end of the day, I feel like a lot of people were bothered by the cost of the retreat. I disagree, but in the future that amount of funding should be reduced. As far as I see it, the consensus is to keep our budgetary status in some form. We should certainly discuss this more in the future. Advocacy first and inter-dorm events second are valuable goals for the student body.

- Ed: I would like to make sure we have a plan before we motion to create the committee.
- New House Treasurer: I made the motion with the hope that it would make it to a vote. I don't want that group to be skewed one way or another. My motion: The plan is to have Phoebe (as DormCon Treasurer) chair a committee, which would consist of a representative of each dorm as appointed by the dorm president. The task of this committee is to prepare a policy for the purpose and process for funding as distributed by DormCon. Each representative and Phoebe will have one vote.
- Phoebe: Flexibility is important, as the representatives on DormCon will change into the future.
- Ed: What does 'policy' mean?
- New House Treasurer: It should be decided by a consensus of the committee, and should have definite rules for some things and loose rules for others.
- Ed: Does anyone have anything else they would like to say about the motion?
- Akhil: Ed, are you against this committee?
- Ed: I would prefer that we could have a plan for the committee before spontaneously creating it. It would be nice to talk about it at a DormCon Exec meeting. I am not against the committee as a whole.

Dorm	Representative	Absent
Baker	Andrea Gutierrez Marty	Yes
Burton-Conner	Akhil Raju	Yes
East Campus	Kelly Snyder	Sure
MacGregor	Walter Menendez	Absent
Maseeh Hall	Clay Goggil	Yes
McCormick	Henna Jethani	Yes
New House	Anna Ho	Yes
Next House	Linda Seymour	Yes
Random Hall	Jacob Hurwitz	Yes
Senior Haus	Proxy: Rodrigo Lopez Uricoechea	Yes
Simmons Hall	Cosmos Darwin	Absent

The motion passes.

- Akhil: You should talk about this at the next DormCon exec meeting.
- Ed: Thanks for coming everyone.

- Maseeh Advisor: As an aside, certain dorms are going to have more beds for next Semester. This may be an issue in the future, as we have doubles turning into quads. We are having a town meeting in Maseeh to discuss it.

The next DormCon meeting will occur on May 2nd at 6 pm, in Burton-Connor