

DormCon Meeting Minutes
02 May 2013

Agenda

- (1) Elections (Ed)**
- (2) Funding Committee Update (Phoebe)**

Attendance

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

Also in attendance: three representatives from the UA. The UA would like everyone to know that “the UA loves DormCon”.

Note: Maseeh has seceded from DormCon by a 4-3 vote of their exec team.

1) Elections

- All positions on DormCon Exec excluding VP for REX are up for election.

President

- Running: Clay(proxyed by Beth), Eli, Matthew (New House VP), Katherine, Jhurwitz
- First: Is it legal for a member of a seceded dorm to run for President?
- The DormCon constitution does not contain provisions for secession, and thus the only way to secede is to un-define the building as an undergraduate dormitory.
- Argument from Beth: Maseeh has already paid its taxes, so Clay is eligible to run.

- Rebuttal from Ed: We are not electing him for this semester, it is for the next semester. He won't be eligible then.
- JudComm Chair (rule of law): Agrees with the interpretation that Clay is eligible to run now. It is not well-defined when the dorm stops being a dorm. He is not disqualified for now however.
- Discussion: Why do you want to be DormCon president?
- Jhurwitz: DormCon is going through an identity crisis, and I am interested in being a part of that conversation. I want to work with all DormCon members to define its future moving forward.
- Katherine: Strongest role of DormCon is advocacy. I feel like I can step up to this role. Funding is something that we need to address, to streamline it and make it effect.
- Eli: DormCon is an important organization in the eyes of the administration. DormCon needs to maintain this role. Opening lines of communication between the dorm presidents and with the administration are important. DormCon is about the presidents, not about exec.
- Beth (speaking for Clay): Agrees with Eli that the DormCon president should facilitate conversation between dorm presidents. Clay knows that he will probably not be elected, but wants to run as a show of faith that he has not given up on DormCon.
- Matthew: I am here to represent my residents to the MIT administration, to DormCon, etc. We can fix actual problems which affect dorms by working together, again on advocacy. DormCon exists to represent the undergrad dorms, and to make it better to live in them. It isn't about funding or money; those are just a way to fulfill the advocacy means. I care about my residents; I want to make sure they have the best possible undergraduate experience possible.
- One dorm has seceded. All of you are running because you want DormCon to stay together. Other dorms are nervous about Maseeh's departure. What are your plans to keep other dorms from leaving?
- Jhurwitz: People have not been seeing much advocacy lately. We need to prove that we are an effective advocacy group. I hope that dorms want to be a part of DormCon because they gain benefits from being a part of it.
- Katherine: We have opportunities which would be difficult or impossible for individual dorms to manage on their own. We need to show the dorms that we actually do advocate for them.
- Eli: I agree with everything that has been said. I would want to get everyone on the same page about the funding issue. The funding side is not the primary side

of DormCon in my eyes, so we should work out that sort of thing early after transitions. The DormCon name, as in ALL of the undergrad dorms, is helpful.

- Beth (speaking for Clay): Finances are in need of reform. DormCon can be an even more powerful advocacy tool than it currently is. Dormcon has a lot of conversations about ideas for advocacy. Those conversations should turn into action items.
- Matthew: We need to establish a sense of trust between the dorms and among the undergraduate residents of dorms. We need to ask the dorms what they want out of DormCon that they are not already getting. We need to provide stability, structure, and trust. There is clearly a problem when someone says I am going to leave this organization which advocates for me. There are problems on both ends which need to be fixed.
- What is your position on the funding issue? Should the DormCon tax (\$5/resident) be lowered?
- Jhurwitz: I think DormCon needs to have guidelines. It is irresponsible to spend money on retreats and meeting food without any upper limits. I am personally in favor of spending money on meeting food and a reasonably sized/budgeted retreat. Inter-Dorm events should be prioritized in terms of funding, and we need to publicize that this source of funding exists. We need more rules for what it means to be funded by DormCon, similar to the Finboard rules. We should ask people to collect data about actual attendance at these events to evaluate how effective the event was in bringing people together. We should require inter-dorm events to email out to all of the dorms. Our current system for CPW funding is decent; we should still have some role in this. I think the DormCon tax should be lowered if the funding committee guidelines say so. The constitution makes editing the tax easy, thus maybe it is supposed to be fluid.
- Katherine: Reasonable to have food at meetings. There is an implicit upper limit; maybe we should add it to the constitution. A cheaper retreat is a good idea, but we need to consider how much the last retreat hurt us in terms of publicity. DormCon funding should go to inter-dorm events, and there should be guidelines. We should take the money which the administration gives us for CPW and redistribute it; I am unsure how I stand on the issue of whether we should redistribute house tax money for CPW. I think the DormCon tax could be lowered.
- Eli: Should fund meeting food and cheap retreat, should fund inter-dorm events. We should continue to get money from the administration for CPW, but not distribute house tax money for CPW. I would like to see what DormCon wants in terms of funding with the results from the funding committee.
- Beth (speaking for Clay): DormCon should be more than a redistribution of funds between dorms. All of its funding should go into things which benefit the entire community. The DormCon tax should be lowered, or even eliminated. It is not valuable for Maseeh.

- Matthew: Funding is great, but it should not get in the way of representing our residents. We need a code for funding from the funding committee. It is up to us to determine how events will benefit our residents. Money is a tool and a means, not something to bicker and fight about. We need to go over our principles to see what needs to be taxed to cover. Is our mission being accomplished with our current tax? It is not a question of numbers, but a question of what you want to do.
- What is your style of advocacy?
- Matthew: The best which you advocate for a large group of people is great organization. My form of advocacy is to have is to have the organization to have an effective leadership team. I live out DormCon every day in New House, as we have nine very distinct houses. Advocacy takes humility(listening to others), dedication(keep trying), and vision (a goal).
- Jhurwitz: The different between DormCon and a collection of individuals is the DormCon has a lot more power as a body by saying that they represent thousands of residents, and that they think a policy should be changed. The dorm presidents should ask their constituents what their opinions are, conglomerate those opinions, and then act on them. This acting could be talking to the administration, writing a tech ad, et cetera.
- Katherine: I like to go to my constituents and to find out what their issues are. I need to get their opinions and find a way to express them in a constructive way, not as a giant mash of negativity.
- Eli: I would talk to the presidents, find out what the problems are, and to talk to the relative people on behalf of DormCon. I have a laid back style which is serious when I need to be. I think I can take a nice middle ground when I need to.
- Beth (speaking for Clay): My style is to listen really well, and to build key relationships with members of the administration. We need these relationships so that they will listen and take us seriously.
- Name your time commitments. Keep it brief. Name the top five administrators who you have advocated with already.
- Jhurwitz: MITBeef. I need to take 4 classes as a senior next year (not per term, for the whole year). Grimson and Humphries, Nina (Random Housemaster).
- Katherine: Humpries, Mike Myers in Dining, Charles Stewart (her housemaster), my house manager. I UROP, I am part of a dance group (Movements In Time, 5 hours per week). Also my roles in McCormick exec. 48 units
- Eli: Grimson, Myers, Humphries, my housemaster and house manager. I have literally nothing going on next year. 48 units + UROP.
- Beth (speaking for Clay): Maseeh President, medlink, 48 units. Our housemasters and house team, Humphries (doesn't know his full list).

- Matthew: 48 units. Humphries for dining renovations, Reif I email a lot, our House Master and House Manager, Dennis Collin (maintenance, repair, and structures at MIT).
- *Jhurwitz withdraws from the running.*
- Candidates kicked for a closed discussion.

Eli was elected.

Executive Vice-President

- Running: Walter(running absentee), Matthew, Alina, Katherine
- Alina: I have been part of DormCon since last year; I got to advocate for dorms on various issues – CPW, FYRE. I want to be VP to put myself in a better position to advocate. 48 units. Desk Captain at Senior Haus, UROP. Hosed, but I worked successfully during this year while taking Jlab. My style is to be everywhere and to hear all of the things. The administration does not do a good job of publicizing opportunities to get involved, and I like to put myself out there for those. I was part of the RLAD initiative for the summer. I like to listen and take action when necessary.
- Alina withdraws (cannot be 2 VPships at once).
- Candidates kicked for a closed discussion.

Katherine was elected.

Treasurer

- Running: Phoebe
- Discussion: Skipped as there is one person running.
- Candidate kicked for a closed discussion.

Phoebe was elected.

Secretary

- Running: Jacobi
- Discussion: Skipped as there is one person running.
- Candidate kicked for a closed discussion.

Jacobi was elected.

Housing Chair

- Running: Alina, Matthew
- Discussion: Are both of you okay with working together, or would you prefer alone?
- Both okay with working together.
- Candidates kicked for a closed discussion.

Alina and Matthew were elected.

JudComm Chair

- Running: Horkley, Jhurwitz
- Discussion: If there is a conflict in your interpretations, what happens?
- We reach consensus. We have prior experience resolving difference of opinions when working together as ESP Chairs.
- Candidates kicked for a closed discussion.

Horkley and Jhurwitz were elected.

Risk Management Chair

- Running: Matthew
- Discussion: Skipped as there is one person running.
- Candidate kicked for a closed discussion.

Matthew was elected.

Dining Chairs

- Running: Beth
- Discussion: What are your views for dining?
- People who live in the dining dorms generally like them, but there is room for improvement. I want to protect the cook for themselves community.
- Candidate kicked for a closed discussion.

Beth was elected.

2) Funding Committee Update

- Met yesterday (May 1st). Phoebe thinks it went pretty well. There will be another meeting next week. They will look more deeply into what DormCon should fund (for instance, what constitutes an inter-dorm event, how REX/CPW fit in).
- Discussed each dorm's interpretation of whether DormCon should have a budget, and what that should be.
- Want to create guidelines for funding that are reasonable and clear. The size of the budget and whether it involves operating expenses are still not decided.
- Also want guidelines for what DormCon wants to fund (the same old, historical events; new, riskier ones, et cetera).
- Might be changes to the house tax collected by DormCon (currently \$5/resident).
- Email dormcon-funding@mit.edu if you have any input.

The final DormCon meeting of the year will occur on May 16th at 6 pm, in East Campus.

*The next DormCon exec meeting (May 9th) is a transitions meeting.
New people take office during the next full meeting (May 16th).*