

DormCon Meeting Minutes

September 12, 2013

MacGregor Hall

Attendance:

Baker - Andrea Marty

Burton Conner – Akhil Raju

East Campus – Kelly Snyder

MacGregor – Walter Menendez

McCormick – Katherine Silvestre (Executive VP) (proxy for Henna Jethani)

New House – Anna Ho

Next House – Linda Seymour

Random Hall – Jacob Hurwitz (JudComm Chair)

Senior Haus – Alina Kononov (VP for REX & Hosuing Chair)

Simmons Hall – Cosmos Darwin

Others in attendance: Eli Ross (President); Phoebe Whitwell (Treasurer); Matthew Davis (Housing Chair and Risk-Management Chair); Beth Sturman (Dining Chair)

1) Outreach from DormCon:

Eli (President): Reaching out to mainly freshmen to let them know about the funding policies and other information. The plan is to send out an email to Dorm Presidents that they can send out to their dorms. Email dormcon-exec if you are interested in writing the email. Comments are valued.

Announcement for a new Secretary will be made. If you know anyone who is good for the position, please inform them of this opportunity.

Current meeting plan is Thursday at 6PM. This may change, as meeting times are formalized.

2) Funding Policy:

Phoebe: *[see attached funding policy]*

Toward the end of the semester, conversations occurred through the funding committee (comprised of a representative from every dorm) through a series of meetings. The culmination of these efforts is the attached funding document. These are guidelines for what DormCon should fund.

Focus is on interdormitory events. There are four categories... (review of document occurred)

Senior House: Concern about giving preference to multiple dormitory events, namely, since there are more dormitories involved, they have more monetary power to host an event. An event such as Senior House needs the money more.

Random House: The categories are not so strictly defined; case-by-case basis.

Next House Treasurer: More important to know where the money is going.

Eli: In the long run, whatever the time frame is, we figure out whatever it is our money is impacting the most. During this semester, we can use these categories to sort these events and determine a delineation in the budget among the different categories. Having never previously made people apply under specific categories, it would be difficult to decide how to arrange the budget now.

New House Treasurer: As long as we remember to do it, I like it.

Eli: The point is that we get to that point. Looking at the preliminary budget, we have \$10,000 for events – if you can tell me now how much should go to events, great. Elsewise, we need data.

Random: I wanted to pick out one point you said: we want to know whether dormitories have a realistic expectation to receive money. We have put in some guidelines that say you should either apply at the beginning of term, or three weeks before you need the money; this gives you some time to determine whether you will have the money and gives Dormitory Council some flexibility. Some dorms assume the money will come and need it the next day; this is unacceptable.

Simmons: We are going to continue going through it?

Eli: Yes.

Baker: Since all the applications are being decided at once, it is up to the people at the time to determine where the money goes.

East Campus: So it will be up to our discretion. If we have \$10,000 worth of applicants that go into category three, it does not mean category one will get no money?

Eli: That is not the case at all. The point is we have one semester to see what events happen, and have some discretion, and have a better idea for the future for allocation.

Treasurer: Intended to encourage dorms to do interdormitory events. This has been a desire that has been expressed in the past. If you apply for funding for your interdormitory events.

Acting Secretary: These are guidelines.

Random: Maybe we should have a deadline for when we should spend money to RFP. I do not see that here.

Eli: We talked about it, I think before we should vote on this, we will add that in. Phoebe, want to talk about the rolling deadline?

Treasurer: [reads document]

New House: We are planning to implement this during the current semester?

Eli: Let's call this the zeroth meeting. Let's give this an extra meeting for the semester, then vote.

New House: Are there plans for how we are going to publicize this?

Eli: [reference prior statement concerning publicity]

Treasurer: [discusses proposed application]

Baker: Funding is for money requested or for the event period?

Eli: I think for the money requested.

Vice President: Make it clear that things like alcohol will not be funded, etcetera.

Eli: What is the deadline for RFP?

Treasurer: Thirty Days.

Random: From the event or when the money is spent?

Eli: From the event.

Vice President: At the end of the event and the beginning?

Next House Treasurer: Let's do at the end.

Eli: Are there any

Simmons: What is the thinking behind the minimum word description?

Treasurer: That is basically in case somebody comes to us and asks what we spent our money on. We need to make funding decisions off of something.

Baker: I have a question but I do not know if this applies. Piano Drop will occur during Parent's Weekend, will the money carry over or not?

JudComm: No.

Eli: It is semesterly not the same event, due to timing.

JudComm: When we approve a budget, the previous one is voided.

Simmons: Can we touch on how CPW plays into this? I feel like that is a gaping hole in this summary.

Treasurer: These are event guidelines; it was my interpretation that we wanted event guidelines down for this semester. We did CPW/REX in the semester; it was my understanding that we would consider that later.

Simmons: So we will talk about that during the Spring?

Eli: Would people be interested in saying that ... this document approving now we are approving it until the end of the term, then revisiting it? Is that something that people are interested in doing? Who is in favour of that?

Aye: All hands

Nay: None

Treasurer: "Adding an RFP Deadline from thirty days from the completion of the event, moving the initial dormitory funding to the third meeting; moving the restrictions of alcohol giveaways to the things that DormCon is funding; changing the wording of funding 50% of total funding to 50% of total event budget."

Motion made by Burton-Conner

Second by East Campus

JudComm: One vote per dorm, not a population vote.

Baker: Y

Burton Conner: Y

East Campus: Y

MacGregor: Y

McCormick: Y

New House: Y

Next House: Y

Random House: Y

Senior House: Y

Simmons Hall: Y

Eli: Now we will move on to the constitution.

3) Constitution Discussion:

JudComm: We have not entirely ironed things out, so there are not too many updates. We are revisiting the constitution for a number of issues: what happens when a dormitory secedes? Can people run for DormCon office if they secede? Can they receive funding? Also: budget references that will need to be changed to accommodate the new guidelines. It may be important to put an explicit statement in the budget to be transparent about monetary spending, to see how we allocated and spent money. We are currently constitutionally required to do it, but not put it online. We came up with a long list of a dozen small things where the constitution has minor pedantic details that have to be cleaned up or fixed; we are supposed to only have one VP for REX, but traditionally we have had many. Big things: Secession, procedures, accommodating the new budget guidelines. We will meet soon and come back next meeting with an actual text proposal with constitutional amendments. I wanted to quickly hear if you had thoughts about what should happen when a dormitory secedes?

Burton Conner: Quick thing about people from seceded dorms running for DormCon positions: They should be allowed.

JudComm: Is there a difference then between exec and voting positions?

VP: Why should they be allowed?

New House Treasurer: It is not their fault that they seceded.

Simmons: But then democracy fails.

Burton Conner: [statement in favour]

Advisor: If they want to run, they could pay the DormCon tax.

Eli: Barring something like that, let's see a show of hands: should members be allowed to run from dorms that are not in DormCon:

5 Aye (New, Burton Conner, East Campus, Baker, Next) – 3 Nay (Simmons, Senior, McCormick), Random Hall abstains.

Eli: JudComm sends an email out to discuss this issue, and people have an idea on how to discuss this meeting.

Simmons: Can we do a second vote on whether dorms not in DormCon can receive funding from events?

Random: Is this an event run exclusively by a seceded dorm?

Eli: Yes. Let's say that Maseeh wants to run Maseeh Steer Roast.

Hand Vote:

Unanimous All.

[Various things] Eli: Somewhat related: A lot of dorms go on an apple picking trip. Should we have one MIT apple picking trip? Just to get this discussion started, let's send out an email. We have a lot of external committee chairs to appoint, such as IS&T, etc. I am going to email out to people about these; if you know people who are interested, please let me know. The website will be getting updated with this information.

4) Budget

Eli: By the time we send out this email, things will be updated [on the website]. Now we need to talk about the budget.

Vice President: Current account balance; is this what is left from the Spring Semester?

Treasurer: The first number is the current account number from SAPweb. Left from Spring Semester is still accepting RFP's for but have not received (RFP's that can still be transferred); expected Fall taxes adjusted for crowding and Maseeh (still an estimate); adjusted initial balance is minus the things from Spring Semester and adding the Fall Taxes.

REX has already been allocated, meeting food is that number (\$1400), and events are \$10,000.

Eli: Unallocated money from the Spring can be put into events; it is not a hard number.

Random: The taxes, you said you accounted for Maseeh. Did you account for crowding?

Treasurer: Yes.

Senior: I remember last semester there was a discussion concerning meeting food...

Treasurer: Previous semesters it was set at \$2,000.

Simmons: I assume the remaining \$5,000 is for our Retreat, right? ← note: this was a joke

Eli: Things were estimated; maybe we want to fund an extra event, etc. I do not think we want a final balance of zero, it is nice to have a buffer.

Treasurer: Large events that request funding happens over the Spring.

Random: Sometimes an event happens in September, so we need padding in our account to ensure that we do not go negative.

Eli: Vote?

Motion made by:

Seconded by general consensus

Population Vote:

Baker: Y

Burton Conner: Y

East Campus: Y

MacGregor: Y

McCormick: Y

New House: Y

Next House: Y

Random House: Y

Senior House: Y

Simmons Hall: Y

5) Security Discussion:

Eli: Let's discuss these new security measures. Who is involved in Phase One?

[all dining dorms raise their hand]

Baker: At Baker, the door is open all day. We did not have a guest list at the beginning of the semester, and a Guest List will be implemented where someone has access for an hour and you do not have to go down to retrieve them.

Eli: I am going to send out a survey about this. Dean Humphreys has been very receptive about this. There is going to be an official survey about this in a month or so.

McCormick: We had a house government retreat internally, and there were a lot of concerns raised about the security. What really bothers us is that McCormick normally has an airlock; now, the door is always open, and you tap in when you get in. People do not like the idea of our door being open all the time. [The person = Charles] we discussed these concerns with was very open to our concerns, and it has reverted to the old systems.

Simmons: If you want your door locked, just email them and they will lock it.

McCormick: We did, it happened. Other than that, people have not been entirely thrilled about the security worker, but changing the door lock back is better.

Many: Why is the front door unlocked? That's less secure.

Next House: Our courtyard access isn't how it used to be, and it's inconvenient. Also, people have been told inconsistent things from different security workers. It's frustrating to sort out what are actually changes versus misunderstandings/confusion.

Senior Haus: Have cameras been put in?

All: Yes.

McCormick: We had/are having(?) a meeting where the security people will show residents what the cameras do, which doors are exits only, etc.

Next: We had a similar meeting.

Baker: We have a dividing tape guiding people into the dorm. It's quite weird.

Simmons: Seconds McCormick. Security staff are nice and trying to be friendly, but aren't great at their jobs. There are gaping holes, inconsistencies, etc. Checking out room keys

isn't even safe right now.

McCormick: We are worried about worker quality, as they get bored and play on phones. Though, Allied Barton has a very good reputation.

Alina: We could invite desk captains to a meeting with Dean Humphreys! From a perspective from dorm in phase not I: it has felt that we're not allowed to have an opinion because we're in phase I.

MacGregor: Yeah, we haven't been approached about it.

Simmons: Indeed. The report says the #1 thing is community buy-in, but this hasn't been evident in the process.

Alina: I'm also a desk captain and they've talked to us about desk software. We told them that we didn't want to use it (Filemaker pro) and they left us alone for now. We gave them a long list of complaints, but it seems they might just implement it anyway... because we have a new monitor in lobby that we said we didn't want but they put it in.

Random: i've been emailing with someone from housing and I might work on DormBase as a project for class.

Eli: We should get Dean Humphreys to come to the next meeting.

East Campus: We need to emphasize that this is very different from dorm to dorm... not going to work in EC/SH..., noting that desk isn't even our main door....

Simmons: I believe they're okay with this principle.

Alina: At the very minimum, housing needs to alert people to security changes with enough time so that they have the ability to move out if desired.

Linda: Next exec wants opinions - setting up protocol for timelines with admin, email DormCon with some amount of time...

Anna: it's good from their point of view too!

Next House: this communication happen directly with students and not just exec boards.

Jacob: sometimes thing told to desk captain, not to dorm, or stuff like that.

Next House Resident: should we make a communication contract with ResLife?

Simmons: a legit contract won't fly. But we could at least say what we want in optimal situations.

6) Murals, etc.

The meeting concluded with some informal conversations about murals and possible next steps.