DormCon Meeting
September 10th, 2015
Location: Burton-Conner

Agenda:
1. **New House Update**
2. **Dean for Student Life Search Update**
3. **Announcement Regarding Tech Cash**
4. **Discussion/Update Regarding Dining**
5. **Discussion of how in-house rush went**
6. **Discussion on REX**

Attendance

Dorm	Representative	Absent
Baker	Amanda Lee	
Burton-Conner	Paul Hager	
East Campus	Sonja Postak	
MacGregor	Arthur Delarue	**Proxy: Jack Greenfield**
McCormick	Mary Delaney	
New House	Matthew Davis	
Next House	Haley Hurowitz	
Random Hall	Eric Mannes	
Senior House	Adrianna Rodriguez	
Simmons Hall	Kate Farris	
President	Yonadav Shavit	
Vice President	Caitlin Heber	
Secretary	Jasmeet Arora	
Treasurer	Jacqueline Liu	

Start time: 19:34

0. Introductions

1. New House Situation
- Yo: New House flooded over the summer, ~130 beds displaced, will be repairing. Last heard, they're thinking of moving people back in around IAP. Lot of close convos with New Exec & DSL resulted in renting out rooms in Hyatt that are close to each other so the community can stay together, including freshmen. Everything we wanted, DSL did. Trey deserves & receives round of applause. He is still working on this and making sure it goes well.
- Trey: We're trying to make sure this doesn't ruin our culture & community so we've planned a lot of events. Also we have a lot of support (financial and otherwise) from AD and MIT.
- Adri: What's going on now that you're really far from campus resources?
- Trey: They added a saferide stop close to Hyatt, people have bikes, not that much further.

2. Dean for Student Life Search
- Yo: Dean Columbo is stepping down. We're beginning the search for a new Dean. No longer will be called Dean for Student Life, will be called VP for student life (there are multiple VPs that MIT administration has, this will be another one). That process is now starting. Matt sent Cindy a letter detailing student position w/Dormcon addendum. The process will take most of this year, Cindy expects to ideally have someone by January but realistically won't start until next fall. They're putting up a job posting now that everyone can see, which is being worked on by Matt. We asked if there was a specific pool of candidates they wanted to choose from but chancellor said anyone who applies will be considered. Hopefully there will be a period where students/alum can suggest, so keep track of potential candidates.
- Candidates, after being vetted by external company, will come in front of committee that chancellor will not be on. Matt & other undergrad/grad reps, and some faculty, will be on it. Committee would interview them all and give list of 3 candidates w/pros & cons, chancellor will have final say.
    - Matt: Committee will be a UA rep, Dormcon rep, IFC rep, and Panhel rep.
- Sonja: Whose task will it be to make sure all groups (alum, faculty, former student life admin, etc.) will see the job posting?
    - Yo: I think they're using the external agency to also publicize this. However getting access to the job listing & finding our own ways to publicize it is probs something we could do.

3. Announcement Regarding TechCash
- Yo: There's a proposal--Instead of using your ID for techcash you can also use a phone app (iOS, Andriod, maybe SMS)... so you can use it for laundry and other things (maybe vending machines at some point). Could use phone to activate one of meal swipes at dining halls. Discussion about using it for retail dining. App will be functional sometime soon. THey're working with an external contractor.
- Becky: Could you put your ID on it to tap into buildings (you need an ID to get into dining anyway)
  - Yo: Explicitly not for access control, we can try to pursue it if people are interested.
- Yuge: Can student groups use the app instead of renting out techCash card readers to accept payments?
  - Adri: Website to accept payments on behalf of student groups.
- Yo: not implemented yet but we could ask. Also they're looking at moving guest list system to better system that would be more universal in that all the dorms would be using it but adjustments can be made for individual dorms but would be supported by external contractors that don't suck.
  - Adri: I don't think that's a great idea, we didn't even want a guest system and we were forced to adopt it. I don't know if they can create a universal system that supports all the differences between all the dorms.
  - Yo: They're (someone working with external contractor) doing a feasibility study to see if we can get all the current functionality on that system and if not we probably won't use it. This person will talk to the desk captain to figure this out.
  - Amanda: If this were to occur, what would the earliest it would happen be?
    - Yo: Probably next semester.
- Kate: Once it's made how flexible would it be in terms of adding/changing features?
  - Yo: I don't know. They're giving us base functionality and then we're gonna give us all the features we want and they'll tell us if they want it or not.
- Mary: People in McCormick have two guests lists. Also we have a really good system, so a good way to improve the system might be to use what MIT students have already created/used in other dorms.
  - Yo: I think historically they've had a hard time using guest lists made by students since they leave and something breaks. Guests lists will be able to be updated online though.
- Kate: Did people get an email asking about guest lists and how they work?
  - Adri: I got one asking if the guest lists were functional

4. Dining
- Kate: There's supposed to be a committee formed that we were promised seats on but we haven't heard about it; we reached out to Peter Cummings and asked about it but he hasn't gotten back to us. Supposed to have Peter & other DSL people on it; supposed to come up with a set of recommendations for Cindy about ideal meal plans, and put as many of those in practice as possible.
- Mary: Bon Appetit may ask for a contract extension; if they do we have until May to accept/decline offer. We're not sure we'll be able to change everything but we are looking for recommendations. Otherwise if they don't ask for one we'll have to look for a new vendor.
- Yo: There will be data available to all presidents for them to see if there's a data-driven approach to recommendations for dining plans.
- Becky: There will also be late-night at Maseeh now. Will be grill/hot food. Open till 1AM.

5. How In-House Rush Went
- Yo: How'd the process go for your dorm, how have your interactions with DSL/Cindy been, how was it different from other years?
  - Adri (*Senior Haus*): It went pretty well. For some reason some freshmen didn't understand that 1, 2, 3, on preference sheet meant first/second/third choice. Apart from that I think it was fairly clear. Same as past years, we had some halls that a lot of frosh want to live on but only 4-5 open rooms so not everyone can, so we put all the freshmen that didn't make it on that hall on another hall together. We figured if they have certain hall preferences we can keep them together. That was the only new thing we did this year.
  - Eric (*Random*): Very straightforward and went fine. We randomized a list of frosh and picked rooms one by one, was successful.
  - Trey (*New House*): Only numbered houses do in-house rush. 2 & 3 are in the Hyatt, only 4 & 5 did rush. Because there were only 2 houses it was super easy. Whenever we move back we'll do something to compensate for what was lost there, probably add 4 & 5 back in there.
  - Haley (*Next House*): Mostly the only different thing about this year was that over REX we had all the wings hold their own events, so it was like an extended rush in addition to the 2hr dorm rush that we do for all the wings. I think it went pretty well. We do something similar to Random where we assign the frosh numbers and they all pick, I think it went pretty smoothly. We have ~60% frosh in forced triples. We changed our housing lottery

process last semester and reserved rooms for frosh in each wing to email it out more. A lot of frosh wanted triples anyway to begin with. I think people were happy and it went fine.

- ○ Amanda (*Baker*): We roomed quads and triples first. Surprisingly large amount of people wanted to stay in quad/triples. We had a lot of doubles open which was good because that's where most people want to be. no complaints, went very well.
- ○ Kate (*Simmons*): Ours went really well, no changes from last year. Everyone seemed happy, even those that didn't get what they wanted.
- ○ Paul (*Burton-Conner*): Over the summer we implemented computerized version of mutual selection process and it didn't end up working with our current system so we ran it by human as we've done in the past. It didn't work with gender inclusive and kosher suites so we decided not to use it. Went as expected. Lot of people would've preferred less forced triples. We had best placement ever, even though always more popular floors than others. Everyone got top 4.
- ○ Jack (*MacG*): MacGregor ran the algorithm. It ran well, everyone seemed to be happy.
- ○ Sonja (*EC*): EC implemented significant changes to the way that meeting ran. We also produced best results this year compared to past. By having these conversations about the rooming process, it ended up being a lot more positive and productive in EC. We haven't talked about why we think it went so well. But I think Cindy will be pleased.
- ○ Mary (*McCormick*): We don't do in-house rush. We had a lottery on reg day, only 4/71 frosh entered it and none of them moved but we also had limited options for rooms.

- Yo: I'd encourage everyone to keep in mind that the REX survey will go out sometime soon. It's different this year. In the past they had one 3 days after REX happened, but now it'll probably go out in early October. The frosh will have to a greater degree settled down and we'll get less of the extreme transitional things they might say 3 days after. Both the chancellor's office and we will be trying to think of questions to ask on this survey about how the freshman experience went, and I'd be interested to hear what questions you have about how in-house rush experience went. Are you still happy where you live, would you move if you have the option, did you dislike the fact that there was upperclassman input, etc. We're working with Jag Patel who is moving to Chancellor's office. The more of these questions we have now, the better it'll be once we have the data from the students. It'll be good to know the things that are flawed about in-house rush/things we believe about it on paper.

- ○ Sonja: Especially if someone is dissatisfied, I'd also like to know if they attempted to solve the problem at all or if they didn't if it was because they felt uncomfortable reaching out or just didn't feel it was worth it etc. One of our problems is that we don't have anywhere to put people who want to swap rooms because there aren't vacancies--these people reached out but we didn't solve their problem. I'd like to know where there was a failure and how we can prevent that in the future.
  - ○ Kate: I talked to Jag about the survey in the summer and she said there would be space for each dorm to ask questions about the process, is that still the case?
    - ■ Yo: I'll ask her.
  - ○ Paul: It'll be good if people could comment on how they feel about the sub-communities within dorms as well.
- ● Adri: How much of this data will we have access to?
  - ○ Yo: Idea is to have each house access to its own data.
- ● Kate: I'd like to distinguish in the questions between students being dissatisfied with the process vs. the outcomes.
- ● Sadun: Also which hall vs. which dorm
- ● Sonja: We got our FYRE numbers, I have some theories about why they look the way they do. I don't have a question crafted but if there's a way to understand why people FYREd--because they didn't get into their top choice in the first place or made a poor choice to begin with...? I'd like to get more data about frosh who want to FYRE. Would they still FYRE given the opportunity now? Etc.

- ● Why were the numbers so low?
  - ○ More people requested, but less people requested.

Kate: What do they use to figure out FYREs?
Direct swaps and triangle swaps... ?

- ● Yo: There will be another period for you to comment/add questions, and will have survey out to prez sometime soon.
- ● Chloe: In the past I know we had numbers on people's first choice and what they ended up getting, so that's something we can ask for which would answer a lot of these questions.

6. Discussion on REX

- Yuge: We have 3 questions for presidents. first-- Specifically directed at dorms that had "controversial events": How was turnout at those events? What was freshman reaction to that event?
    - Paul: Porn and pole dancing went really well. Everyone had fun at pole dancing. Porn was very well attended, they had a nice discussion that went past allotted time. All reports were positive and everyone seemed to be happy.
    - Adri: People who turn up to an event titled Alternative Sex Seminar know what they're getting into... all of our events were pretty well attended esp all the "controversial" ones. Everyone seemed to know what was going on, some people were a little baffled but nobody seemed uncomfortable. During CPW it was a problem because we couldn't call Alternative Sex Seminar that, and so frosh walked in and then realized what it was about and walked out. But everyone who showed up knew what they were getting into and seemed fine with it.
- Sadun: Feedback on booklet this year--we changed the booklet this year. Big events (75+ people) had boxes around them.
    - Amanda: I didn't spend long looking at it but was informed yesterday that there was confusion of tour times in the booklets.
    - Sadun: I hand-edited those, but nobody emailed me so Idk if I messed up.
- Amanda: A lot of kids were confused and showed up at random times.
    - Kate: we also had a lot of times who were confused about how/when to get a tour.
- Holly: Why aren't the events grouped by dorm?
    - Sadun: The thought behind having them grouped by time is that people can just open and look at the time they're free and then go to those. We could do it by dorm but I think that'd be worse.
    - Rachel: EC posts all the events on the website so if they're looking for EC events they can look there.
    - Allan: REX is meant to explore all of campus and it's one of the only times people go to other dorms.
    - Yuge: Can also sort by dorm on the app.
- Sadun: Are there specific things you want to know about REX to be put on the survey?
    - Paul: Did you feel that your living place was too empty?

- Yuge: Did you all use all your early returns, did everyone actually come back, did you have enough? Do a lot of people move in unofficially because they don't have an ER?

basically everyone: YES, YES, NO, YES

- Sadun: if everyone who wants an early return gets one, then REX chairs can't make sure that people are helping with REX?
  - Adri: If REX is about exploring the residence then there should be more people there.
  - Mary: We have trouble getting volunteers, so it's important that the people who are there with early returns actually help with REX.
- Amanda: At other dorms are most people who are back only getting ERs from REX?
- Yuge: Apparently Panhel only has 40 ERs to distribute to members in dorms, so they tell the sisters to sign up for other things to get ERs. It'd be better if they got it from their sorority thing instead of us.
- Sadun: I'm hearing that we'd like to keep everything the same but have a greater quantity of early returns.
- Rachel: In EC a lot of people feel like there's nobody there on hall, so frosh don't feel like people are living in the dorm.
- Sonja: if people didn't sketch back the way they do, then we'd have parts of the community that would be empty where some frosh are living.
  - Yuge: There's a rumor the chancellor is with us on this argument.
- Matt: It seems that if we can have an unlimited number of people to sign up for REX and come back early that would work. People still have to help out with REX to be back.
Mary: if dormcon was the only group that had that I wouldn't be worried, we really rely on people who have to do mccormick events that have to come back for other things. We really need volunteers. Wouldn't work too well for us.
- Kate: the other thought that came up at a post-REX meeting was that we work out an agreement with Panhel that if someone from a sorority has an ER from their dorm, then they're excused from mandatory sorority events. A lot of people would go to those instead of the dorm ones last REX.
- Haley: It really screws with internal processes if people don't show up to mandatory events at sororities. Pre-recruitment is really important.
- Yuge: If we give sororities more ERs, then Mary says they'd be missing a good chunk of volunteers because they'd no longer be obligated to help out with REX events. However if we don't give them early returns then they take them from

dorms and might not stick to dorm events anyway. I was intending to work with Panhel to get them more early returns so they wouldn't be taking them from dorms at all.
- Matt: Should talk with Panhel to see if we can reach some agreement.
- Amanda: don't think it's a good idea to give sororities unlimited early returns kind of thing. I'm in a sorority and I think it's a big pain to do all that scheduling. If you gave Panhel too many early returns there wouldn't be anyone back for REX. Everyone who comes to Baker to help with REX are affiliated. So it's kind of built into the structure of how we run our REX.
- Sadun: I think we'll need to think about this more. Also we want to know how generally satisfied people were with REX.

Did anyone encounter extremely stringent safety rules this year? Seemed to be worse this year.

- Yuge: Simmons had build events that weren't flagged for safety plans.
- Rachel: For CPW they had to do an extensive plan for finger painted. one of our events got flagged and we had to change it because we were unaware about some regulations we're violating. Something Risk Management is working on this year is to come up with what needs a safety plan so people can look that up easily.

- Matt: REX chairs had difficulty not knowing when mandatory events were.
- Sadun & Yuge: We still didn't know any orientation events that weren't orientation.

~~Make food information more available--when is orientation giving out food?~~

- Also, during FPOP week, everyone on a meal plan got an email saying dining starts next week. All the halls that were open and the times they'd be open. But they didn't notify anyone except through this email. The problem was that students on dining plan would go to dining halls instead of REX events. housemaster brunches was the same day that everything was open for lunches.
- Mary: One problem we had was that we often had parents attending the REX events and they couldn't get into dorm because of guest list policy but that's something we should look into.
- Kate: Guest lists during REX would be nice.
  - Yo: That's being worked on, plan is to bring a bunch of students together (Caitlin & housing chairs included) and will iron out all the guest list kinks.

- - Kate: there was bad communication about whether guest lists were active or not during REX week.

- Caitlin: Btw I'm taking point on security stuff after AB trainings.
  - Yo: Committee to think about security in dorms, had meetings, made communication happen, worked on policy changes, rather than what's happening now which is a little disorganized.

- Eric: Like Next House, Random had various events flagged for safety reasons. If we don't plan to try to distribute the REX booklets thru UAAP in the future, to what extent will we be asking for review from admin in the future?
  - Sadun: If someone in EHS gets word that you're planning an event and don't like it, they can make you do anything. The way this happened is we sent it to Julie for description approval. If we don't go thru UAAP next year, booklet will still be public and EHS can still ask you last minute which will be worse. You're running events at your own risk--someone may find a perceived safety risk at last minute and can stop the event.
  - Yo: There's been no decision about whether we're getting it approved next year and the admin involved do want to continue to have the conversation about what the problems are & want to adjust guidelines so they're something both parties can agree on. I don't think we should stop talking with them about it.

- EHS is flagging a bunch of things, and people aren't sure what should be flagged or not. Risk management chairs want to come up with guidelines.

End: 20:50