

**DormCon Meeting**  
**April 14th, 2016**  
**Location: East Campus**

**Agenda:**

- 1. Funding Applications:**
  - a. Steer Roast**
- 2. CPW Recap**
- 3. Soap updates**
- 4. Dining update**
- 5. S^3 update**
- 6. Elections and Next meeting schedule**
- 7. Storage Updates**
- 8. Diversity Discussion**

**Attendance:**

<b>Dorm</b>	<b>Representative</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Baker	Elizabeth Cox	
Burton-Conner	Flora Liu	
East Campus	Piper Lim	
MacGregor	Ki-Jana Carter	
Maseeh Hall	Billy Moses	
McCormick	Susan Mullen	
New House	Sarah Wharton	
Next House	Kyle Saleeby	
Random Hall	Issac Grosos	
Senior House	Sarah Melvin	
Simmons Hall	Yuge Ji	
President	Yonadav Shavit	
Vice President	Caitlin Heber	
Secretary	Sabrina Madera	
Treasurer	Jacqueline Liu	

**Start Time: 19:35**

**0. Introductions**

## 1. Funding Applications

- Hansa: So, basically, we understand that you have extra money, and we have some unforeseen costs, especially for the use of Walker Kitchen. These increases in costs create a situation where we were hoping to get some of that for funding. The funding we received last time was for music, it was \$5000, and that's open for everyone. The things we're looking for now is for advertising. Registration is open, we've already had like 200 people register for the courtyard, and we've had a lot more interest this year a lot earlier. Also, the mud pit open to everyone. We're asking for money for lighting and security armbands as well.
- Ru: We also highlighted art projects and temporary installations, some of which are in the courtyard and open. We want to emphasize that this isn't setting a precedent.
- Yo: Do you know if the events budget included the latest round of Steer Roast funding?
  - Kate: Jackie said in the email we would be allocating the remainder.
- Yo: We cannot allocate the full amount.
- Billy: This is a separate comment, but Maseeh has a giant sound system with speakers and stuff if you want to borrow it.
  - Hansa: I'll get our band guy to look into that.
- Yo: One comment I had: the \$1500 for art installations is not something I'm super comfortable with, I would rather fund only external things.
  - Ru: There's 300 dollars of that that goes into funding a project by an alum that is available for everyone.
  - Yo: My personal preference would be to allocate \$300 for that line then.
- Sarah: We do tours of the art to show off to administrators, is there any way we could do this for other people?
  - Ru: We're gonna talk to Cindy about keeping it open, or raising the number of guests.
  - Hansa: We'd like to make it more permanent that the Haus will be open at certain times.
- Issac: What's the difference between the armbands and the wristbands?
  - Hansa: We recently found out we weren't allowed to use wristbands. Security uses armbands, and guests get colored wristbands.
- Kyle: I think you guys have done an awesome job advertising.
- Yo: I'll raise the motion that the line item will be decreased by \$1200 dollars, does anyone have any comments on that specific line item? The total currently requested is \$3964, and this would bring it down.
  - *Vote taken; budget ratified.*
  - *Vote taken; unanimous yes.*

## 2. CPW Recaps

- Nolan: We're planning a meeting with Admissions to go into detail and debrief everything. We'll start talking about REX things, probably next week.
- Kris: We already sent an email to REX chairs about this.
- Yo: Is there anything else we need to worry about in terms of logistics for REX?

- Nolan: As for the bonus early returns, we'll probably make an early return spreadsheet.
- Kyle: I'm part of an FPOP and some FPOPs only give 4 or so early returns, so they encourage people to volunteer for one event, and do nothing else during the week.
- Kristina: There was an update where we talked about early returns, and they're very reluctant to give us any more.
- Sarah: Is this for the counselors?
  - Kyle: Yes, I've always gotten an early return from Next House, but the FPOPs are specifically recruiting people to volunteer for one event at dorms.
  - Sarah: If an FPOP needs 30 people to function, it should have 30 people there regardless of their other events.
- Kristina: Specifically as REX happens, we can get data back.
- Piper: Did you send an email to the REX chairs and presidents, in the whole you need to commit to the plan.
- Sarah W: Why do we have to have a system of early returns?
  - Kristina: Administration is afraid that people will come, and not have enough to do and get into trouble.
  - Sean: Some of the dorms are Summer Conference dorms.
- Yo: One of the conversations we started last year was the move-in move-out process.
- Yuge: For your CPW, did you experience prefrish hanging out in your public spaces later into the night? In Simmons, we had a major conflict with this because the prefrish like going upstairs, our walls are not that thick, we have residents who have exams and PSets due, and the prefrish where there until like 3am. They were there being really loud when people were sleeping. If this is a general concern, we should get together, that they should make something at 1AM so prefrish won't hang out in lounges.
- Kate: If they could just have some event that was literally hanging out and food, they would go there instead of people's lounges.
- Sean: I see your argument, but this just helps their argument that prefrish don't get enough sleep.
  - Kyle: On Sean's point, I feel like administration's response will be to put in a curfew, and not an event.
- Yo: I would recommend the CPW Chairs talk to Admissions, that the 1AM rule is detrimental to actual students lives.
- Sarah W: It's possible for each dorm to have a central space.
  - Yuge: We do, we leave our giant stuff on the first floor.

### 3. Soap Updates

- Yo: The news is that we're gonna roll it out this summer, and next semester there will be soap in all undergraduate bathrooms. We just asked and asked and asked, and now it happened. We had Howard Heller, he explained to them that soap

- covers other diseases that hand sanitizer doesn't, also, the next thing we won't talk about is that if we have soap, we also need to have paper towels.
- Kate: Does every undergrad bathroom include Simmons?
    - Yo: My understanding is yes, this is for the public good. They're figuring out the details now.
  - Yuge: Is this like bar soap?
    - Yo: Probably liquid.

#### 4. Dining Update

- Kate: We just wanted to update you guys on what we've been doing, and the status of dining. The contract is going to be virtually unchanged, and next year they'll look at changes, to wrap up the working group. We're doing focus groups next week, and we're calling our peer institutions, the result of that will be a report. If there's anything you guys feel like should be included, let us know.
- Mary: We also have questions on the Senior Survey about dining.
- Sarah: The focus groups are from current students?
  - Kate: Yeah, so we have people who are forced to be on the meal plan, voluntary meal plan users, people who aren't but live on campus, and people who don't and are not.
- Mary: We're sending out info in batches, if you get an invitation, you should participate.

#### 5. S^3 Update

- Yo: The next thing is the S^3 letter, we sent it to Dean Randall. S^3 does actually publish a form on the month after people attend appointments. Dean Randall and the person in charge of the surveys do read them through, we ask if they could email out immediately after, it seems there might be a technological issue with that. We spoke to them about specific feedback about specific people, they said there isn't much they can do with feedback from forms, and it would mean the difference if you went to talk to Dean Randall, who is very receptive and can maintain confidentiality. If you give specific details and the two of you decide it should be acted upon, don't write things that would identify you if you don't want to be identified.
- Yuge: Why did they mention the feedback form was not an optimal way to do this?
  - Yo: Part of the discussion we're having is the point of view of the individual, and an anonymous feedback form is not ideal.
  - Issac: Isn't that what they do for faculty?
  - Kate: Those go into determining tenure.
- Yuge: I understand the necessity of having a dialogue, but if I have a complaint or something good, I'm not gonna go out of my way to meet with someone to say that, I won't necessarily have time. It doesn't have to be an anonymous form.
  - Yo: The problem is that most people choose anonymity.

- Sadun: I was at the S^3 related town hall, and someone suggested that Dean Randall needs to pay more attention to MIT confessions, and Cindy was visibly upset. It seems like it's pretty hardwired that they don't like anonymous feedback.
- Issac: There's in-person feedback and anonymous feedback, what if there was some kind of proxy?
  - Yo: If there's an extenuating case, I'm sure it can be worked out. There's also an office that will interact with them for you.
- Flora: How easy is it to get a meeting with Dean Randall?
  - Yo: My impression is that more people aren't talking to him.
- Sadun: I sent him a generic complaint about something minor and he wants to meet with me.
- Flora: You know when you schedule something, and you don't get seen until much later, will this happen?
  - Yo: If we find that there's a long waiting time, we can talk about that.
- Kate: Can you clarify if he doesn't want anonymous feedback, or if he wants face to face feedback? What if someone went to their RLAD and talked to them to relay info.
  - Yo: Just talking to an RLAD is not sufficient grounds for sufficient punitive operations. I don't want to talk about this in the context of this, but in order to change, S^3 requires non-anonymous feedback.
  - Becky: Anonymous feedback, you can't do much with that in a human resources personnel sort of way, the actionable things come from face to face.
- Arthur: Can you come as a group? Maybe that's a way to advertise.

## 6. Elections and Next Meeting Schedule

- Yo: The DormCon elections are next week, in the Student Center, not in a dorm. Regarding meeting scheduling, the week after next week could be a general DormCon meeting, but I prefer if it was an exec meeting, and then the DormCon meeting would be the last one. Are people all right with that? And, the last thing is, if you are thinking of running for President or Vice President, it's important you submit your platform in time. Do it ahead of time. Not that you can't nominate yourself in the meeting, but there are reasons it is significant.

## 7. Storage Updates

- Yo: The Security Committee will be meeting this semester, and we will be having some sort of conversation. If you have specific agenda items, please email DormCon housing chairs.
- Kyle: Piece by Piece is going well, your dorm Storage Chairs should be talking to your house managers right now. Piece by Piece will be visiting Baker, Maseeh, and Simmons. Maseeh on April 27th from 11AM-3PM, Baker 4PM-7PM on the same day, Simmons is on the 28<sup>th</sup> during dinner hours. The full website will be open on the 15<sup>th</sup>, there will be a 100 dollar late fee for anyone who doesn't apply before the last day of classes.
- Yuge: Simmons has in dorm storage, we won't be needing that.

- Kyle: Now that we have backing from DormCon, we might ask to change it, our compromise however was that they would also have one in Lobby 13. Would you like one in East Campus? We thought East Campus and Senior Haus had indoor storage, so there wouldn't be much interest, we assumed your basement storage would not be changing size.
  - Sarah: It's not, but it's becoming more limited on what can be stored.
  - Piper: We were told we could keep our storage system this summer.
- Yo: They're trying to iron out the kinks in the system, and originally they needed to figure out a storage option for everyone together.
- Piper: We have a lot of space downstairs, but every year there are people who want to use external storage.
- Kyle: If it's an issue with getting Piece by Piece, they will happily do it. They are really serious about having the orders in before classes end, that would be the Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>. It's only an online system, after that, it'll be 100 dollar late fee.
- Piper: When do they actually take the stuff?
  - Kyle: It will come out next week.
- Piper: I was wondering if you could get a just in case thing.
  - Kyle: The 100 dollar late fee doesn't apply if you change your order on the spot, they have plenty of warehouse space, just maybe not enough people to move all of it.
- Issac: Random is open, they're telling us that we need to move everything that was normally allowed to be kept in rooms, but they're allowing us to will the rooms, and the people there in the summer would like to be able to use that furniture, but housing is telling us we can't do that.
  - Yo: EC has worked this out with our Housemanager.
- Issac: I've spoken to my Housemanager, and she says she can't do that. Also, MacGregor, are you facing that as well?
  - Ki-Jana: We don't have that system of willing.
- Kyle: Can you specifically look and see how much storage space you are losing East Campus? I wasn't under the impression that you were losing space.

## **8. Diversity Discussion**

- Yo: Caitlin has met with a lot of you to have the discussion about diversity. First, we're going to have an introduction by Caitlin, and then we're gonna break out into groups.
- Caitlin: Thank you all for meeting with me this week; the whole point of our discussions has been to begin thinking deeply and thoughtfully on the issue of diversity, and how it impacts student government and dorm government. I was going to do a summary, but I don't think I could give each of our discussions justice. I just wanted to encourage you all to continue to think, and I hope this comes across in your conversations today. I'd encourage you to think and speak for yourself and not generalize. Please be aware that some of you don't feel as heard in your discussions that you would like, and I hope you have meaningful conversations that will be equal.

- Yo: So, we're going to break into seven different groups, each of these groups is going to talk, and I hope you'll make sure to be very honest, but also very considerate. I want to make sure everyone understands everyone else's perspective.
- Becky: Compassion can go a long way, listen first and then speak later.
  - *Discussion*
- Yo: I would love to go over some of the problems we can identify, and which ones we can address in the short term, and which are long term. Let's start off with problems that surround the wide connection to DormCon and student government, don't replicate things said by other people.
- Lily: We came to the realization that people relate to things when they know what's happening. It can go to dorm government but very rarely beyond that, how do we get people aware of what's happening, and how it impacts them?
- Yo: Do people view that as a concern that is a short, or long term?
- Issac: I think we can make progress for that in the short term; just publicizing what is happening in student government, make it more emphasized and important.
- Lily: We agreed that a personal connection was the impetus, but also it's a self selecting group. But, we want to make sure people who are interested aren't turned away. Another conclusion is that these positions in dorm government lend themselves to people already with leadership experience, we were thinking of ways for people who don't have confidence, to get that confidence so they know they are qualified.
- Arthur: We said something about diversity of opinions being important, and diversity in terms of gender or race is the goal or the means to end, which is diversity of opinion.
  - Kate: Diversity of opinion encompasses the diversity encompassed by gender, race, and sexual orientation. It's not just your opinions, it's everything that you are, it's connected to factors that are important in our society.
- Yuge: We primarily agree with group one, and the extent to which you know about a system is related to how much you might invest in it. We identified that essentially, how you learn about DormCon is through a personal connection or a friend. We agreed that there's no other way anyone hears about DormCon. You don't see emails that say "the dormcon housing chairs worked with x to do this" but "this was decided". We proposed possibly advertising to cultural groups on campus, it sounds a little sketchy because it's affirmative action-ish, if racial diversity is something we're concerned about, that's an immediate short term.
- Piper: In my opinion, we should first be asking why everyone in this room became involved in student government in the first place, and why these groups are not feeling invested in student government. It's often true these people hold leadership in something else, this isn't the only position in the world.
- Yuge: Essentially, you'd have to ask a much more broad question, why our friend groups aren't necessarily diverse. For exec, we talked to someone who was already on exec, we have to examine why our friend groups might not be diverse, it is not untrue that we don't have friends in those cultural groups.

- Yo: To address that specific point, Caitlin and I met with OMESAC, we had a discussion on what some of the barriers are. we mentioned the way you get involved with anything is by knowing people, but another thing is the notion of confidence to enter a space you aren't comfortable with. We should be aware of the kind of environment we set up.
- Yuge: The last point, publicizing our agendas, having presidents send it out to their dormitories, and being concerned with the topic is irrelevant to who you know in DormCon. That's a short term one. The four of us agree that DormCon is generally welcoming once you step in, we feel like when we walked into the door that it was so informal that anyone felt included.
- Jane: How people perceive dorm government, there's sort of a binary. DormCon is doing well, and people think how can they live up to the standards, or DormCon is doing poorly, and people think it's too much work. We also have infectious apathy from upperclassmen. If freshman see upperclassmen not wanting to do things in their dorms, they can get discouraged. There's also a cycle of selecting the most vocal people, the people who agree with the opinions of DormCon and are vocal will be elected.
- Mary: It's not just about DormCon existing, there's a level of confidence associated with just going to a meeting, that can lead to lack of diversity of thought, because you'll go if your friends do. Then, you end up with a lot of people that think similarly and arrive to the same conclusions.
- Jane: We were concerned with the issue of sameness, and Simmons and EC being on DormCon exec.
- Issac: One thing we thought for the awareness, having a formal responsibility of every dorm president to tell their dorm about what's happening in DormCon. It would help people get a better sense of what's going on. A big factor of who gets involved is who their friends are, and we discussed whether that was good or bad. There's also the fact that people who are in student government become friends, I think it can be good in some ways. It has the problem that a much smaller opinion is represented. Avoiding that problem is what diversity is good for. One solution is the system of having representatives from each floor, the same way DormCon has a president from each dorm. A mechanism like this might be good in other situations.
- Piper: There are a lot of numbers involved that should be looked at, like way back. Even in our recent memory, there's been a lot of changes in the dorm, whatever problems we perceive today may not hold with time.
- Flora: It's important for us all to be aware of any bad habits that can be passed on, because it's hard to break. You have to be aware of the situation that you're currently in, and determine how active of a role you need to play to get involved.
- Kate: A couple things that haven't been talked about, a lot of times if a position hasn't been filled and it's approaching time, we'll reach out to someone and then they'll run unopposed. We shouldn't settle on one person we think should be in this position. We talked about finding a way to communicate why diversity is so important, and reiterating that this has substantial effects on how we do our jobs.
- Yo: During the New House debacle, a student reached out to me about equity, because the spots open to New House residents and MacGregor opened up. This

- student would have been required to pay, because I wasn't aware of the things I wasn't aware of, I failed as an advocate for that student. All of us have a responsibility to the people we represent.
- Billy: One other thing we talked about were ways DormCon could reach out to individuals who weren't informed about DormCon. We thought potential DormCon office hours or lunch hours.
    - Sarah: Also, just going to dining dorms during meal times, like come talk to DormCon, and we'll talk to you.
    - Nolan: We can also do it around election time, for people to talk about their position.
  - Sarah: Also, dorm governments in some communities are biased towards different areas in a dorm. Holding some kind of office hour in your communities, and then you can tell them what DormCon is doing. A big part of getting involved is knowing DormCon can make the changes you want.
  - Sabrina: We should get on the UA's level of advertising, so people can even know DormCon exists.
  - Yo: I want to make sure everyone understands that this is not a conversation that ends in 30 seconds. If we talk about it more, we can identify a lot of solutions. It's important to make sure that the presidents know that there is value in having this conversation in dorms, that it's a concern we're all aware of.

**End Time: 21:14**