

# UA Senate: Monday, February 9, 2009

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## *7pm: Chancellor Clay as guest speaker*

- Chancellor Clay: Letter Wednesday as a preview of student issues over the term. Some of the topics for this spring are:
  - MIT budget
    - Created the budget task force, with student members
    - Will probably take \$50 million out of the budget next year and \$100 million out of the year after
    - Will not compromise our education, will not reduce financial aid
    - Will not go forward in this year with complete renovation of W1
      - Would have cost \$90 million dollars—needed that flexibility
      - Generous donor which will allow external work on the building which helps avoid unnecessary damages before completion of W1
  - Issue of communications
    - The transparency we [administration] needs to have isn't yet in place
    - Links to minutes of meetings will be distributed
    - Offer to meet in more conversational settings, eg. in dorms, fraternity houses, etc.
- Vrajesh Modi: What do you see as the role of students in decision making and what do you see as the value to you and the administration of student input?
- Clay: MIT relies on students for a lot of the student enterprise, such as with student members of Institute Committees. There's a communication problem between the administration and students, but also one between the students involved and those they represent. Few issues go un-discussed in one of these committees, so when those both communication channels work efficiently, students have a lot of input.
- Keone Hon: To what extent are the students' voices on those committees and the committees themselves factoring into the decision process? Eg. the Blue Ribbon dining committee
- Clay: Dining report should be out in a couple of weeks. The committee was asked to make recommendation(s), but there's a long way between recommendations and the outcomes. These aren't quick decisions to be made; this issues go back for some time.
- Noah Jessop: Can you talk about how this works with say, the Commencement Committee?
- Clay: For the commencement speaker, there's a bit more that the committee can't discuss. The president then decides, and the quality of the decision is based on making the best selection given the options present. Also, the tuition decision for next year will be coming out very soon. We have an inclination to make the tuition less rather than more; raising tuition doesn't mean we collect anymore.
- Paul Baranay: How transparent does the [Budget] Task Force plan to be?

- Clay: As transparent as possible. There will be opportunities for anyone to present an idea. The Task Force will be asked to make a recommendation and these recommendations will be made well known. The issue is going to be how to make a community that is sharing. There will be some suggestions that won't make a lot of sense initially, but after discussion, might make some sense. We need to make people feel safe in making suggestions which will initially be viewed negatively.
- Mike Bennie: Where do you see the Task Force for Student Engagement going in the future? What kind of transparency?
- Clay: Summary notes of the Task Force for Student Engagement meetings are on their way already. The Task Force was put in place as students questioned whether the communication between students and the administration were adequate and working well. Hopefully, this year, we will answer this question and work on fixing it so that we no longer need a Task Force. We also want to encourage the various governments to talk about how they will handle governance among students.
- Cyril Lan: As the students on the Blue Ribbon Dining Committee were not supposed to talk about their meetings, there was an issue about approachability by other students. How do you plan on resolving this issue?
- Clay: The issue is how to develop a protocol of any committee as to what can be discussed and communicated. We need to be a bit clearer about that as a lot of sensitive issues are being discussed.
- Vrajesh Modi: In the case of Blue Ribbon, what should the student representatives have been talking about?
- Clay: There were focus groups and some people who went out and talked to groups of students. Additionally, there was a survey. These were examples of things that could have been discussed, but there was no absolute bar as to what is responsible discussion. At the beginning of each year, committees discuss what will be on the agenda for each year. Ideally, they should establish a protocol for the year then. An absolute clear rule is difficult, such as when dealing with admissions and financial aid
- Cody Daniel: You spoke about your vision for the west side of campus, what exactly is this?
- Clay: With respect to housing and dining, we have a system with considerable choice [over the whole campus]. The vision is that as we develop new facilities, we will continue to promote variety. I expect that the dining report will show a need for additional dining, which is the basis for the 2006 recommendation for dining in W1. We also expect there to be more of a system. We plan to upgrade the kitchens as needed in dorms without dining halls. It's never been MIT nor is it expected to be to have one dining hall and one dining plan like many other universities.
- Paul Baranay: There are about 30 FSILGs. Choice is a big issue for them as well. What is your vision for that percentage of campus regarding dining?
- Clay: I don't have a vision because all of them have their choices. We have recommended that they might be acting too independently for their own good and have supported the initial cost of setting up a co-op.

- Vrajesh Modi: You mentioned that there are some aspects of culture that we need to reconsider. Can you elaborate on that part?
- Clay: I have a very limited number of options for lunch on campus, but while I like my four main places, if I had to give up one of them, I'd live with it. We may need to replace or consolidate things such as this.
- Vrajesh: All of the smaller places seem to make profits, while the dining halls don't. Are they fair game for consolidation?
- Clay: You have to look at the whole of it because some parts are much more profitable than others inherently. The entire system will be considered, and it will be evaluated whether or not money should be leaking there.
- Noah Jessop: What's the June goal? What should students expect to see from the committees?
- Clay: The charge suggests that at the end, there will be a list of suggestions for changes that could be made to preserve our ability to accomplish our mission and save money at the same time. MIT will look at opportunities to charge additional fees and enhance our revenue. Other things will be savings, possibly through consolidation.
- Vrajesh Modi: From a financial perspective, MIT's looking to cut back. How does that fit in to renovating and retaining funding?
- Clay: The most urgent funding is for supporting curriculum development and faculty teaching. These resources vary by department. On the student life side, our philosophy is to let every flower bloom. We need more money to continue to support student life to the depth we do.
- Mike Bennie: Are we looking to save more in the long run by investing or looking to cut spending down more now? Such as the heaters/windows in Burton Conner.
- Clay: We hope to invest in more sustainable and cost-efficient options for buildings. We need to work on doing this because the time to get a payback is not too long. However, we still need to get the initial payment.
- Vrajesh Modi: What processes does the administration use for developing policies related to hacking? Who ends up making final recommendations to you?
- Clay: We worked with a group of students a few years ago to get the policy we have out now. We did this because we were talking out of both sides of our mouths—both praising hacks for their creativity and opposing the illegal and dangerous acts involved. We have been trying to walk a fine line, but we don't quite understand where that fine line is. If it's illegal, we cannot excuse it because it's a hack. We don't want anyone to be endangered. We would like to have an open discussion about hacking. We won't stop talking about issues such as these during the large amount of discussion about the budget.

*8pm: Special Budget Session as usual*

Call to Order : 8:23

Roll Call

- Absent: Zachary Tribbett, Shin Nee Wong (excused), Tim Stumbaugh (excused)
- Late: None

Call to Order: 8:23 PM

Approval of Minutes from 40 U.A.S. 6

- Minutes have not yet been received, postponed to next meeting

Yi Cai (SCEP Chair)

- Looking for additional members
- Projects: Advising, student-faculty dinners, any educational aspect you feel is important
- Meets Sunday evenings
- Email [ua-scep-chairs@mit.edu](mailto:ua-scep-chairs@mit.edu) if interested

Paul Baranay (NomComm Chair)

- Committee coordinates and manages Institute Committees
- Also looking for Institute Committee members
- Email [ua-nomcomm-chairs@mit.edu](mailto:ua-nomcomm-chairs@mit.edu) if interested in NomComm or an Institute Committee

State of the Undergraduate Association (Noah and Mike)

- Noah
  - Working on interactive websites for discussing MIT's budget changes
  - Institute Committee on Student Life to make interact portal—the definitive resource for all things and questions relating to student life
  - GIRs proposal: Did not pass because did not get the proper majority, but UA still working on approving the simplified HASS component
  - CAC is continuing to trying maximizing the services they will deliver
  - Blue Ribbon: Consultants coming in, committee will hopefully sign off on the recommendations, then there will be a few months for feedback
  - Task Force for Student Engagement: Channels for communication much more open than before, during this term seek to set and achieve more concrete goals
  - UA: Evaluating roles/structures
- Bennie
  - Last semester achievements: New website, COOP book website, FSILG recycling, Recyclemania, GIR report, Blue Ribbon Dining transparency, UA committees able to access their financial accounts, progress in student mail, athletics weekend, working with chefs in individual dining halls, Fall Festival, Dorm Storm, redesign of Barker Library Reading Room, PLUS program, work towards creating a holiday for the career fair, SafeRide issues, sustainability pamphlet
  - Ongoing projects: Next SafeRide (held up in Cambridge laws), freshman advising, internal physical improvements (UA Senate power outlets and

projector), UA Internal Wiki to encourage collaboration, NomComm Institute Committee Notes, faculty dinners, Interact website, removing deadweight within the UA, getting an office administrator, getting IT done by non-students, better communication with the Tech, pulling the Class Councils into the UA

- Focuses for this term
  - Transparency with the Tech, History Committee, reforms to the Secretary position and Public Relations committee
  - Senate involvement

## Budget

- Alex: Barbecue will have 300 attendees and cost \$3500, LEF/Arcade guidelines suggest less per person.
  - Riley: Fall barbecue had over 500 attend.
  - Alex: It's still over the guidelines if 500 attend.
  - Keone: I think this is okay, better to over-budget a little bit of surplus.
  - Ekate: We should follow the LEF guidelines.
  - Keone: I feel like this is okay because it's being catered. The \$3-5 guideline is meant for buying the food and cooking it yourself; paying a caterer will always cost more.
  - Riley: It's been \$3000 the past few times it's been held.
  - Vrajesh: Motion to amend to \$3000, Cody: Second
  - Riley: \$500 won't change it that much. We don't want to make the Athletics Committee have to haggle with the catering company.
  - Rachel Meyer: We should cut it more.
  - Ekate: We should look to get people to work for this instead of paying the caterers.
  - Keone: \$500 dollars is a waste of our time to discuss.
  - Riley: The committee members are generally involved in athletics and are also more useful elsewhere in the event.
  - Keone: Budget for UA is \$133K a semester of which we pass on ~\$100K to FinBoard. This is not that terrible an amount to spend.
  - Keone: Move to vote, Cyril: Second
  - Amendment failed
- Rachel Meyer: Regarding food at meetings for athletics: how many people at how many meetings?
  - Riley: These are committee planning meetings and meetings with people in the department of athletics. We have about 6-7 members at each meeting, and meetings are held almost every other weekend.
- Alex: Can you use surplus from one line item towards another?
  - Mike Bennie: Technically no, but SAO does not explicating stop it at this time.
  - Riley: As treasurer, people do spend money on the allocated items. A lot of the money comes back. This does not seem to be an issue.

- Rachel Meyer: What is the Athletics Weekend discretionary for? Shouldn't they have to come back to Senate for more?
  - Bennie: They don't know what they'll be able to get sponsored at this time and seek flexibility in what they specifically fund because of this. These sponsors pay for roughly half of Athletics Weekend.
- Vrajesh: For Public Relations office hours, we turned down Senate office hours bill, why should we give funding for this?
  - Liz Denys: This is for holding office hours for the entire UA over the next term. The PR committee has expressed interest in coordinating it. Food is an incentive. It won't be mandatory.
  - Alex: The office hours bill didn't specify who that we should not have office hours, especially for Exec.
  - Keone: Not a lot of money for this and a lot of people in this room and not here would be interested in it.
  - Paul: It's a positive step to get our name out in the open and encourage people to talk to us one on one.
  - Ekate: We could give our money to FinBoard instead, for instance, than use it for UA purposes. Can you clarify about this idea?
  - Maggie: Ultimate goal is to have people in the office with snacks so that people have more of an incentive to come around. You shouldn't worry as much about being forced into things. This is just facilitating you getting UA stuff done.
  - Alex: Further legislation would be needed to mandate us to be there.
  - Eleni: Would this be open to Institute Committees?
  - Liz Denys: Yes.
  - Alex: Is this meant for internal UA meetings/work or for holding office hours?
  - Liz Denys: It's not exclusively one way or another, but it will not fund committee meeting food.
  - Alex: All exec meetings should be open, this should as well. What is the plan to advertise this?
  - Liz Denys: As one on one attention unlike Exec.
  - Bennie: Do we agree with the general idea behind it or the implementation?
- Paul: Why is there discrepancy for food at meetings, such as between SCEP and Athletics?
- Vrajesh: Do office hours fall under PR? Why is there all this food money for PR?
  - Bennie: We had \$10K come back to us last term. People aren't trying to steal money from the UA. SCEP spends more on food because they spend a lot of time in the office working on things.
- Bennie: Can we pass out free fruit in front of LaVerde's/W20 as well? This would help target sorority/fraternity members as well as dorm residents.
  - Richard: People actually go looking for food there.
  - Keone: Want to amend to include free fruit in W20 and change it from \$200 to \$300 dollars per day.
  - Paul: Motion to split the motion, Vrajesh: Second
  - Discussion to change the amount to \$1500, \$300 per day

- Vote passed
  - Vrajesh: Richard (who's also on CSL) thinks they might need \$4000 for food, can we make it to \$4000?
- Discussion to change so that a percentage of the fruit be put in the Student Center
  - Vrajesh: We don't want to feed the community at large, who often go through the Student Center.
  - Bennie: Someone should man a booth.
  - Alex: Can we put it in other trafficked areas like Lobby 10?
  - Maggie: We should not pick where, but stipulate that it should be in other easily accessible locations.
  - Alex: Motion to amend from student center to places easily accessible to the student body—motion amended
  - Sun: Motion to vote, Keone: Second
  - Vote passed
- Noah: Let's talk about the budget, not specifics of the line items.
- Keone: Motion to approve the budget, Cody: Second
- Budget passed!

#### Proposals for New Business

- Bennie: Two bills—First: Class Council budgets being approved by Senate and integrating their funds, second: constitutional changes
  - Daniel: Why is this the first time we've been hearing about it?
  - Bennie: Class Council has been going for a while, and we've been working on it with the SAO. Now, Class Council things are working, and we want to keep it that way.
  - Bennie: I want to pass these today because it would set the precedent to evaluate class council budgets during the budget meeting.
  - Vote to hear new business: 13 for, 7 opposed, 0 abstain—failed

#### Closing Announcements

- Nice nametags from Vrajesh, we'll keep them in the UA Office

Adjournment: 9:56 PM