

# UA Senate: Emergency Meeting 02/16/2009

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Call to Order: 7:15

## Roll Call

- Absent: Nelson Elhage
- Late: None

## UA President Noah Jessop

- Blue Ribbon Dining Committee (BRDC) tasked to create a long-term vision for dining
- Hired external consultants to match up the survey data to the BRDC recommendations
- The consultant's report should have been returned to the admins over IAP, but no correspondence to the committee even though a meeting was supposed to be called once the report came back from the consultants.
- Report leaks
- Now, need community input to incorporate the consultant's results
- This is a major transparency issue, hence this emergency meeting

## E1.1: Bill to Reform Undergraduate Dining

- Daniel Hawkins: Are we questioning the objectivity of the data collected by the survey?
- Noah Jessop & Mike Bennie: We want to make sure the data we review is impartial and accurate.
- Shin Nee Wong: How will the formation of a new committee improve upon the current committee (of a similar makeup)?
- Mike Bennie: Living groups shifted, people graduated, the only person remaining in East Campus is Kate Delaney. People who were supposed to help guide in this process have been asserting more influence than they should have. We want to put more influence on students and have more transparency.
- Noah Jessop: The Institute Committee Chair is supposed to not have a pre-concieved outcome.
- Aziz Al-bahar: Will the new student committee have access to the survey results?
- Mike Bennie: Have a 181 page data report, but we can't run any of the data ourselves. We want to get the actual data tables. More realistically, we might have to work from the data we have, as we don't realistically have time for another survey.
- David Templeton: How will this committee be different from the outgoing committee we hate?
- Mike Bennie: Students should be able to say what they want without administrators strongly influencing them. We want a student-run committee so that the report says what the students want. We would still be conversing with Rich Berlin, but there will be a fundamental difference in power and how it will be run.
- Ainsley Braun: Why not reestablish the roles of the BRDC?

- Mike Bennie: We want to invite administrators to the table, instead of them being in charge. We want a student to be in charge, without administrative pressures.
- Noah Jessop: We want this to be resolved, and the current method is not being efficient enough.
- David Anderson: How transparent will this new committee be?
- Mike Bennie: Want to be more transparent than BRDC now. We definitely want summaries to be available, but we want better summaries. We may not have open meetings, but everything that happens at these meetings will be available for students.
- Ashley Davis: How are the cultural houses going to be handled? We seemed to just be pushed into New House?
- Mike Bennie: Each dining style/habit should be represented. The chairs on the committee should be allocated by these dining habits.
- Preeya Phadnis: The data itself seems objective, while the analysis of the data is much less objective?
- Mike Bennie: We want to go back to the original data, and do new analysis. A few points seemed accurate and should be considered, eg. 70% of students don't want a mandatory plan.
- Paul Rubner: Everyone keeps saying that the dining system should not be mandatory. What if the committee finds that it should be mandatory?
- Noah Jessop: Committee and data have already agreed that it should not be mandatory.
- Carmel Dudley: Is the idea to create more dining options or work on changing dining within the framework of it not being mandatory?
- Noah Jessop: Improvements can still be made within system without making something mandatory.
- Michael Johnson (French House President): Can't have it both ways that the committee and data are wrong, but still say that we found things from it.
- Mike Bennie: We want to look at the data and see if it is objective and in the right form. It's mostly solid data; we want to evaluate it. We don't want to start with constraints, such as W1 having a dining hall. The biggest flaw with this report is the mandatory dining discrepancy.
- Sari Canelake: Should it be the objectivity of "the analysis of the data" instead of the data itself? Mandatory dining can be awesome like at a very large school, but we are a much smaller campus. How can we distribute the cost of large-scale dining with a smaller population?
- Mike Bennie: We could be efficient and cost-effective over one dining hall. How can we reform the system based on this idea? We could distribute over the entire on-campus system, but why draw the distinction there? It comes down to practicality. Why make it mandatory when we can make it optional?
- Paul Baranay: Motion to amend the bill so that the third that clause says "objectivity of the survey analysis be reconsidered." Friendly.
- Kathleen Clark-Adams: We need to make sure there won't be hidden costs in tuition to subsidize our dining halls.

- Mike Bennie: We must currently have that now, as dining is losing half a million dollars a year.
- Anila Sinha: Why can't we just change the system of the BRDC, instead of forming a new committee?
- Noah Jessop: This isn't the first problem with this committee and the leadership of the committee. If we cannot get the BRDC to corral itself to having students in power.
- Ken Haggerty (Simmons): What is MIT's past history regarding dining options?
- Mike Bennie: MIT had a dining plan 20 years ago.
- Raul Garcia: It slowly got faded out because of the lack of interest.
- Noah Jessop: 8 years ago, mandatory dining was proposed, but students were very opposed to it.
- Richard Dahan: The BRDC took two years to come up with this; what specific steps will we take to make the new committee create a recommendation in 3-4 months?
- Mike Bennie: The BRDC survey took 9 months to put together. Students, unlike administrators, can work at more hours and will be willing to meet more. We can start with people who were already on BRDC.
- Alex Dehnert: We shouldn't argue about what the committee should do. I motion to the previous question.
- Bill, as amended, has passed: 23 for, 1 opposed, 1 abstentions.

Adjournment: 7:56 PM