

DORMCON MINUTES - MARCH 31, 2011

Attendance:

Dorm	Representative	Absent
Baker	Brian Luque	
Burton-Conner	Alex Penn	
East Campus	James Douberley	
MacGregor	Mariya Samoylova	
McCormick	Krithika Shanmugasundaram	
New House	TyShaun Wynter	
Next House	Alec Lai	
Random Hall	Rebecca Cox	
Senior Haus	Paula Countouris	
Simmons Hall	Zach Hynes	
Phoenix Group	Virginia Nicholson	
President	Christina Johnson	
Vice President	Meagan Roth	
Secretary	Alicia Singham Goodwin	
Treasurer	Leonid Grinberg	

Topics Discussed:

1. Engineer Laundry

- Engineer Laundry does wash and fold laundry and delivery for dry cleaning, and its all set up except that we need to provide them with information about students. They would start flyer-ing and sending out brochures as soon as we let them know.
- We're promising them that we'll help them give incoming freshmen information about their service, and they'll give us some money in return.
- Consensus: We want to make sure that we're not giving out actual addresses to them, otherwise no one is opposed to this.

2. Brian's First Year Leadership Retreat

- We're going to reschedule, and Endicott house is being really cool about it and letting us postpone until the fall.
- We'll hopefully do it earlier next semester, and it will give us more time to plan and get participants.

3. CPW Event

- The DormCon CPW event is next Friday, 4:30-6:00 in W20-407. There will be a quick presentation about the dorms, and then it will be opened up for questions

from the pre-frosh. Parents will be asked to leave after a certain point so that the pre-frosh can ask any questions they might feel uncomfortable asking with adults there.

- Wear your dorm shirts, and be prepared for any dorm-specific questions you might get.
- When the parents are there, be political and diplomatic with your answers.

4. CPW funding

- Leonid: I've contacted housing about taxes, and we'll probably get about \$15000 soon.
- Leonid: It might be prudent to vote on whether we want to tax next fall.
- *Burton-Conner funding request for \$350 for CPW for the "sugar high" party was white balloted.*

5. Restructuring the UA/DormCon

- Brian Morrison: I asked to facilitate this discussion because we often walk out of long DormCon meetings without making progress, and I'd like to be a neutral facilitator. You're here representing your dorms, and there will be places that this doesn't apply, but we should be discussing the issue as DormCon and in the interest of DormCon. Lets focus on the difference between an argument and opinion. Here is the plan:
 - Talk about the problems were trying to address
 - What are DormCon's interest in solving these problems?
 - Is what is proposed here actually what will serve our interests?
 - What are our action steps moving forward? Both for dorm presidents within their dorms and for DormCon as a whole.
- Leonid: There is a UA committee that has been created to talk about all of these things, and Alec, Christina, Meagan, and myself are on it. We certainly should have a discussion here with DormCon, but we also don't want to double the conversation.
- Meagan: One of the things I'm doing here, because you all said that Christina and I didn't accurately represent the dorm presidents during the UA Senate meeting on Monday, is to get feedback from the dorm presidents to bring to that committee.
- Brian Morrison: What are the issues that need to be resolved?
- Virginia: Since I got here we've always asked "What is DormCon?, What are we supposed to be doing?". I don't think that I can truly represent my dorm with important things happening in the UA that I don't even hear about and that we don't discuss here. I believe that the dorm presidents are the best voice to represent their constituents, so it is redundant to have the UA and DormCon.
- Meagan: I personally think that the dorm presidents' academics will suffer if they take on this new responsibility.
- Alicia: The way the plan is laid out, its just a shift in time commitment from DormCon to Senate, and we would still have meetings at the same time and for the same amount of time as we do now, but they would be across the hall in the Senate chambers instead of in the PIFCO.

- Alec: I'm not sure that everyone here has enough time for this, because Senate meetings are typically longer than our DormCon meetings have been.
- Mariya: The efficiency of a meeting depends on the presidents and whoever is running the meeting more so than the structure of the organization.
- Zach: We should definitely consider the stakeholders within the administration. The main goal of this plan is to enhance our relationship with them, and I'm worried that no one has contacted them to ask for their advice.
- Virginia: I also feel like at this point the only time I've spoken with administrators that matter is with W1 stuff, and I haven't seen administrators come to DormCon. It seems like DormCon doesn't really have a voice, so we could be heard much more effectively as dorm presidents if we were actually part of the UA.
- Meagan: Our problem is that we don't have people who volunteer to serve on committees and stuff when we get contacted by administrators.
- Alicia: I disagree. I personally would volunteer for almost anything of that nature if we'd heard about it, and I know a couple of the dorm presidents are now sitting on some of the newly-formed institute committees as members of DormCon.
- Brian Morrison: How do we feel about committees in general?
- Zach: A good structure is how committees within the UA do research and find out things about specific issues, and then bigger bodies like DormCon vote on things.
- Krithika: The problem in general is that there are so many people on any given committee that no one will really take on responsibility for anything because there are always other people there to pass work off to.
- Virginia: For W1 stuff, we made a bunch of committees, and at the beginning of the year they didn't meet, but now we've appointed someone to check up on them, sort of like a chief of staff, and they've been way more effective since.
- Leonid: The question "How do we feel about committees" is really broad. In the case of the UA and more specifically Senate, the way it works is that there is a chair for each committee, and they report back to the Senate once the committee has done research and come to informed decisions about any given topic.
- Paula: One of the things that I like about DormCon is that we can just sit here and talk and not use Robert's rules or be formal.
- Alicia: Back on the topic of time commitment, I don't think that voting on funding allocation and other small issues is really a good use of the dorm presidents' time, and so hopefully this new council would allow the dorm presidents to focus their time on what is really important.
- Zach: In Simmons, we have a house chair that deals with internal stuff, and the president is more of an external representative. *(BC seems to be the only other dorm that functions like that)*
- Mariya: One of the things that makes us more representative is that we *are* involved in the internal things in our dorms, and are therefore more in touch with the views of our residents.

- Brian Luque: From my point of view, the UA Senate is not an accurate way of representing our dorm (our 2 senators haven't been going to meetings), and as the dorm president, I could be a more accurate voice for my dorm and its residents.
- TyShaun: Our senator is also our vice president, which means that he does communicate with exec, but the other one quit.
- Leonid: Brian, you suggested that the UA has burned bridges with administrators, and that admins no longer wants to work with them, but I haven't gotten that impression, because administrators continue going to UA meetings and seeking out advice from the UA senate and president.
- Alicia: And there is an analogous problem, which is that DormCon isn't trusted by students any more.
- Brian Morrison: What should be the role of the dorm presidents to the outside world?
- Virginia: We need to know how the people in our dorm feel about different issues.
- Alex: We should all have the same housing policies and be on the same page about housing decisions.
- Paula: What do you guys think that the role of the UA is vs. the role of DormCon? For DormCon, I feel like I'm representing my dorm physically and the dorm culture, but the UA is representing the students that happen to live in the dorm.
- Zach: Dining and REX fall within our domain. I don't think that we need to play a role in is the UA's committee in educational policy, for example.
- Zach: So it seems like its been suggested that we be passive, do we want to be active? Like looking for new projects?
- Meagan: I think we should not just fund REX and CPW, but also do things to come up with new CPW ideas.
- James/Brian Luque: Since there is a committee working on this now, and we all have other commitments, can we just meet on Sunday?
- Brian Morrison: Do you feel comfortable voting on this on Sunday?
- Meagan: My big question is that it'll be 12 presidents on the council, 1 IFC rep, 1 Panhel rep, etc. Do we need a body to talk about dorm things specifically?
- Virginia: I feel like we should come up with a list of points that we want to be included in the new proposal.
- Zach: We certainly want an effective transition, but we also want to get this right. I don't think we've given this enough thought.
- Leonid: What *are* the questions that need to be resolved?
- Brian Luque: At what point are we actually gong to ask people in this meeting how they actually feel about restructuring? Can we vote on this soon? Like in 20 minutes?
- Krithika: If we were to consolidate with the UA, at what point would we be able to just talk about dorm things?
- James: A requests I want to make from this committee: No matter what the final structure is, I and my dorm wants someone from East Campus sitting on that committee. I could absolutely never represent the needs of New house, and not

even those of Senior House. Its hard enough for me to represent the needs of 10 different halls, each the size of the fraternity, so I think its really important that every dorm has a representative on the final council.

- Meagan: Another thing I wanted to bring up is that it seems like you guys don't trust Christina and I, and you don't think we're accurately representing you. Why is this? And what can we do to fix this?
- Leonid: The reason is that the UA president is directly elected by students, whereas there is an extra level of abstraction with the DormCon president and vice president, because they are elected by dorm presidents (not even the current ones), who were elected by their constituents. Its nothing personal, just the structure doesn't allow for you two to be as representative as someone who was popularly elected.
- Christina: Alright, well we'll be sure to convey the opinions that you've expressed to the committee meetings over the next few days, and DormCon will have an extra meeting this Sunday to vote on the proposal.