

DORMCON MEETING MINUTES – September 13, 2012

Dorm	Representative	Absent
Baker	Michael Plasmeier	
Burton-Conner	Janille Maragh	
East Campus	Robert Johnson	
MacGregor	Edward Mugica	
Maseeh Hall	Regina Cho	
McCormick	Katherine (proxy)	
New House	Benjamin Shaibu	
Next House	Austin Brinson	
Random Hall	Alexandra Westbrook	
Senior Haus	Katy Gero	
Simmons Hall	Eli Ross	
President	Edward Mugica	
Vice President	Janille Maragh	
Secretary	Phoebe Whitwell	
Treasurer		position not filled

Ducky: EHS sent me an email about pyrotechnics. I'll send them a response.

Alicia: Leonid and I talked to Henry Humphries about scheduling orientation things before everyone leaves for the summer, hopefully around CPW time.

1. Treasurer

- Yukino Nagai was the only candidate.
- Leonid has worked with her to prepare her for the position.
- Edward: Keep in mind we do not have a surplus anymore.

Yukino was elected unanimously to be Dormcon treasurer.

2. JudComms

- SweetTea: I am the JudComm chair, but I don't think anyone knows what this is. Dormcon's judicial code is out of date (2004), for instance we no longer have RLAs. I've been talking to CDSA and Housing about writing a new policy. What powers should dorm JudComms have, and what role should JudComms play in your dorm?
- Edward: JudComms should settle housing disputes, fine residents, and remove residents in extreme cases.
- SweetTea: To clarify, Dormcon judcomm is for interdorm disputes and to appeal dorm JudComm decisions.
- Katy: Don't housemasters have these powers? (Yes.) I think this is a conflict if the housemasters make a decision and it is appealed to dormcon judcomm.
- SweetTea: judcomm can only take a case if all parties agree.
- SweetTea: I think judcomm should be able to ban nonresidents from the building, but this is disputed.
- Housemasters and ResLife can do this currently.
- SweetTea: People see JudComm as a student-run organization that specifically does not involve the administration. I don't know what powers this body should have.

- Edward: What arguments have you heard against JudComms having these powers?
- SweetTea: Nonresidents should be in the building only as a guest, therefore the dispute should be between the resident with a problem and the resident who invited the guest.
- Michael: The dorm exec could take action about this. If the issue occurs during an event when the inviting system is relaxed, this is more like vandalism than domestic dispute.
- SweetTea: this could be a dormcon judcomm role. JudComm has had in the past the ability to sentence someone to community service, enforced with support of the administration.
- Regina: if JudComm is supposed to take care of “sensitive” issues, then how can they be enforced by the administration?
- SweetTea: JudComm will keep as many facts private as possible, this has worked in the past.
- Regina: What about power abuse?
- SweetTea: JudComms are elected.
- Ducky: I would be afraid of JudComms deciding to ban people from dorms.
- SweetTea: This would be dorm JudComms, they are at least 3 elected people.
- Edward: If there is a nonresident JudComm is considering banning, this person needs an appeal process.
- SweetTea: yes. Also, in cases involving violence and significant problems, these will go to someone higher up than JudComm. Therefore JudComm might not need banning power.
- Michael: JudComm could recommend such an action and ResLife could approve.
- Alex; this is what happens now, students talk to housemasters and they address it with the support of ResLife.
- Katy: I worry about inserting bureaucracy into currently working systems.
- SweetTea: “currently working” is variable, since all judcomms are different and their powers are unclear. Bringing a case to JudComm would require all involved parties agreeing to judcomm over administration action.
- Eli: no one in Simmons has any interest in starting a JudComm and we have no need, what do we do?
- SweetTea: Not sure, Simmons residents could go directly to dormcon judcomm
- Baker/Next: we don’t use our judcomms very much
- SweetTea: people don’t go to judcomms, since they don’t know what judcomms do. it would be effective to support/advertise judcomms from all dorms, not just the few with working judcomms
- Regina: is a standardized description really necessary?
- SweetTea: all judcomms now refer to the existing code in the Constitution.
- Alex: Isn’t EC not allowed to have a JudComm?
- robj: We don’t have one presently, the judicial branch is me. I don’t know if we’re allowed or not.
- Edward: MacGregor also has no JudComm in our constitution
- SweetTea: we should fix the policy here, then talk about individual dorms.
- Edward: We should have an opt-in system, with the possibility of moving towards a fully standardized system in the future.

3. RLAD

- Edward: There’s two groups: the dorms with RLADs and the dorms without. The administration wants to bring the rest of the dorms on board.

- Katy: Dorms that aren't slated to have residential ADs are really a separate group.
- Edward: Dorms with ADs, how do you feel?
- Burton Connor and Maseeh have ADs that were previously their RLAs. They say nothing has changed except their locations. They are supportive and friendly.
- Regina: It works because we have a personal connection/trust with her. I think this is very important.
- New House, Next, Simmons, and McCormick got ADs from outside MIT, but they are pleased. Their ADs are "friendly and outgoing" and "active and committed".
- Benjamin: The main issues are the physical changes to the dorm since they're taking out 5-6 rooms (leaving 2 on the floor) to make an apartment.
- Katy: is that bigger than a GRT apartment?
- Becky: Yes. The AD apartments have to be standard in dorms.
- GRT suites are much smaller, ie 2 rooms in East Campus
- Austin: Our AD is dealing with a lot of the administration things and freshman things like RBA which needed fixing. We are not losing space, since she's in the RLA apartment.
- Eli: Our AD doesn't have anything to do.
- Affi: my AD said, make sure that students remember that ADs are people and this is their life.
- Edward: What about dorms without RLADs?
- Michael: I haven't started talking to housemasters about what we want to do, but I think making that process go smoothly is important. We can transfer "service and leadership" roles to RLAD.
- Katy: Senior House still really doesn't want one. We're in a unique position because Baker is working on getting one and all of the other dorms weren't going to get one residential anyway. Taking out space from the lobby and rooms is a really big deal since we're currently full and we're very small. I think they wouldn't have much to do, and so they're going to find things to do which might get in the way of our currently functioning system. I don't have a sense that the administration wants to listen. This makes me worried and upset. My housemaster doesn't want one but he thinks we're going to get one anyway.
- Edward: Dean Humphries doesn't want to displace any students. In MacGregor, the rooms used for the AD apartment would have gone to freshmen.
- Alex: Losing freshman is still a problem for Senior House.
- Robj: Senior House will share with EC, but EC is falling down so the AD can't live there.
- Katy: We would love to share with a bigger dorm, maybe Maseeh.
- Benjamin: What about Bexley? Are they sharing with someone?
- Becky: That was supposed to be me. What if the SH/EC AD lived in Eastgate until EC renovations?
- Robj: The timeline for that might not be acceptable. The renovations are huge and will close the dorm for a year. EC hasn't had a discussion about RLADs recently; before the summer, we weren't interested in one. Our housemasters are interested in having a dormwide discussion.
- Michael: how effective can an RLAD be if the dorm is resistant?
- Affi: Becky, at BC part of the dorm didn't want them, is Michelle getting bad behavior from those residents?
- Becky: None of the ADs are having issues with that. I do think SH is different. Living in a dorm that didn't want them would be really difficult for an RLAD.
- Katy: This might be the best reason against Senior House getting an AD.

- Edward: For each dorm, make sure we're doing information gathering about how people feel and why. This will help with the administration, they might be willing to listen to good reasons. I'm still working with Jonte and Humphries about moving the process forward with student engagement.
- Michael: can the administration approach the problem on a dorm-by-dorm basis?
- Edward: I agree, I'm going to suggest this to Humphries.
- Becky: we should solidify whether this is still open for discussion or if dorms will be forced into the system. I've heard both. Are they interviewing five people in the spring?
- Benjamin: can we have a public conversation?
- Edward: A public meeting with either dean or with the chancellor would be very difficult to get. They've made it clear that meetings with them are not public. They want to be able to review their quotes.
- Michael: what can we gain from a public meeting?
- Katy: Trust. SH has an issue with DSL about them doing what they've said they're not going to do. Also, what about the "secret committee" that originally came up with the AD idea? We don't know anything about them, they never released a report, etc.
- Edward: Jonte and I felt that it was important to get dorm opinions listened to as the process moved forward. We've set up a list of concerns that we are going to bring up. Admins know that the process was bad.

4. Issues from REX

- Simmons: We decided a fair policy for fraternity rushing was that we didn't care about fraternity members if they weren't actively rushing or wearing letters at events. We didn't have too many problems.
- Alicia: There were similarly lots of fraternity members at the Eastside party. It wasn't a problem.
- Edward: If they weren't wearing letters or rushing, I don't consider that to be fraternity presence. We did have a small issue with one frat rushing people outside Macgregor parties. So far IFC hasn't come to me with complaints. I think this sets us up well for an actual REX-Rush agreement, and I'm going to approach them soon. Word of caution: for the second year in a row, an individual dorm has had a hall cause problems and get away with it because there was no policy. This year one hall rushed before hall rush, last year one hall in a different dorm said a lot of bad things about another hall. Consider putting rules against these things into your constitution. I can discuss this with you if you want.
- Alicia: you can email me with feedback about REX.

5. Events planned from last year

- Affi: we're having Iron Chef. Fuzzy met with a potential judge.
- Edward: I want to discuss these things at the next meeting as well.

The next Dormcon meeting will be Thursday, September 27, at Burton-Connor.