

DormCon Meeting Minutes
October 10, 2013
Location: New House

Agenda

- 1) **Alcohol/Drugs/Hazing/Sexual Misconduct Policy Discussion**
 Guests: Judy Robinson (Associate Dean, Student Outreach and Support)
 Kevin Kraft (Director of Student Citizenship)
- 2) **Violence Prevention and Response Placards (Betsy Riley)**
- 3) **Funding Proposals**
 - **EC Fall Party**
 - **Baker Piano Drop**
- 4) **Constitution**
- 5) **Apple Picking Details**
- 6) **Brief Discussion of Ongoing Topics (Letter to DSL, Security, Murals, etc.)**

Attendance

Dorm	Representative	Absent
Baker	Andrea Gutierrez Marty	
Burton-Conner	Akhil Raju	
East Campus	Kelly Snyder	
MacGregor	Walter Menendez	Absent
McCormick	Henna Jethani	
New House	Anna Ho	
Next House	Linda Seymour	
Random Hall	Jacob Hurwitz	
Senior Haus	Alina Kononov	
Simmons Hall	Cosmos Darwin	
President	Eli Ross	
Vice President	Katherine Silvestre	
Secretary	Caitlin Heber	
Treasurer	Phoebe Whitwell	

Begin: 6:10
End: 7:58

1) Alcohol/Drugs/Hazing/Sexual Misconduct/Weapons Policy Discussion

a) Context:

- Last spring, a small group of staff was tasked with looking at policies and updating them. The policies deemed fit to update were the Alcohol/Drugs, Hazing, Sexual Misconduct, Weapons and Dangerous Objects. Updates were done and drafted by August with the goal of having them ready for the academic year. However, due to the timing of the updates, it was difficult to get opinions from students over the summer. Associate Dean Robinson and staff needed more feedback and finalize once students are ready. They have contacted housemasters, student groups, and have collected feedback from individuals by email or face to face.
- A full scale policy review and scrutiny of the “Mind and Hand book” will be happening in the near future. Institute policies and procedures will be reviewed for student behavior section. The group reviewing these policies will be appointed by Dean Colombo and will be comprised of both staff and students.
- Associate Dean Robinson and her staff only have purview over policies relating to student life and behavior. Additionally, the policies discussed are not finalized and they would appreciate it if the drafts provided would not be widely circulated (it is ok to go back and ask dorms for feedback).

b) Alcohol/Other Drug Policy:

- In the new policy, state law included is included because by law have to inform us of banned drugs
- Kelly: is the new inclusion of making being in the presence of drug use punishable a MIT policy or law? Judy: this is a new MIT policy, it allows for a range of sanctions/responses
- Matthew: in previous policy exceptions were made for 21+ year olds drinking. For example, if a group of 21 year olds in one of their rooms, is it wrong to share alcohol between the individuals? Judy: State law is that if you are under 30, it is illegal to give, sell or share alcohol
- Matthew (in regards to the new general alcohol policy and the specific content of alcohol related behavior): What are MIT’s goals with these policies? Does MIT want to teach students about alcohol use or punish them for their actions while they are intoxicated? To what extent are students going to be held responsible? For example, I’m intoxicated but my friends aren’t, who is responsible? Kevin: friends aren’t responsible for your behavior; the way the policy is written gives flexibility to interpret from situation to situation. Judy: the goal is to address any and all issues disruptive to student life and behavior. Information and education is important, but policy is part of prevention and also educational. We want to support students and help them make good decisions.
- Matthew: Why are large quantity dispensers and drinking games explicitly banned? Judy: drinking games are like a central source and central sources do not allow for people to control the volume of alcohol they’ve consumed (i.e. not

keeping track of how much you are drinking). Drinking games do not encourage low risk use; anything that encourages more than low risk use is prohibited.

- Jacob: drugs treated differently than alcohol in this policy. The current policy leads to unsafe conditions, i.e. doing drugs alone and/or not being watched. It would be safer to enact something similar to the Good Samaritan policy. Judy: we are aware of this issue and the goal is to get students to help each other (helping seeking protocol is on page 7). We will look into this.
- Alina: please clarify the wording in the Other Drug Policy. Kevin: old policy used the word “facilitation.” The way this has come up in practice is by allowing room to be used to do drugs.
- Katherine: will this new wording be looked at? It is incredibly broad. Judy: Yes
- Kelly: why do we have this restriction on being in the presence of “other drugs?” Katherine: the policy explicitly states that I am in trouble if I’m in the presence other drugs, which could have the affect Jacob mentioned earlier. Jess: the wording seems to make being in the presence of other drugs an egregious violation. Judy: we will revisit this and take into account your concerns.
- Matthew: MIT prohibits some legal substances, could we have a list of prohibited drugs? Jacob: wording just says “prohibited,” would cases be treated equally for legal and illegal drug use? Kevin: yes, assuming equal circumstances. The current policy does not distinguish either. We look at individual situations (how much using, situation, strength, etc.)
- Cosmos: the policy should have varying levels. Katherine: for example, caffeine consumed in large amounts is dangerous. Cosmos: energy drinks to drugs, wouldn’t it be realistic to have set list? Katherine: if there’s a resource (such as a government list) it would be good to have link in the handbook to MA state law list. Alina: clarification on non-prescribed legal drugs is also important. Judy: please remember that these policies are about safety; however, we will be revisiting the wording.

c) Hazing:

- Judy: this portion has been updated with MIT’s policy and provides new definitions, and repeated state law (required)
- Matthew: the definitions on page 10, are examples not really definitions. Judy: we will attempt to change that.
- Alina: page 10, who are the appropriate law enforcement contacted in hazing situations? Kevin: police in the area responsible. State law imposes an affirmative duty/obligation to help those being hazed by calling the police and continue to help.
- Judy: group of DSL staff began speaking last spring to create a comprehensive educational opportunity to prevent hazing

d) Sexual Misconduct:

- Matthew: we appreciate the effort of attempting to define what consent is, but some areas of the policy still need clarification. On page 18, what are “mutually understandable words or actions?” Different parties have different ideas of what this is. Kevin: some schools have “gone to the extreme” to require verbal

consent; our policy of “mutually understandable words or actions” stops short of verbal affirmation. The person initiating contact is responsible for obtaining consent. Our goal is to avoid false positives.

- Matthew: we understand the initiator is responsible, and that victims are not at fault, but what if the initiator believes that consent has been obtained by mutually understandable words or actions? Kevin: victim does not have to verbally say no, just have absence of actions that imply consent
- Andrea: page 18, when alcohol or other substances are involved, how do you define that? Also, is there a time limit for reporting sexual misconduct? Kevin: the policy is written for flexibility and would be decided at the case. We cannot set a clear limit due to the fact of different tolerances. Incapacitation is the strongest descriptor of alcohol impacting you (e.g. blackouts or “walking blackouts”). Time limit left out on purpose because we do not want to limit the cases that we can investigate (we are interested in obtaining student feedback). Judy: time limit issue is tough. Kevin: other schools have time limits, but they also have ways to appeal.
- Matthew: if a student contacts a non-confidential source at MIT, is MIT’s response to bring it to a legal representative? Kevin: no, decisions are left to the complainant. Some people prefer to stay in MIT, others do not. MIT explains options to the complainant and helps them in whatever they decide

e) Weapons

- Jacob: Has your group talked to the MIT Assassins Guild? Judy: Not yet, but we have gotten that feedback already and will be talking to them.
- Akhil: Why are charcoal and lighter fluid not allowed? Kevin: they are allowed when stored in approved storage containers.
- Matthew: we would appreciate it if appropriate storage containers were clarified. Additionally, please improve the phrasing of where hazardous materials must be stored. Judy: we will have conversation with EHS about getting these and clarifying.

f) Things to think about moving forward

- How will these new policies be implemented? What will the difference be between policy and enforcement? Are these new policies a “slippery slope”?
- Push for changes to the Alcohol Policy and Other Drugs Policy (would like a policy for other drugs similar to the Good Samaritan Policy)
- We should all send Judy, Chelsea, and Kevin thank you emails for being proactive, willing to look at our issues, and having both informative and constructive answers.

2) Violence Prevention and Response Placards (Betsy Riley)

- Betsy came to talk about placing placards in dorms to raise awareness of sexual assault support resources. Currently, there are placards placed in East Campus, but they have slowly been spreading to other dorms and she would like DormCon’s support and feedback.
- Akhil: it would be easiest for the presidents to grab them and distribute them
- Betsy: I will come back next meeting with the placards

3) Funding Proposals (able to allocate up to \$7000)

a) East Campus Fall Party

- EC is trying out a Halloween party (could be combining forces with Senior House). East Campus will be turning basement into haunted house; the courtyard will be used for food and possibly a hay maze. EC would like funding for \$400 worth of food and candy.
- Attention brought to cost estimate being low; Kelly explained that the estimates were made conservatively.

Vote passes unanimously for 400.

b) Piano Drop

- Baker would like \$3450 in funding (for food, candy, piñatas, decorations, advertisements, and Uhaul costs). Baker is asking for more money than in the past because they are expecting more people (scheduled on parents' weekend), dropping two pianos, and filling each piano with candy.
- Cosmos: skeptical of pianos being filled with candy, suggests people should throw candy to the audience. Additionally, he is of the opinion candy costs are too high, and since this proposal is a large fraction of budget, we should not disburse frivolously.
- Andrea: Baker calculated amount needed to fill the pianos from measurements.
- Matthew: last semester Baker asked for DormCon to pay \$2400, the price increase is due to more people and amount of candy.
- Alina: \$1000 reasonable for candy
- \$500 is taken off candy funding, bringing the cost of candy down to \$1000, from \$1500. Total becomes \$2950.

Vote passes unanimously for 2950.

4) Constitution

- Ben: announces that draft will hopefully be done by Sunday and set out to presidents and exec for feedback. After feedback is obtained, the constitution will be distributed further.

5) Apple Picking Details

- 386 people are going (8 buses (9 including Maseeh)). DormCon funding 5 buses. Residential Life and Dining contributed \$900 and certain RLADs paying the difference for the other 3 buses.

6) Brief Discussion of Ongoing Topics (Letter to DSL, Security, Murals, etc.)

- Katherine: Eli is meeting about the letter to DSL tomorrow (everyone liked the letter (administration, DSL, even Chancellor Grimson). Survey on security is apparently being pushed back to December; Eli will talk to Humphries about this.
- At the UA Council meeting, Title IX people came and spoke. Some people felt it was not helpful. The chain of command (people to approach when offended by a mural) is still unclear.