

**DormCon Meeting Minutes**  
**April 17, 2014**  
**Location: McCormick**

**Agenda**

- 1) Elections**
- 2) Updates**

**Attendance**

<b>Dorm</b>	<b>Representative</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Baker	Sean Corcoran	
Burton-Conner	Victoria Stivanello	
East Campus	Jessica Parker	
MacGregor	Walter Menendez	
McCormick	Chloe Orphanides	
New House	Matthew Davis	
Next House	Ryan McDermott	
Random Hall	Gaurav Singh	
Senior Haus	Rodrigo Lopez Uricoechea	
Simmons Hall	Lars Johnson	
President	Eli Ross	
Vice President	Katherine Silvestre	
Secretary	Caitlin Heber	
Treasurer	Phoebe Whitwell	

**Begin: 7:10**  
**End: 8:47**

## 1) Elections

- Eli welcomes all and explains elections (see [DormCon Constitution](#))

### a) President

- Matthew Davis: Over the past year, a few of the issues we've faced are security, murals, title IX, and lack of unity across student groups on campus. I've had the opportunity to work with faculty and have established relations with the UA. I hope to provide DormCon with balance and plan to have a calendar to organize deadlines we need to follow up on (continues to speak, stressing the importance of student governance and listening to one another). I hope to visit each dorm to hear from its residents in order to execute the agenda of the dorms (finishes his speech discussing how much he enjoys the MIT undergraduate community, specifically interdorm events).
- Chloe Orphanides: Why do I want to be president? I have enjoyed working with DormCon this year and have realized first hand its influence on campus. I want to continue the trend of being important and influential on campus. Also, I want dorm life to be as amazing as it can be. Two issues I mentioned in my platform are publicity and community. Most undergraduates don't know what DormCon is or how it's useful. We need to reach out and inform students in order represent people effectively. Like PanHel, IFC and UA, we should reach out to people at orientation and have more DormCon events to foster community. We can do a lot more to bring people together; we can break down barriers and be one great community – that's what DormCon represents. My qualifications include serving McCormick as its current president and past JudComm Chair, Room Assignment Chair, Social Chair and more. I enjoy running events across campus and have been involved with big issue topics.
- Jiacheng (Jack) Feng: As President, I would bring Maseeh back to DormCon, establish relationships with freshmen, converse with presidents, get electronic feedback, amend constitution, organize a calendar, address institutional concerns, encourage an atmosphere of team work, a promote interdorm events (etc. Jack read Matthew's platform verbatim).
- *Question to all: What are you committed to next fall?*
  - Matthew: New House Government and DormCon
  - Chloe: I'll be a senior and am done with classes, so not many commitments.
  - Jack: I'm a sophomore and don't have many commitments.
- *Question to Matthew: In the UA meeting about the CPW 1am rule, you were stern and pushed for not allowing compromise with the administrators. This is concerning. Can you explain where you were coming from?*
  - Matthew: It may have come across that way, but I was trying to ensure that the President and VP had a set of points or stance going into the negotiation. It is very important to have a stance when going into discussions. I've worked on a huge range of issues, and I know that you need to be able to reach compromises. For the most part, I know that the administration has our best

interests at heart, and we can come to a place where we reach a compromise good for all parties involved.

- *Question to all: The Bexley situation is seen by most students as a failure of communication between students and the administration. How would you have handled that situation differently?*
  - Chloe: The letter to administration was good, but it could have been followed up on quicker. There was too much confusion, and we should've pushed for answers. It was a difficult time for everyone. Basically, I would try to get answers quicker. Also, crowding was an indirect effect of the Bexley incident and an important one.
  - Jack: There are two options: go big or go home. The undergraduate population didn't receive any response from the administration at all. So, we should demonstrate and show them that we really care about Bexley.
  - Matthew: My answer will address two fronts – what happened and the lessons we learned. What happened: terrible communication breakdown. Communication could've been better and will be better in the future. Lessons we learned: there's a gap in communication. We are able to submit proposed policies and letters, but then they come back to us with a plan without our feedback. Res life doesn't even have the feedback vehicles that other committees get. Over the next year, we should create standing committees with DSL and Res Life. There should also be a standing body with students, faculty, and administrators that gives actual weight to what students are saying. Right now we're on the outside looking in. HSG is merely faculty telling us what's happening, but we need to be involved with dialogue and have an authoritative voice.
- *Question to all: what is the right balance between meeting time and discussing things thoroughly?*
  - Jack: We should decrease number of committees to make things more efficient. Also, protesting is an effective strategy.
  - Matthew: I think most work happens outside meetings. We should be prepared going into meetings, but discussion should happen (especially over budgetary matters). I think the number one thing is to get dorm presidents together and ensure things happen efficiently to improve campus. I would try to avoid the common pitfall of meetings becoming traps; sometimes people do not utilize meetings effectively and nothing productive occurs.
  - Chloe: It depends on the topic. Some topics need lots of discussion in meetings because you don't know how other dorms and people are going to respond. We need to reach compromises because no one person is going to have the best idea. Planning in advance is always a good thing for big topics. Additionally, we should always have an idea of how long discussion to last and stick to the schedule.

- *Question to Chloe and Matthew: Eli has changed the DormCon president role into an advocacy position. Please share an experience of when you talked with administration, house masters, or students and got a positive outcome.*
  - Matthew: Security is the issue I will discuss. New House has been incredibly upset about these “upgrades”, but I couldn’t go into meetings about security confrontationally. I had to ensure I would not give off a bad vibe and put negative feelings aside and approach the issue as a collaborative effort. We needed to discuss this as a team to reach a compromise and improve residential living. In the meeting, I got all the assurances I wanted, and I got understand where the administration was coming from. We were able to help each other, and got what we both wanted. I know you need to be respectful and kind, we’re all people. I can only imagine what would’ve happen if I went into the meeting angry and frustrated.
  - Chloe: In McCormick, we’re updating our constitution, and there has been a lot of backlash from the house masters. They like tradition and don’t agree with some of our changes. We’ve met with them to get their perspectives and information before we made changes. We made sure to listen to their ideas and compromise. Everyone should go in, share information and come to an agreement.

*Chloe Orphanides is elected president.*

#### **b) Vice President**

- Walter Menendez: I’ve been in DormCon for two years now as MacGregor president (only MacGregor president in resident history to be reelected). I know how to talk with admins and how organizations work. We need to inform people of DormCon to be both visible and transparent. We should also look at what can do for people on the both the micro and macro level. We should work with the UA a bit more seeing as we represent a large number of students and UA is the other largest advocacy group on campus.

*Walter Menendez is elected vice president.*

#### **c) Treasurer**

- Caitlin Heber: I’m Simmons Hall’s former treasurer and current internal president. Additionally, I’m the outgoing DormCon secretary. I know how DormCon runs and how the Student Activities office works. When I was Simmons treasurer I ran a tight ship and got reimbursements processed very quickly and would hope to do the same with DormCon.

*Caitlin Heber is elected treasurer.*

#### **d) Secretary**

- *General Comment: this person should not be a dorm president*
- Jasmeet Arora: I'm a freshman living in Senior Haus. I don't have much prepared, but I want to be involved with this organization because I care a lot about my community and I want to be more involved across campus, specifically with what goes on in west campus. Regarding the position, I've had experience being secretary in high school.
- Allan Sadun: I live in East Campus and am a freshmen. I care about care about issues effecting the undergraduate population and want to be more involved. Although I have opinions my own, I like hearing other people's opinions and recording them. I read email regularly and am good at not forgetting things.
- *Question to both: What are you committed to next fall?*
  - Jasmeet: I'll be taking 4 classes and doing a UROP.
  - Sadun: A Cappella, Tech Squares
- *Question to both: To you prefer verbatim note styles or summary?*
  - Jasmeet: I don't mind either. I would do whatever is preferred.
  - Sadun: I like summary style more.
- *Question to both: As secretary, you have more flexibility in what you do with DormCon. What are you passionate about regarding dorms?*
  - Sadun: DSL Committees! I care about this because of what we are and are not allowed to do in dorms
  - Jasmeet: I agree that what you can do inside dorms is a big issue, but the East/West campus interaction (the lack of it) bothers me.
- *Question to both: If you are not elected secretary, would run for other positions?*
- Sadun: Yes
- Jasmeet: No

*Jasmeet Arora is elected secretary.*

#### **e) Housing Assignment Chair**

- Phoebe Whitwell: I've been a part of DormCon for two years, and seen RLADs to Bexley to murals and other things. I've been involved in various capacities, sometimes through taking notes and as treasurer this past year. I feel strongly about housing system, due to its uniqueness amongst other universities.
- Matthew Davis: Over past year, Alina and I worked together as housing chairs. I would like to have continuity and serve another year as house chair.  
*Both Phoebe Whitwell and Matthew Davis are elected housing chairs.*

#### **f) Risk Management Chair**

- Allan Sadun: I don't have much extra to say as I am not as well informed of this position, but I'm interested in filling the need.

*Allan Sadun elected risk management chair.*

### **g) Dining Chair**

- Antonio Moreno: I live in Next and was Next House's dining chair freshman spring to sophomore fall. I got good food back at the grill but had to struggle with ice tea (which we still haven't gotten). I've been to many meetings and know students complaints.
- Cosmos Darwin: I was Simmons president last year and went to HDC for that time. I have pretty good relationships with the administration and I know how DormCon works.

*Both Antonio Moreno and Cosmos Darwin elected dining chairs.*

### **h) JudComm Chair**

- Ben Horkley speaking about the role – The JudComm Chair makes sure we follow our constitution. If anything comes up, they're the final word on correct procedure. Another thing that could happen is to have a committee with representatives from all the dorms and/or make documents a more useful thing for the dorms.
- Guarav Singh: I think constitution should be feasible and we should follow it. It should be up to date and not constantly change it all the time.
- Allen Park: I'm a Simmons resident and have lot of experience with constitution issues-following the word of the law and making sure it fits what we're doing.

*Gaurav Singh elected JudComm Chair.*

## **2) Updates**

- Rodrigo speaking on behalf of Adrianna (i3 Chair): Admissions is censoring the videos and quite possibly the dorms themselves. Censorship Highlights: MacGregor – IDGAF mural is a language violation, but after emailing we received an email that it was ok. EC – Weapons and Roaches. EC, Random, MacGregor – repelling because it's considered "reckless endangerment." All these censorships are occurring while they cannot point us to policies these "violations" violate. Half of the dorms videos were edited, yet in the past explicit music and other shots were approved. She's working on meeting with people to discuss these inconsistencies further.
- Victoria: We should use this extra project they want us to do as hostage.
- Katherine: I think we'd burning bridges doing that. Yes, this censoring is unreasonable, but we need to tread lightly.
- Ryan: What are next steps? Rodrigo: other than meeting in person, she doesn't have any at the moment.
- Ryan: Do you think it's worth i3 videos attending this meeting? Rodrigo: I think given that the censorship is widespread, it makes sense for her to go alone and represent everyone, it's what we elected her for. Allen: There should maybe be one other person whose videos were approved go with her.

- Ryan: I'm worried about this meeting being productive. Please have her make sure everyone is on the same page with this meeting.
- Jes: Adrianna left out that EC received this laundry list of censoring 4 days after the final deadline – eleven days after the video was submitted. Our i3 chairs responded with a note about how they thought it was disrespectful.
- Eli: The new exec will be transitioning prior to the next meeting. Lot of continuing issues going on. I3 is a tiny drop in the bucket of everything. Murals aren't a closed issue and we will be talking about them soon. Please everyone be diligent in following up on our discussions.