

Dormcon Meeting
April 9, 2015
Location: Next House

Agenda:

- Lil B funding - Mary/Ryan
- DormCon Election on 4/30 - brief run-through of all the positions
- REX booklet guidelines
- Chancellor - Freshman Rooming

Dorm	Rep	Absent
Baker	Amanda Lee	Proxy: Sean Corcoran
Burton Conner	Paul Hager	
East Campus	Sonja Postak	
MacGregor	Arthur Delarue	
McCormick	Mary Delaney	
New House	Matthew J Davis	
Next House	Haley Hurowitz	
Random Hall	Eric Mannes	
Senior House	Adrianna Rodriguez	
Simmons Hall	Kare Farris	
President	Chloe O	
Vice President	Walter M	x
Secretary	Jasmeet Arora	Proxy: antonio moreno
Treasurer	Caitlin Heber	
Guest Of Honor	Cynthia Barnhart	

Lil B

Mary: *plays lil 'b music* due to lil b music being offensive, Mcc would've have originally voted no under normal circumstances, but due to the current circumstances, they are undecided, so just making us aware of the logic of Mcc govt

Ryan (UA Treasurer) : not here to defend lil'b AT ALL. That being said, we're here to support students, and we are here to help BSU. UA has a large budgets, and can cover these large budgets, so this is one of the roles of the UA,

Conversation with Cynthia

Chloe: introduce yourselves!

people go around introducing themselves

Dormcon elections coming up!

(If you know people who might be interested in being part of dormcon exec, please tell them to come!

Run-through of all the dormcon positions opening up:

President: (chleo)

talks to admins and exec team a lot, tries to help exec team
runs meetings

EVP: (walterm)

works with president a lot, bounce ideas off of each other
similar roles
can be split up as needed

Treasurer (cheber)

funding guidelines
TRANSPARENT fiscal process
reimburse events in a timely manner

Secretary (jasmeet)

currently secret webmaster
takes minutes

REX VP (yonadav)

talks with UAAP, Reslife, and Admissions to talk about CPW and VP

Housing chairs

lots of projects, dealing with dorm life
meets with Humphries a lot, kinda randomly
security, GIH, if there is an explicit charge by president or dorms-prez, they

carry out those actions

involved in projects, not involved in running meetings
you don't have to be two people, but it really helps
mattjd: clearing house of dormcon, everything goes through them

judcomm chair: (gaurav)

head of dormcon judcomm
interprets the dormcon constitution

risk manager:

makes sure alcohol with events has all the proper training and permits and follows MIT procedure

party-safe training

how dorms tackle sexual assault and community building

Dining chairs (cosmos and dontoy)

reps with HDC

coordinates with dorms' dining chairs

renegotiating with the dining contract

(generally speaking, everyone has to be a dorm resident)

Exec meets a lot and talks about a lot of things, related to what the actual dorm presidents do want

represent on committees, such as ISTAB, CAC,

Q: when does the term start?

the summer, transition in may, joint at the end of the year to get used to the role, the transition works over the summer

OFFICIALLY take office the last meeting of the spring term

Q: how do elections work?

people nominate others/themselves up until april 30th, give a little speech.

candidates have time during meeting for a schpiel, then get kicked out of the room

when presidents vote

can send a short statement to send out with the agenda

POPULATION vote

Q: where?

at simmons

Q: can we send a proxy?

yes

REX Booklet Guidelines:

Yo: emphasize, apply BY dormcon rex chairs, TO the submitted events by dorms

give booklet to julie, if she approves and says it's kosher, and send off to print

we want as many comments as possible on the draft

language that is not meant as a guideline is meant to be guiding

Q simmons: representing the "styles of the dorm", what does that mean? culture?

yes, needs clarifications, culture is exactly what we want to pinpoint

Q simmons: contradiction in can't invite prefrsh to illegal activities, but can reference illegal acts?

no, while promoting this is NOT what we want to do, a reference to them, in the guidelines, is ok

Q simmons: Would prefer the number of fucks given not be in the guideline, note should be removed

QBC, point 3 is not necessary, and shouldn't be in the guidelines

QBC, obtuse is too obtuse as a term

QEC: the spirit, we should NOT encourage, perhaps actively discourage, maybe not outright ban, the idea of poking fun of other dorms.

Baker: last year EC poked fun at skyline party

BC: it's humorous

Yo: edit to keep gentle, must be kept to a minimum

Next (kyle): notify dorm first if editing is needed in booklet by rexvp?

yes, that should be explicitly put in the guidelines

gaurav, maybe not in these "guidelines", but could be a more formal process

If there are more comments, email dormcon-rexvp@mit.edu with comment and concerns

If housing is unhappy, this is an ongoing process, so we are not done yet

Chancellor visit:

Cynthia: engage in a dialogue, introduce,

students worry that it's a done deal? definitely NOT

What problem are we trying to solve:

data, small percent ~9%, when asked how satisfied are you with MIT housing, this 9% dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied

9% is a large enough number, we should be looking at it

2nd set of core principles at MIT, and specifically in housing

Looked at Bacow report

set forth 5 principles for housing, design objectives

provide meaningful opportunities for frosh to actively participate

respect diversity of culture

strike balance between frosh who want to know immediately, and those who want to taste

no student experiences rejection

respect existing housing practices in exec boards, and maintain satisfaction

key point we want to look at, "no student experiences rejection"

3rd point, no data, but I'll throw it out there anyway

the process of trying to find a place you fit in could be very stressful especially if there isn't that much confidence

4th point

post rex housing survey:

answer to "i would've preferred to stay in the same room i was assigned to"

agree or strongly agree > disagree or strongly disagree

this is the main thing that informed my thinking

more data

70% of students found that summer housing selection for frosh is extremely important to them

40% opportunity to remain in the same room, extremely or somewhat important

*last point unseen 30% not that excited about dorms placing them somewhere?

things i want to do

provide MORE choice

remove the chance of a student being rejected

allow any of the current processes to remain intact

idea of what she thinks, and others that have surfaced in convos

allow students to stay in their current assignment, "squat

Q: when should they make the decision to squat, in the summer? before REX?_after REX?

cindy was thinking perhaps over summer

but open to suggestions

not a huge idea

IF students choose this option, allow them to do that

what would we have to do to make the process work, and be compatible

assigning students to room, remain however the houses do it how they've done it, perhaps even earlier

why not allow the option for REX to happen perhaps after orientation, with one, two months after people have had enough experience meeting everything

macG:

data: 9% dissatisfied, what fraction is that they are dissatisfied with the dorm, and what fraction is dissatisfied with the room in the dorm,

it addressed the issue of the wrong room of the right dorm, and perhaps not the wrong dorm idea

Cindy: looked at compared number of swaps in REX lottery, and number of empty rooms in dorms

demand does not equal supply in comparison

and this doesn't address that

SH: is the frustration about the dorm

Cindy: the data is related to "MIT housing assignment process", that is what's in the question data also about "fit" in the community, the "community" aspect of the community, can look at that.

MAcG, when did this happen?

CB: 3 days after, housing survey

more data in enrolled student survey, which we just took

BC: looked at #s of first choice, second choice, etc

was the number of people who didn't get first choice, or second choice, are they also the people who were dissatisfied?

CB:_yes, there is a correlation:

BAker: not fair to have random assignment, try to fit people together for the whole dorm, quads as an example issue, would rather have two sets of two who choose to be together, rather than random

CB: it doesn't have to be random, opt in

New house; people select new house meaning to live in house 3, or house 4, when people fill in new house in summer lottery, would be helpful to select an additional option to have a house preference

CB: housemasters talked about how houses are different, so dorms can have house-specific questions in the survey

likewise, such as in McC, people do this, frosh *can* squat

some houses might say, this doesn't work for us at all, other houses say that this happens already

very interested in assessing outcomes, and see if people are less happy or more happy at the end of the year. is there something different about how communities form due to this experiment?

EC: 3 things: stress, dissatisfaction, rejection, rejection very ambiguous, so what does that mean?

CB: rejection as, they've expressed interest in living in a floor, or room, but they don't get into it. Maybe it's due to supply and demand, which is fine, but if it becomes personal, then it's troublesome. If it happens over the summer, it's secret, so it's simpler,

SH: timing is very important. As RAC of SH, 42 frosh in SH, only 2 people actually stayed in their room. So there's that. Transfer students are the ones who are unaware of room-rush process, and they expressed that they after two months wanted to choose room, because they didn't participate in room rush

CB: analysis, of stickiness, what groups stick together, see dorms are very different. Dorms stick to the floor, aspire to better rooms, etc.

Rob miller says, EC is really ten dorms, communicating the difference is really hard, without people being here. Because theirs isn't a homogenous system, a single solution probably doesn't work. what could be done to address this issues?

Random: squatting, and parents. If parents have any idea that student can stay in the room, parents are going to encourage and enforce this. Overactive parents will interfere with parents trying to make an active choice. Second, hall information over the summer, will cause parents to have this information, and could strongly influence this decision.

CB: students are going to have to stand up to parents.

Cosmos: being a helicopter parent could be more solidified in this process

CB: _can't think of a system that works for them too

Slmmons: impact on FYRE, students who choose to FYRE, People will choose to stay in their good room, and therefore people who choose to FYRE will get the bad pick in the room, so it will discourage the FYRE process.

CB: If squatting happens after FYRE, we could make a way to work.

less than 10% of students choose to FYRE. that supply/demand imbalance. More fill it out, but due to imbalance, it's only possible that less than 10%_of students can get the chance to FYRE out

MacG, how many people apply to fyre?

CB: have the hard numbers who want to move in and out, but addition is hard:
move out:

16

6

34

5

8
8
10
15
5
6
28

13% of frosh filled out the FYRE form, but only 9% got the chance to move out

MacG: the social rejection does exist, if you spend all summer wanting to be somewhere, but not get it. But another really bad situation is if someone is in a community and chooses to be in that community, but the social rejection if there is a bad fit with the community becomes a whole semester of rejection. That prospect is even scarier

CB: wouldn't make a student stay there.

McG: could end up in a worse community, because there is a lack of empty rooms.
small unhappiness

CB: 25% are unhappy of where they are
imbalance of supply and demand

problem of heterogeneous system, it could happen.

Baker: REX data being too closed to REX itself, and if it happens later, people could get used to the system, it always works out. Analogy of students being unsatisfied to their rooming process after REX, but it becomes easier as time moves on

CB: current system tends to people who begin being slightly unhappy, but it gets better a system that has an assignment beforehand happens in a similar form. if ~80% people don't move out, how different would the outcome be? as a test of both systems, the settling of people?

Baker: _would settle in better if they were with people they wanted to live with

CB: how much worse or different is that than just a summer housing assignment by housing chairs?

8:31

SH: FYRE form was not opt-in before, used to be opt-out, due to this, numbers decreased drastically.

CB: we have that data:

Kyle(next): triples, next house does random selection, not allowing squatting allows people to have more fairness. If frosh have a single or a double squat, then people don't have the equal chance of moving to a triple

CB: if opt in happened before what kind of room you have, without this bias, then this problem doesn't really occur.

Example, if a group of 3 all wanted to live in next house, does the assignment initial, with extra information,

how could we make sure to maintain equity

Phoebe: helicopter parent, specially when we talk w.r.t. GIH.

CB: for sure, we would work with the students to make it work

Phoebe, there are other reasons why we would want to stop helicopter parents for any reasons

unhappiness after time goes away

would be hesitating to place students in floors for smoking and clothing optional

also, long term, we see the experiment in the long term, but we see, as students, the short time

what is the timeline of this experiment

what does failure look like

is the de-facto agreement reversible, can we say no later

CB: timeline: try it for incoming frosh, important to see if we get a better outcome. have to figure out what we're measuring

after this we can see how long the experiment needs to run to assess it

one year might not be long enough, want to see how the community changes, want to repeat the analysis of 'stickiness', assessed, if not good, then that's the failure of the experiment, that's why we don't want to hardcode it to policy

what it would look like, depends of the dorm, can't say outright for sure, it would have to be the dorm saying we'd like to try it.

next steps: if dorms are interested, we can talk about implementation

gaurav: rejection problem, i can see it. frosh can't get an accurate view of dorms in the summer. Without knowing, i don't see people wanting to opt-in if you don't know if you'll like it or not. The REX process makes a big difference

solutions, extend rex, stop conflicts with REX, have frosh get a chance in person

CB: look at the data, large fraction of students who would like to stay

87% choose to stay in the dorm

more would like to squat their room

Backy: CPW_is a main driving factor, rather than REX, and i3 exists as well.

but is it enough

DBD: i3 videos don't cover ALL the communities...

also, i was deeply dissatisfied with the process, i am the 9%, i understand the desire to solve it. if i had been given the option to squat, i can't say for sure, i would like to keep the room i get. I was also excited about hall rush. trial period, a little taste of every place. The opting-in process asks the question, can you opt-out of the opt-in. If i opt-in, does hall rush not apply to me?

instead of the idea, extend the process of hall rush for a period of time, have 2 weeks to a month out, a re-evaluation in the dorm, there be another in house rush process, re-assign. This alleviates people who might have concerns before the 1st rush, it gets better, and if it doesn't there's a chance to change that. Things get better, people get happier. This in addition to current hall rush process.

So, if you're unhappy with first rush, then second rush

CB: still having a first round, trying to address. not too happy with the student angst of people in house rush is doubled.

don't we want to know what the dorms look like, even if we opt-in to squatting?

DBD:

Mary: Mcc's system is opt-in to move within the dorm, very few freshman opted to move in in the previous year. BUT last year, the system of a mini-weekly lottery after the fact, students take that opportunity more into consideration.

MCc students also partake in REX

Mcc isn't that culture heavy, only somewhat distinct between dorms, so there does exist concern in other dorms that are more different.

CB: the weekly system still works.

lottery vs gaining admittance to a floor, that's the point we want issue

explain that to me? which system is more likely to have the frosh experience rejection? what is the difference

Caitlin: frosh fill out the dorm, maximize happiness based on frosh' preference.

SH: mutual selection

CB: how do you decide who gets that?

cosmos: RACs, 5 people go through and optimize

CB: optimization?

Simmons: _lots of parameters

CB: mutual selection?

EC RAC: currently making adjustments. frosh fill out preference of each hall, then RACs meet, reps from every hall, manually done, talking about making it more algorithmically. try to put as many people in first choice as possible. hall reps have some say, specifically based on living environment. halls that want frosh get them first, then sorting as many people in the highest ranked hall as possible.

people can stop and say if there exists the possibility that there is a lot of people who didn't get their top choice, there is a reshuffling and attempt to minimize that

CB: how do rank?

EC: rank every hall. Will not be place in a hall that they choose "please not here". few people got the

EC: frosh input only, versus upperclassmen have some input. allow frosh to judge us, and see if they will fit in with us. likewise upperclassmen have an interest in finding a good fit.

people fill out based on parents lived here, clothing optional;

CB: have we looked at making the assignment based purely on frosh-only input?

phoebe: supply and demand exist within EC exist as well, so with or without mutual selection, problem will still exist

MacG: rank each entry from 1-5, all entries, from that generate a ranking of the entries, ties are randomly broken, run deferred acceptance algorithm live, with entry-reps to help make decisions.

two levels of system, one rank entry ordering, separate total ordering

maximise frosh happiness, entries have the 'illusion' of having input

frosh are the only ones who really give their input, but the process can be divisive. the entries need to feel that they get

sadun: sounds machiavellian...

CB: given all these different systems, what's the movement, flexibility to move if they are unhappy. don't have that data

Eli (next housing chair): when the opt-in to squatting exist, worried if it happens over the system. no matter how much data we have, and how much useless data we have, matching roommates and matching wings is nigh-impossible

it's more probable with more information if it happens AFTER REX, that it is more optimal.

Choosing roommates after face-to-face meeting much more important than these little questionnaires.

skeptical that this system could works over the summer

Chloe: _not enough information over the summer, huge concern from the RACs. even with more questions, not confident in placing frosh in optimal system. I'm concerned about the mcc system merely based in the questionnaire.

CB: know what percent of people remain roommates, its really low.

difference between tolerating frosh year vs long term rooming.

Baker: internal survey of frosh, what they would like to see

it works just fine, just want more information about the system itself. talked about giving the information sooner and better, and that's the biggest problem, and are striving to fix it.

CB: just a few more questions? happy to talk someone afterwards

Yo: we have a lot to say, but it's useful to have a take away, what is the problem we're addressing.

one issue i saw come up, is the human component. focus on this. preassignment and squatting ability *removes* the human component

CB: hypothesis is that rejection is tied to the human component

Simmons: it's important frosh roommate is not just that they know, but it's someone that they get along, can lean on each other. Important to have an extracurricular rapport, but can't see if roommates will connect or not based on these superficial answers on surveys. assessing the interpersonal relationship capability when pairing roommates, and doing or seeing that in person is better than this.

CB: agree with that, but there isn't a piece of paper or data that tells us this delta, that tells us the difference between squatting or not.

would love to find a way to collect that data?

Chloe, two more questions, then discuss next steps

Eli (next): squatting as removing the human component, decrease rejection, maybe, but its taking an axe to a problem that needs a scalpel.

the human component is more important, and removing it completely is a bit brash

CB: _have data that more people want to stay in their original room (after 3 days), but i also want to provide more choices. what i'm getting from you is that you don't see that the frosh know enough to make that choice

Caitlin: is that answer based on inconvenience of moving, athletes, rush, parents, how that influences their decisions, aside from where they want to live

CB: the inconvenience means that their making priorities, rooming over living place not everyone thinks the system is perfect. fundamentally there is the issue, supply demand, vs diversity. that might be the biggest source of stress, and we're not changing that, unless you change the communities, and we're not going to talk about that.

EC: the inconvenience exists, but people regret this decision

reducing stress, reducing rejection, these goals get mixed, no solution we've talked about today addresses BOTH issues, one or the other
failure to get a desirable room assignment, the difference in whether it was a human process or not, it's bad. The matter is minimizing the number of people overall in that system, not rejection

CB: feeling rejection is probably more important than choosing an optimal room
not a match of what you're looking for, should be more dynamic in changing what we're offering.

EC: rejection is a matter of wanting to live in a community, but failing to get it

CB: it's the human component that causes rejection

EC: but how is that better

CB: given outcome of chance, doesn't matter what the process is. IF we want to change that outcome, that would be great. The hypothesis comes from, because it's a random system, algorithm, i don't feel hurt.

Kyle: w.r.t. lack of data, we had a survey, we asked what would make your process better, restricted only to next house, but it's something that could influence your decision, we can share it with the chancellor if needed

Caitlin: better inform how the system works, give us the resources to find optimizing processes without changing what we do, could be ideal
next steps, each dorm reaches out to you

CB: appreciate your comments, happy to engage further

Chloe, if you met with the housemasters, ask the house team first, the students first, the housemasters shouldn't have final say, and everyone else, feel free to reach out to her specifically

have some dorms said they'd be ok with this?

housemasters said they would talk to their dorms, no one said outright yes or no

mcdran: what's the best way to meet with you?

CB: email me?

Chloe: please email her.