

**DormCon Meeting
November 5, 2015
Location: Maseeh Hall**

Agenda:

- 1. Environmental Solutions Initiative Talk by John E Fernandez**
- 2. DormCon Q&A for Maseeh Representatives**
- 3. First Year Housing Survey Updates**
- 4. Security Committee Charter Announcements**
- 5. MetX Warehouse Talking Tour Overview**
- 6. IAP Meal Plan Discussion**

Attendance:

Dorm	Representative	Absent
Baker	Mandy Lee	
Burton-Conner	Paul Hager	
East Campus	Sonja Postak	
MacGregor	Arthur Delarue	
McCormick	Mary Delaney	
New House	Trey Watts	
Next House	Haley Horowitz	
Random Hall	Eric Mannes	
Senior House	Adrianna Rodriguez	
Simmons Hall	Kate Farris	
President	Yonadav Shavit	
Vice President	Caitlin Heber	
Secretary	Sabrina Madera	
Treasurer	Jacqueline Liu	

Start Time: 19:37

0. Introductions

1. Environmental Solutions Initiative Talk by John E Fernandez

- John: I was appointed to the Environmental Solutions Initiative. The Energy Initiative is a 7-year-old program that has raised upwards of 600 million dollars, funded a lot of research, and so on. Several years ago, the idea was hatched that

we should do with the environment what we did with energy. The Energy Initiative was anchored in research; the head of EEPS got us proposals, and etc. Right now, I'm in this position for about 4-5 years. One of the things I've advocated for is a bottom up strategy, starting from ideas that come from the community, and having a footprint early in student life. I'm just coming to you to say that I have a number of donors interested in funding projects. Anything having to do with research efficiency, building efficiency, anything that might mitigate climate change. Right now in Baker, we're probably going to be launching a personal farming project, relatively small scale. Urban agriculture is a proof of concept to be tested. We want to test it in the dorms. Another project is composting; it's not done well, and it is very irregular. Those are just two examples of a huge range of ideas that are possible. I welcome you guys to take this back to your dorms, there is a website. Please survey your population, and send them directly to me with ideas. One of the hardest parts of this initiative is getting it to the students.

- Yo: Have you thought of speaking to the fraternities and sororities at all?
 - John: That's on our list. It's a bit more complicated.
- Sonja: I desperately want bees.
 - John: We're thinking of a roof somewhere where this is possible.
- Sonja: Also, solar power.
 - John: Solar power is on our list as well. There is great potential in East Campus.
- John: MIT is a very challenging place on test-bet projects. We're lining up some projects. Also, if you're involved in a UROP and see research that can move into test-betting, you can talk to me, to see if we can get funding. Another project we have is fertilizer from urine; apparently there is a system to derive nitrogen from it. I'm interested in ideas like that. My mind's eye view of success is that we sponsor research and there's some breakthrough. I'm looking to you guys to be the ambassadors to this. Thank you for your time.

2. DormCon Q&A for Maseeh Representatives

- Yo: So quickly, I wanted to give an opportunity for any Maseeh residents to ask anything about DormCon. If you have any questions at any point, you can ask.

3. First Year Housing Survey Updates

- Yo: For the last month and a half or so, we've been working with Jag Patel to create a Freshman Housing Survey. The survey went out, and we got 700 something responses. Jag said she usually didn't expect people to fill out the survey more than once, but frosh are froshy and filled out the survey. I have in front of me the initial results, they are confidential, and so I can't share. For the presidents, you will be getting a breakdown of the results in your dorm, so I advise you to perhaps change some things based on that. I don't know when that's going to happen; let's wait a week, and if people haven't gotten it, I'll email Jag.
 - Sadun: It would be nifty if we could share results from each dorm.
- Yo: In the results, "overall how satisfied have you been with your housing experience," zero people said very dissatisfied, 3% said generally dissatisfied.

Regarding informing freshman about the dorms, 20% of freshman felt somewhat or very poorly informed about the dorms. All but 1.8% enjoyed the events they attended during REX. A lot of people said the number of events during REX was overwhelming.

- Sonja: On that point, I don't know if we can discern this, but I'm curious if freshman found it overwhelming because there's multiple events between dorms, or if there's a clash between dorm and orientation events.
 - Rachel: We were not allowed to schedule during orientation events.
- Sadun: I think it would be good idea for next year that the REX survey be separated from the housing survey. I'm dissatisfied with the number of feedback.
- Kate: To get back to that, we were allowed to schedule over some orientation events.
- Art: Is there a way to make REX less overwhelming? That's the point of it.
- Adri: I'm not sure if this is a good idea. People don't want an event cap because everyone wants to have as many events as possible, would it be a good idea if we had a shorter version of the schedule, like a booklet that only highlighted the big events, and then the dorms could have a larger schedule with all the events?
- Sadun: This year was different because we had an official REX app. I think we need to call a focus group of freshman.
 - Adri: It would be nice to see how many people sorted events by time, or by dorm.
 - Sadun: If you want me to haul Tristan, who wrote the app, I can.
- Yo: "I enjoy living where I do" had only 5% of people disagree or strongly disagree. "I'm happy I went through the in-house selection process" had 7% disagreeing. That's not far away from the 9% the chancellor presented last year, people who stated they were unhappy with the rooming process. This was asking specifically about the in-house rooming process, now we can clearly say the in-house process is problematic.
 - Haley: I feel like there are variables they're not considering. I feel like a lot of the freshmen were unhappy because they were in force triples.
 - Sadun: If Next has a high number compared to other dorms, they'll see that.
- Yo: "In-house room selection was fair towards freshman", only 4% disagreed.
- Haley: A lot of freshman were not aware that they would be getting triples.
 - Yo: The number of roommates they have exists in the survey data.
- Arthur: It sounds like they're setting unrealistic expectations for the rooming process. If freshman come in and expect everyone to be happy, they're expecting too much.
 - Adri: So you're saying to anti-rush.
 - Kate: Arthur is saying we should have a more realistic merit.
 - Sean: We should let them know that there are quads and triples in Baker, and no upperclassmen live in them, so obviously they have to.

- Sonja: I understand we're in crowding, but on the website, under Next House it says only doubles and singles are available.
 - Haley: I brought this up at the meeting in Baker.
- Adri: I'm confused because I've talked to Nilam and said, "Hey we need to update the website," and she's just like "Oh, yea," and doesn't.
- Yo: Other points, we have "I would feel comfortable going to upperclassmen for advice/support," followed by GRT advice/support, followed by academic advisor, are at 75 percent. For Housemaster and RLAD, it's at 40 percent.

4. Security Committee Charter Announcements

- Sonja: The Housing Assignment Chairs are in the process of starting a Security Committee that will be in charge of looking at policy changes and providing recommendations. This is our draft; I would like your feedback. Some of this has already included Henry's input, so we factored that in. The committee will be in charge of looking at existing policies, and they'll be recommending changes to current policies, reviewing policies that are suggested, moderating internal unresolvable disputes. We used the term audit, but Henry didn't like that. Examining existing policies to ensure they remain relevant and useful, sounds like an audit to me. What's important is that we wanted this committee to be separate from the committee that suggests changes. We didn't want the committee to be a loop of recommended policies that they'll approve. We want someone else to create, and someone else to recommend them. Right now, we're thinking two DormCon reps, either both Housing Chairs, or one and a representative. An FSILG representative as well, because they are affected by security policies. A GSC rep and a UA rep as well. The goal of this student representation is that every student affected by this would have a representative they would feel is theirs.
 - Yo: So, to clarify, Maseeh would be going through the UA representative?
 - Sonja: Yes, that's the reason we have the UA rep for this, because we recognize dorms don't have to be a part of DormCon.
- Adri: Moderate internal unresolvable disputes by request?
 - Sonja: A lot of the small internal disputes are done in-house, like guest list changes, but we don't want students to feel like there's an immovable wall, like if a Housemaster prevents something from happening. That's part of the goal.
- Chloe: Would you consider having Housemasters in the committee?
- Kate: This committee will make recommendations to whom?
 - Sonja: Basically to Henry. On the associate side, a representative of Allied Barton, Dean Associate of Student Life, Director of Housing Operations and one RLAD. The goal of the RLAD is to be a bit of a bridge.
- Kate: Have you talked to the FSILG or GSC on how they feel at all?
 - Sonja: From talking to Henry, there are some people in the GSC who are interested.
- Chloe: The Housemaster would have a different perspective, because they're also faculty. Also, talking with IFC and Panhel.
- Sonja: And the committee chair would be Director of Housing Operations. On the

- housemaster issue, the goal tonight was to get feedback, but if we're happy with this draft, the next steps on this are a DormCon vote to approve, and Henry would give it to Colombo, and they would review it. The goal would be to start it for the spring semester.
- Arthur: It seems like it makes it more of a hassle, because there's another procedure.
 - Sonja: No, you don't have to. Internal problems can be done internally. It's just an extra resource. It's for us to be involved with campus wide changes; this wouldn't affect internal changes.
 - Mandy: I feel like if we're going to vote for this, we should talk about Housemasters.
 - Sean: Is there a reason for this charter?
 - Caitlin: A big concern was Parent's Weekend, and the security was changed.
 - Sonja: That's one thing I expect this committee to do.
 - Adri: I'd send committee to discuss PNG procedures. Prior to Allied Barton, dorms were allowed to PNG someone internally if someone was disruptive or dangerous. Now, we can't PNG someone without going through the housing office.
 - Mary: We did that last year without going through the housing office.
 - Adri: Twice now, we've tried to explain that this person is detrimental and they don't agree, and we're not allowed to internally PNG anymore. It's mostly been the student desk workers trying to discourage the person from entering. I'd like to get that changed.
 - Arthur: It does sound necessary to go through some authority.
 - Adri: The Housemaster is authority. Right now, he'll try to do something, and he doesn't have the power.
 - Sadun: If the charter changes, would you have to vote to change it?
 - Sonja: If it's dramatic, I would want another vote. Email me if you have anything else. Parents weekend, not chaos? A lot of people waiting doesn't surprise me, but if there were students unable to get in, that's a problem.
 - Becky: Not sure how Maseeh really went, so I wouldn't consider it a success.
 - Sonja: Any other Maseeh residents observe their findings?
 - Katie: I didn't observe any long lines or hear any problems.
 - Mandy: I talked to Angelo, the guy who works desk, and a lot of parents were like oh we could walk in last year.
 - Caitlin: Security only had one supervisor during the weekend, and no one wanted to show up for that.
 - Arthur: Maybe they should pay the people more on that day.
 - Kate: Have they had problems with that in the past?
 - Paul: Once they saw special instructions they were probably disinterested.

5. MetX Warehouse Talking Tour Overview

- Yo: I hope everyone had a chance to go to the meetings about the Metropolitan

Warehouse. Just to quickly go over, people said lounges need to be closer to major throughways, both suite lounges and regular ones. Triples are worse than doubles or quads. Ten by ten community sizes are not a familiar model to MIT, interested to see how Maseeh has this. Some people voiced the fact that splitting the community into two halves of 50 would be more conventional. Also, more bathrooms.

- Arthur: There were two per floor.
 - Kate: And they were gendered.
 - Becky: But that doesn't work for everyone.
- Yo: Also, disabilities if you're at one end of the building, and need to go to the other half to get to the bathroom. People also suggested to possibly add a staircase near the center. The public spaces that exist could be kitchens and are still usable as public spaces. Also, to possibly add a second entrance to the building to allow people to not cross the entire building.
- Paul: Can we make a quick recommendation to the seating population, that the architect can't be considered in the Housemaster search?
 - Kate: Right now, thinking of the Housemaster is premature. But the Dining Hall is a major concern; the fact that it's on the third and fourth floors, it has a lot of access concerns. Also, the two floor thing.
- Lily: The laundry room is too small.
- Chloe: The number of singles is really low, which is concerning because there are some people who need a single for reasons.
 - Mandy: About the triples, if you make it big enough, it won't be that bad if the triples are really nice. If it's actually legitimately nice, and if you feel like you won in the space department, it might be easier to advertise.
- Sonja: There are the two or three quads at the end of the halls that seem very isolated.
- Sadun: If the current plans are 3 GRTs per floor, I would say 2 by 50 is worse than 3 by 33. Also 30 is a better size.
- Eric: Random is the only dorm that has something resembling the light wells, and we said we'd happily sacrifice natural light for more lounge space.
- Adri: Outdoor things; Senior Haus really likes our courtyard, and it's sad that these guys don't even have a rooftop garden.
- Kate: Another thing on the light wells, is that there's less natural light in the lounges.
- Adri: The way it's set up, shrink the triple into a single, and that way the suite lounge can have natural light, and then it will be 8 people, which is much more homely.
- Yo: I want to make more specific one of the things we talked about; do people feel it would be worth it to remove specific triples into quads, and take away from other spaces? It would be easier to remove some rooms, and turn the triples into quads.
 - Kate: Can we just fight really hard on the occupancy numbers, and turn the triples into doubles?
 - Mandy: If you can make the triples into quads, can't you just make them

into two doubles?

- Caitlin: Quads don't take the same space as two doubles.
- Sonja: If you took a quad and made it into two doubles, it would be much smaller.
- Kate: If we could look into it, it would be nice, but I think quad is still better than a triple.
- Adri: If 60% of students want to live in doubles and 40% in singles, they should build a dorm with 60% doubles and 40% singles.
 - Zach: Have you lived in a quad? It's not that bad, if I had been with people I actually liked, it would've been an amazing time.
- Kate: I'm not saying we should have no quads.
- Arthur: I don't think removing triples and quads is a good idea, but if it's mostly that, it's bad.
- Mandy: I know there's this huge idea with community, but if there's going to be so many triples and quads, I found that I needed time to myself sometimes. That's one of the reasons I didn't like the triple.
- Mary: Two points; because there's a sense of community in triples and quads, singles are really isolating when everyone outside you is in a community. Also there aren't a lot of big spaces for communities, that weren't like shutting it out.
- Caitlin: They have a theatre.
 - Sadun; It doesn't have a Porter Room.
 - Mary: Every dorm, or most, have something.
- Yo: In Maseeh do upperclassmen tend to live in doubles?
 - Zach: Doubles and singles.
 - Adri: Interesting thing is that every year we have 2 or 3 sets of upperclassmen who choose to live in a double, but they exclusively choose to live in doubles in suites.
- Kate: How locked into the maker space are we? If we took the maker space and moved the dining hall there, then there's more space for residential living. The maker space doesn't have to be in the dorm.
 - Arthur: I second that, fuck the maker space.
 - Adri: There's a maker space right across the street.
 - Yo: There are too many people involved with this idea.
 - Arthur: The maker space brings the academic world directly into the dorm, and I heard some parts will be open 24/7, and people should be sleeping at night. Having a place where you do work at 3 am in a dorm is a terrible idea.
 - Sadun: If you can't kill the maker space, can you work on killing some of the rooftop bar and making it residential?
 - Mary: One other big concern is the noise level, like in my dorm we have a dance studio, and many people complain about the noise.
 - Yo: They have an audio consultant. If people have other concerns, please email Caitlin and me.

6. IAP Meal Plan Discussion

- Mary: It looks like as of now, Naomi is not going to have a meeting about the IAP meal plan. She wants it to remain the same as last year.
- Kate: Last year, you could buy it by week instead of all IAP, and only Baker was open.
 - Haley: It used to be by the number of meals.
- Mandy: Are winter athletes going to get the free meal plan?
 - Mary: We didn't really meet with her, but they're planning as of now what they did last year, which was a week free for athletes.
- Caitlin: I'm upset they haven't had a single meeting.
 - Kate: If you guys want things to be brought up, we could make agenda items for the HTC meetings.
- Mary: What she's doing instead, is meeting with individual people from dining hall dorms, which is more effective in causing changes in those, but it won't look at the big picture.
- Becky: What about you all attending some of the house meetings?
- Kate: They do them about every two weeks, for about an hour.
- Sadun: Is it reasonable for you and Mary to attend some of the meetings?
- Mary: Would Baker, Maseeh, and Next be okay with that?
 - Sean: Yes.
- Mary: The other thing is that only the concerns of dining dorms are the ones being heard.
- Haley: They used to have campus wide discussions about things besides dining, like how to foster dining communities in non dining dorms.
- Caitlin: Back to the IAP meal plan, it would be nice to have a better conversation than that. I would like to know how it impacts on a whole. I want to know how each dorms reps feels about that.
- Kate: It would be useful if you guys could go back to your dorms and see if anyone has any feelings about the IAP meal plan, if they liked it or not. And then we can get agenda items.
 - Mary: The people who were here and not on the meal plan, we still want to hear from them, to see why and so on.
- Sean: I think the week-by-week meal plan is great and they should do that again.

End Time: 21:01