MIT UNDERGRADUATE ASSOCIATION

51 UA Council Session 1 Meeting Minutes
September 4, 2019, 7:30pm - 9:00pm in W20-400

Living Group	Representative	Present?
Baker	Hannah Mahaffey	
Burton-Conner	Alice Zhang	
East Campus	Adriana Jacobsen	x
MacGregor	Anthony Cheng	x
Maseeh	Kye Burchard	x
McCormick	Afeefah Khazi-Syed and Yara Komaiha	x
New House	Lia Hsu-Rodriguez	x
Next House	Erick Eguia	x
Random Hall	Amanda Putnam	x
Simmons	Carlos Sendao	x
Interfraternity Council	Sam Ihns	x
Interfraternity Council	Ato Kwapong	
Interfraternity Council	Daniel Gonzalez	x
Interfraternity Council	David Poberejsky	
Living Group Council	--	
Off Campus	--	
Panhellenic Association	Amanda Horne	
Panhellenic Association	Vanessa Wong	
Panhellenic Association	Charlotte Folinus	x

1. Roll Call + Introductions   7:30 - 7:35

2. Approval of 50 UAC 12 Minutes   7:35 - 7:40

3. State of the UA   7:40 - 8:00

4. Commencement Changes   8:00 - 8:30

5. Vice President Updates   8:30 - 8:45

6. UA Student Activism Fund   8:45 - 9:00

Enclosures
A. 50 UAC 12 Minutes
B. Commencement Changes Proposal
C. Commencement Committee Student Response to Update from Chancellor Barnhart on the future of Commencement
D. UA Student Activism Fund Proposal

7:39 Last year's minutes

Motion, seconded, all in favor. Passed.

7:40 State of the UA

- Mahi working with CPT/OPT for work authorization
- Currency Exchange mentioned student email, financial aid packages,
- NAWSEM working group: chancellor starting working group for sexual assault
- Memorials Policy: working with Admin to get procedure in place before planning Aliza's memorial
- DSL Visiting committee: Suzy's visiting committee comes in the fall, they want a lunch and UA council will be invited
- Re-accreditation
- All officers are working on projects on the summer.
- Tesla gives update on CJAC topic: looking at how housing is done and effect on local community
- Question: Is course 11 involved?
- Tesla: Not really because CJAC isn't sponsored by a department but I have personally spoke with people in DUSP.
- Other topics are Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The first generation program is lack luster and seems to be only a mailing list.
- Noah is working on advising.
- Charlotte is working on College of computing.
- Rishi is working on guidelines for admin to student leaders communication pipeline
- AJ is focusing on tuition costs and financial expenses.
- Danielle is working with the ICEO on student engagement.

7:52 Commencement Changes

- Mahi asks for opinions
- 3 people are in favor
- Most problems people have are with the lack of communication from admin
- Mahi presents timeline of events
- Proposal emailed -> Barnhart asks student reps to discuss -> 7/31 mahi phone call with admin -> 8/10 Barnhart said Reif signed off
- Peter is giving summary since he was on commencement committee last year
- Proposal: One big ceremony with speeches for everyone and then separation of undergraduates.
- Problem: Everyone leaves before the last few people get to walk
- Tesla: Do you think the changes will fix the problem?
- Council member who took pictures at commencement 3 years ago said the weather was better than and people stayed until the end of the ceremony.
- Problem: Equity between undergraduate students and graduate students. Who Reif gives diplomas to and who gets to sit on Killian
- Mahi notes problems not solved by changes: Students want to celebrate with the entire class, huge shift from MIT tradition (conforming to other elite institutions), people tend to have a unity and pride with MIT as a whole rather than by department.
- Note that all degree conferrals would be happening at the same time so it would be impossible for you to watch your friends.
- MIT students tend to not identify themselves as major.
- Admin argues that it keeps graduation down to one day
- As Tesla noted, it shifts inequity between departments as Course 2 and 6 are much larger than others.
- No class councils were included in this discussion
- One of the people who were in favor before were confused about the proposal in question
- A lot of people are uncomfortable by admins' deceitfulness

- Clarification by Peter: They may not split up every department. No one gets to walk across Killian.
- Commencement committee voted to have the split.
- Last year was the first year they split grad students from undergrad but people still left early,
- Question: How many grads and how may undergrads? How long does the ceremony take?
- Mahi: About 3 hours.
- A lot of people in Simmons were in favor because they wanted to sit with their friends at the first ceremony.
- Question: Is the worry of graduate students staying longer related to the push for affordable commencement housing
- Moving forward: What is our plan? Are we going to push back?
- Mahi thinks it is council's decision to make
- Notes about admin backing down on other topics including meal plan and mutual selection
- Most want to push back because of the way the decision was made, without stakeholder input
- Question for Peter: what does the end of the school year look like for grad students?
- Peter: The end is only a day apart, not a big enough gap to have large separation between ceremony
- Want to make sure all undergrads hear about this new change.
- Tesla: We should ask admin to write exactly what they want
- Mahi: We asked and they haven't given it
- Why don't we publish the proposal on the Tech?
- Mahi: The only way this will work is if all students present a united front.
- On the call we recommend that we talk to all of the department heads to gauge the opinion.
- Leah's advice: Before you do anything, make sure this change is set in stone.
- Charlotte: On the call today she said the separations are set in stone but what is flexible is how it is separated.
- Mahi: The question we need an answer to is our ability to present a united front.
- It is harder to present a united front against the changes but it is easier to go against the lack of communication.
- Sending out a poll with the problems and allowing students to give solutions may be helpful.
- Tesla: In favor of finding out what students care about and having all undergrads rate the points and build commencent around preferences
- Kelvin: Want to make sure not to "do the job for them" and focus more on the lack of communication.
- Peter: This doesn't have to be a one step process.
- What are our actionables?
- Mahi: My concern is student response rate. We all should be on board for getting our constituents to act. Class council and UA can write something in the Tech. Email sent to all undergrads and everyone meets with their constituents to poll. Wait a week and then before official poll.

8:34 Vice President Updates
- Kelvin is taking a leave from MIT to work on Elizabeth Warren's campaign and will be stepping down from his role as VP.
- Mahi: He has provided a resignation letter and I have notified council. I have decided to appoint Charlotte. In two weeks, we can vote because I want you to think about it.
- Rishi will become Chief of Staff when Charlotte resigns and we are actively looking for a Secretary.

8:37 Student Activism Fund
- Over the summer, we realized that there was a demand for students who were looking for funding.
- Mahi wants feedback.

- Eric: What if one group receives funding for an issue and the group opposing the issue does not? What goes into the vetting process?
- Mahi: Done by the officers against the goals of the fund then a majority vote by council would approve the decision to fund a group. The goal of this fund isn't to support any causes in particular.
- Where does the money come from?
- Mahi: The officer's budget. A few years ago, we had to use up all our reserve money so recently Presidents have been saving up a lot of money for reserves so there is available money there.
- Question: Would it be specifically for getting student's more involved or paying for things Activist groups want?
- Mahi: It depends on the sustainability.
- If a group uses hate speech after getting the money, what steps will the UA take?
- Mahi: We will add explicit language addressing if a rule is violated. Another point is to tell your constituents. In addition to money, they would be allowed to send an email to undergrad mail list. There are $14 million dollars sitting in reserve accounts by student groups across campus.
- Is there a way that student groups could donate reserve to this fund?
- Mahi: The officers talked about it and decided that if the first year went well, we would reach out to ASA recognized orgs.
- What kind of proposal gets approved by UA officers?
- Mahi: Proof of budget, plan and financial need.
- Mahi will add the changes and resend the new draft.

8:52 Motion to Adjourn