



MIT UNDERGRADUATE ASSOCIATION

52 UA Council 10 Agenda

August 20th, 2020, 9:00-10:30 PM EDT, Zoom

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| 1. Roll Call | 9:00 - 9:05 |
| 2. Minutes Approval | 9:05 - 9:10 |
| 3. RISE Petition | 9:10 - 9:25 |
| 4. Beirut Fundraiser | 9:25 - 9:35 |
| 5. COVID Committee Chair Updates and Bylaws | 9:35 - 10:00 |
| 6. Off Campus Rep Discussion | 10:00 - 10:15 |
| 7. Gather Demonstration | 10:15 - 10:30 |



MIT UNDERGRADUATE ASSOCIATION

52 UA Council Session 10 Meeting Minutes
August 20th, 2020, 9:00-10:30 PM EDT, Zoom

Living Group	Representative	Present?
Baker	Laura Rosado	Y
Burton-Conner	Sarah Aaronson	N
East Campus	Miana Smith	Y
MacGregor	Seif Eses & Albert Gerovitch	Y
Maseeh	Octavio Vega	Y
McCormick	Afeefah Khazi-Syed & Yara Komaiha	Y
New House	Sarah Edwards	Y
Next House	Thomas Adebisi	Y
Random Hall	Sonia Reilly	N
Simmons	Shaida Nishat	N
Interfraternity Council	Diego Escobedo	Y
Interfraternity Council	Jaya Kambhampaty	Y
Interfraternity Council	Sam Costa	Y
Interfraternity Council	Nico Salinas	Y
Living Group Council	Jason Ye	N
Off Campus	Sam D'Alonzo	Y
Panhellenic Association	Kate Nelson	Y
Panhellenic Association	Stephanie Zhang	Y
Panhellenic Association	Valerie Chen	Y

9:05 Minutes Approval

Kate motions. Tommy Seconds.

Living Group	Representative	Vote?
Baker	Laura Rosado	Y
Burton-Conner	Sarah Aaronson	-
East Campus	Miana Smith	Y
MacGregor	Seif Eses & Albert Gerovitch	Y
Maseeh	Octavio Vega	-
McCormick	Afeefah & Yara Komaiha	Y
New House	Sarah Edwards	Y
Next House	Thomas Adebisi	Y
Random Hall	Sonia Reilly	-
Simmons	Shaida Nishat	-
Interfraternity Council	Diego	Y
Interfraternity Council	Jaya Kambhampaty	Y
Interfraternity Council	Sam Costa	Y
Interfraternity Council	Nico Salinas	Y
Living Group Council	Jason Ye	-
Off Campus	Sam D'Alonzo	-
Panhellenic Association	Kate Nelson	Y
Panhellenic Association	Stephanie Zhang	Y
Panhellenic Association	Valerie Chen	Y

13 yeses.

9:10 PM RISE Petition

- <https://www.rise4mit.com>
- Ki-Jana (phD student and MIT alum) and Jeff give brief overview of RISE campaign and petition
 - BTSA and GradStudent Council co-leading
 - Advocacy effort extension of support of BTSA's Support Black Lives petition
 - Attempt to expand scope beyond racial oppression to include gender based and other forms of oppression

- Previous campaign this past fall have addressed mental health, addressing causes and improving benefits
 - Achieved free weekly off-campus therapy and ended co-pay on anti-depressants
- Public and collective approach which will hopefully be effective in the current campaign
- 4 primary areas of demands
 - Raw numbers of URM faculty and grad students
 - Fighting known bias
 - Current percentage of black grad students at MIT is 2%
 - Faculty process mirrors similar numbers
 - Incorporate students into the hiring process (to more accurately reflect grad students' values)
 - More service-minded and focused on DEI initiatives
 - Mandatory harassment and discrimination training
 - Addressing Culture and Climate in the Departments
 - Addressing Culture and Climate in the Departments
 - Hold leadership accountable
 - Identify bad actors
 - Critical to reform current faculty disciplinary process
 - Advancing Funding Equity at MIT
 - Not all departments give grad students a living wage
 - Imposes exclusionary barrier to entry of people of varied socioeconomic classes
- Questions/Comments
 - Danielle asks if students have seen the petition around- one or two people say yes
 - Yu Jing thinks that RISE could be a springboard to bring the opportunity to your dorms/living communities to educate about antiracist policies and practices
 - Both Jeff and Ki-Jana are open to questions and input in the future as well
 - rise4mit@gmail.com

9:17 PM Beirut Fundraiser

- Undergrad leadership from Lebanese club spoke to council about fundraiser
- Danielle mentions that the club decided not to make a video (they have already reached their goal of \$25,000), but they may co-author the UA email that herself and Yu Jing are writing
- Yara K. adds that as a Lebanese-American this issue is close to home to her. She adds that this issue is the breaking point and not the only conflict that they have come across
- Diego E. asks where the donations are going to
 - Yu Jing mentions that amid economic turmoil the explosions that occurred in Lebanon created mass devastation. Money will be going towards the Lebanese Red Cross and other NGO's
 - <https://www.seal-usa.org/BeirutEmergencyFund>

9:26PM Covid Committee Chair Updates and Bylaws

- Baptiste Bouvier '22, co-chair of Committee on Covid-19, will be stepping down to study abroad this year
- Danielle Grey-Stewart '21, is being appointed as co-chair of the Committee on Covid-19
 - Danielle has experience with PKG, Peer Career Advisor in CAPD, and Society of Undergrad Material Scientists
 - She also led report to team 2020 on fall options, co-led APART grading policy report, and contributed significantly to previous reports
- *"Unless otherwise specified, no Principal Officer may chair a Committee, and no single*

person shall chair more than one Committee. Either of these rules may be suspended on an individual basis by a 2/3 person vote of the full voting membership of the Council” -Article 4 Section B.4

- Regarding the appointment of Yu Jing for committee co-chair
- Danielle acknowledges that this violation was brought to her attention and begins the discussion of Yu Jing remaining on as a co-chair which requires Council approval. Danielle opens to questions
 - Kate N. is interested to hear what other daily duties Yu Jing manages
 - Yu Jing adds that Vice President (VP) role is not strictly defined
 - Main role is to assist the President
 - She manages a lot of committee roles
 - Oversees things that organically arise (Beirut Fundraiser, BLM, etc.)
 - Jaya asks for Yu Jing to walk through her role as co-chair
 - Yu Jing manages and oversees committee with Batiste
 - Using her position as VP she aims to leverage their policy pushes and initiatives
 - Guidance of committee itself is also a large proponent
 - Natasha Hirt mentions that Yu Jing Chen and Danielle Grey-Stewart have been excellent leaders and their leadership has had positive influences on their committee members
 - Afeefah wonders about time management with committee management in the fall
 - Yu Jing feels that her role as chair will complement her role managing other committees. Most of the COVID-19 committee’s current tasks may fall into UA education when the Fall semester begins and she can assist with the transition
 - Danielle adds that UA Committees typically do not function over the summer so the transition from Covid committee to standing committees will be important
 - During the school year, the COVID-19 committee will be utilized as an extra arm to activate when necessary
 - Yu Jing’s role will be largely focused on the pandemic related aspects of issues
 - Nico S. is wondering how the UA committees distinguish themselves from the UA subcommittee groups. There seems to be a lot of overlap between the two
 - Yu Jing adds that there will be a restructuring of the COVID committees to avoid overlap and overstepping
 - Danielle adds that standing committee chair apps will open in the fall. She also notes that there are problems to be solved that don’t fit into any of the standing committee domains
- Yu Jing is sent to a breakout room so that Council can deliberate and air concerns before the vote occurs
 - Kate N. wonders what happens if the vote were to say Yu Jing could not continue
 - Danielle adds that Danielle Grey-Stewart could serve alone, and then the UA officers would need to find another chair
 - Danielle Grey-Stewart feels that Yu Jing brings an unwavering commitment to the committee and amicable attitude. Her connection to the officer team is a strength, and it is important to be well-integrated in order to be most effective
- Some councilors indicate that they would be more comfortable deliberating and voting without the COVID committee (at least those members who are not councilors) present
 - Based on council sentiments, committee members are asked to leave.
 - Kate N. wonders if it would be helpful to have an additional chair as part of her role includes being involved in committee overseeing regardless
 - Albert G. feels that the clause *Article 4 Section B.4* is put in place for a reason. People may feel pressured voicing an opposing opinion to a principal officer

- Danielle Geathers spoke to a past president who was involved with the latest constitutional overhaul and he mentioned that the clause was put in place because the vice president should not be on a committee with a narrow focus. However, Danielle felt that because the pandemic is such a wide-reaching issue, so the narrow reach would not be an issue. COVID-19 is a wide ranging issue that is the focus of the UA as a whole
- Sarah Edwards clarifies that Yu Jing could still serve on the committee while not chairing it
- Diego E. has the concern that the time commitment of holding both roles will be too great and may hinder progress
- Jaya thinks that working around the constitution may not be the best option, especially if Yu Jing is still able to continue her work with the COVID-19 committee. However, he acknowledges that we would not want to lose her valuable work on the committee.
- Kate adds that she is still VP, so the loss of title may not be an issue
- Danielle adds that in regards to time commitment, Yu Jing would still be dedicating the same amount of time as a member. She wonders if the discussion is too focused on semantics
- Kate N. feels that having two additional people equipped to lead the committee would make a difference
- Yara K. feels that if a principal officer is a member versus a co-chair their word could mean an opinion rather than a forced direction. If council decides no, it should be ensured that Yu Jing holds the position of a member rather than a chair
- Fiona mentions that Yara's point is accurate if it is to the UA at large, but if it is the UA Covid-19 committee specifically the effect may be smaller
- Nico adds that the Covid-19 committee has far-reaching effects ("everything"), so his concern is that the committee is too broadly focused. If they are representing the entire student body, then isn't it a UA duplicate?
- Nico reiterates his question about the difference between a subcommittee and a UA committee. He feels that having another student as the lead would aid Danielle Grey-Stewart in overseeing the Covid Committee
- Stephanie Z. wonders if things start transitioning into UA Standing Committees and they are overseen by Yu Jing, what will the Covid Committee be doing. Additionally, how would it be different if Yu Jing was to be co-chair.
- Danielle feels that if Yu Jing was the co-chair, she would be more integrated like attending every meeting rather than frequently checking in which is important for a topic like COVID
- Kate N. wonders how change will be in place based on the structure of committees and subcommittees
 - Albert G. one chair is being switched out and changes are being put in place in standing committees.
 - Kate N. feels that the Covid-19 committee is categorized as a special topic → she disagrees that Covid-19 should be covering everything
- Nico S. wonders what specifically the Covid-19 Committee will be handling in the fall
 - Idea is for them to be in conversations with other committees in order to bolster student support while helping them to maintain their current projects
 - Without the Covid Committee, Danielle feels the officers would be constantly scrambling to solve the multi-faceted problems from COVID
 - Fiona C. adds that sudden changes or plans for the spring would not naturally fit under the umbrella of any other committees other than the Covid committee
- Yara has a comment regarding the rules in the constitution. This [Yu Jing's leading the covid committee] has been going on for three months and a retroactive vote is being requested. In her opinion, there has been a trend of acting for forgiveness as

- opposed to voting before acting.
- Sarah E. agrees this discussion could have been different had the council spoken about this decision before it happened. This could have been avoided had it been talked about sooner
 - Nico S. wonders if the role of the committee can be a Covid response committee
 - If something does come up that a group or committee cannot handle, then the covid response could be activated
 - The current covid committee focuses on a wide variety of areas and their final direction is unclear
 - Nico adds if something drastic happens, the people in place to handle it needs to be made clear
 - Danielle fears that a committee that does not meet regularly would not necessarily be as effective or organized
 - Afeefah adds that she has faced a lot of redundancy amid concerns and echoes many of Nico's sentiments
 - Fiona C. is also worried about the fluidity of these conversations, and she feels that it may be more integrated to have officers integrated in the covid committee. She wonders if admin would still confer with the officers with covid issues
 - Sarah E. says that things get communicated with the Covid committee so other government in MIT needs to go through the Covid Committee
 - Kate adds that IFC and panhel ran into communication issues. She thinks this is an opportunity to restructure and better communication
 - Sarah feels that it is difficult to understand the consequence of the VP being a co-chair of a committee if we do not fully understand what the covid committee is supposed to do. Also, if the committee is restructuring council may have further questions. Sarah proposes potentially voting for an interim until more information is gathered
 - Kate is worried about voting for an interim, and the possibility for a confusion (she feels that it is better to vote now)
 - Albert also feels that it is better to vote on it now
 - Shelly wonders who would be the chair in the interim (if that period were to occur) but tables the topic for a later discussion
 - After a cease in discussion, Danielle asks if councilors are ready to vote

Motion to bypass the constitution to appoint Yu-Jing as the Covid-19 Committee Co-Chair

Diego E. motions to bypass. Laura R. seconds

Living Group	Representative	Vote?
Baker	Laura Rosado	N
Burton-Conner	Sarah Aaronson	Y
East Campus	Miana Smith	Y
MacGregor	Seif Eses & Albert Gerovitch	N
Maseeh	Octavio Vega	Y
McCormick	Afeefah & Yara Komaiha	N
New House	Sarah Edwards	N
Next House	Thomas Adebisi	N
Random Hall	Sonia Reilly	Y
Simmons	Shaida Nishat	N
Interfraternity Council	Diego Escebedo	N
Interfraternity Council	Jaya Kambhampaty	abstain
Interfraternity Council	Sam Costa	N
Interfraternity Council	Nico Salinas	N
Living Group Council	Jason Ye	-
Off Campus	Sam D'Alonzo	N
Panhellenic Association	Kate Nelson	N
Panhellenic Association	Stephanie Zhang	abstain
Panhellenic Association	Valerie Chen	abstain

Motion does not pass.

- Sarah E. has a question about the covid committee bylaws. There is a section about how it only includes appointment by the president
- Danielle Geathers wants to clarify with Shelly if it is the decision of the UA president. Shelly adds that the UA president appoints, and at least 5 councils can object during a 7 day waiting period.
- Sarah E. clarifies if the president is the person who is appointing, at least 5 councilors need to object in order for it to go to a vote. She clarifies the only process is the appointment by the UA president. She then repeats the internal election and objection process.

- Sarah E. wonders why the bylaws for the covid committee are just now being voted on. Danielle noted that the committee had been working on the draft and because the committee is an ad-hoc emergency formed committee, she felt that the clause was directly pertinent
- Sarah Edwards interprets that ad-hoc and standing committees are treated largely the same
- Danielle feels that the constitution lacks clarity since it notes “standing committees” at the end, so various interpretations arise
- Nico S. has a question about the bylaws. He is confused by the phrasing “all regards related to Covid-19” which feels far-reaching and non-specific
- Sarah E. agrees with Nico, but also acknowledges that defining covid specific issues is a difficult task; she adds that other UA committee bylaws are commonly vague
- Nico adds that the use of the word “advocate” in the constitution and also saying that the committee serves to communicate between various groups could lead to confusion and miscommunication
- Nico distinguishes between elected committee members and appointed UA covid committee members and their role as the face that communicates with admin
- Danielle Geathers worries about bottle-necking occurring if conversations with admin are limited to principal officers and counselors
- Yu Jing feels that there are so many topics under the umbrella of covid that the officers may not be able to attend all necessary meetings
- Sarah E. feels that “in all regards” is still too broad, and it should be delegated to other governing bodies in many situations
- Postpone voting for Covid Committee Bylaws amid concerns and discussion. Danielle encourages council to email in their suggested edits for the bylaws

10:20PM Gather Demonstration

- Jeffrey L. and Alex C. demonstrate Gather
- Gather.town is a platform that Jeff, Alex, and a few peers built
- Idea of gather is that creating distance between avatars will fade audio and video
- Model using a commission map of Kresge, and Jeff adds that some dorms also include commission maps
- This came from many misplaced academic conferences, and they decided that based off of their good press, they should use a gathering space online
- Fostering mingling as opposed to the typical one-to-many style that Zoom often facilitates
- Anyone can access public map makers, and anyone can create new locations and design. You can define any images and any object that can be interacted with (whiteboards, games, etc.
- They are aiming to encourage community in a time of physical distance
- Slowly integrating into things such as REX, FSILGs activities, and more
- Trying various grassroots methods to support first year activities and student groups for both one-off events and persistent spaces for community
- Afeefah feels that gather.town is an awesome project (and Yara voices that she enjoyed it as well!)

10:32PM Motion to Adjourn.