



MIT UNDERGRADUATE ASSOCIATION

53 UA Council 4 Agenda

November 9th, 2021, 7-8 PM ET, UA Chambers

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|--------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Roll Call | 7:00 - 7:05 |
| 2. Minutes Approval | 7:05 - 7:10 |
| 3. Judboard Appointments | 7:10 - 7:25 |
| 4. Carlson Lecture | 7:25 - 7:40 |
| 5. Admin Visits | 7:40 - 7:55 |



MIT UNDERGRADUATE ASSOCIATION

53 UA Council Session 3 Meeting Minutes
Oct 12th, 2021, 7-8 PM ET, UA Chambers & Zoom

Living Group	Representative	Present?
Baker	Madison Wong	Y
Burton-Conner	Ankita Devasia	-
East Campus	Brendan Vaughan	Y
MacGregor	Shruti Ravikumar	Y
Maseeh	Octavio Vega	-
McCormick	Adina Golden	Y
New House	Christian Camacho	-
New Vassar	Tina Lu	Y
Next House	Swapnil Garg	abstain
Random Hall	Rachel Shen	Y
Simmons	Mohan Richter-Addo	-
Interfraternity Council	Jaya Kambhampaty	-
Interfraternity Council	Orrie Page	-
Interfraternity Council	Nick Mannhardt	-
Interfraternity Council	Max von Franque	-
Living Group Council	Jason Ye	-
Off Campus	Leif Clark	-
Panhellenic Association	Ashleigh Teygong	-
Panhellenic Association	Catherine Washburn	Y
Panhellenic Association	Maria Ascanio	Y

7:05 Meeting begins

7:10 Minutes approval

Living Group	Representative	Vote
Baker	Madison Wong	Y
Burton-Conner	Ankita Devasia	-
East Campus	Brendan Vaughan	Y
MacGregor	Shruti Ravikumar	Y
Maseeh	Octavio Vega	-
McCormick	Adina Golden	Y
New House	Christian Camacho	-
New Vassar	Tina Lu	Y
Next House	Swapnil Garg	abstain
Random Hall	Rachel Shen	Y
Simmons	Mohan Richter-Addo	-
Interfraternity Council	Jaya Kambhampaty	-
Interfraternity Council	Orrie Page	-
Interfraternity Council	Nick Mannhardt	-
Interfraternity Council	Max von Franque	-
Living Group Council	Jason Ye	-
Off Campus	Leif Clark	-
Panhellenic Association	Ashleigh Teygong	-
Panhellenic Association	Catherine Washburn	Y
Panhellenic Association	Maria Ascanio	Y

Judboard Chair

- Interviewed candidates and got applications in
- Alana is a 2022 (Senior), course 9, has experience & relevant knowledge!

Carlson Lecture

- C&D Committee has spearheaded a working group to talk about aftermath of the Carlson Lecture

- We talked about this a little at the UA GBM
 - Group of UA members, EAPS reps
- Background & Introduction
 - “The Carlson Lecture is organized by the Lorenz Center and aims to ‘communicate exciting new results in climate science to the general public.’” – The Tech
 - “The speaker invited in early 2020 was Professor Abbot” – Provost Schmidt
 - “Abbot posted YouTube videos similarly critical of DEI in November 2020” – The Tech
 - “Sept. 30 decision to cancel the lecture” – The Tech
 - “Abbot wrote in an op-ed for Common Sense with Bari Weiss that a “Twitter mob” of MIT students, postdoctoral associates, and alumni successfully demanded he be uninvited and that the department ‘caved in so quickly.’” – The Tech
 - “The Carlson Lecture cancellation has been subject to widespread and often critical media coverage from sources such as the New York Post, Newsweek, The Boston Globe, and The Atlantic.” – The Tech
 - “The James Madison Program at Princeton has since offered to host Abbot’s talk” – The Tech
 - “many EAPS community members who discussed the situation publicly on social media have since been targeted for harassment” – The Tech
- Yu Jing: lots of conversation at the admin level about the publicity and press (freedom of expression?), how do we prevent something like this from happening in the future and are seeking student input?
- David: Ideas on MIT’s response, Transparency & Communication, Student Impact, Action from the UA
 - Brendan: He’s still giving a speech at MIT, it’s just a different speech
 - Cat Washburn: if you aren’t involved in EAPS or some course 8, most people haven’t heard about it, only heard about it at @mit wooop guru
 - Maria: only heard about it from an Atlantic article that an alum wrote
 - EC-discuss: a lot of alums sent an email, everyone collectively kind of just said that they didn’t care
 - Baker - Not a huge discussion within the dorm
 - New Vassar - wasn’t really aware that it was a topic, wasn’t aware the lecture was happening or that the lecture was cancelled
 - Juliana (EAPS Senior) - no one realized he was still invited until mid-sep 2021
 - Everything has been taken very out of context
 - Media is only publishing Dorian Abbot’s side of the story and what Abbot has told them (cancel culture, twitter mob) - not how the decision was made at all
 - EAPS students went to Department Head OH and had a nuanced decision
 - It would be hypocritical to have him invited after MIT’s and EAPS commitments to DEI
 - He’s still invited for an internal lecture but having him as a public face was not the right decision for EAPS
 - Have had conversations with the Department Head and Dean of DEI for the School of Science but no one higher up has reached out to EAPS undergrads or grads
- David: What are ways that you can see the response group bring student concerns to administration?

- YJ: Conversation within admin is very freedom of speech oriented instead of DEI oriented
- Brendan: admin has to draw the line somewhere when we say that's fine vs when we actively say no (e.g. Media Lab person associated with Epstein)
- What would your constituents do if they received an email tomorrow about freedom of speech
 - Cat Washburn: MIT appointed Hastings to create a mission and values statement, constituents would understand drawing the line if this person violated the values
 - EAPS: Why is this coming out so long after the fact? And offended that it's still being viewed from a freedom of speech lens when it is not a freedom of speech issue
 - Brendan: the longer this goes, the more we buy in to what the ny post and atlantic says about it
 - Danielle: from admin perspective - a lot of alumni have been reaching out to the alumni association, donors are confused, etc. so this is a hot topic for them
 - What's the mix between valuing the student perspective or just letting it die out on the student side (do people know about this, do people care?)
 - YJ: biggest issue is the lens that it is being viewed from
 - Brendan: not that students don't care, it's that students think the correct decision was made
 - Swapnil: why do people not know about this? Reif sent out an email but it was really long
 - EAPS (Megan & Juliana): so few people know the whole situation so it might not be helpful, EAPS undergrads have been on the front line of all of this since the beginning
 - Would be good to get student opinions from EAPS but not the whole school
 - YJ: But if they are getting opinions from the whole school, unlinking it from the Carlson discourse could be helpful?
 - David: if a similar incident happens in the future, this discourse will set precedent for future situations
 - Megan (EAPS): the fact that DEI within EAPS is such a mess made this whole situation worse which made students want to speak out about this in the first place
 - Having a discussion about freedom of speech not attached to the lecture is good but if we follow the process of talking to department heads and having an internal process in the future, how do we make sure the situation is not misconstrued in the future and that this process is validated by the institute
 - A lot of community actions and feedback were not codified and informal
 - Cat: this feels like a DEI in EAPS issue, a lot of departments have this issue, the institute needs to look at their DEI standards within their departments
 - Megan: DEI in EAPS needs to be figured out but it's hard to say that it's not great within the department for the current students
 - YJ: lots of wants and desires to establish more guidelines/discuss how to prevent this in the future
 - MIT will set up a committee or working group and it'll be centered around freedom of speech and expression
- David: thank you for sharing feedback & advocating for constituents
 - If you have any thoughts/feedback email ua-carlson-response@mit.edu, daspicer@mit.edu, if you want to be more involved, let David know

- YJ: pulse check - has anyone heard about this being a violation of freedom of speech?
 - Most people know 1 person who would see it this way and it seemed to parody what the news article said
 - Swapnil: a lot of people would see this as a freedom of speech issue - if they know about this, it's because they saw the media response and would think similar because they haven't heard testimony from EAPS students

Other updates

- Dorm Visits: President Reif, Chancellor Nobles, and John Dozier went to Next Haunt
 - She's doing dorm tours but doesn't know that much about student culture at MIT
 - If people want to have admin come to events, including FSILGs, let us know if you have events, or ideas
- Adina & McCormick: Veterans Day does not feel like a Student Holiday
- Madison & Baker: mental health is an issue, it takes so long
- EC and NV gave Chancellor Nobles and Dean Nelson a tour

Catherine moves to adjourn

Brandon seconds