Item I: Project on Student Health at MIT

- Why here?: MIT has rich relationship network and a strong commitment towards supporting students, but there isn’t a way to measure goals or gauge how much support students receive regarding the promotion of healthier lifestyles.

- Members of MIT Medical and DSL started a project for student health last summer with an ice cream social where they asked a series of questions: What does healthy MIT student look like? What do people think of as a healthy MIT student? They then had a series of dinners at different locations in order to get more feedback on questions which focus on thinking broadly about health, not just about access to health. A website in Canada which shows what factors contribute to the health of the population was referenced as an example. From the questions asked at the ice cream social and the dinners the project members managed to develop a set of rules (in the handouts) which they would like to use towards assembling a community approved definition of a “healthy MIT Student”. This definition would not merely suggest physical health but would also include social support and family. The list contains goals for having a healthier community and how to inform regular people about health risks.

- The next step after creating the definition of a healthy student would be to look where MIT is actually at in comparison to the definition and also see what specific communities are at higher health risks.

- The document the project has created has been shown to DAPER, Chaplains, Mental Health, Medical, and the Division of Student Life. Currently they have very little input regarding the goals because they want something that people can react to and give their feedback. This process could greatly benefit from association with a committee to help with implementing the goals and guiding the entire process. Would the Committee on Student Life be interested in association with this project or have recommendations of a committee that would?
  - A Subgroup of CSL would be an appropriate source to help with the project. Perhaps working with the UA in conjunction with a CSL subgroup would be the best answer (it is recommended to wait to contact the UA until the new members are elected so that information isn’t lost in transition).

Discussion & Questions:

- The definition of a healthy student varies depending on your location on campus, how can one definition of health incorporate all the different MIT communities?
  - There were a large spectrum of students at the focus groups and they tried to look for themes, not specifics regarding issues of health. Additionally, they made a specific point of questioning the individual definitions of MIT health according to undergraduates, graduates, and faculty, and combining the answers to make a comprehensive list of goals (the only significant difference for graduates compared to undergraduates are family health goals).

- How to measure cultural vs. objective definitions of health?
“Stages of Change” is a theory which can be applied to many lifestyles or health problems (examples: for heroin addiction, sleep, etc) by tailoring the belief of each person towards a healthier lifestyle by thinking about how dangerous the lifestyle is and what you are losing from living that lifestyle. The goals of a healthy lifestyle would be based upon this model.

- What is the timeline for this project?
  - There have or will have been three surveys completed this year on the topics of food, drugs, and sex. Currently the project is at the stage of reviewing the content of the health goals, circulating them, and having them approved. Next year there will be a health survey and the goals will be implemented the following year. The goals will then be used for four years before they are revisited.

- Health isn’t just physical, how will this issue be addressed?
  - The definition of a healthy MIT student will consider social health and relationships.
  - There is a seven session workshop at MIT called When Support Gets Personal which is an opportunity for support staff to get training regarding the handling of student issues. It is for people who work with students on a daily basis but might not know exactly where to refer people in certain situations. The more support staff are informed the more they can aid students in physically unrelated wellbeing issues.
  - There is also a student organization on campus called “Imperfect at MIT” which focuses on making students aware that it is normal and okay to make mistakes to a degree at MIT.

- What are the ultimate goals and hopes of the health project?
  - Social cohesion, access to care, available resources, for the goals around risk to be framed in a positive way, to teach students how to choose healthy behaviors, and to start with a risk point of view regarding health and then make yearly goals.
  - To have a common definition of a healthy student by MIT standards (last page of handout “Healthy MIT!: Goals for Healthy Undergraduate and Graduate Students”).

- How will avoid this looking like social-engineering exercise to students? Despite the good intent it could come off this way because everyone has different risk levels.
  - When the goals were drafted the project members wanted to make sure that it wasn’t a checklist for student behavior; the goals are not intended to tell students what they should do, but rather intend to be seen as a way that the community can help students attain a healthier lifestyle.
    - The list is currently written in behavioral terms and this may be what gives it a prescriptive tone instead of the community tone intended.
    - CSL recommends that the list of goals make sure that there is a message which states it is okay to have a few allowances to the list (this will cover all-nighters, different cultural health standards, etc). Prioritizing the list would also allow students to see the factors that are most important to follow to have a healthy lifestyle and those that have the most room for allowances.
    - Concern with presentation: is it a good idea to condense broad ideas to one list?
      - The project members were careful about the language in checklist and made sure to use broadened terms such as “support” and “recommend” instead of students “should” or “need to”.

- Where will list be taken next?
  - The Housemaster Breakfast Meeting would be a good place to go to next.

- Will this list be out for Wellness Week (end of April)?
The goal is to have something prepared publicly for Wellness Week. There is a concern that health isn’t always held in high value here and is this the right time to advance health goals with all of the current financial problems? Additionally, it is often hard to present the big picture at MIT when people think primarily in short term goals, not long term goals which include sacrifice and trade-offs and working with what you have to access your own risk.

**Agenda II: Roll-out schedule for Interact: your interaction**

- Campus Preview Weekend is not that far away (April 14-16): the intent is to still to have a display at CPW and it could also be good to put a link to Interact on the CPW website. The Interact website only requires certificates for off-campus computers (on-campus computers have access to Interact), should new students be given temporary certificates (you don’t get a user id until you are confirmed to attend MIT) during CPW or would it be possible to remove certificate requirements on Interact for the week so potential students can access the website from off-campus? It is very important to get information out to the incoming class. How can CSL get advertising of Interact out before CPW?:
  - Put an article in the Faculty Newsletter.
  - Put an opinion article in the Tech even before the site is finished (must get article in the day before the paper is printed) and then put a front page news story in the Tech right before CPW.
  - The UA is willing to send an email to undergraduate students and the GSC would probably be able to do the same for graduate students.

- Another idea to think about is promoting Interact during student orientation (and keep in mind that International students have a separate orientation).

- How is website coming together?
  - The student group information is not yet complete because a new ASA database is being implemented which will be incorporated into Interact. It will allow student groups to be able to upload pictures, etc., and this ability to update will be an incentive for student groups to update their profiles.
  - A student group interaction space could be a good addition to Interact.
  - One possible solution to the Rumormill would be to have the Tech, the UA, and the GSC manage the feed with the most updated information.
  - Another recommendation is to add a count to see how many hits the website receives.

**END OF MEETING.**