Committee on Student Life (CSL)  
Friday, February 4, 2011
Room 12-196 12pm – 2pm
Minutes taken by Lisa Stagnone

Present: Alex Slocom, Barbara Baker, Tali Figueroa, Norvin Richards, Robin Deits, Danielle Guichard-Ashbrook

Guests: Abigail Francis, Assistant Director, LBGT  
Phil Walsh, Dept Head & Director of Campus Activities Complex  
Martin Schmidt, Prof. Elec Eng-computer Sci. & Associate Provost  
Ulric Ferner, GSC President  
Alex Evans, Grad Student  
Ellan Spero, Grad Student  
Agustin Rayo, Associate Professor  
Paul Kominers, 3rd Year Student  
Graham Ramsay, Video Blogging

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TOPICS: LGBT Issues, Walker Memorial, Rex

Walker Memorial  
(Martin Schmidt, Prof. Elec Eng-computer Sci. & Associate Provost)  
Marty Schmidt stated that the Institute had assessed the space needs on campus. This was done to define plans for renovations or in some cases new construction depending on what the end result needs were.

Planning for the development of the Institute’s building are decided by the Building Committee and the Committee for the Review of Space Planning (CRSP). Based on the 2007 study by Vanderweil Facility Advisor, the Department of Facilities addressed the deferred maintenance needs. This was calculated by an analytical process defined by MIT. Vision 2030 is the Institute’s effort to develop a framework to guide long-term capital-planning decisions.

Part of the process is prioritizing and figuring how to pay for the changes based on worked assessments and by figuring out what the costs are to bring the space up to speed on every building at MIT. It’s a project of $1.5 billion.

Two types of buildings being dealt with:
- Building that are now 100 years old (main group of buildings) – that may last another 100 years
- Concrete steel, reinforced buildings that were built in the 60’s, may last another 50 years.

Do you renovate? Do you construct new? Sometimes renovation is not the answer. Sometimes you need to build new for today’s needs as with the example of the Micro System Technology building. You need to input the academic needs into the formula and prioritize (MIT’s results):

1) NEW Energy and Environment Research Building
2) NEW Micro System Technology Building
3) Main group of building to be renovated head to toe (math building 2 moves to top of list)
4) E52 (by Sloan) Economics Department (moves to top of list)
5) Walker Memorial
MTA (Music and Theater Arts) needs performance space. They use large spaces based on the
volume, its value is higher. What would happen if we were to re-purpose this space? We’d like to
put what we have, out front, for all to see and tell us what they use this space for, what they’d like to
use this space for and discuss how we make everyone win with it. No decisions have been made.

WHERE ARE WE NOW? There are two steps to where we are at before making decisions;
1) Technical Assessment of the RFP with Architects
2) Defining the impact of re-purposing the space?

- Need to make sure that all tenants are informed. No one is being asked to leave. We are still
  researching what we should do.
- Music Theater Arts Committee is aware of what’s happening.
- We’ve had one-on-ones with student groups in the building which is currently ongoing.
- Committee Meeting is set for February 14th at 5pm.
- Meeting with UA & GSC (Student Engagement).
- Administration to have the best inform as possible to evaluate all aspects/impacts.
- Later in the semester, we will figure out how to engage everyone, define the purpose and
  the process plan.

General feel is that everyone’s aware of the process. It’s transparent.

According to Ulric Fermer, GSC President, the GSC is not happy with process. He states that students
don’t want their space to disappear. As an example, he referenced Voodoo and that they are
concerned over their climbing wall. (Ulric also spoke of how he feels the process should flow.
Asked for him to submit his presentation be included in the minutes. Have not received an answer
from him as of yet.)

Martin Schmidt stated that a stripped down version of an informational posting was released in
September regarding Walker renovations. What was not included, that he wished was included,
was that MIT understands the personal commitment and investment that these groups have to their
space. He doesn’t want anyone to feel that they’re being kicked out. He doesn’t want anyone to feel
that their financial investment in the space was wasted. He wished he addressed it at the time. He
wants everyone to know that they will have a home which he has been communicating to everyone
via the one-on-ones. What Marty is planning on doing is playing out every scenario so to meet all
needs.

There is a survey, through the Department of Facilities, that evaluated all buildings and their value.
It was mentioned that the Housemasters would like to see a copy of this assessment. However,
according to Phil Walsh, Dept Head & Director of Campus Activities Complex, he doesn’t think that
it’s a usable document. He has a copy of the document and doesn’t think it has direct value.
LGBT
(Abigail Francis, Assistant Director, LBGT)
LGBT has their offices in the basement of Walker called the Rainbow Lounge. There has been an uptake in LGBT. Their focus is on the students and the productivity of the students. LGBT host a campaign “You Are Welcome Here”. People come to MIT because they feel they can work well and study well here. At LGBT, they would like to have total acceptance for all.

Hate crimes have been on a decrease here on campus. MIT has had homophobic issues and incidents of violence in the past. Joking, mild harassment however is still present. These can escalate to bigger issues. Students need to feel safe.

The LGBT situation is a global situation. Individuals can make a difference. Hostile environments are everywhere, especially internationally. We need to get more informed here about what’s happening globally. We need to be aware of language used and assumptions made. When possible use gender neutral language (example: partner instead of spouse, preferred pronouns). Be aware that MIT does have a non-discrimination policy.

Danielle Guichard-Ashbrook, from the International Office, has witnessed tremendous changes over the past 20 years. In the past, there have been horrors overseas as situations revealed themselves. Recently, students have felt more comfortable here. Ones actions here can cause harmful results at home to returning students as well as the families.

WHAT STILL NEEDS FIXING?
- General climate (everyone to feel welcomed)
- Assuming everyone’s heterosexual sets a tone
- Conversing over terminology (male/female parts. How far is too far? Do we need to redefine histories terminology?) Do terms need to evolve for society today?

RECOMMENDED READING from Grad Student Ellan Spero:
'Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences' by Geoffrey C. Bowker and Susan Leigh Star.

MIT does not self-segregate. Students come to MIT and ask ‘where is it un-safe to live? Where is the friendliest place to live?’ They are not generally looking for other living groups. This is per the Living Pink Survey.

Everyone’s invited to the MIT mc2 Multicultural Conference held on Saturday, March 5th from 9am-5pm at the Endicott House located in Dedham. It’s a one day retreat focused on bringing students together across race, ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, and other aspects of cultural identity. The conference offers a provocative day of workshops, speakers, community building, actions, and reflection centered around issues of culture, identity, and social justice at MIT and beyond. Learn more at web.mit.edu/mcsquared

Here are some of the resources regarding LGBT:
LBGT@MIT http://web.mit.edu/lbgt
Trans@MIT http://web.mit.edu/trans
You Are Welcome Here http://yawh.mit.edu/
LBGTQ Students and Staff Face Significant Harassment:
http://chronicle.com/article/Gay-StudentsCollege/124419/
http://www.campuspride.org/research/ (click on Download National Report Executive Summary)
Example of LGBT Hate Crime of Harvard student:
Living Pink Guide: Is only in printed version.

FINAL NOTES:
Next topic to be addressed: Rex

Prof. Alex Slocum has invited Julie Norman to the next CSL meeting on Friday, February 25th, in PDR #4 of the Student Center at 12pm to discuss Rex.

Please note revised schedule for remainder for the meetings has been submitted to the committee for approval (requesting to move Wednesday evening meetings to the following Fridays).

Attachments:
Revised Schedule for spring 2011 CSL Committee (see below)
Brochure from LGBT (will include in final release)
Presentation from GSC President, Ulric Ferner (pending)
Dean Hastings Tech Letter to the Editor regarding Orientation (will include in final release)
Dear Campus Community:

We had a robust Fall:

- A great workshop mtg on domestic violence, and then health and fitness! We sent “come try Zoombah or yoga passes” to admin overlords so hopefully they will see how critical it is to MIT physical and mental health to make exercise affordable! Let’s see what happens next year☺.
- Gave input to dean of engineering search committee, which in summary asked for a dean with hands-on as well as science focus; and I believe that Prof. Ian Waitz fits these needs and will be awesome!
- We tried to help with dining and made great progress in at least making it clear to the administration that total openness and peer review of all data and economic models is critical to an atmosphere of trust and respect. (Only time will tell what effect this had).
- For advising, we found out more informal interaction between GRTs and students and amongst grad students are vital! Also, the registrar agreed to roll out (ideally beta Fall 2011) class lists for instructors where the students’ advisor and housemaster names and emails are also listed so it’s easy for an instructor to alert them as soon as a student starts to get into trouble.
- The “wed dinner after faculty mtg to draw in more faculty and meet at a living group” experiment did not work (other than the dean of engineering search dinner) so in the spring we will return to a Friday noon-2 schedule.

This IAP the issues of REX and repurposing Walker Memorial arose with gusto, and at our first mtg on 2/4/2011 we agreed we should focus on these issues this spring, and only once resolved would we return to other topics. However, we will use first half hour on the previously planned topics as a way to make sure their effect on/by REX/Walker is known. For example, on 2/4/2011 GSC and LGBT issues helped a lot in the discussions (especially about living groups).

So for the spring: (changes in red. Wednesday night meetings switched to the following Friday)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 4, 2010</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>12:00-14:00</td>
<td>12-196</td>
<td>LGBT topics&lt;br&gt;Walker, REX&lt;br&gt;(special guests Prof. Marty Schmidt (Assoc. Provost aka Space Overlord), Phil Walsh (Dept Head &amp; Director of Campus Activities Complex), Ulrich Ferner (GSC prez))</td>
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<td>Feb. 25, 2010</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>12:00-14:00</td>
<td>PDR #4</td>
<td>MIT student body size increase,</td>
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<td>March 4, 2010</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>12:00-14:00</td>
<td>12-196</td>
<td>Women’s topics &amp; Women of Color topics (special guest DiOnetta Jones, Associate Dean and Director, OME)</td>
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<td>March 18, 2010</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>12:00-14:00</td>
<td>12-196</td>
<td>REX</td>
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<td>Walker Memorial Evolution</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 8, 2010</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>12:00-14:00</td>
<td>12-196</td>
<td>Men's topics &amp; Men of Color topics (special guest TBD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 22, 2010</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>12:00-14:00</td>
<td>12-196</td>
<td>If students were running MIT they would.... (special guest TBD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 6, 2010</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>12:00-14:00</td>
<td>12-196</td>
<td>International Students (special guest TBD)</td>
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<td>REX</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 20, 2010</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>12:00-14:00</td>
<td>12-196</td>
<td>Legal Issues (IP etc) (special guest Tena Herlihy)</td>
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<td>Walker Memorial Evolution</td>
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I look forward to seeing folks at our meetings. Note that we have a standing committee, but this is not a closed meeting so if someone really wants to come, they are welcome. If we get large herds, we may have to reconsider format.

Sincerely,

Alex
Walker Memorial:
Where we are and where we are going

Walker Memorial Task Force
Graduate Student Council, MIT
Walker Memorial:

The repurposing project

- The administration is considering repurposing Walker Memorial for MTA academic use.
- Independent of the community it serves, Walker needs to be renovated in the coming years.

MIT student community, student life

Repurposing?

Walker memorial

Student center
The Walker project: Goals & benefits

“Our overarching goal is to help MIT to be an even greater MIT”
-Susan Hockfield

- MTA
  - New performance space
  - Consolidate academic spaces

- Institute
  - Reduce building deferred maintenance

- Student community & student life?
Possible outcomes:

Maximize chances of a win-win

Value to MIT

Threshold for positive value

MTA

Student life
Possible outcomes:
Maximize chances of a win-win

Value to MIT

Threshold for positive value
Possible outcomes:
Maximize chances of a win-win

- Value to MIT
- Threshold for positive value

MTA

Student life
Possible outcomes:
Maximize chances of a win-win
A process proposal:
Walker Memorial Recommendation Group

- **Composition**
  - Administrators, student community representatives, MTA reps.

- **Charge**
  - The group co-authors the recommendation report to CRSP for Walker Memorial
  - Evaluate viable options for MTA in Walker and for student group locations around campus
  - Maximize benefit for both the student community and MTA
The current decision process:
Status of the Walker project

- Martin Schmidt
  Associate Provost
- CRSP
- Building Committee
- The Corporation
- Student interviewing team
- MTA deliberation team (+architects)
State of the Walker project:
Current focus on the MTA deliberation team

- **MTA Deliberation Team**
  - Administration brainstormed MTA locations, early 2010 or 2009?
  - CRSP approved the contracted study of Walker with architects, early 2010?
  - Initial call for feasibility study released in early 2010
  - Architects toured Walker in Dec. 2010 with deliberation team
  - All architectural questions due Dec. 21, 2010 and team to respond by Jan. 1, 2011
  - Architect for evaluation chosen and initial feasibility underway?
The current decision process:
Where can student community add value?

- Student interviewing team
- Martin Schmidt
  Associate Provost
- MTA deliberation team (+architects)
- CRSP
- Building Committee
- The Corporation
Who are student stakeholders?

A structured and diverse group

- Current students, alumni, and corporations that use the common event space
  - Sloan functions, alumni functions, career-fairs, award ceremonies, socials …

- Majority of student group office spaces in Walker managed jointly through the GSC and UA by the ASA

- A small but important set of resident student organizations with long-term investment in Walker
  - WMBR, Muddy Charles & GSC, Black Student’s Union, Rainbow Lounge, Voodoo, student performing groups, etc.
Two separate Walker teams:
Current focus on the MTA deliberation team

- **Student interviewing**
  - 45 minute interviews with each student group Oct. 2010; Process queries from students Nov. 2010; 45 minute process proposal Dec. 2010

- **MTA Deliberation Team**
  - Administration brainstormed MTA locations, early 2010 or 2009?
  - CRSP approved the contracted study of Walker with architects, early 2010?
  - Initial call for feasibility study released in early 2010
  - Architects toured Walker in Dec. 2010 with deliberation team
  - All architectural questions due Dec. 21, 2010 and team to respond by Jan. 1, 2011
  - Architect for evaluation chosen and initial feasibility underway?
Student community engagement:
Open questions seen as opportunities

- The student community has little information regarding
  - Project motivations & constraints

- Lack of information complicates discussions of technical needs
  - Focus on process to eventually tackle technical details

- Open questions for the Institute
  - Process for student engagement
  - Timeline for student engagement
  - Protocol for student engagement
A huge opportunity for MIT:  
Provost-Chancellor detailed collaboration

The Corporation & President

Chancellor

Student deans

GSC, UA

Provost

Associate Provost

MTA
Why collaborate?

**Network complexity**

Complexity of networks that form a cohesive and interdependent whole

VS.

Piece-by-piece solution fitting
Balanced collaboration:
Proposed decision process

Walker Recommendation Group

Student interviewing team
MTA deliberation team (+architects)

CRSP

Building Committee

The Corporation
Working for MIT:

With appropriate constraints, we are a team

- Unlock win-win scenarios
  - Collaborative multipliers through stakeholders working in concert
- Maximize buy-in and minimize long-term risk
  - Co-author the recommendation to CRSP
Such student engagement is unorthodox?
*Depends who you ask!*

- **The design of New Ashdown**
  - Lesson learned: *Early student input*

- **Graduate housing rental allocations & housing increases**
  - Lesson learned: *Trust goes a long way. Students and administrators can work as equals*
A process proposal:
Walker Memorial Recommendation Group

- **Charge**
  - The group *co-authors* the recommendation report to CRSP for Walker Memorial
  - Evaluate viable options for MTA in Walker and for student group locations around campus
  - Determine what measures would need to be addressed to maximize benefit for both the student community and MTA

- **Composition**
  - Administrators, student community representatives, MTA reps.
Walker memorial:
The key GSC issue for the coming years

- Buy-in & incentive
  - Co-authoring report
- Collaboration
  - Working with both MTA as well as the administration
- Appropriate student membership

- Aspects to discuss
  - Constraints of committee?
  - Timeline?
  - Additional components of the committee charge?
  - Voting structure: consensus maximization?
LGBT resources

**MIT Resources**

LGBT@MIT/Rainbow Lounge  
Working to create a more inclusive and welcoming campus community for lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender, queer, questioning individuals and their allies, with a primary focus on students.  
web.mit.edu/lgbt  
617 253 5440

Trans@MIT  
Transgender-related information and resources for the MIT community.  
web.mit.edu/trans

LBGT Issues Group  
A committee that seeks to foster a safe, welcoming environment and to ensure MIT’s educational mission is upheld for all students.  
lgbt@mit.edu  
617-253-5440

LBGT Student Groups  
http://web.mit.edu/lgbt/subform.html

MIT Medical Mental Health  
617-253-2916

MIT Student Support Services  
617-253-4861

**Massachusetts Resources**

Fenway GLBT Helpline  
888-340-4528  
Peer line  
800-399-PEER

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays in Boston  
866-427-3524

Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition (MTPC)  
www.masstpc.org  
617-778-0519

Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network of Massachusetts  
617-536-9669

Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders  
617-426-1350

**National Resources**

Trevor Project Crisis/Suicide Line  
866-4-U-TREVOR

Human Rights Campaign  
202-628-4160

American Civil Liberties Union  
212-549-2627

As part of MIT’s continuing effort to create a safe and welcoming environment for its LGBT students, the “You are Welcome Here” Campaign was launched in 1999. The purpose of the campaign is to raise awareness and create visibility and support for members of the LGBT community at MIT.

More than an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender, LGBT has also been used as an umbrella term to imply the more inclusive acronyms for Queer, Questioning, Intersex, and Allies. LGBT Allies, advocates and supporters of the LGBT community are a very important part of the effort to create a more welcoming campus climate.

At times, the LGBT community is looked at as a group that seeks special attention. On the contrary, the members of the LGBT community would like the world to embrace and celebrate the diversity of the human experience. We would like to be respected as individuals with valid identities, relationships, and as those who lead healthy, responsible lives rather than “lifestyles”. The LGBT community at MIT seeks to ensure a safe and supportive campus, free from homophobia, bi-phobia, trans-phobia, and any kind of hate, where all are welcomed as equals. We envision an MIT where all aspects of people’s identities are celebrated and where all individuals are respected for who they are, free from any prejudice, harassment, or discrimination.

While the main effort of the Campaign is to invite faculty and staff at MIT to join the Campaign by posting a “You Are Welcome Here” Card in their office or workspace, ongoing education and awareness programs are an important part of this effort as well. Two such programs are the monthly lgbt@mit e-newsletter and the monthly LGBT Issues Group meetings. For more information about these and a variety of other LGBT, Ally, and Diversity Resources at MIT, please visit:  
http://yawh.mit.edu/
ten steps to being an ally for transgender people

1. Don’t assume. You might not know if a transgender person is in your presence. If speaking to a group, try to be inclusive.

2. Don’t tolerate anti-trans remarks or jokes. If someone makes a transphobic joke or remark, call them out on it. Challenge transphobic thinking.

3. Use someone’s preferred pronoun. If a person says she identifies as female, use “she” and “her” regardless of what that person’s body or appearance is. If you are not sure which pronoun to use, ask the person, “What pronoun would you like me to use?”

4. Respect confidentiality. If a person comes out to you as transgender, transsexual or questioning, ask that person who else knows and who you can talk to about it.

5. Listen. Every trans person’s experience is unique. If someone is having a hard time coming out or experiencing discrimination, you can help a lot by just listening.

6. Know your limits. Admit when you’ve reached the limit of your knowledge. Ask for guidance or find an appropriate resource.

7. Don’t try to label someone. If someone tells you they feel like they are “trapped in the wrong body” don’t tell them they are necessarily transsexual. People who are struggling with their gender identity often need the space to figure out for themselves how to identify.

8. Don’t assume you know what someone’s sexual orientation is. Sexual orientation and gender identity are not directly connected. Someone who is transitioning may also be questioning their sexual orientation or may choose to identify in a different way than they have previously.

9. Look at yourself. Examine your own ideas of gender stereotypes and challenge those around you to do the same.

10. Stay open. Remember transgender people are individuals who deserve respect and understanding.

at least 8 suicides, 3 murders and 3 tortured countries that have formally legalized same-sex marriages before the United States

10 countries

1 in 10 students who drop out of school due to repeated bullying, from the LGBT community

16 years the average age of youth who ‘came out’ in 2009

14 minutes the amount of time between anti-gay slurs directed at LGBT youth

when someone comes out to you

“Coming out” is an ongoing process of being open about any of the many identities that a person may associate with. Here, we talk about someone who is choosing to tell you their sexual orientation or gender identity, but anyone can come out for any of their identities (race, socioeconomic status, etc.). Coming out takes a lot of courage and authenticity and may be the culmination of months or years of personally coming to terms with one’s sexuality or gender identity/expression.

When someone builds up the courage to come out to you, it is important that you be as supportive as you can because the things that you say can have a strong impact on the person (especially for those who are just coming out).

Here are some guidelines on what you can do:

1. Listen.

2. Remain neutral and non-judgmental.

3. Ask sensitive questions and be willing to learn.

4. Be supportive: Let them know that you are there if they need something, and or point them towards a few resources if necessary. You do not need to be an expert to be supportive, just remember to be open-minded.

5. Don’t ignore it: Make an effort to take an interest in this part of their life.

6. Don’t make their sexuality the extent of your interactions: Remember that this person has not changed; their sexuality is one part of their life, but not the only part of their life.

7. Be honest and be open: When someone is coming out to you, the most important thing is not how much LGBT background knowledge you have but to communicate to the person that you value the existing relationship.

Coming out is a huge step for anyone, and really means that someone trusts you enough to share a big part of their life with you. They may fear that you will not accept them, or that your relationship will change. By being honest, open-minded, and caring, you can help someone coming out to feel more at ease.
Opinion: Letters to the Editor
February 1, 2011

Letters To The Editor

No decisions made on Orientation

I write to respond to the recent article in The Tech that suggested that a decision had been made to shorten REX. We are looking at Orientation as a whole and the impact on a number of programs. We don’t know the final schedule yet and, at the present time, no decisions have been made. Though we will look for ways to shorten the overall Orientation period, we do not plan to shorten the REX period in the coming year. It is not correct that such a shortening has been decided. The current schedule including the pre-orientation programs that almost 60 percent of the class participate through to Registration Day totals almost two weeks. There is broad agreement that this orientation period is too long. The specifics of REX, and other components will be considered for the following year as we consult students, staff and other stakeholders.

The Task Force on the Undergraduate Educational Commons, which had significant faculty and student input, recommended that the Chancellor establish a process to examine Orientation to ensure that it met its living and learning objectives. The momentum behind rethinking Orientation increased as a result of the Budget Task Force and the sense that we might be able to do it more efficiently, for example, by using online resources more effectively. We have one of the longest Orientations in the country among our peers and many faculty feel the freshmen start the term too tired. Freshmen report too much free time. In order to give a specific target, the Chancellor suggested looking at how we can shorten Orientation by approximately two days. Reducing orientation by this time does not translate to the full impact being on REX.

As we consider this, the Office of Undergraduate Advising and Academic Programming (UAAP) in DUE has been conducting a background study. As part of this process, UAAP recently engaged key stakeholders, include a faculty advisory committee in December; colleagues from the Division of Student Life, International Students Office, Housemasters, MIT Medical and DUE in January; and students, via the UA Senate, in January. The freshman learning communities have also been consulted and consultation with the Student Life Orientation Programs and Experiences (SLOPE) will start this week. The students on the SLOPE committee represent DormCon, UA, fraternities, sororities, independent living groups, SaveTFP and in addition there is a housemaster, a rep from UAAP and DSL staff who support the activities/events.

As these consultations proceed, we will listen to input from all interested stakeholders. We encourage students to work with their representatives on SLOPE to provide input and address their concerns. While it may not be possible to satisfy everyone, we all agree that Orientation should welcome and prepare freshman as they enter our living and learning community.

Daniel Hastings PhD ’80, Dean for Undergraduate Education