Division of Student Life Strategic Plan
Implementation Team 5
Partnering with Parents and Families of Undergraduate Students
I-Team 5 Charge

To review and establish best practices for providing ways to collaborate with parents and families of MIT students.

The outcome of this process will provide ways that we can build relationships with parents as a unified partnership to support and educate their students on clear pathways for a successful MIT experience.
Team Membership

- Leah Flynn Gallant, SAO, Leader
- Stephanie Hansen, Parents Association
- Katie Maloney, Parents Association
- Sharon Snaggs Gendron, SOS
Information Gathering

• Environmental Scan with DSL staff who work with parents.
• Reached out to peer institutions in how they serve parents.
• Identified themes from 2012 Parents Survey.
• Conducted focus groups with parents during Family Weekend 2014.
Accomplishments: Emergency Communications

In collaboration with Parents Association, create a cohesive plan in regard to emergency response, planning and protocol.

- “FAQs and Best Practices for Parents in a Campus Emergency” - a proactive document to be shared with parents, housed on the Parents Association website and featured regularly.
Accomplishments: Assessment for Parent Programs

- Conducted focus groups with parents during Family Weekend 2013; will continue for 2014
- The Parents Association surveys parents within six weeks of Family Weekend; will add more specific questions relative to DSL events for feedback and suggestions.
Accomplishments: Include a wider representation of articles in Parents Newsletter

- Added more DSL staff to newsletter distribution list and the Parents Association “call for content” list.
- **Active Minds at MIT** included an item in the March 2014 Parents Newsletter asking for parents to submit questions about student stress, anxiety, etc.
Letter from the Dean: A Network of Advisors and Mentors

Dean for Undergraduate Education Dennis Freeman addresses a recent student question about how MIT can help students interact more with professors, especially in their freshman year.

READ DEAN FREEMAN'S LETTER.

2014-15 Housing Intention Forms

Undergraduate students should have received their Housing Intention Forms for the 2014-15 academic year. All students are expected to complete the form confirming their plan to return to or cancel their housing for next year. They have until March 31, 2014 to complete the form. There is a $250 inaction fee for anyone who does not complete this form.

CHECK OUT HOUSING DATES AND DEADLINES.

Active Minds Students Are Asking

Do you have questions about how to talk to your student about stress, daily struggles, depression, anxiety, or around other health and wellness issues? The student leaders of Active Minds at MIT want to hear your questions and give you answers!

Parents can submit questions anonymously now through Friday, March 28. The MIT student leaders in Active Minds will then answer those questions and we'll feature the questions/answers in the April MIT Parents e-newsletter.

SUBMIT A QUESTION TO ACTIVE MINDS.
Overall Recommendation

We found that although parents are overall pleased with the services and support provided to them, **DSL could be more intentional in its presence in programs, communication and initiatives.** This calls for a stronger collaborative relationship with the Parents Association and increased representation in programming and web presence.
Team Recommendations

Recommendation #1
Parent Communication

• Develop a more cohesive plan for how DSL and PA can work together to communicate with parents in times of crises
• Collaborate with DSL staff to send consistent messages via the Parents’ Facebook Group.
Team Recommendations

Recommendation #1 continued
Parent Communication

• Parents Association working to reformat “Virtual Orientations” increase the number of DSL sessions offered.

• Create a one-page FAQ sheet for staff on best practices for communicating with parents (i.e. FERPA law, resources on campus, etc.)

• Showcase DSL blogs on the Parents’ Association website as a “blog roll” for parents to see all that DSL has to offer.
Recommendations, continued

Recommendation #2
Assessment

- Include more DSL related questions in the Family Weekend survey on programs/initiatives.
- Work with Admissions, UAAP, Aideen Doneski (DSL Assessment), to include DSL questions on future CPW and Orientation surveys.
Recommendation #3
DSL Involvement in Parents Weekend, CPW, and Orientation

- Be more intentional in our assessment of DSL involvement during the programs and our impact upon parents.
- Work with Parents Association staff, MIT Medical, and Snaggs on including a support/mental health presentation during Family Weekend 2014.
- Continue focus groups during Family Weekend in 2014.
Next Steps

- Identify stakeholders/staff that would be responsible for these action items
- Parents Association staff meet with DSL Communication staff to discuss cohesive communication plan during emergencies.
- Continue to identify next actionable items to streamline our work with Parents Association
- Seamless end to Team 5; identify stakeholders that could continue work moving forward