2022-2023 Random Hall Action Plan
First-Year Room Assignments

1. **Please describe, in detail, your house's updated room-assignment process for first year students. This should include details of the process over the summer and the process during REX and Orientation.**

Starting in the summer, there will be detailed email communication from the President and RAC of Random to incoming first year students regarding move-in and the room-assignment process. Enhanced communication will include flyers detailing the room assignment process and floor exploration that will be placed on the bed in each FY room.

During REX, the President and RAC will hold an office hours event where first-years can ask questions about Random's room assignment process. Following REX, there will be an opportunity for Floor Exploration. Each floor will be available to talk to first-year students and answer any questions about their floor's personality and culture. Floors bake cookies and have small events (i.e., puzzles) that they feel are relevant to their cultures. Shortly after, first-years will gather in our main lounge to submit an online form that contains their room preferences as well as their roommate preferences. By having them come together to submit the form we ensure that they won't forget to complete it and that they have an opportunity to talk to potential roommates while submitting the form, but the online system gives them privacy to not share their room preferences if they would prefer not to.

On the form, first-years can also indicate if they have strong feelings about single-gender floors and cat floors, and there will be a text box on the form to explain their room ranking (for example, are their top choices all roughly tied, or is there a clear preference?). The RAC will run an algorithm to match students to rooms optimally, and then may make specific swaps in the output of the algorithm based on non-personal factors (e.g., gender balance, quiet/noisy floors, additional student preferences expressed on the form, etc.) The AD will be present during this process.

As Random is a small dorm, it is sometimes difficult to accommodate roommate requests, but we hope to alleviate this by offering an option to either prioritize getting the room they want or the roommate they want. If they choose a roommate, it is almost guaranteed that the two will be paired.

After the optimization process is run and rooms are announced, there will be a dorm-wide celebration welcoming first-year students to their new floors.

To encourage exploration and mitigate the stress of moving to one's permanent assignment, we will host a "moving/pizza party" in which upper-level students are encouraged to help first-years move.

2. **How does the process allow for students who are overwhelmed to opt out of exploration and moving?**

Understanding that this is a stressful time, we will try to support all of our first-years through this process. As such, students who feel extremely overwhelmed or stressed at the prospect of moving can express this to

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Random's AD, RAC or President, or a member of the House Team. Students are strongly encouraged to have a conversation with either the RAC, the Area Director, or the Heads of House to discuss the decision to opt-out of room reassignment. First-years will not need to specify the specific reasons for wanting to opt-out of the process. Any decision to opt-out of the process will be communicated between the President, RAC, the AD, and Heads of House and the Area Director will inform Housing and Residential Services. This will ensure clear communication about which first-years are not participating in exploration and moving. This process will be communicated to students over the summer via emails from the President and RAC, as well as in flyers that are placed in each room.

3. **What is the level of upper-level student involvement? Are the first year students being assigned through an algorithm or another way?**

Upper-level students will be involved in the process, but they will not have any say as to who joins their floors. They will help first-years learn about their floors and communities, they will welcome them in during the welcome/celebration event, and they will help first-years move to their new assignments.

First year students will be assigned through an optimization algorithm.

4. **Please describe your house's upper-level student room-assignment process. This description should include any information about mid-semester room switches.**

Create a list of priorities from first year room assignment (people who got their top choice will be at the bottom of list, randomized, and vice-versa). We have a priority list that changes as people move rooms (if a student moves rooms, they will be lower in the priority list for their class year).

Mid-semester room switches are considered for urgent reasons (flexible threshold for what constitutes "urgent").

5. **What is the role of the AD in these processes?**

The AD will be there to support the student leaders and RAC running the process. The AD is present during the Floor Exploration event, the welcome/celebration, and the intra-dorm move day.

The AD will help the RAC and President write the communications to go out during the summer to provide a non-student perspective.

The AD will be present for the optimization process.

6. **What forms of evaluation are being considered for assessing the effectiveness of the new process? What ideas do you have for evaluation?**

We will send out a survey to first year students post-REX, as well as one during the second semester (February 2023) asking how students felt about moving rooms during REX (would they have stayed in their room if they could have?)

Random Hall is the smallest dorm on campus with 93 undergraduates, 3 GRAs (Graduate Resident Advisors), and 2 Heads of House (Laurie and Jared). The dorm consists of 8 floors, and each has its own kitchen, lounge, murals, and 12-14 residents. If you would like to watch any of our i3 videos about the dorm and dorm culture they can be found here: https://mitguidetoresidences.mit.edu/map/random-hall. This is what the start of the school year will look like from a housing perspective for Random Hall.

Preferences Questionnaire - Random is a unique dorm with lots of excellent floor communities. In order for the RACs (Room Assignment Chairs) to get to know you better, we ask everyone assigned in Random to fill out a brief form.

Temporary Room Placements - Sometime in August you will be sent your temporary room assignment. This is the room you will move into when you arrive on campus. IMPORTANT: This is not your permanent room. You will move to your permanent room at the end of REX. Because of this we recommend you pack your belongings so that you have one or two bags that you can live out of for about a week and reserve most of your stuff to be unpacked once you move to your permanent room for the year.

Arriving on Campus - When you arrive on campus you will follow the check in process outlined by MIT housing. When you arrive at Random Hall, we will have a desk set up and a helpful upperclassman will get you your room key and assist in moving your belongings to your room. For first years participating in an FPOP this is the room you will be in throughout that week.

REX and Floor Exploration - REX lasts several days and is designed for you to get to explore campus, dorm life, and generally socialize and acclimate to MIT. This is a fun week where you will meet lots of new people and lots of new friends. Near the end of REX, Random Hall will have Floor Exploration. Floor Exploration lasts for about an afternoon and is a chance for every floor to show off their best qualities and try and convince you of why their floor is the most fun. Upperclassmen will be around on each of the 8 floors to answer questions about their floor and community. After floor exploration, there will be a required event for first years to list their preference for the available rooms. Should any freshman become too overwhelmed during this process, they can talk to the RACs or the AD (area director) in order to opt out. All first years will gather to fill out an online form where you rank which rooms you are most interested in. This is also where roommate preferences can be made if you have someone who you would prefer to room with.

Permanent Room Placement - The RACs will go through all the forms to optimize everyone's choices and then release the permanent room placements the following morning. That day will be moving day, and many upperclassmen will be around to help everyone move their belongings to their new rooms. This is a lot of fun and once the moves are finished each floor holds an event to celebrate their new residents.

That's a lot of information, but don't worry there will be lots of people around to help you through the very exciting first weeks on campus. If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to the RACs with anything and we will happily do our best to make your process as easy as possible. You can reach the RACs at random-rac@mit.edu.