



## **Undergraduate Association Final Report to Council**

May 10, 2015

### **President**

**Matthew Davis**

**Email:** [ua-president@mit.edu](mailto:ua-president@mit.edu)

### **Spring Semester Projects:**

Over the past month, I have been engaged in the interviewing of candidates for open Judicial Board positions and open committee chair and officer positions. I have been working as a member of the Division of Student Life (DSL) Policy Review Committee to include student input into proposed changes to our Institute policies, particularly the Mind and Hand Book. I have been meeting with senior administrators to establish the relationship between the Undergraduate Association (UA) and their various areas of responsibility, as well as attending meetings such as the Housing Strategy Group and working with other student leaders to advocate for their interests. I am also working with the President's Advisory Cabinet (PAC) to write a report concerning the ideal "Institute of the Future", and would welcome any ideas people may have concerning their ideal MIT.

Recently, I met with Dean Judy Robinson and discussed having a student representative work with her on developing MIT's response to tragedies, as it relates to undergraduate students. She has agreed to work with the new Student Support and Wellness Chair to make sure student concerns are properly addressed in whatever policy is developed. I plan to work with the IFC, PanHel, DormCon, LGC and Council to ensure that this policy includes student leadership.

We have appointed a student representative to the Student Activities Office's search for a new Assistant Director of Leadership and Activities, and we will be engaging the Division of Student Life in appointing a student representative to the search for a new Senior Associate Dean to replace Barbara Baker. We will also be working with various student leaders to create the framework for student involvement in the renewal of Bon Appetit's dining contract, which will occur next year.

### Recommendations to Council concerning the position:

I look forward to working with the Joint Council-Exec Committee on Bylaws and Procedures concerning this question, and look forward to establishing a Council-Exec Committee on Government Accountability in the future to hold this position more accountable. Perhaps one of the most incredible things I have learned upon taking the office, is that the UA President could basically tell Council whatever they wanted concerning money, events and the operations of the UA, and they would have no way of verifying whether it is true. On this end, at our first meeting of the Fall Semester, I look forward to introducing a bill concerning transparency, which will formalize, in an efficient way, ways to keep our government accountable to Council and all undergraduates.

### Recommendations to Council concerning the UA:

At our upcoming Council meeting, you will receive a request to create two new committees, one on Public Affairs and one on Community. The creation of these two positions was a large part of what Sophia and I campaigned on, in order to increase MIT's international presence in the world and represent the interests of underrepresented groups across MIT. I firmly believe that these two committees will make our undergraduate experience better, and we have some exceptionally well qualified and outstanding individuals lined up to make them a success. I recommend that, at our meeting, Council approve their creation, so that we can continue to make our Institute a better place for all undergraduates.

### **Chief of Staff**

**Githui Maina**

**Email:** [ua-chief@mit.edu](mailto:ua-chief@mit.edu)

### Spring Semester Projects:

I will list all the projects I have worked on with the Nominations Board as well as individually as Chief of Staff in order of importance.

1) Nominees for Institute Committees have been recommended to Council after conducting interviews and reviewing applications. Some nominees still need the approval of bodies outside of the UA (such as the President for PAC) so these candidates will be notified that they have our recommendation but their candidacy is still being processed.

2) An orientation event has been planned for the week of May 11th for all recommended nominees to the Institute Committees so they will be aware of their responsibilities as a committee member. This is the first time this event has been organized - credit for the idea goes to Matthew Davis.

3) I have worked with the Office of the President to have a more comprehensive list of institute committees available to update the current list on the UA website which is currently outdated  
(<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Ysrr7SRyLgXBqF3KDTj-zIS1KhAl9jW8Kp86l6oT1PM/edit#gid=0>). This will include removing committees which have been disbanded as well as updating the committees when membership changes.

Recommendations for Council concerning the position:

It may be helpful to change the way Nominations Board is composed to ensure all members have time to faithfully perform their duties. For this reason, I would suggest the board be composed of seniors so there is no conflict of interest when conducting interviews. A change to the nominations board bylaws stating no member of the Nominations Board is allowed to apply to institute committees would also address this concern.

It would also be helpful to begin advertising Institute Committees earlier in the Spring so more students will be encouraged to apply. This would go well with organizing institute committee panels where undergraduate members of the less confidential committees talk about some of the projects they are working on. This would help increase transparency and make it easier for the entire campus to get engage in the conversation.

Recommendations for Council concerning the UA:

It would be great if we could update the bylaws of the UA Standing Committee as 10/14 of the standing committees listed on the website  
(<http://web.mit.edu/ua/governing-docs/committee-bylaws.pdf>) have no bylaws listed. Many of these committees have their own governing documents and they would just need to be integrated into the official document.

It would also be helpful if the UA website was updated so when people go to the UA website they are immediately aware of some of our ongoing projects. Our social media presence is also severely underutilized as the UA twitter page jumps from CPW 2015 to CPW 2014 within one tweet.

Additional Comments:

It has been a pleasure being interim Chief of Staff. Thank you for your support.

**Ryan McDermott**

**Treasurer**

**Email: [ua-treasurer@mit.edu](mailto:ua-treasurer@mit.edu)**

Spring Semester Projects:

- Creation of the Spring 2015 UA Budget
- Work with the financial board committee to allocate funds to ASA groups that apply for financial board funding.
- Direct groups of students to various discretionary funding sources when appropriate
- Manage "Fresh Fund"
- File UA Reimbursements for committees and projects such as Student-Faculty Dinners
- Review and maintain UA accounts balances and transactions

Recommendations for Council concerning the position:

- Council and the treasurer should maintain open communication to ensure there is no confusion on the state of the UA finances.
- Council should read carefully through the UA Budget before voting upon it and give feedback to the treasurer to ensure that the budget represents how their constituents would like the funds allocated
- Council should be active in reviewing requests for discretionary funds, examining Financial board allocations, and active in all other financial matters brought to council so that appropriate and informed decisions are made.

Recommendations for Council concerning the UA:

Be as an active member of Council as possible. This includes reviewing documents prior to council meetings, understanding the views of your constituents, and participating in discussion when appropriate. By being an active council member, Council serves its purpose as an important part of the UA Structure.

Additional Comments:

For any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to [ua-treasurer@mit.edu](mailto:ua-treasurer@mit.edu)

**2030 Committee**

**Laila Shehata**

**Email: [ua-2030-chairs@mit.edu](mailto:ua-2030-chairs@mit.edu)**

Spring Semester Projects:

- Saving Bexley artifacts/organizing a tour for former residents
- Feasability study for Metropolitan Warehouse dormitory proposal
- West Campus Steering Committee (first meeting was April 27)

Recommendations for Council concerning the position:

Since Council represents all the various living groups, it'd be great to collaborate more on projects to get a wider range of student input.

Recommendations for Council concerning the UA:

N/A

**Committee on Athletics**

**Nathan Varady**

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Spring Semester Projects:

This year, working with the SAAC and varsity-sport team captains, we took a different approach from our traditional "have a few big events" approach for our athletics promotion aim. Rather than having a few events, we decided it would be more fruitful to enable teams to promote themselves for whichever games are most interesting and relevant. We did this by acquiring merchandise such as T-Shirts, foam fingers, wristbands, towels, etc. and giving team captains an allotment. We also put it on the team captains to create a social media campaign for their event and then we helped share that around. The feedback has been very positive and teams are anxious for their allotments to do it again next year. Increasing the budget for this, so that teams can promote more than one game, is something worth exploring.

Another big initiative of this winter/spring was securing a deal with Susquehanna International Group (SIG) for a half-court shot competition at eight of our men's and women's basketball games. The competition was open to anyone in attendance and one participant was drawn for a chance to shoot a half-court shot. If the participant made it, he or she was awarded \$5,000 and a chance at a second shot. If he or she made the second shot then the award was \$100,000! Though no one made the shot this year, the competition had undergraduates buzzing and is definitely something to continue next year. We also saw an increase in attendance at the games that the competition took place.

Another initiative we are currently working on is the incorporation of an "Athletics" tab in the MIT Mobile app. Working with DAPER and IS&T, we are hopeful to have this in place by next school year.

Finally, the UA Athletics Committee worked with SAAC and DSL on MIT's involvement in the Saturday's POTS walk. With the support of Dean Colombo, we secured bus transportation from MIT to Medford for any undergraduates who wanted to go and we had over 140 undergraduates sign up for spots on the bus.

Recommendations for Council concerning the position:

We appreciate the continued support. I would especially continue the support for the pre-season/IAP meals as I know it is immensely appreciated.

Recommendations for Council concerning the UA:

Please continue to support the work of UA Exec. The UA can be most powerful when all of us are on the same team (which should be always).

Additional Comments:

Thanks for your service, as well.

**Committee on Education**

**Trevor Mulchay and Jennifer Zheng**

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Spring Semester Projects:

We used our two Coffee and Tea events from last semester to launch a new event: Let's Just Talk. We are a diverse community of individuals, both students and faculty, and with the Let's Just Talk event, we were hoping to bridge the gap between these two subsets. It was held in the Bush Room on May 4th and was reasonably attended by both students and faculty. Even though students still greatly outnumbered faculty during the event, valuable conversations were had between students and faculty.

On top of planning the above event, we continued to take care of our semesterly duties, including running student-faculty dinners and responding to reported violations.

Recommendations for Council concerning the position:

The one main recommendation I have for council is to clarify the role and power of the Committee on Education. Through my four years on the committee, I've found myself, year to year, in a committee with different ideas of what it can or should do. Education is a broad topic, but how should we the committee handle it? Is the committee more of an event or policy committee, or is it, perhaps, some combination of the two? With a more clear role, we will be able to focus entirely on the task at hand instead of whatever comes our way.

Recommendations for Council concerning the UA:

It would be beneficial for there to exist a comprehensive and comprehensible checklist for how to run an event that all committees can follow. For example, our committee had some problems renting out a room for our Let's Just Talk event. It was unclear who we should contact or how we should even find a schedule of rooms that were open on any given day. A

structured process for this, or granted access to the room-renting system for more members, would've helped prevent these problems.

#### **Committee on Events**

**Raichelle Aniceto and Divya Shanmugan**

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#### Spring Semester Projects:

We've worked on putting together the SpringFEST weekend this semester and creating a sense of community around SpringFEST in general.

#### Recommendations for Council concerning the position:

I recommend that Council considers increasing UA funding for UA Events - we were allocated \$5K Fall semester and \$10K Spring semester, all of which was put towards throwing well-received events for the student body. We can do so much more with the funding (like throw a WinterFEST!) and we'd love to opportunity to do so.

#### Recommendations for Council concerning the UA:

I recommend that Council consider how funding is going back to the undergrads and which undergrads that funding is catered to. It's often hard to cater to the entire MIT community but the concept of the UA is that every student is represented.

#### **Financial Board**

**Alekhya Reddy and Anirudh Sailesh**

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#### Spring Semester Projects:

We have completed the Spring Cycle allocations and have met with certain groups to find funding solutions that best fit their spending. Most specifically, we are looking into having a yearly allocation for groups who make large purchases at the beginning of the year (i.e. Solar Electric Vehicle Club). We are also looking into the possibility of an auditing system if it is feasible, time efficient, and fair for students.

#### Recommendations for Council concerning the position:

N/A

#### Recommendations for Council concerning the UA:

Try to garner more interested in the committee.

**Committee on MITx**

**Colin McDonnell**

**Email: [ua-mitx-chairs@mit.edu](mailto:ua-mitx-chairs@mit.edu)**

Spring Semester Projects:

Running Learner's Faire seminar: a 3-unit seminar to discuss drivers of change in education and kickstart related projects.

Organizing first edTalk in conjunction with ODL: featuring Marsha Lovett and Norman Bier from Carnegie Mellon university.

Planning pizza-party style study breaks for all classes implementing MITx Residential for the first time in Fall 2015.

Discussing Teaching With Technology awards for professors that integrate technology well into their courses. Professors will be nominated by the students.

Recommendations for Council concerning the position:

N/A

Recommendations for Council concerning the UA:

N/A

**Committee on Student-Admin Collaboration**

**Obasi Onuoha and Phoebe Whitwell**

**Email: [ua-sac@mit.edu](mailto:ua-sac@mit.edu)**

Spring Semester Projects:

Org chart project

Update to the UA SAC report (available on UA website)

Working to interface between students and appropriate administrators where needed

Recommendations for Council concerning the position:

The recommendation from Matthew and Sophia's platform to turn the UA SAC into a joint committee of students, faculty members, and administrators is the only way that I can see SAC as a committee being truly effective. As a student-only committee, it lacks the true



authority needed to hold administrators accountable or to reassure students that they will be listened to. In the future, SAC should function less as a committee which works on projects and more as a resource and oversight body.

Recommendations for Council concerning the UA:

Be sure to look at the communication guidelines specified in the SAC reports from the last two years--we have worked with both students and administrators to generate them. Following the ones specified for students can only help encourage administrators to follow the guidelines we would like for them to follow.

**Committee on Special Projects**

**Robert Mahari**

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Spring Semester Projects:

Our work has focused mostly on working with a number of student groups to help ensure that certain events can impact all students on campus (namely iFair and Student Mixers).

We have also worked with the 2016 Committee and the CAC on how W20 will be developed in the future and how it can best accommodate students.

Finally, the committee has continued to maintain the shuttle service that it oversees (Costco) and the corresponding card service.

Recommendations for Council concerning the position:

The SPC does not interact closely with council. It would surely be helpful for a future SPC to gain insight into possible projects from council given the committees wide range of projects.

Recommendations for Council concerning the UA:

In general, it would be helpful for committee chairs if council highlighted areas for change on campus - this type of conversation is very limited.

**Committee on Student Support and Wellness**

**Chrysonthia Horne and Morgan Moroi**

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Spring Semester Projects:

Projects Completed

### *UA People Before Psets Campaign*

Launched campaign in April 2015 in conjunction with members of the 2015 Multicultural Conference Student Planners.

Hosted a three-day kick-off event that centered around tabling in Stata and Student Center to give away campaign swag.

During the three-day kick-off, hosted a panel event for students in which administrators and staff presented about their experience with MIT's culture to expand the dialogue on MIT's culture to include all levels of the Institute.

### *UA Wellness Grant*

Launched Beta version in March 2015 to the entire MIT community, in collaboration with the GSC and the Chancellor's Office.

Designed revamped proposal to be launched in Fall 2015 available to undergraduates with funding provided by our committee and the Chancellor's Office.

### *Imposter Syndrome Panel Event*

First event in the You Are Not Alone Speaker Series.

Panelists were all from MIT: one faculty, admin, and student leader.

Panelists presented their personal experiences with Imposter Syndrome and stayed for a Q&A session.

The goal of this event (and of the entire series) is to destigmatize mental health and psychological issues, make people feel less alone in their personal experiences, and encourage help-seeking.

### *Student Health Group Progress Report*

Worked with the groups of SMASH, the Chancellor's Office, the GSC, and the Vice President's Office to write, organize, and disseminate a report to campus listing the projects and services provided by MIT's student health groups.

Our goal was to raise awareness about opportunities for students to get involved in activism/advocacy in matters related to mental health, student support, and well-being.

We are currently in the process of determining how to make this report a working document hosted on a website (likely the UA website) so that student health leaders can update the progress of their projects over time to be made available to the student body.

### *Wellness Week*

Our Committee hosts this annually in coordination with other students health groups on campus (i.e. Active Minds, Medlinks, Clowns@MIT, Art of Living, etc.).

This year we decided to host a "Wellness Day" in which we will provide food, activities (making self-affirmation stones, frisbeeing, or spinning a prize wheel), and free exercise classes (zumba and yoga).

This event is scheduled for May 12th from 3-6pm at the Kresge BBQ Pits.

## Projects In Development

### *On-Leave Student Support Network*

Mentorship program where students currently on academic or medical leave are connected to students who have returned from leave in order to provide students on leave with a meaningful link back to MIT.

Have been coordinating with S<sup>3</sup> to have this program be incorporated in the leave process and to recruit interested student mentors who have returned to MIT from leave.

Final logistics are currently being wrapped up and the program is scheduled to launch at the start of the Fall 2015 semester.

### *Depression Speaker Event*

Working in collaboration with the Class of 2018 Class Council to host a panel speaker event in which students share their experiences with depression, and a professional from mental health comes to talk about signs and interventions that students can take to help a friend.

This event was initially planned for this semester, but has been rescheduled for Fall 2015.

### *UA Time To Talk*

Working in collaboration with UA Special Projects and MIT 2030, this event will be a panel series designed to bring administrators and students together in a town-hall setting.

Each panel event will be themed. The theme for the upcoming event (scheduled for Fall 2015) is mental health.

Administrators representing relevant offices/departments/services will present updates about their recent work on mental health, and students will be invited to voice their questions/concerns/comments in a Q&A session with the panelists after the presentations.

### *The TIMagotchi Project*

Working in collaboration with a graduate student in the Media Lab to create a mobile health app that reflects the user's current state of health/wellbeing through a virtual pet.

The goal is to game-ify personal self-care habits in order to improve them. The game will specifically aim to improve users' habits in relation to eating, exercise, and sleep, and will likely have a social component to further encourage user engagement. The game is modeled after the 1990s tamagotchi toy but will likely feature a virtual pet beaver.

Our hope is that this increases the relevance, interest in, and discourse on basic self care habits that students may neglect while at MIT.

The application is scheduled to launch and be made available to MIT undergraduates in Fall 2015.

### *Student Experience Blog*

Blog where students are able to post personal reflections on their experiences with particular resources on campus.

Each blog post will have a tl;dr statement summarizes a take away from their experience with the resource or personal issue.

### *Discussion/Engagement Website*

Working in collaboration with several students designing a Reddit-style website to facilitate discussion on various matters related to student life at MIT, including issues of mental health and student support.

Our committee's role will be to help serve as student moderators on the site once it is up and running (likely Fall 2015).

The development of the website is being supported by IS&T and the Chancellor's Office as well.

### *Representative Duties*

Served on Students at MIT Allied for Student Health (SMASH)

Represented the UA on the Title IX Working Group

Served on the COD Sexual Misconduct Task Force

### Recommendations for Council concerning the position:

This is the second year that our committee has existed in its current form. Our goal this year was to continue the work of our predecessor in establishing the UA as leaders and advocates for MIT undergraduates in matters related to mental health, student support, and wellbeing.

We hope that, moving forward, we continue to demonstrate leadership and advocacy in these areas through our actions. A big part of this requires Council's trust, support, and acknowledgement amongst themselves and their constituents. We have worked hard this year to complete projects and engage the community in order to establish this trust, and we hope to continue to foster positive inter-UA/inter-governmental relationships in the coming semesters. We believe that the more trust students have in the UA (especially on matters that our committee is involved with), the more confidence they will have in the UA's ability to represent them and the more comfortable they will be in coming to us to talk or work with us, which, in turn, achieves our goal of making students feel more supported at MIT.

Our committee believes that MIT's naturally collaborative spirit should be leveraged in addressing these issues, and we hope Councilors feel comfortable reaching out to us with ideas, suggestions, questions, or concerns. We hope that Council will come to view our committee as a resource that is available to them or their constituents if they want to learn more about the current state of mental health, student support, and wellbeing at MIT from the student and administrative side.

### Recommendations for Council concerning the UA:

We are excited about moving towards a future of abundant transparency and collaboration between student government structures at MIT! We hope this will promote a culture of trust between student leaders so that we can all work together to improve MIT undergraduate life now and in the future.

#### Additional Comments:

The results of the mental health survey that the Chancellor's Office sent out will be released at some point next year!! We anticipate that this will create a stir on campus, and we hope that our committee, other student health groups, and all of MIT's student leadership can rally together to make the release of these statistics a productive moment for activism. Our Committee is interested in planning a campaign/event that provides the framework for coordinating the relevant parties in anticipation of the release of the results to make the most of this important moment.

#### **Committee on Sustainability**

**Jacqueline Kuo**

**Email: [ua-sustainability-chairs@mit.edu](mailto:ua-sustainability-chairs@mit.edu)**

#### Spring Semester Projects:

Dorm Electricity Competition (DEC) - DEC occurred this past April and is a competition that challenges dorms to save electricity and promotes developing sustainable habits. Dorm scores were calculated based off of amount of energy saved (in comparison to April 2014) and number of spirit points earned by sending in pictures of people doing sustainable things (i.e. using refillable water bottles, composting correctly, etc). This year, Simmons won!

Trash2Treasure (T2T) - T2T is our reuse program, which happens during finals week. We collect students' unwanted items in dorms, store them over the summer, and sell them back to the community on Reg Day at inexpensive prices (\$1-5 usually) so that we can reduce the amount of waste MIT puts into landfill and give new life to old items. This year is the 3rd year we've had T2T and we've been preparing for the past semester. Students who do not live in dorms are encouraged to put their unwanted items in the T2T drop-off locations in any of the dorms for collection.

ECO Foodware - We launched the ECO foodware program at the beginning of the semester. Having partnered with World Centric, we've been selling compostable items to student groups and individuals for events, at prices comparable to those of Shaw's and La Verde's. Thus far, we're happy with the responses we've had from students and will be looking for ways to expand the program in the fall.

Student Center Compost Bins - The Composting Team worked with Facilities and GSC Sustainability to put green compost bins on the 1st and 2nd floors of the Student Center.

Facilities will be collecting data on the amount of compost that is collected from those bins. We hope that the data will help us convince CAC that we should implement permanent compost bins in the Stud.

Undergraduate Cooperative Garden - This semester, we officially launched the Undergraduate Cooperative Garden, which is located in the Westgate Parking lot. Shared by 37 gardeners, the Garden team ran 3 planting sessions a week where shareholders of the garden planted, watered, and tended to the fruits and vegetables. The garden will continue to be used over the summer by undergraduates staying in the Boston area. Next year, the Garden team is planning on holding educational events at the Garden, open to the MIT community.

Other than the above events and initiatives, UA Sustainability was very involved with "Earth Days", a 5-day fiesta of green events organized by sustainability groups on campus. We also formed a MIT Sustainability Green Team for a Red Sox game and volunteered to help clean the Charles River Bank. Both of these events were open to the MIT community to attend.

#### Recommendations for Council concerning the position:

It has historically been more difficult for our Committee to reach FSILGs. It's a bit easier to implement "sustainable changes" to dorms and hold events on campus. Recommendations from Council on how we may organize events and initiatives that can more easily reach those in FSILGs would be much appreciated.

#### Recommendations for Council concerning the UA:

Again, I have don't really have recommendations for Council, but if Council has any recommendations for us, please feel free to reach out.

#### Additional Comments:

I hope you all have a great summer!