



Undergraduate Association Monthly Report to Undergraduates

October

President

Matthew Davis

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Past Month:

We focused heavily on internal reforms to make things easier for committee chairs. We have had a string of resignations in the beginning of the year, and we decided to explore the reasons why a little further. We asked two questions to our Cabinet committee chairs:

1. *How satisfying has your time in the UA been? (1 (Unsatisfactory) - 5 (Very Satisfactory))*
2. *How supported do you feel as a committee chair? (1 (Not Supported at all) - 5 (Very Supported))*

The average response to question 1 was a 2.4, and the average response to question 2 was a 2.3. We also asked the committee chairs to provide feedback about their concerns. I also sat down individually with each Cabinet committee chair to further understand their feedback. Broadly, there were four concerns:

1. Committee chairs felt micromanaged;
2. The pressure of fundraising detracted from the quality of their policy work;
3. My email communication style was unsatisfactory with committee chairs;
4. There were many administrative barriers that kept them from doing their work.

Accordingly, we spent early October course-correcting and making life better for our committee chairs, and allowing them to both have fun and be able to focus on what they want to do for students. We rearranged the budget, thanks to Dean Freeman paying for student-faculty dinners, to provide a small amount of money for our committee chairs; Sophia assumed more of a head management role in the organization; and we broke down some of the internal administrative barriers while maintaining the goal of transparency. The initial feedback on these

changes has been overwhelmingly positive, and we will be doing a follow-up survey at the end of the month.

I have also had meetings with Dean Freeman, Dean Colombo, and Chancellor Barnhart about a variety of topics, specifically the Career Fair, dominance of Course 6 at MIT, and ways to increase student-faculty interactions at MIT.

Current Projects:

We are finalizing the role and scope of the Government Accountability Committee, and it will be presented at Council on October 28, 2015. We are also working on ways to increase student group funding, which will also be presented to Council. We are participating in a review of the Career Fair, to improve it for future years, and will explore ways that students can be involved. We are also exploring how to increase the diversity of majors within MIT, and strengthen advising resources across the Institute. Finally, we are keeping tabs on developments related to President Reif's climate action plan, and how undergraduates are responding.

We are also reviewing the Audit Report of the UA, which will be presented to Council on October 28, 2015, and finalizing the formation of the Independent Review Committee.

Future Projects:

Moving forward, we will develop the projects listed above. Further, I will be scheduling a meeting with the Director of the Libraries to explore ways that students can have further access to information resources. As an organization, we will continue to find new sources of funding and alleviate the financial pressure student groups have.

Vice President

Sophia Liu

Email: ua-vp@mit.edu

Past Month:

This past month I have been working on continuing with the website development project. I've met with Lydia, the head of Institutional Research, and have been taking her notes from her faculty communication surveys to use in our own survey and move it to Qualtrics.

Second, I've been working to review the bylaws for the committees to submit to Council for approval, as very few of the committees currently have bylaws. I have also worked on supporting the Cabinet and Operations committees by running the weekly meetings and training several new chairs in their roles. We also have a new secretary, which is awesome! I've also been transitioning her into her role, as well.

In an effort to increase transparency and foster more rapid communication, we've started using Slack to communicate internally (for reminders and such), while still maintaining our mailing lists for external records.

In terms of tracking our projects and progress on our campaign goals, I've started a UA Projects Excel tracking system that I'm encouraging committees to use at their meetings instead of filling out the weekly reports. If all goes well, we hope to share this with the exec boards of DormCon, Panhel, IFC, and the LGC, as well as, potentially, a read-only version with undergrads.

I've also connected with the president at the undergraduate board at Princeton, and various exec members at Duke and Cornell to better understand some of their projects.

The Byte has also grown into a way to increase visibility of UA committee members, and has a Google Calendar subscription option.

Current Projects:

I plan on continuing my work on the website development and bylaws review, as well as looking into new ways to encourage diversity on campus, foster transparency, and enhance the internal team dynamic.

Future Plans:

I've been wanting to incorporate a conference funding grant for a while, and have had it written up... perhaps I'll run the idea by some people! I'm also meeting with Nina, the Director of Community for the Libraries to discuss the undergraduate experience.

Additional Comments:

Feel free to communicate any concerns or questions to us!

Chief of Staff

Githui Maina

Email: ua-chief@mit.edu

Past Month:

Over the past three weeks we were notified of the revitalization of the Committee on Race and Diversity which will need to be staffed with two permanent undergraduate representatives.

In a similar vein, there have been several events hosted by the Black Alumni of MIT (BAMIT) as well as the Alumni Association which focus on steps MIT has taken to address inclusion and diversity. These include a seminar on the Blacks at MIT History project (<http://blackhistory.mit.edu/>) as well as alumni panels discussing what it was like to attend MIT in the 1970s to the early 2000s and what ways alumni can be involved to continue the ongoing efforts to support current students.

Current Projects:

Currently, we are beginning the process of searching for permanent members for the Committee on Race and Diversity. We will be sending an email out to all undergraduates this week calling on them to join the committee. The nominations board will then review the applicants and create a slate of 4 nominees to be presented to Council and then pending their approval we will forward these 4 nominees to the Chair, Ed Bertschinger, to source the 2 undergraduate representatives.

We are also reaching out to our institute committee members for updates on their committees. It is important for us to maintain transparency and so we will be getting updates from the committees to see what they have been involved with, what they would like resources and support on, and how they feel about the committee in general.

Future Plans:

There will be a meeting of the Social Sciences Visiting Committee this Wednesday to meet with MIT undergraduate students in order to get a more accurate picture of students' views and attitudes toward the Social Sciences at MIT. I will be in attendance for this and will send out meeting minutes afterwards.

There also may be opportunities for strategic partnerships with student groups at Harvard to strengthen the bonds between both campuses which I will be exploring over the next three weeks.

Additional Comments:

We look forward to working with our committees and student groups to hear more about topics and concerns that are important to undergraduates to make sure they are addressed appropriately. If you have any such concerns, please reach out at ua-chief@mit.edu.

Treasurer

Alekhya Reddy

Email: ua-treasurer@mit.edu

Past Month:

This past month we have changed our budgeting plan for the committees. Now, committees are encouraged, but not required to, fundraise. As a result, we believe that committees will be able to spend more time focusing on their mandate and bettering student life at MIT. Moreover, we have received a grant from Dean Freeman for the Student Faculty Dinners so we are using the money that was previously allocated for that program.

Current Projects:

I am currently involved with numerous projects, including funding collaborations with GSC and ASA, fundraising plans with the Resource Development Committee, and investigating changes to the Student Life Fee.

The Treasurer's Council, composed of the UA Treasurer, Finboard Chair, ASA Treasurer, GSC Treasurer, and DormCon Treasurer, has been reinstituted and meets every month. At the last meeting, we discussed possible collaboration between the three bodies (ex. centralized application, pooling of Finboard/GSC resources, sharing of "best-practices") and I believe that these meetings will aid in accountability and operative efficiency for these funding bodies. Resource Development, charged with fundraising for the UA, is trying to strike a balance between short and long term funding so that we are financially sustainable not only for this year, but for years to come. We are working to establish a funding goal and plan for the year. Finally, we are investigating the possibility of increasing the Student Life Fee. Few developments have been made, but we are looking at the history of increases as well as other ways to source funding. This Finboard cycle, many groups were extremely unhappy about how we had to significantly cut funding so we would like to mitigate this as much as possible.

Future Plans:

There are two main goals I have for the future: ensuring financial stability of the UA for this year and years to come and ensuring that we can provide as much as possible with the limited resources this year.

Additional Comments:

Please let me know if you have any questions/comments at alekhya@mit.edu

Secretary

Alexandra Zele

Email: ua-secretary@mit.edu

Past Month:

I've been secretary for a week now-- I've attended meetings and taken minutes and worked on a variety of jobs/projects, including meeting with the Chair of Public Affairs, summarizing survey results, posting the last Judboard decision to the website, collecting head shots for the poster in the infinite, starting to set up committees as NGEs, setting up meeting times and room reservations, etc.

Current Projects:

Currently, I'm working on collecting head shots for all committee chairs, room/lobby 10 booth reservations, setting up a survey on Quantix with the VP, and other organizational odd jobs.

Future Plans:

I'm going to keep doing the weekly/daily things necessary to keep things organized and people informed and I want to get more comfortable in the position.

Additional Comments:

I'm excited to have this position and feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns!

Student Support and Wellness Committee

Tamar Weseley

Email: ua-wellness-chairs@mit.edu

Past Month:

Red Flag Campaign and sensitivity training with the Tech. Organized subcommittee for semester's future projects.

Current Projects:

Red Flag until the end of the month.

Future Plans:

Moving forward we will be working on holding a stress related panel, attending the Wellness Fair, monitoring the Wellness Grant, contributing to wellness content on DSLx, reviewing withdrawal policies, and beginning reverse mentorship for professors.

Committee on Community

Kyle Archer

Email: ua-community@mit.edu

Past Month:

Our Committee has worked on brainstorming with undergraduates and staff members about ways to best improve the MIT-wide sense of community. We have also begun progress on the creation of community compact with Edmund Bertschinger.

Current Projects:

Currently, we are delving into several projects, including a holiday mixer, possible updates to quads around campus, a picnic program through the mind-hand-heart grant program, and other community-oriented events.

Future Plans:

We will continue to explore projects that could better the sense of community and equity at MIT while following through on the projects we have already begun.

History Committee

Sadun

Email: ua-history@mit.edu

Past Month:

sadun has been beginning work on the Colombo legacy project, in which we reach out to alumni, staff, and faculty to try to understand what the themes of and changes under Colombo's deanship have been.

asludds has been working on putting together a publicly-editable timeline of MIT history.

lagrassa has been investigating the colonization and founding history of Maseeh Hall.

In addition, we have been sending more and more links out to the ua-history-interest@ list, in an effort to keep interested subscribers informed and more knowledgeable about MIT institutions.

Current Projects:

Our three active projects are the Colombo legacy project, the Maseeh project, and the timeline project. The Colombo project is in the initial phases of interviewing fairly easy-to-interview alumni; we will progress to other interviewees in the coming months.

Future Plans:

One of our members has expressed an interest in digging deeper into Housing philosophy reports; we will attempt to indulge him in that.

A couple of our members are unassigned and will be re-assigned at our next meeting on October 25th according to their curiosities.

Additional Comments:

Subscribe to ua-history-interest@mit.edu! If you have any comments, questions, or project suggestions, send them to ua-history@mit.edu or sadun@mit.edu.

Public Affairs Committee

Daniel Wang

Email: ua-publicaffairs@mit.edu

Past Month:

Bylaws have been drafted and submitted for review to UA Council

Current Projects:

We are investigating the following projects for next semester:

- 1) Inviting prominent and local politicians to give talks at MIT and/or have dinner with students
- 2) Holding a voter registration drive before next year's presidential primaries
- 3) Holding public debate screenings prior to the presidential election next year

Future Plans:

See above

Additional Comments:

We are a brand-new committee, so we are still in the planning phase for our projects and expect to start executing in the spring.

Academic Advisory Council

Dante Delaney

Email: ua-aac@mit.edu

Past Month:

The Academic Advisory Council has been established and convened for the first time on Sunday, 18 October 2015.

Current Projects:

We are currently putting together a 3 unit advising seminar for the upcoming spring semester. This is a joint venture between the UA and the Institute Community and Equity Office to expose students to the breadth of opportunities available at MIT and to improve the state of faculty advising of undergraduates.

We are also consolidating a list of department-specific career events to make available to all undergraduates.

Future Plans:

Achieve representation of all undergraduate majors in the AAC.

Events Committee

Divya Shanmugam

Email: ua-events@mit.edu

Past Month:

We've been working on the survey to be sent out to campus regarding SpringFEST artist preferences, applying for grants/funds for our events later on in the semester and planning for FallFEST on December 5.

Current Projects:

We're working on getting the survey out as soon as possible. Publicity for FallFEST will be starting very soon too! Make sure to get your tickets.

Future Plans:

We're planning on throwing a wildly wildly successful comedy show this upcoming December, renamed to be WinterFEST. See you all there!

Marketing Committee

Alberto Hernandez

Email: ua-marketing@mit.edu

Past Month:

We spent a large amount of time creating over 50 total new UA logo mockups and deciding which ones to cut. After narrowing our logo selection down to roughly 15 candidates, we presented these new logo designs to a diverse focus group of MIT students. After reviewing the results of the focus group and discussing the UA's current situation thoroughly, we decided on a new UA logo that best reflects what the UA should represent.

Current Projects:

One of our next projects is the Weekly Byte video podcast, which will be released via YouTube. Currently, we are working on video intros and outros that will play at the beginning and end of each episode. We are also gathering equipment and finding filming locations. The first episode is currently planned to launch around mid-November. We are also working on a script for a UA-themed music video, which will also be released via YouTube. Many of our other projects are in the planning stages, which are described below.

Future Plans:

We have several other projects planned. One of which is the development of a UA Marketing website, which currently does not exist. Additionally, we are planning to produce an additional, more humorous video podcast project (like The Daily Show, Saturday Night Live) that would include skits and would cover broader news events.

Technology Systems Group Committee

Ariel Jacobs

Email: ua-tsg-chairs@mit.edu

Past Month:

We have been updating the current website with current information. Most of our focus is on gaining members so we can operate more effectively.

Current Projects:

We have a meeting planned on Monday to try to attract more members. We are in contact with the Education Committee to make the Student/Faculty Dinner webpages up-to-date.

Future Plans:

We are going through the rest of the pages, and asking committees or UA sub-organizations for a more current list of members, more current policies, and more recent information.

We are also planning on calling Sharp and getting the TV in the UA office fixed.

Resource Development Committee

Dang Pham

Email: ua-rd@mit.edu

Past Month:

We sent out emails to several businesses, and companies asking for funding and sponsorship. We also reached out to the MIT regarding place advertisement on Safe Ride and Tech shuttle.

Current Projects:

The committee has recently meeting with the Events committee to talk about initial steps in finding funds for SpringFest. We're looking at external funding and ways to drive up ticket sales. We're continuing our conversation with MIT to possibly having ads on shuttles to increase our income.

Future Plans:

N/A

Alumni Affairs Committee

Keertan Kini

Email: ua-alumni-affairs@mit.edu

Past Month:

We have recently been set up, created working goals moving forward, and completed our bylaws.

Current Projects:

Building relationships with the Alumni Association for current initiative and future work.

Future Plans:

Bringing alumni who've had non-traditional careers back to MIT to come and speak.

Additional Comments:

(become) One of us. One of us.

Innovation Committee

Malte Ahrens

Email: ua-innovation@mit.edu

Past Month:

SOLVE. Two of our committee members participated in SOLVE. To explore opportunities for undergraduates in future SOLVE conferences (recurring annually, now - next years' will be September 26 - 29), more broadly consider its implications and opportunities, and in light of student criticisms around involvement and openness, we will convene the student volunteers who participated in SOLVE - and any interested undergraduates - to gather feedback and prepare an undergraduate response. Further details to follow this week.

Meeting with Nina Davis-Millis, Director of Community-Support for the Libraries. We spoke about collaboration spaces, the role of libraries in serendipitous discovery, and the sharing of ideas, passions and curiosities for students and faculty, among other things. We look forward to working with Nina and the libraries team in the future.

Personally meeting with each of the committee chairs to further our working relationship and explore continued options for collaboration. Due to timidity - and some time limitations- we have so far only met with Corinn (Education Committee), Kelly (Special Projects) and Alberto and Salaam (Marketing).

Current Projects:

Appraisal of the state of innovation on MIT campus. This includes on-campus innovation spaces (including maker spaces, collaboration spaces, Athena clusters, libraries, etc.), local off-campus innovation spaces, innovation-related classes, student groups, and funding sources available to students. The appraisal will both be published in a "State of Innovation" report at the end of the year, and be made available in an interactive map, being developed with the MIT Innovation Initiative, to help undergraduates navigate opportunity at MIT. Further undergraduate input will be actively sought at a later stage (though is always welcome, at any time - just email ua-innovation@mit.edu)

Surveying undergraduates on the "State of innovation at MIT". Based on our initial overview appraisal of innovation on campus, a survey is currently being developed to include opinions and ideas from the entire undergraduate body, to inform our future projects - and those of future committees and the greater administration. We hope to launch this survey within the next month.

Growing our capacity as a committee. To this end, we just launched our innovation committee specific undergraduate-wide recruitment drive.

Future Plans:

See SOLVE notes above

Additional Comments:

Malte Ahrens (Chair) is out of town this week, from last Saturday (10/24) to next Monday (11/2) working with the Mongolian Government on their innovation policy. Please forward all urgent requests to Katherine Nazemi (knazemi@mit.edu).

Special Projects Committee

Kelly McGee

Email: ua-projects@mit.edu

Past Month:

Over the past three weeks we have split up the committee into three project groups and have made the following progress:

Time to Talk (Judy Wang, Emily Young, Cindy Liu, Helena Ma)

- Speaking with UA WellCom and SAO to help organize first town hall on mental health
- Selected admins to sit in on first event

Truckin' Tuesdays (Anna Frederich, Maddie Burgoyne)

- Coordinated with DSL and Dining Staff to get the approval for weekly/biweekly food trucks on Kresge
- Selected food trucks to reach out to (Roxy's Grilled Cheese, Bon Me, Baja Taco Truck, Mother Juice, Stoked Wood Fired Pizza)

UA Corporate Sponsorships / Off Campus Dining Solutions (Gabriella Baracchini, Zach Churukian)

- Split up student groups in to categories
- Found companies whose interests match certain categories

Current Projects:

See Above

Future Plans:

- Securing the schedule for Time to Talk events, such that we can hold 3 events over the remainder of the semester
- Solidifying the permits and approval for Truckin' Tuesdays
- Reaching out to corporations about sponsorship opportunities for student groups

Additional Comments:

If you have any comments or suggestions on our work, feel free to reach out to ua-projects@mit.edu and let us know!

Committee on Education

Corinn Herrick

Email: ua-education-members@mit.edu

Past Month:

Student-faculty dinners are back! Undergraduates can sign up to take their favorite professor out to dinner at <http://ua.mit.edu/projects/student-faculty-dinners/>.

Current Projects:

Currently we are working on administering the student-faculty dinner program and improving the process for reporting violations. We are in a state of leadership transition and are working to finalize our policy and projects agenda.

Future Plans:

At our meeting next week we will be finalizing our future plans for the committee.

Financial Board

Jitesh Maiyuran

Email: finboard@mit.edu

Past Month:

Finboard has been processing appeals over the last three weeks, and all groups should have received a spreadsheet outlining the final allocations for this semester. For this cycle of allocations, we tried to meet with as many groups as possible to explain the appeals process and how we go about making allocations and funding different needs for student groups. Finboard also worked with the Society of Women Engineers to allocate close to \$9,000 to groups with a diversity initiative. With their help, we were able to meet as many needs as possible for the different groups. Within the next few days, we will also be corresponding with groups regarding funding concerns.

Current Projects:

Now that the fall cycle is over, we will be creating a timeline for the next cycle so that there isn't a delay, and allocations are released before the semester ends. Also, we will be aiming to hold seminars for all group treasurers to clarify the funding application process. This will allow more groups to submit valid proposal the first time around; with clear funding needs and proper accounting, groups can expedite the allocation process. After meeting with the Student Activities Office and the Graduate Student Council, we also will be working to ease the reimbursement process and also increase accountability.

Future Plans:

NA

Sustainability Committee

Linda Jing

Email: ua-sustainability-chairs@mit.edu

Past Month:

Our Composting committee has set up the initial infrastructure at Burton Conner and will be beginning composting at respective suites.

Our Garden Committee just had their Herb Gathering event on 10/24 (Saturday) at our community garden in the parking lot across from Next House.

Our Trashion Committee has been reaching out to sponsors for our annual Trashion Show, which will be held in Lobdell on December 4th this year. Our application for designers is closing on October 30, so if you are interested in designing a costume, or know any friends who would be interested, remember to get your application in! The link to the application is:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/155rvvdouFUq3Q1SwS_ozm_Fhd2DAPIGQSNt6SYSCKR8/viewform

Current Projects:

The release of the MIT Climate Change Action Plan has spurred much discussion among student groups. UA Sustainability is currently discussing the plan, and outlining the most effective plan of action.

Our Special Operations Committee is introducing Terracycling on campus. This program promotes non-traditional recycling, such as chip bags that would normally be thrown away as waste. We will be in the student center the first week of November. Feel free to come talk to us and learn more about the program. You can also learn more about the program at <https://www.terracycle.com/en-US/>.

Our ECO committee has been and will continue to reach out to the MIT community about our ECO Foodware program. Our prices are discounted and even cheaper than what you can buy at Costco! The link to our order form is:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1mNwPDDAkzYTLjcDt0i-huhZf-u7XTKutp68WnmK9_aQ/viewform

Future Plans:

Our composting committee will be hosting a study break in BC to hand out compost bins and educate the general community. We hope to take the model that have been developed at BC and apply it to other non-dining dorms.

Our garden committee will be handing out plants to undergraduates who would like to see some more greenery in their own dorm.

Additional Comments:

If you have any thoughts on the MIT Climate Action Plan, please convey that message through your respective class representatives and feel free to email ua-sustainability-chairs@mit.edu.

Student-Administrator Collaboration Committee

Lilly Chin

Email: ua-sac@mit.edu

Past Month:

1. Entire committee met with Charles Stewart. Strongly advocated not going for formal committee like we were going for, but informal one
2. Got referred by GSC President to talk to GSC Housing Chairs. So far, no response
3. Current Divide in whether we want the committees to be of a formal nature (official minutes, charge, etc.) or an informal nature (group of "wise people" who meet and use connections to whisper into other's ears) or some mix of the two (wise people committee who still publish an annual report of what they decide? Public dinners where anyone's free to come but primarily for wise people to meet?, etc.)

Current Projects:

Continued conversation about what we want the institute-wide committee to look like. This is pretty blocking to any other initiatives because we can't do much without having a solid direction of where we want this to go.

Future Plans:

A lot of logistical things were punted last meeting because of the meeting with Charles Stewart and the direction change. Will get back onto the bandwagon after this.