Dear Undergrads:

We thank you for your faith in us in the recent election, and, as the future UA President and Vice President, we are dedicated to being representative of the undergraduate student body in our upcoming term. In the process of alleviating the recent issues with student engagement, we look forward to:

- Restoring trust between students and the administration
- Compiling a full, comprehensive report on all aspects of student life
- Continuing constant communication and engagement of students

We also hope to:

- Enhance student spaces and Athena workstations
- Create a UA Help Desk that compiles student resources onto one website

We understand that currently there is much discussion over the structural changes to the UA. However, we will devote our time to making the UA more efficient and effective. We intend to create unity not only within our organization but with other organizations and the student body as a whole. We are looking for feedback and advice on the restructuring; so, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Once again, we look forward to and are thrilled to be granted the opportunity to represent the students. Thank you very much for your support.

Sincerely,

Allan Miramonti, UA President-Elect
Alec Lai, UA Vice President-Elect
Reed and Grimson Visit UA Senate

Two leaders of the MIT community have visited Senate recently: John Reed, the Chairman of the MIT Corporation, and Eric Grimson, the Chancellor. In their respective visits, both administrators provided the UA with an hour of knowledge and insight.

John Reed began with a discussion on the Corporation, essentially the MIT Board of Trustees which has “the responsibility for the proper functioning of the institution at some level.” For example, they select the MIT President. In the subsequent exchange, Senate learned of the importance of institute visiting committees to the Corporation. Having used $667 million last year from our endowment (around 6.67%), Reed hopes to keep watch the future finances. Reed wants to keep MIT competitive as a technical institution, but, in the process, he will not sacrifice the unique, innovative qualities that define the MIT experience. In terms of student engagement, Reed recommended looking towards our new Chancellor for aid. A few weeks later, Chancellor Grimson stopped by to give us a little background on himself. Grimson says, “My first priority is to listen,” and he will try to create many opportunities for all students, not just student leaders, to provide feedback. Grimson does not intend to give up teaching, as he finds it key to staying in touch with the students. He hopes that students will reestablish channels of trust with the administration as we move forward on new projects.

The Chancellor ended with, “We do many things extremely well at MIT. We are a world class institution. We generate unbelievable ideas... We do really good research. We do great entrepreneurship. We have superb faculty. Fundamentally, in my mind, the primary products of this place is our students.”

The UA thanks Reed for his words of advice, and we look forward to working with Chancellor Grimson in the future.

Results on the UA Dining Referendum

Not too long after the referendum was held (in conjunction with the UA elections), the results were released at the following link: http://web.mit.edu/elections/current/referendum-results.shtml. The website not only breaks the data down by living groups and class year, but it also provides distribution and column charts for the same categorical breakdowns.

Overall, we see that around 59.5% (949 students) of the undergraduates that responded disagreed with the recommendations made by the House Dining Advisory Group (HDAG). Specifically for freshmen, to whom the dining plan should have been properly outlined prior to the school year, 57.7% (365 students) are still dissatisfied.

For the second question that addresses the process followed by the HDAG in constructing the recommendations, 59.6% (951 students) of the undergraduates were dissatisfied with the process.

Modi, the UA President, plans to bring these dining referendum results to Chancellor Grimson soon. He will be presenting it as factual data, and the amount of interpretation will be outlined closer to date. If you have any further questions, or comments feel free to email ua@mit.edu.
**Update on the Orientation Committee**

On March 3, 2011, the Committee on Orientation received a charge to “ensure the program balances student life, academics, and research and sets the stage for the intellectual journey upon which first-year students are about to embark.” Specifically, it’s been charged to:

- Examine all aspects and activities associated with Orientation.
- Collect data on these activities, including the use of past reports.
- Develop principles for the appropriate balance between these activities.
- Investigate changes to Orientation that may improve the Orientation experience for newly arrived first-year students, help the program be more efficient and productive, better prepare first-year students for the challenge they are about to encounter.
- Develop and find consensus on a set of recommendations that describe an excellent and appropriate Orientation program for MIT in the 21st century.

The Committee should submit a report by the end of the Fall 2011 term.

The group is composed of 16 members: 6 MIT Faculty or Housemasters, 6 student representatives, the Senior Associate Dean of DUE (Julie Norman), the Associate Dean of Programming (Elizabeth Young), the Senior Associate Dean for Students (Barbara Baker), and the Senior Associate Dean for Residential Life and Dining (Henry Humphreys). In addition, Leslie Bottari will sit as a Staff Associate. The six selected faculty are: Merrit Roe Smith, Chair and Housemaster of BC, John Essigmann, Housemaster for Simmons, June Matthews, Professor in Physics, Charles Stewart, Housemaster for McCormick, and Nina Davis Mills Housemaster for Random. The six UA approved student representatives are: James Douberley ’13, EC President, TyShuan Wynter ’13, New House President, Kimberly Sparling ’12, Panhel President, Patrick Hulin ’14, EC Resident, and Rachel Meyer ’12, an Off-Campus Student.

With regards to upcoming plans, Anna Babbi Klein reports, on behalf of Dean Hastings, that there will be a very active schedule. They plan on meeting at least seven times and will gather data and input through guest speakers of all sorts. By summer, the critical components, barriers, and potential changes will be outlined, and in the fall, the committee will continue to develop a vision for the Deans. This information may be found online at: [http://due.mit.edu/initiatives/review-committee-orientation](http://due.mit.edu/initiatives/review-committee-orientation).

**PE Credit for Club Sports**

The current status is that Club Sports do not receive PE credit. “The PE GIR provides supervised, intentional, methodical instruction for the skill acquisition by certified instructors...Club sports are student initiated and student sustained organizations intended to provide MIT students with leadership opportunities.” (http://web.mit.edu/clubsports/PE_credit.pdf). The best solution as of now is that any club sport can propose a course through the PE system. DAPER will review it, and work with the team to construct a course with the properly trained staff and outlined syllabus. The future of this will hopefully broaden the limited scope of PE credit to Club Sports which demonstrate the satisfaction of the PE GIR requirements without modifying the team to a class.

Michael Walsh, Chair of Athletics
Midnight Study Break, Success Again!

The week before spring break was painful for many students, chock full of exams and psets and papers. The UA held another midnight study break on Wednesday to give students a mid-week reprieve. Undergrads were excited and began lining up outside the Coffeehouse around 11:50. We served four delicious flavors of ice cream from Toscanini’s, complete with hot fudge, whipped cream, and an assortment of delectable toppings, and every ounce of ice cream was consumed by around 12:30. At the study break, students were also encouraged to talk to UA representatives, read and take UA newsletters, and give feedback on three current issues: suggestions for LaVerde’s, problems with dorm facilities, and things that students want professors to know. By the end of the study break, three large sheets were entirely covered with comments and suggestions from the almost 300 students who came. These were delivered to the Space Planning, Housing, and Educational Policy committee chairs, and were very helpful to their policy and planning work. Be on the lookout for the next UA Midnight Study Break on Wednesday, May 4!

Janet Li, Chair of Public Relations

UA Updates: Stata Plugs & UA Restructuring

Since the Dining Referendum bill passed, asking the UA to hold a binding referendum on the HDAG proposed dining plan in conjunction with elections, some more legislation has been passed. One in particular asked the UA Senate to fund $1200 for power outlets in the Stata Center, “specifically, around the benches that are outside of the fitness room and across from the child day care center.”

In addition, Senate passed 42 UAS 14.1, tasking an Ad Hoc Committee on Restructuring to examine the structure of the UA and other student governments at MIT. In particular, it will also look at the newly proposed structure of Vrajesh Modi, the UA President, which substitutes senators with dorm presidents and the presidents of IFC, Panhel, and LGC, with an extra off-campus representative. The new system hopes to make the “UA Council” more of an advisory board to the UA President, making decisions and resolving issues by consensus between these originally separate systems. Accordingly, the bill for such a constitution was named the “Bill to Unify Undergraduate Student Voice at MIT.”

The committee, chaired by Tim Jenks, a current senator for fraternities, has had multiple public meetings and plans to hold many more. We want student input to be involved in the process. Feel free to attend these open meetings in the UA Office (W20-401). If you have ideas, improvements, or suggestions, you may contact ua-restructure-chairs@mit.edu. If you only want to receive updates, you may join the public list: ua-restructure-listeners. The UA will keep undergraduates updated, and we look forward to hearing your opinions.