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Upcoming Events

Exec Meetings
Wed 12/1, 7:00pm
Simmons (W20-401)
Wed 12/8, 7:00pm
UA Office (W20-401)

Senate Meetings
Mon 12/6, 7:30pm
W20-400

End of the semester!
Good luck on finals!
The UA wishes you a great vacation.

FinBoard Reform to be Implemented this Spring

The UA Finance Board (FinBoard) is responsible for allocating money to undergraduate student groups. With over 200 eligible groups, we’re constantly looking for ways to help student groups with operational expenses and with event funding. This semester, FinBoard has been working closely with the SAO and the UA President, Vice President, and Treasurer to come up with ideas to help FinBoard better serve student groups.

For the upcoming semester, we have made three major changes:

- We have removed the caps on costumes and travel expenses, and instead, we plan on providing funding for these on a case-by-case basis.
- FinBoard will provide more funding for medium sized events. This will help student groups fund events that are bigger than the average general body meeting but are too small to qualify for LEF/ARCADE funding.
- The spring semester will be split into two funding cycles. This will give student groups a chance to more accurately plan events that occur later in the semester.

More details about policies can be found at our website at ua.mit.edu/funding/finboard/. We hope that those changes will help student groups better plan their activities and more effectively use allocated money.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions, concerns, comments or suggestions at finboard@mit.edu.

Cynthia Bouldrick, Chair of FinBoard
Ellen McIsaac, UA Treasurer

UA Working with IS&T on Changes to Athena and Printing

IS&T is moving forward with the implementation of a new campus-wide printing system. It will involve a hold-and-release system similar to the printers in Baker and the first floor of the Student Center (Lerman). More trial runs should be conducted starting this January; the plan should undergo full deployment this summer. Both IS&T and the UA are committed to gathering student feedback about the implementation. In particular, the UA Printing Committee is looking for input on paper quota, optimal printer placement, locations for implementation, and the demand for student access to scripting for the Pharos API. Send comments to ua-printing@mit.edu.

Allan Miramonti, Chair on Athena Printing
**UA Seeks to Strengthen Relations with Alumni**

MIT has great students and great alumni. The students have everything to gain by maintaining a relationship with our alumni, and the committee on Alumni Relations has been revived to foster this relationship.

MIT is unique in that we choose where we want to live. Thus, we have close communities centered around our living groups. This UA committee wants to help living groups reach out to their alumni so that student-alumni interactions can be as meaningful as possible. Our goal is to help dorms and FSILGs that are interested in reaching out to their alumni.

The Alumni Association already has an infrastructure in place so that students can contact their alumni, but many students do not know how to use it. We want to help students use this resource effectively. We will also encourage dorms to update their blurbs on the alumni website, so alumni may be more inclined to donate to dorm projects.

In addition, we would like to have many more events. We want to increase alumni presence on campus in courses open houses and career info sessions. This spring, we will also be launching Student-Alumni Dinners, which are modeled after the successful Student-Faculty Dinner program. We think that it would be great for students to have the chance to talk with an alum to get advice and to network. It would also give the alum a chance to learn about the students' current views on MIT and to keep in touch with the heart of MIT.

Ashley Nash, Chair of Alumni Relations

**UA Sustainability CFL Exchange Program Successful**

As one of our priorities, the Sustainability Committee has been providing students with the resources necessary to be sustainable. This is why we’ve worked to expand composting in dorms and helped bring reusable take-out containers to dining halls.

At the beginning of this fall, Jennifer K. Liu ’14, one of our committee members, began planning the light bulb Dorm Storm that recently occurred. Over the week of November 14th, we went door to door in every dorm offering students the opportunity to exchange their bulbs. In this way, the UA Sustainability Committee exchanged 1000 incandescent light bulbs for CFLs (compact fluorescent light bulbs). The program has been far more successful than we could have imagined; in fact, we often would run out of light bulbs to exchange. Since each light bulb uses less than ¼ the energy that a regular 60W bulb uses, we estimate that this project will save MIT roughly $15,000-$35,000 over the lifetime of these bulbs.

This is just one of the projects that the UA Sustainability committee has undertaken this year. We have been working with the administration on motion sensor lighting, increasing the efficiency of the heating system, and expanding the use of biodiesel in MIT vehicles.

If you have any concerns or have any sustainability issues you feel the UA should be pursuing, email ua-sustainability@mit.edu.

Krishna Esteva, Chair of Sustainability
Student-Faculty Dinners Program Grows by 60%

Educational policy is one of the things students and faculty care most about at the Institute. So, not surprisingly, the Student Committee on Educational Policy (SCEP) has always been one of the most active committees on the UA. In the past, we have worked with faculty on several issues including GIR changes, advising, and proposed majors/minors. Our two year-round projects are running student faculty dinners and handling academic violations.

Student Faculty Dinners: The program encourages a group of three to six students and a professor to go out for a nice meal. The cost of the meal is on us, as we reimburse up to $20 per person for the students and the professor. This semester, we have already had 574 students registered for 129 dinners in our system, an increase from 304 students and 81 dinners last semester. Originally designed to augment the formal advising system with informal dinner conversations, this program has been a great success for students and professors.

Violations: While it may not always seem like it, MIT does believe in work-life balance and the faculty have rules to enforce this. In particular, near the end of the term, classes are allowed no tests after December 3, no assignments for classes with finals after that date, and at most 1 assignment for classes without finals. This semester we have resolved violations in 14 classes, and violations can be reported at any time anonymously at violations.mit.edu.

Apart from student faculty dinners and violations, we are also trying to assess the impact of the upcoming increase in enrollment on the Institute, and trying to make sure the most important groups affected by it (such as GIR subjects, advising, UROP, financial aid) are prepared. In addition, we are researching on the quality of TA’s in undergraduate classes and are working with the administration in an attempt to get a better system in place for selection of TA’s.

Radhika Malik, Vice-Chair of SCEP

Food Runs Out at Midnight Study Break

The UA held its first ever Midnight Study Break at 11:59 pm on Wednesday, November 3 in the Coffeehouse of the Student Center. The purpose of the event was simply to spread some good cheer and give students a chance to take a break from their hectic MIT lives. It was autumn-themed and included festive fall foods like pie and apple cider. There was huge turnout for the Study Break. Some of the traffic came from the Reading Room, where Tim the Beaver encouraged students to come and take a break. While people were waiting in line, UA reps handed out blank sheets of paper for students to write down any concerns or ideas they had for the UA. Also present was a colorful "Wheel of Topics," filled with student life issues. Students had fun spinning the wheel and learning more about all of the different areas the UA is working to improve.

The UA is definitely planning on having more of these throughout the year. We are hoping to have our next one on December 8, and we will make sure to have lots of food!

Janet Li, Chair of Public Relations
Senate Holds Outreach Events

As student representatives, Senators make use of UA funds to promote communication with residents of their living group. Over the past couple months, their efforts have culminated in several study breaks where students were encouraged to voice their concerns on issues as diverse as enrollment, Athena printing, dining, the Student Center's "game room," and the Kendall Square initiative. The tone and focus of each event has been tailored to the interests and culture of each living group, and in many cases, Senators used surveys to assist them in planning the event. Often, UA Committee Chairs and Officers were invited to provide detailed information on a specific issue.

As an attendee at most of these study breaks, I can attest to the high degree of engagement fostered by these events. It is one of the few examples where student representatives are able to speak directly with their constituents about an issue, and those interactions have led to useful and insightful discussions on the Senate floor. These face-to-face interactions not only aid the Senators, but they provide residents with a way to keep Senators honest to their living group's positions on key campus issues.

I encourage undergraduates to make use of these opportunities to get involved with campus decision-making. I believe you'll find your Senators highly receptive to your opinion and, at the very least, you'll score some free food or entertainment.

Jonté Craighead, Speaker of the Senate

Learning from the Past: UA Data Vault

The UA has been the primary voice for undergraduates for decades, but because each student is only here for four years, it can be difficult to keep ideas alive. The UA History Committee is working on several projects to improve the way the UA functions. For example, we've gone through all of our Governing Documents to make sure they are up-to-date and consistently formatted. We've removed typos and added all the amendments.

We're also creating a UA Data Vault. In the past it was difficult for committee chairs and officers to know what data already existed about any given topic. The History Committee is compiling all of the UA's surveys, reports, legislation, minutes, and agendas in one easily accessible database. We've already loaded all of the material generated this year, and in the coming months, we'll be adding information from past years. We encourage all students to check out the site: ua.mit.edu/history/data. Each item has keyword tags to help you find exactly what you want. As always, if you have questions or comments please contact ua-history-chairs@mit.edu.

Adam Bockelie, Chair of History