Upcoming Events

No Senate or Exec meetings during IAP. Both will resume in February.

All UA meetings and events are announced on the Google calendar at ua.mit.edu.

Read this newsletter online at ua.mit.edu/news

UA Discusses Walker Memorial with Associate Provost

Currently, the Institute is looking to find additional space for Music and Theater Arts (MTA) and is dealing with a deferred maintenance issue on campus. Renovating Walker Memorial may kill two birds with one stone.

Two “arms” of the project are being carried out in parallel. On one side, architects have been asked to assess the building to determine whether the space meets MTA’s needs. That “arm” is being led by Facilities, the Office of Associate Provost Schmidt, and MTA.

At the same time, on the student engagement side, Prof. Martin Schmidt (Associate Provost), Mr. Dunbar, and Mr. Phil Walsh are meeting with stakeholders, developing a website, and planning forums.

The student engagement process is currently very fluid, and the UA has recommended that the ASA president and undergraduate and graduate reps be added to the working group. The UA believes that, with student reps on the working group, public detailed meeting notes, and a well-defined process and timeline, successful student engagement will be possible. More details on how to provide input will be sent out soon.

Vrajesh Modi, UA President
Prof. Martin Schmidt, Associate Provost

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Over 125 Attend UA-Sponsored East Campus Alumni Event

Recently, the UA Committee on Alumni Relations supported East Campus's second semi-annual Alumni Friday Afternoon Club (FAC). Over 30 alumni and 100 current residents attended the event.

"We had fantastic interactions between the alums and the students, and many [alums] stayed for well over two hours, touring the building and sharing stories from back in the day," said EC President Robin Deits.

The Committee on Alumni Relations hopes to continue to support such events. Contact ua-car-chairs@mit.edu with questions or with funding requests.
UA Continues to Increase Funding for Student Groups

This fall, the UA raised the FinBoard allocation by 37%, relative to last spring. In mid-December, the UA continued to support student groups by increasing the allocation by an additional 13% (relative to last spring).

In the most recent funding cycle (i.e., 2011 IAP/Spring I), FinBoard was able to fund 69% of requests, up from 52% in the previous cycle and 48% in the cycle before that.

More funding, coupled with the improvements to FinBoard policies that will be finalized during this IAP, will allow a greater fraction of the student group funding needs to be met. The Ad-Hoc Committee on FinBoard Policy will operate over IAP and will be chaired by Ellen McIsaac, the UA Treasurer.

Rate SafeRide Drivers

The UA Committee on Student Life will begin collecting feedback on SafeRide drivers on an ongoing basis. A short summary will be sent monthly to the MIT Parking and Transportation Office. The summary will include ratings and comments, along with recommendations for the Driver of the Month award.

Please help us improve the SafeRide system by submitting your feedback at ua.mit.edu/rateyourdriver.

Chancellor Search

A committee of undergraduates and graduate students will participate in this search by making recommendations to President Hockfield on qualities and priorities that they would like to see in the new chancellor. President Hockfield will then make the final decision.

The UA will collect ideas from students and take them into account when making recommendations. If you have any opinions or traits you would like to see in the chancellor, please fill out the form at ua.mit.edu/chancellorsearch.
Student-Faculty Dinners Expanded to Include IAP

Due to the great success of Student-Faculty Dinners this past semester, UA SCEP will continue this program over IAP.

The same policies will apply — IAP will simply be treated as an additional term. The program will also be run during the spring semester.

UA Accomplishments: Fall 2010

A primary goal for the fall was to improve communication, so the specific steps that were taken are listed here in detail. Highlights from committees are also included here; full details will be available in the Fall 2010 End-of-Semester Report, which will be published on the UA website during IAP.

This semester, the following steps were taken to improve UA communication:
- Weekly booth in the student center
- Weekly office hours for UA officers
- Weekly UA updates in the Tech
- Monthly newsletters
- Monthly 'Midnight Study Break'
- Semesterly 'Dinner with the UA'
- Campus-wide survey
- Exec meetings in dorms
- UA blog
- Online “Data Vault”
- Issue-based letters to undergrads from the UA President and VP
- Online summaries and detailed minutes for Senate and Exec Meetings

Committee highlights:
- Resource Development: Managed Star Market and Trader Joe’s shuttles
- Information Systems: Implemented the UA blog
- Alumni Relations: Sponsored East Campus Alumni Event
- History: Implemented Data Vault
- SCEP: Expanded Student-Faculty Dinners
- Student Life: Implemented Rate Your SafeRide Driver
- Sustainability: Organized CFL Exchange in the dormitories

150 Attend Midnight Study Break; Food Runs Out Again

Seeing the great attendance at the November Midnight Study Break and the useful feedback on the comment cards, the UA Committee on Public Relations decided to hold another Midnight Study Break. This time, there was hot chocolate, apple cider, coffee, cookies, fruit, and the special feature of the day — desserts from Mike’s Pastry!

The room overflowed with undergraduates, and so did our comment box. The UA received useful feedback on the topics of dining, game room usage, enrollment, and the chancellor search. UA Officers and Committee Chairs in attendance also enjoyed talking to students about their experience. More study breaks are planned for the upcoming semester.

We hope that students will also choose to voice their opinions and concerns more proactively by emailing ua@mit.edu.

Due to the great success of Student-Faculty Dinners this past semester, UA SCEP will continue this program over IAP.”
Summary of Senate Legislation from Fall 2010

This fall, Senate passed legislation in response to various student issues and concerns. Some bills were passed to investigate aspects of student life and space, while others provided funding for student groups and programs.

For example, the very first bill discussed the usage of the Student Center Game Room, and another bill established the Committee on Alumni Relations, which already sponsored an alumni event at East Campus. Another bill established an Ad-Hoc Committee on Athena Printing to help with the implementation of upcoming changes, and yet another bill tasked various members of Exec to examine the impact of the enrollment increase. At its most recent meeting Senate created the Ad-Hoc Committee on FinBoard Policy and tasked the Committee on Student Life to launch the “Rate Your SafeRide Driver” program.

In addition, Senate has funded multiple projects, events, and student groups directly through legislation. The UA Committee on Student Life was given $520 to help run the Fall Wellness Day and Capture the Beaver events. MITERS was allocated $300 for the MEETERS event. $476 was provided to fund an IAP massage class. Furthermore, a contribution of $1200 was made to fund the Bad Ideas Weekend to help improve its cross-campus nature. For theater student groups that use La Sala de Puerto Rico in the Student Center, $10,000 was allocated to purchase a brand new lighting board.

Meet the UA: Alec Lai, UA Secretary-General

Alec Lai is a sophomore in Course 11 and 12 who lives at Next House. He manages UA communication internally and externally, and is responsible for information flow. Outside of the UA, Alec is President-Elect and former RAC at Next House, and he runs a Quiz Bowl business. Originally from Cleveland, but born in Taiwan, Alec is also a breakdancer. Alec's favorite class at MIT was 5.310. "It was my first real hands-on lab class," he remarked. He also looks forward to taking 9.70 (Social Psychology) and 11.123 (Big Plans and Mega-Urban Landscapes) before graduating.

When asked for a random fact about himself, Alec mentioned that he has an open door policy, so a lot of people come to him for life and relationship advice. He also mentioned that his favorite animal is the phoenix. Alec’s "need for aesthetic perfectionism" is largely responsible for the quality of the UA Newsletter this year.