

**Addendum to the Statement of the  
UA Ad Hoc Committee on  
Student-Administrator Collaboration**  
Research and Related Past Actions

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# 1 Residential Life

## 1.1 Dining

The 1990s saw multiple attempts to revamp the dining programs, but many stalled, derailed, or narrowed in scope due to student opposition to mandatory meal plans which were often proposed. For example, when an expensive all-you-can-eat option was added to try to improve the profitability of dining halls in 1993, students resisted the high price tag, and so the Institute closed half of the dining halls—the ones in MacGregor and McCormick. Finally, a system with an up-front fee and a la carte meals at half price was adopted for Simmons Halls opening in 2002. The other dining halls also adopted this plan, and the closed dining halls reopened. [22]

In October 2007, the Blue Ribbon Committee on Dining (BRC) was charged with comprehensively examining the dining system at MIT. The BRC consisted of relevant administrators, along with many student leaders, including multiple years of UA and DormCon executive officers and dining dorm presidents. [54] While the BRC worked to complete its research and recommendations, dining became a hot topic on campus. In early 2008, a decision was made to remove the floor-kitchens in W1 (the future Maseeh Hall) in favor of a large dining hall, despite a lack of input from the students of the W1 steering committee, who did not agree with the decision. [39]

Dining was once again in the spotlight during February 2009, when recommendations made by Envision Strategies (the consultant group used by BRC) leaked to the MIT community. [22] Around this time, the UA created the Dining Proposal Committee (UA DPC), a student committee to provide an alternate proposal for a new dining system.

In April 2009, both BRC and the UA DPC released their reports. Due to discontent with the Envision Strategies proposal, BRC rejected that proposal in favor of their own. [13] While both reports suggested expanded dining options, such as extended breakfast and all-you-can-eat options, the UA DPC report maintains that students in dining dorms should not have a high minimum contribution to dining. In fact, the UA DPC report recommends the closing of three dining halls in favor of one large, centralized facility.

After gathering feedback, the end of the 2008-09 school year saw the release of an updated, final report from BRC. This report represented recommendations to the MIT Division of Student Life (DSL), but no direct actions. [14, 54]

Throughout summer and fall of 2009, dining was a quiet topic on campus. In October 2009, Chris Colombo, the Dean of DSL, stated that there would be no changes to dining for the 2009-10 school year, as administrators waited for the results of discussions and recommendations of the Institute-wide Planning Task Force, which was now discussing the issue. Later that term, the UA pressed for updates on dining changes and plans, and in early 2010, DSL said it would reassess dining due to financial deficits in the current program. [42, 46] The House Dining Advisory Group (HDAG) discussed dining, and included MIT administrators, faculty, and Housemasters, as well as student representatives from some dining dorms and a UA representative.

In April-August of 2010, many concerns were raised about the transparency and representativeness of HDAG. Some of the student body contended that HDAG wasn't keeping

students informed, and that the process wasn't receiving accurate/representative student input. [43, 3, 4, 51]

In September 2010, HDAG released its final report recommending a dining plan for Fall 2011. [24]

In response to student dissatisfaction about the report, in mid-October 2010, the UA passed a bill urging Chancellor Clay to intervene/halt the dining plan. [56]

However, the response to this bill was essentially that it is too late in the game, and that the recommendation will not change. [16]

This was frustrating to students, who felt they did not have much of a chance to provide input earlier due to the way HDAG was organized. In late October, the UA representative to HDAG resigned, stating in *The Tech* that HDAG was just going through the motions. [66, 59] In early November 2010, there was much debate over the legitimacy of the representation. The *Tech's* editorial board contends that it failed to represent students, while the three dining dorm presidents on HDAG say that the UA representative mischaracterized HDAG's approach and that the Group took student input seriously throughout the process. [2, 33]

Around that time, HDAG also released a fact-sheet to summarize the 112 page HDAG proposal, while the Chancellor and various Deans defended the dining recommendations as long-time-coming actions. [17, 21]

The rest of November 2010 saw a divide across campus about the dining plan. Online petitions were launched against the recommendations, which got over 1000 student signatures very quickly. Meanwhile, some Housemasters and several athletic coaches wrote in support of the HDAG plan. [19, 23, 5, 64]

In response, the end of November saw some cheaper plans and lunch options added to the HDAG plan, but students were still dissatisfied. [18]

In December 2010, there was a protest held over dining, but it was only weakly attended. [58] The MIT Corporation discussed dining in January 2011, but no changes were suggested. [47]

In March 2011, results of a dining poll indicated that students were largely against it, even in dining dorms. However, the UA planned no further action, likely sensing that any action would be considered too late to impact the plans that were already moving forward. [36]

As the dining plan began to be implemented in Fall 2010, a survey revealed that, while freshman liked the dining plan, upperclassmen did not. [62] By November 2012, enrollment in the dining program had increased about 10%. [40] In Spring 2013, *The Tech* ran a large dining survey. The results showed that students were still dissatisfied, particularly with food quality. MIT said it would assess dining again in 2014. [7, 27]

## 1.2 Orientation

A key issue that affects all students, especially incoming students, is the idea of and programming within Orientation—and programs related to Orientation, such as Freshman Pre-Orientation Programs (FPOPs) and fraternity, sorority, and independent living group (FSILG) Rush and Recruitment.

From past research, changes to Orientation have been proposed by various bodies, committees, and persons every few years in the past couple of decades. In the 2010-2011 academic year, administrators proposed numerous changes to 2011 Orientation, including shortening REX from three days to one day, which seemed to be the most contentious issue. [48] However, given strong student opposition, including an emergency meeting held by the UA where students expressed many of their concerns, many changes were withdrawn or postponed. The changes that were implemented were minor, seemingly non-controversial changes to FPOPs and International Orientation. [41, 63]

This particular instance seemed to cause some distrust and distress for students. This was in part due to students not fully understanding why these changes were proposed, and administrators not clearly articulating why they were pursuing these changes. On the one hand, students felt that the changes were driven by a desire to save MIT some money; on the other hand, administrators were pointing to past reports recommendations (though the cited reports did not actually make any recommendations regarding Orientation) and their feeling that freshmen are too tired during the first week of classes because of events like REX. [48]

Because of this strong pushback, and because the administrators still wanted to make changes to Orientation, the Review Committee on Orientation was created in March of 2011 and consisted of students, faculty, and staff. The committee was charged with reviewing all of the Orientation programs, including FPOPs and FSILG Rush. The committee held its first forum on November 21, 2011. [48] Throughout the process, it seems that student input was taken into consideration to a considerable degree.

On February 13, 2012, the Review Committee on Orientation issued its final report. Among the changes, some of the most important were that FPOP schedules be synchronized, that students have more time to decide on whether they want to live in an FSILG, and that REXs goals be re-articulated. Furthermore, the Committee recommended that CityDays be removed from Orientation to the academic year. [55] This particular issue on CityDays received strong criticism from many students, but the decision stood and will not be reversed. [9]

In April of 2012, the Committee released its final decisions, which included the changing of the adjustment lottery to the First Year Residence Exchange (FYRE) program and the implementation of a housing fee for incoming students who participate in FPOPs and must live on campus during that time.[15]

In the 2012-2013 academic year, the UA created a Working Group on Orientation that addressed these changes and issued its own report addressing various issues. This working group was charged with issuing its own recommendations based on its research, including looking at 2012 Orientation. With the issuance of the report, almost every administrator contacted expressed some level of frustration or confusion that this report was written at all, and many merely discounted it. Thus, the report has become somewhat moot at this point.

### 1.3 Residential Life Area Directors (RLADs)

On May 29, 2012, Chancellor Grimson emailed the Housemasters with a decision that almost all dorms would receive a staff member who would live in the dorm, except for EC, Random, and Bexley (explained further below). The new position was called Residential Life Area Director, or RLAD. (Currently, many administrators refer to the position as Area Director or AD while most students still use RLAD given that this original email used that term.) Given how students were informed of this new position, distrust of administrators by students grew and persists today.

A few days later on June 2, the email was leaked anonymously to MIT students with an image of the letter the Chancellor had sent to Housemasters. [31] Within minutes, students began sending emails to their dorms and to one another to discuss these issues. The next day, June 3, DormCon representatives met with Dean Humphreys to discuss the letter and its impact on dorms. Primarily, Dean Humphreys apologized for the leak since the letter was only meant for Housemasters. Part of the discussion centered on the exact role of RLADs, which had yet to be fully fleshed out, as well as on the process and transparency (or lack thereof) of creating and implementing this new role. Further, it was stated that all dorms would have an RLAD associated with them, so none could opt out; however, Bexley would share an RLAD with Maseeh, Random would share an RLAD with Simmons, and EC would share an RLAD with Senior House—with the RLAD living in each pairs latter dorm. At the end of the meeting, Dean Humphreys stated that it was not the administrators intent to take anyone by surprise. [60]

Given the lack of understanding with regard to why this role was created, how RLADs would be selected, and why students were not consulted about this before the leak, many expressed their concerns publicly as well as privately. On June 8, GRTs from across campus wrote an editorial in the Tech expressing their concerns over their perceived flaws in the process and proposal. They suggested having more focus on revamping support services for students that have been cut. [8]. In the same Tech edition, Grimson defended the RLAD position by emphasizing that the RLADs will support, not replace, house teams. Moreover, Grimson cited the hard academic year (2011-2012), caused partially by multiple student deaths, and subsequent meetings he supposedly had with students, staff, faculty, alumni, and parents. [32] However, it is not clear when or where these meetings took place, and if they were formal or informal conversations.

After the leak, the exact roll-out of the RLAD position changed. On July 2, a new timeline was posted by the Division of Student Life. [53] In the new proposal, only five dorms would receive RLADs in the first phase in the fall. [25] On July 16 and 17, dorm student leaders and housemasters interviewed RLAD candidates and provided DSL with ranked feedback. Those dorms that were not receiving RLADs were still able to interview candidates and ask questions. For instance, Random was present at some meetings. For some students involved in the process, they are unclear as to how seriously their preferences were taken into consideration, especially in relation to housemasters.

Initially, the exact role and responsibilities of the RLAD were not made clear to students and house teams, leading to much concern. On July 23, then-UA President Jonte Craighead sent an email to students with a link to the DSL websites more detailed role

of the description. Unfortunately, the specific webpage in question cannot be accessed at this time.

During the summer and fall of 2012, the UA and DormCon attempted to run a survey about RLADs, but were essentially shut down by DSL and Institute Research. From what students who were involved in this attempted survey could recall, the administrators did not want professionals to come to MIT while students release survey responses stating that 90% of students do not want them at MIT.

On August 1, students provided feedback and concerns from the interview process. [52] Later that month, on August 31, the RLAD for MacGregor left her role, citing personal reasons. [26] On that same day, the Tech published an editorial outlining seven main reasons for this whole process potentially hurting student-admin relations: the unknown of when DSL intended to announce the position publicly, the suddenness and quickness of the implementation, the virtual lack of any student engagement regarding the issue, the inconsistency in the administrators messaging on the position, the sudden departure of the MacGregor RLAD, the fact that no RLAD would agree to interview with the Tech, and the fact that [t]he day after The Tech ran its August 1 article on new RLAD hires and referenced their LinkedIn.com profiles, those profiles were taken down or made private. [6] SAC further echoes these comments, and believes most of these still have yet to be satisfactorily addressed by administrators.

On September 18, Next House leadership defended the process, claiming it was not a failure. [11] The next week, on September 25, Cory Hernandez countered the Next House article point-by-point, delineating issues with their points and the process as a whole. [37] Some of Corys arguments were similar to the Techs editorial on August 31.

Over the fall semester, much controversy among students ebbed since most of the conversations surrounding RLADs were happening at a high level, with little student involvement. On January 30, 2013, it was announced that Bexley, EC, Random, and Baker would receive RLADs in Fall 2013. However, Senior House would still not receive an RLAD because Humphreys and the Senior House Housemaster, Agustin Rayo, were still working out exactly what Senior Houses needs were. [28] Later, on February 5, it was announced that all dorms but Senior House would have an RLAD, and that the Bexley RLAD would also be the RLAD for Random. [30]

All-in-all, a few articles have pointed out the issues with the process. Before the leak, it is clear that administrators had been discussing the potential position but did not solicit student input; or, if they did solicit student input, they did so without any other students knowledge. Further, administrators still have not stated when they had planned to tell students, given that they wanted to have RLADs hired before the Fall 2012 term began, yet students did not hear of RLADs until June 2, 2012. Clearly, when decisions are being made in the future, student input needs to be solicited much earlier, timelines need to be made clear from the get-go, and all interested parties need to be kept in the loop during the decision-making process.

## 2 Athletics

In 2004, an institute visiting committee came to evaluate DAPER and the athletics programs at MIT. The most important discussion points were determining the vitality of the current programs, specifically focusing on questions like: Was 41 varsity athletic sports the right number? How do we manage space issues, feasibility, etc., with regard to all DAPER activities? As a result, DAPER created a sub-committee consisting of faculty, staff, undergrads, grad students, and coaches to construct a document which outlined a process for evaluating each of the varsity teams.

Over the course of that year, the sub-committee created the Health and Vitality Assessment Process. This document consisted of a three-step process:

1. Annually review a subset of the MIT varsity teams
2. When necessary, refer any recommendation to the Department Head/Director of Athletics for further review
3. Have previously reviewed teams complete a Sport Information form to be reviewed each fall by the sub-committee

Recommendations arising from this would be forwarded to the Department Head/Director of Athletics.

As apart of step one, the subcommittee used the follow five points of emphasis to construct the initial reviews for each sport:

1. Student Interest
2. Managing Impact Issues
3. Expenses
4. Title IX
5. Coaching/Program Leadership

The document also outlined the departments level of support and service it would provide for a sport to maintain varsity status as well as the sports responsibilities to retain varsity status. Upon reviewing a team, there were three grades the subcommittee could give a team: Healthy and Vital, Healthy and Vital with Risks and Vulnerabilities, and Watch Team.

Over the course of the next three years, DAPER graded each of the 41 athletic teams. This information was incredibly important because it helped determine areas of improvement for each team. Additionally, DAPER could utilize this information in situations where cuts were necessary. This became especially helpful during the recession in 2009 when DAPER budget cuts were being made and everything was on the table.

In an effort to gather student input before major decisions were made, DAPER held two town hall meetings to determine what should be considered. The purpose of these

town meetings was also to give information about the state of the matter and why each part was being considered. In order to publicize the event, DAPER utilized student involvement via the Student Athletic Advisory Committee (SAAC).

Students were not involved in the final decision-making process. After extensive evaluation and discussion, eight sports were cut: men's and women's ice hockey and gymnastics, wrestling, golf, Alpine skiing, and pistol.

There were the following common themes amongst the reduced programs:

- Variable and reduced student interest (low roster numbers)
- Reduced Nation Programs (MIT was 1 of 2 DIII Programs)
- Limited local competition
- Majority of competition again Club teams
- Practice and competition facilities off campus

As mentioned briefly earlier, student-athletes are often represented by the Student Athletic Advisory Committee (SAAC). The NCAA requires that each member institution have a SAAC on their campus. The SAAC works with team captains to relay information from DAPER and other stakeholders to students.

Additionally, DAPER conducts end-of-the-season surveys for all varsity teams. These surveys have been conducted for over 20 years and help determine strengths as well as areas for improvement for the varsity teams. As a component of this survey, athletes assess their coaches, the staff, the facilities, and more. There is also a student meeting run by a member of the DAPER staff.

Concerns with Student Admin Collaboration in Athletics involve a lack of time commitment and ability to stick with the process, especially in situations without a high tension topic; on the admin side, there needs to be more transparency with certain decision-making policies.

## **3 Academics**

### **3.1 Transition to “new 2A” in 2012**

The mechanical engineering department announced a new version of the 2-A curriculum in the spring of 2012. Prior to that announcement, input was gathered from numerous sources and a smooth transition was planned for the implementation of the new 2-A. This smooth transition, as well as the creation of a 2-A Student Advisory Committee allowed for continued information gathering after the curriculum was introduced.

Brandy Baker, the Course 2 undergraduate academic administrator, explained the motivation for the creation of this new curriculum. In an interview with The Tech published on April 10th, 2012, Baker cited the increased enrollment in 2-A as central: In the past, especially since we became accredited, 2-A has seen a large increase in

enrollment about 40-45 percent of Course 2 is 2-A. When the faculty reviewed the curriculum, the department realized there were enough students that we could design a curriculum specifically for 2-A. [20] A desire to better address the needs of students in the 2-A curriculum was also a strong motivator for the modification of the program.

Student input was gathered prior to the official announcement of the curriculum. Students, alumni, and faculty were all solicited for feedback on the proposed changes. Anette Hosoi, the course 2-A Program Coordinator at the time, noted a number of changes that were implemented as a result of student input. The two things we heard from the students were, Let us build right out of the gates, and give us some kind of programming experience that we can use in our upper-level courses, reports Professor Hosoi. As a result, both hands-on design classes and Matlab classes are provided early-on in the 2-A program. Additionally, faculty, students, and alumni requested the addition of linear algebra and statistics. As a result, these topics were also included in the new curriculum. [12] Finally, Baker mentions the addition of new classes to fulfill needs that students have been asking about for a long time, such as 2.678 (Electronics for Mechanical Systems). [20] Student input shaped many portions of the new 2A.

The broad support for and input to the new curriculum sped up the work. There was a lot of support (both among the the students and the faculty) and I think that's why the proposed curriculum went through so quickly. It was a well defined challenge with well defined constraints, Professor Hosoi says, highlighting the importance for broad support from many stakeholders to allow for quick work within the institute. [12]

Planning for the continued testing and modification of the curriculum after its announcement has helped to make the transition from the old 2-A program to the new seamless. The creation of an opt-in pilot system for the 2015 2-A class provided a slow move from old to new. Importantly, a group of students has been put together as a peer advisory board. Professor Hosoi explains, The ASME student chapter has put together a group of upperclassmen who will meet with us once a month or so, who can tell us Here are all of the questions I've been hearing, and we can give them answers to propagate back to the the general student population. [12] A wordpress blog (<http://course2a.wordpress.com/>) also helps disseminate information to the student body now that the curriculum is in place.

According to the Tech and Brandy Baker, the Course II administrator, here is a 2A Student Advisory Committee in place, consisting of two undergraduate students.[20]

### **3.2 Creation of 6-7 Major in 2011/2012**

At the faculty meet on November 17th, 2010 a joint major in courses 6 and 7 was proposed. The major was, basically unanimously endorsed, by EECS faculty according to Eric Grimson. The major has since been approved and has been a popular choice of major for undergraduates. Eric Grimson and Chris Kaiser had been working on the major since it was proposed within a task force five years prior. Although student input was not gathered through official channels, it has been fully accepted by the student body.

From its proposal onwards, Kaiser and Grimson were confident that students would

be interested in the new curriculum. According to Kaiser, Both biology faculty and CS faculty have been very interested in this area of computational biology for awhile. And there are MIT students who are very alert to new and exciting fields that have been interested as well. Kaiser also found support for their choice to create the major in, our advisees and the enrollment in the various bioinformatics courses that exist. Its become something that we just see so clearly, Kaiser reported to The Tech on November 23rd, 2010. [38] No focus groups or surveys were used to gather further student input.

There was a recognition that student input after the formation of the major would be valuable. The Tech reported that the committee in charge of the development of the major planned to gather input from students enrolled in the major as well as from industry once the major was established. Note the similarity here to the student committee supporting the continued development of 2-A following its introduction in spring 2012. [38]

Although a successful example of policy change, the practice of waiting to gather student input after the public announcement of a change may invite not only objection from the student body, but also poorly designed policy. Professor Hazel Sive argues that this informal information gathering is sufficient: We knew that students from both course 6 and course 7 were taking the previously single U subject in computational biology. The new very popular 6-7 major is therefore an outcome of both student and faculty input.

### **3.3 Creation of new 7.01x classes in Fall 2013**

Recently, two additional subjects, 7.015 and 7.016, were added as options to satisfy the Biology General Institute Requirement (GIR). Through student comments made on subject evaluations and to advisors, it became clear that the 7.01x subjects were overcrowded. This, in combination with a desire to provide students with strong biology backgrounds a more advanced subject, prompted the creation of the two new subjects. Further student input was not gathered. Professor Hazel Sive explains that faculty are here as guides, as professionals in their field who can help to direct the creation of curriculum. students ... would not have the expertise to set up a curriculum, saus Sive. The gathering of student input to prompt the curriculum change and lack of input during the curriculum development process seems sensible and has not caused any negative reactions from within the undergraduate population. [29]

## **4 Past Efforts**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In general, many students and student bodies have felt disenfranchised to varying degrees over the years. From research, it seems that the most contentious times that provoke significant student protest have occurred every couple of years or so—ultimately creating a graph of student protest over (perceived) breakdowns in communication with spikes of

high protest happening about every two or three years. In 2008, one prominent student leader remarked that, Student involvement...has been an issue for decades. In particular, she superficially mentions student protests over divestment issues in the 1960s, over ROTC in the 1970s, over fears of the philosophy/legal of *in loco parentis* encroaching upon students rights in the 1980s, over the new policy that freshmen must live on campus in the 1990s, and most recently over various issues in 1999, 2002, 2004, 2007, and 2008. [49]

Thus, it is clear that over the years many informal and formal committees and groups have formed to address the issues of student engagement. Interestingly, most of these bodies have been formed in a reactionary manner rather than via a proactive approach. While many of these entities were undoubtedly successful in addressing smaller issues, it seems none of them directly examined the systemic issues that lead to these student protests. In particular, given that we as a committee exist, we feel that students have continuously felt disenfranchised on various issues, and continue to feel this way today. Ergo, the very existence of our committee shows that many of the underlying concerns and issues have not been resolved.

To fulfill our mission stated above, we will examine and explain some of most recent past efforts on addressing the issues of student-administrator relationships.

## 4.2 1999

In 1999, the Chancellors Strategic Advisory Committee, made up of the Chancellor and student representatives from the UA, DormCon, and IFC issued a report that made myriad proposals, including capital expenditures recommendations and various recommendations to Orientation. Moreover, the Committee reiterated the requirement that all freshmen must live on campus, without exception. [65] (The Committee was created in part in response to the death of freshman Scott Krueger during the pledge process of the Phi Gamma Delta fraternity. [70])

Also in April of 1999, perhaps in part a response to this Committees report, the informal group self-named ILTFP (which most likely stands for I love this fucking place), held a tool-in (see: sit-in) protest in Lobby 7, citing broadly issues of creeping paternalism and their perception that administrators were ignoring student requests. [34]. Similar protests, discussed below, have taken place.

## 4.3 2008-2010

One of the largest recent initiatives at addressing the issues of student-administrator collaboration was the 2008 Task Force on Student Engagement, which started meeting in May of 2008. [61] (The name of the task force was eventually changed to the Student Engagement Committee [10].) This committee had support from the faculty and then-President Hockfield [35, 45].

The committee was charged to fulfill a role of an advisory board to develop[e] a philosophy guiding student involvement, to recommen[d] opportunities for greater student participation, and to [ultimately] propos[e] methods to ensure success. The committee

did not supersede existing structure. [45] In particular, the committees creation was due to the way in which NW-35 was presented to the community, the conversion of Green Hall and W1 Ashdown space to undergraduate housing, the increase of undergraduate student enrollment, and student dining. The committee also addressed the Star incident at Logan Airport, and the arrests of the hackers in the Faculty Club. [50, 1, 69] Some of these issues, particularly dining, still resonate with the student body today. And others, like the conversion of W1 to undergraduate housing, give pause to current issues like the situation surrounding Bexley.

All-in-all, no one was satisfied or content with the results of the committee (the committee officially ended in 2010); indeed, some claim that the committee solved nothing and had the result of further distancing students from administrators. Why did the committee fail? Some point to structural failures like the committees (supposedly hypocritical) refusal to publish agendas and minutes. [44] And students also place blame on then-Chancellor Clay for dragging his heels in leading the committee, including cutting back meetings from once a month to once a semester. [44, 68] Informally, some students have flatly and simply stated that the committee failed because Clay wanted it to fail.

Others pin the failure (at least partially) on a lack of buy-in from key players, including the Dean for Student Life Chris Colombo. However, at a meeting with SAC on October 23, 2013, Dean Colombo reflected upon his time on the committee and remarked that some of the failure stemmed from his perception of students failing to show interest in the committee, as exemplified in part from their unwillingness to submit meeting agenda items in advance. Furthermore, Colombo believed that many individuals, mainly students, would address the committee in angry, irrational ways, sometimes resorting to screaming.

A potential problem for this committees failure is that many of the undergraduate students did not have a unified voice, as compared to the graduate students. That is, the graduate student body is governed solely by the GSC. However, the undergraduate student body is governed in different settings by the UA, DormCon, IFC, Panhel, and LGC. Without this unified voice, these governments sometimes came into meetings with different opinions that often conflicted with one another. [10]

Other students point to other issues in communication breakdown that happened during the tenure of the committee as examples of where this committee clearly failed. In particular, students cite the decision to cut varsity sports, discussed above, the decision to increase undergraduate student enrollment, and the changes to campus dining. Here, students still felt disenfranchised, though the committee was established to prevent such feelings in the first place. [68, 67]

Despite the fact that virtually everyone agrees that the committee was a failure, there were some proposed solutions that have eventually come to fruition. For instance, the Chancellor now sends a monthly digest email to undergraduate students highlighting issues he finds particularly relevant to students at the time. Moreover, the Chancellor now holds informal Cookies & Conversations with a random sample of students every now and then. Furthermore, there was an attempt at an online Comment Box for students to submit suggestions and comments for the Chancellor, but students ultimately lost interest and stopped buying into the system. [57]

In the midst of this committees operations, a group of students held a sit-in in Lobby 7 (reminiscent of the 1999 tool-in) during Family Weekend of 2008 to voice their concerns with the lack of student engagement on various, hot-button issues. This sit-in was a part of a larger group that called themselves the Campaign for Students. Their top cited grievances were the issues regarding Green Hall, dining, and the Star incident at Logan Airport—all discussed in further detail above and throughout this document. During this sit-in, the students had a visual display that had large dominoes collapsing onto each other—the dominoes read, independently, Communication, Hacking, Dining, Housing, and Community. The UA also paid for T-shirts for the campaign, but later tried to distance itself as an organization from the protest and the campaign, without explicit explanation. [34]

This campaign also issued an article calling for assistance from the Corporation (the article was partially quoted in the Introduction to this sub-section). In particular, the article cited a variety of issues that needed to be resolved: housing, closing/delaying W1 (see above), removing a floor from NW-35 (see above), Green Hall (see above), dining (see above), student support, hacker arrests (see above), Star arrest at Logan Airport (see above), changes to financial aid, increasing undergraduate student enrollment (see above), and MITs failure to comply with ADA requirements. In addition, the article lists specific potential solutions: publication of minutes from Corporation, Academic Council, and Presidential/Faculty committee meetings; having at least one representative on Academic Council, the Corporation, the Executive Committee, and other important bodies selected by the UA; advanced notification of policy changes; community conversations between administrators and students; presidential office hours (which President Reif has instituted); and the opportunity for the UA and GSC to present to visiting committees. While some of these solutions have been implemented, others have not. Later in this document, we will discuss and recommend some of these solutions. [49]

#### **4.4 2010**

In 2010, the UA established a now-defunct Undergraduate Presidents Council that had two purposes. One was to [s]implify the coordination and expression of the views and desired of the undergraduate student body. The other was to [i]nform and align the efforts of the governments involved. In essence, the council served to try to unify the scattered opinions of the distinct undergraduate student governments, as discussed above. In particular, they addressed some of the issues brought up by the Institute-wide Planning Task Force in their most recent report: the recommendations of moving Add/Drop Date, the implementation details surrounding on-campus housing, and the possibility of Spring FSILG recruitment. In the end, it seems that this council was not very effective. [10]

#### **4.5 2013**

In 2013, President Reif, the UA, and the GSC created the Presidential Advisory Cabinet (PAC). Given the timing of this report, the true effectiveness of PAC has yet to be seen, though initial reports are positive from all parties. The cabinet consists of eight

members: four undergraduate students four graduate students, with the UA and GSC presidents serving *ex-officio* and the other six students selected by the respective processes of the UA and GSC nominations boards. As we discuss later in this document, it could be best to have similar (in)formal bodies for other administrators, such as for the Chancellor.

## References

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