Housing and Community Affairs (HCA) Minutes
October 9th, 2019, 6 PM in 50-220

1. Introduction of Members and Sign In (6:00 - 6:10)
    a. Mohammad, HCA Chair
    b. David, MIT Housing
    c. Megan, Westgate
    d. Alex, GSC VP
    e. Kenny, Warehouse
    f. Marie, Warehouse
    g. Lucio, SP
    h. Dylan, Off-Campus
    i. Marlis, Sustainability
    j. Mike, 70 Amherst
    k. Bharat, 70 Amherst
    l. Tasha, MIT Housing
    m. Jenny, MIT Housing
    n. Alex, Ashdown
    o. Jerry, Edgerton
    p. Peter, GSC president
    q. Daniel, Eastgate
    r. Nuria, SP associate HoH
    s. Mohit, Ashdown
    t. Akshay, Off-campus student
2. Discussion of Changes in Graduate Housing with Graduate Housing Implementation Team (6:10 - 7:00)
    a. Review of grad housing pilots/changes made (couples, roommates, self-selection, 2nd year option, license end dates, etc.). Assessment of changes and preliminary data. Implementation Team Goals for the year (focus on improvements to new processes, continued assessment, officer incentives)
    b. Presentation
        i. Goals
            1. Align residential options with academic programs
            2. Improve student experience and minimize wait times, maximize occupancy
        ii. Policy Changes
            1. Renewable license in most dorms (except EG, Warehouse)

      2. License change - end date of July 31st rather than August 15th, more time for apartment turnover

      3. 2nd round of allocation open to everyone, not just people who didn't get housing the first allocation

      4. Rate increases for various unit types based on market prices, results in 4.3% increase in weighted average

  iii. Process Changes

      1. More communication - emails went out April with 75-85% open rate, 7% increase in housing allocation applications

      2. Waiting List - Opened June 1st rather than July, June 17th first self selection, 471 applicants with 196 housed. Vacancy rate is now 1% rather than ~3% at end of August

  iv. Pilots

      1. Couples Housing - SP, Edgerton, 70 Amherst (33 units in Fall 2019)

      2. Singles in Westgate Efficiencies (69 singles listed this in top 3 with only 19 couples ranking this in top 3, 41 singles live there in total)

      3. Roommate Applications - 49 groups accommodated

  v. Timeline

      1. Housing assignments received in May, waitlist opened much earlier than before

  vi. Facility Improvements

      1. 70 Amherst - 5/6th floor renovated

      2. Ashdown - Hardwood floor in Hulsizer

      3. EG - Lobby improved

      4. Tang - 90 apts renovated

      5. SP - AV

      6. Edgerton - IST, lounge update

      7. Westgate - New TV/sound

      8. Warehouse - lounge furniture

  vii. Occupancy

      1. 99% occupancy on August 15th

      2. New process allowed students to get into spaces earlier, increased vacancies

  viii. Housing Survey Insights

      1. Overall Experience, Assignment Process, Move-In Experience, Residential experience

       2. New survey for Fall 2019 - for new students and couples in housing

   ix. Goals

       1. Focus on improvements (waitlist, communication, solidify pilots, allocation)

       2. Officer incentives (assist and support)

       3. Continued assessment of changes

c. Input from HCA members on changes

   i. Surveys

       1. It would be good for information from move in surveys to be shared with house governments - this was done in Fall 2018

   ii. Communication

       1. How is information about housing communicated out to students?

           a. Emails go out to lists

   iii. Move out experience

       1. It would be good to collect feedback on moving out. It may be difficult to find accomodations for the month of August.

       2. Moving July 31st gives an advantage that matches up with finding a lease that starts August 1st.

       3. Can we have optional move out dates (July 31st or August 15th)?

           a. Having this flexible optional date may put a disadvantage on new incoming folks who are trying to move in.

       4. Move out in Edgerton is hard because it is unfurnished. It would be good to have a method to turn over the furniture. Eastgate and Westgate are also unfurnished.

           a. The Trash2Treasure pilot program currently runs at Tang Hall, where furniture is kept in a pod and sold. Undergrads have this program.

   iv. Algorithm

       1. How does the matching algorithm for roommates work?

           a. Happy marriage algorithm puts many people into their top choices as possible, it's getting fixed up (always need to check computer work).

       2. Is there raw data shared on applicant data?

           a. More internal, aggregate data is available. This raw data is only available on undergrad side.

v. Rates
  1. How will rates increase in the future?
     a. Previously there was a flat rate increase. Housing needs to generate revenue from buildings, and put this back into buildings. There is a lot of pressure for people living in efficiencies.
  2. There is a lot of pressure for people living in efficiencies.
  3. Some couples/families are living on single graduate stipends. These families may be priced out in a place like Kendall.
  4. What off-campus market is used for comparison of rents? Greater Cambridge Area.
vi. On-demand availability
  1. Is it possible to have an on-demand system for finding on campus housing, rather than setting rigid move in/move out dates?
     a. Graduate Housing consists of communities, not hotels. We want a strong officer core and to maintain culture without on-demand availability.
     b. On-demand availability may depend on what people want - this may hurt community but improve availability
vii. Visiting students
  1. Tend to have a difficult time finding housing and click through application as fast as they can
viii. Revenue
  1. Where did money for Site 4 come from?
     a. Comes from housing
ix. Waiting List and Self selection
  1. Procedure - studentlife.mit.edu/housing/graduate-family-housing/get-housing/waiting-list
  2. Ran from mid June to October (some weeks in September were inactive due to lack of availability in units)
  3. Self selection works really well on a limited scale, there may be implications from implementing this on the larger scale
x. Officer incentives
  1. What is on the table, and how can we continue this conversation?

a. Ideas: Official Gala Dinner (lots of SP/Ashdown support), More appreciation for officers, paying officers with monetary incentives can be very messy.
3. Committee and Dorm Updates (7:00 - 7:25)
    a. Marie - Warehouse, Halloween event coming up (October 26th! 7 pm - 1 am joint event)
    b. Dylan - Off campus, October events coming up - candlemaking, other events - lottery for events
    c. Jerry - Halloween and Thanksgiving events, EHA Mental Health
    d. Megan - Westgate
    e. Daniel - EG (⅚ Welcome dinners), Fall Welcome BBQ, 5k event, Pumpkin carving coming up
    f. Alex - Ashdown (remove disposables), brainstorming officer incentives
    g. Mike - 70 Amherst - BBQ happened, Pumpkin carving, mapping out plans for next year. Walls in basement painted, investing in infrastructure, increase spending on events
    h. Marlis - Sustainability - Oct 21st at 11:30am at GSC Office. Mixer with other sustainability related groups at 4 pm Oct 21st in Coffee House. Reusables for cafeteria, and volunteer opportunities. Sustainability section.
4. Open Floor (7:25 - 7:30)