I. Gatherings and visitation

The Officers asked some clarifying questions on recent MIT policy decisions on gatherings and visitors. Overall, the message is that grad students are trusted to behave as responsible adults and follow local laws and public health mandates. Here are some specifics:

First, grad students not residing in the Boston area are still subject to some campus policies such as those in the Mind and Hand Book. Health-wise, they are primarily subject to the municipal, state and national laws in the places they reside, but MIT policies can be invoked in cases of misconduct such as throwing a crowded party during a pandemic.

Second, DSL will revisit issuing guidance on participation in outdoor political gatherings, possibly in reference to MIT Medical’s prior advice on the matter.

Finally, because this is a crucial moment for establishing whether we can safely have some in-person classes, and it’s vital to ensure everyone follows the Boston and Massachusetts guidance not to have parties, we agreed that SOLE/Funding Board-funded events should be virtual and that this decision would be revisited in another month. Informally, on and off-campus grad students can have small gatherings in the outdoor spaces set up on East Campus. Finally, we will investigate obtaining additional guidance from MIT Medical on best practices for social “bubbles,” to facilitate meeting our need for human interaction in the safest way possible while also reinforcing the understanding that every additional person you come in close contact with heightens the impact on our community if you fall sick with COVID.

Housing Working Group Charter

We separated the overall charter of the Graduate Housing Working Group (GHWG) from its Fall 2020 list of goals. While oversight over campus planning ultimately rests with the Corporation Executive Committee, the GHWG can offer powerful and impactful insight and recommendations. We all reiterated the importance of this committee’s work.

We agreed that rather than a Chair the committee will have a Convener, to convey equality between the members; David Friedrich is willing to serve as Convener. Membership should also include the Heads of House convener, the Director of Campus Planning, and the Associate Provost. Grad student members will include the three members of the Housing Implementation Team, which will be folded into HWG at this time. The Eastgate Transition team will continue its work separately and report periodically to the GHWG as requested.