

28 August 2003

21:30 hours

MacGregor House Team Special Meeting

Location: MacGregor House Master's Apartment

Meeting impetus: The in-house rooming process of 27 August 2003 created discord for MacGregor freshmen, upperclassmen, and GRTs.

Meeting objective: To brainstorm ideas to help the current situation in the immediate future and to identify the main problems with this year's process that we can use to improve in-house rush for next year.

Attendance

Munther Dahleh – Housemaster

Jinane Abounadi – Housemaster

Joe Jacobs – President

Rose Grabowski – Vice President

Jeanette Fershtman – Secretary, J-Entry Rooming Representative

Carl Mahler – Co-Rooming Assignment Chair

Swapna Panuganti – Co-Rooming Assignment Chair

Yong-Hwa Lee – JudComm Chair, G-Entry Rooming Representative

Tulasi Khandan – JudComm Member

Ethan Crumlin – A-Entry Co-Chair

Alex Crumlin – A-Entry Co-Chair, A-Entry Rooming Representative

Eric Brittain – A-Entry GRT

Meisha Bynoe – B-Entry Rooming Representative

Saria Hassan – B-Entry GRT

Janice Lansita – C-Entry GRT

Adam Kumpf – D-Entry Chair

Neal Mankad – D-Entry resident

Omar Bashir – D-Entry resident

Bryan Davies – D-Entry GRT

Meri Silberstein – E-Entry Rooming Representative

Merritt Tam – E-Entry Chair, E-Entry Rooming Representative

Colin Ashe – E-Entry GRT

Heather Ashe – E-Entry GRT

Michael Churchill – F-Entry Chair

Wenying Zhang – F/H- Entry

Wei-an Yu – F-Entry resident, Desk worker

Sana Ahmad – H-Entry Chair, H-Entry Rooming Representative, Desk worker

Deepti Mehta – H-Entry Rooming Representative, Desk worker

Heidi Davidz – H-Entry GRT

Mike Cluff – H-Entry GRT

Laura Tifenbrock – J-Entry GRT

Minutes

Swapna (Co-RAC) speaks about the e-mail from Laurence Wong (Desk Captain) that vehemently opposed the actions of the RACs and Rooming Representatives the night of in-house rush in changing from the “new” computer algorithm to the “old” traditional system.

Everyone introduces him- or herself and indicates whether or not he/she was present during the entry assignment process.

Swapna reads an official statement prepared by herself, Carl Mahler (Co-RAC) and Joe Jacobs (P) – See Appendix A

Joe (P) explains that some entries like the computer algorithm because it gave them many people who ranked that entry 4 or higher. Joe goes on to explain that some entries did not like the system because they did not get assigned freshmen that they wanted and who also wanted them in return.

Jinane (HM) asks what happened in HouseComm to approve the computer algorithm’s usage.

Joe (P) responds that the RACs and JudComm agreed that we’d try it and “see what happens in this pilot attempt”

Heidi (H-GRT) says that GRTs were told to tell parents and freshmen that the algorithm would be used in the entry assignment process.

Reasons that each entry did or did not like the system

- A: The system gave them eight people who ranked A 1st but not that A-Entry wanted. A-Entry voted no to the computer algorithm and was happier with the traditional system.
- B: Was satisfied with the computer system. B-Entry voted yes to the computer algorithm but the overall outcome, using both systems, was roughly the same.
- C: C-Entry voted “indifferent” to the computer system and was more satisfied with the traditional system.
- D: The system did not assign them people who had ranked D-Entry 1st and who D-Entry also wanted back. D-Entry voted no to the computer algorithm and was happier with the traditional system.
- E: E-Entry voted “indifferent” to the computer algorithm and felt that the traditional system gave them “more freedom” and made them happier.
- F: Half the freshmen assigned to F-Entry had ranked F-Entry 4 or above. F-Entry voted “indifferent,” believing that they could do better for themselves with the traditional system. The traditional system made the assignments *much* worse for F-Entry.

Had they known the outcome of the traditional system, they would have voted to stick with the computer algorithm.

- G: The computer system gave them all freshmen who had ranked G-Entry 1st but only six (out of thirteen) of which G-Entry liked.
G-Entry voted no to the computer algorithm and was happier with the traditional system.
- H: The system gave H-Entry freshmen who ranked H-Entry 3 and above.
H-Entry voted yes to the computer algorithm and was very unhappy with the results of the traditional system.
- J: The system gave J-Entry freshmen who had ranked J-Entry 3 or above. However, very few of these did J-Entry actually like, and one of which J-Entry did not want at all.
J-Entry voted “indifferent” to the computer algorithm and was happier with the traditional system.

Comments on the computer system versus the traditional system

Church (F-Entry): By the time F-Entry was done sorting out the people that it was given in the traditional system the other entries had left and they could not trade.

Wei-an (Desk worker): The traditional systems did not take into account smoking and coed-vs-single sex suite preferences.

Carl (Co-RAC): If there is a medical reason why you cannot be around smoke or a religious/other reason that you must be in a single-sex suite, you must register with MIT Medical/housing office. MacGregor received no students who had done so this year. Therefore, preferences on a form are simply preferences and there is no way to differentiate between a “need” and a “want.”

Deepti (H-Entry): Perhaps ranking F-Entry last indicated the strength of their need/want to be away from smoke.

Ethan (A-Entry): Is not appropriate to infer that (referring to Deepti’s statement) correlation.

Saria (B-GRT): Freshmen might now be thinking: “Those entries that I wanted don’t like me because I ended up in my last choice.”

Ethan and Alex (A-Entry): Through the computer system, freshmen would have ended up in entries where the entries did feel that those freshmen would be a good fit.

Sana: Switching back to the traditional system had the effect of moving some people from their 3rd pick to their 1st pick and others from their 2nd pick to their 9th pick.

Swapna passes around Article 7 of the MacGregor Bylaws

Action Dialogue

Jeanette (J-Entry): Does this meeting have a purpose?

Munther (HM): Both systems have problems and we need a new procedure for next year. Giving misinformation to both the freshmen and to the rooming representatives was a procedural error. We must develop a new system.

Jinane (HM): House Committee needs some counterbalance to remind it about the needs of GRTs and House Masters (who have to deal with the problems that inevitably result from freshmen being placed in an entry where they do not want to be)

Heidi (H-GRT): What are we going to do to take care of the freshmen now that we've got them?

Ethan (A-Entry): Instead of having gone at each other's throats this morning, we should have presented a united front and comforted freshmen by telling them that it would not be bad and that they really couldn't learn *that* much about an entry in 15 minutes.

Carl (Co-RAC): "Getting screwed" is a relative thing.

Joe (P): (in response to the question, "If this was against the bylaws, why did we tell people we were going to use it?") Joe accepts blame. We did it because, at the time, we were confident that it would work. From Tyler (former-P), Joe believed that the bylaws stated that the RACs had the power to change the rules. Joe says that he should have checked the bylaws before making the assumption that what Tyler had told him was correct. We need to explain to frosh what happened.

Munther (HM): What are we going to do with H-Entry and F-Entry now?

Carl (Co-RAC): We will move people as rooms become open, giving people who were placed into their 8th and 9th choice entry priority.

Ethan (A-Entry): Maybe we can ask freshmen to voluntarily crowd into an entry they'd prefer.

General dissent to this suggestion.

Deepti (H-Entry): Bring unhappy freshmen together and see if swapping is possible.

Munther (HM): It is impossible to reverse room assignments at this time. We should follow Carl's suggestion to give freshmen that were placed in their 8th and 9th choice entries priorities in moves.

Adam (D-Entry): We should ask students why they are unhappy.

Heidi (H-GRT): We gave suggestions for change last year but they weren't implemented.

Joe (P): We will form a taskforce to put a solid system in place by the end of this school year.

Adam (D-Entry): It is important that the new system does not have the effect of eliminating the unique cultures of the entries and make all of MacGregor homogenous.

Eric (A-GRT): Maybe we can invite students who wanted another entry to simply visit and hang out with that entry.

Meri (E-Entry): That would have the effect of making the entries where those freshmen live feel really bad.

Sana (H-Entry): We should do a feedback survey with the freshmen.

Heather (E-GRT): We need to be positive and make the freshmen feel that they are wanted in their entry. We also need to make sure that upperclassmen that are not on campus yet not receive the immediate impression that their entry got unwanted freshmen.

Deepti (H-Entry): It's true that 15 minutes isn't a long time to get to know people but you can definitely figure out who you REALLY like and who you REALLY dislike.

Janice (C-GRT): Why don't we give H-Entry and F-Entry more money for study breaks and programming?

Swapna (Co-RAC): When a room opens, we could e-mail frosh to see who wants the room and do a lottery.

Church (F-Entry): That would just bring transfer students into F-Entry, which is always uncertain regarding what type of person you get.

Meri (E-Entry): Do we anticipate upperclassmen canceling their housing over the next week?

Munther (HM): Let's focus on what we're going to do. Right now we have three things.

- 1) 8th and 9th placed frosh get preference in moving**
- 2) More attention/money to F-Entry and H-Entry**
- 3) Use house money to buy air filters for F-Entry**

Deepti (H-Entry): How do address the complaint, "I don't want to be here?"

Swapna (Co-RAC): Need to reassure the frosh to keep an open mind and give their new entry a chance.

Mike (H-GRT): Maybe HouseComm needs to re-evaluate the whole in-house rush process.

Meri (E-Entry): If we just use the current algorithm, we risk losing the entry cultures.

Munther (HM): Last action is to STAY POSITIVE!

Joe (P): How are we going to go about informing frosh about what happened?

Rose (VP): We should issue a short, concise statement through e-mail.

Colin (E-GRT): Wording of e-mail must be delicate so as not to create more tension. We must also be clear that this system is no different from what we've used in the past.

Alex (A-Entry): What's "the party line?" What are we, as a group, going to say happened?

Joe (P): The e-mail statement will be the official story that we all stick to. It will:

- 1) Admit our fault in communicating false information**
- 2) Explain what we did**
- 3) Explain that we are going to improve the process for next year**

Rose (VP): What can we do now to bring the house back together?

General agreement for a house study break sometime in the near future.

Meeting adjourned at **time**.