1 MINUTES

AILG Plenary Meeting Minutes

 Wednesday, September 10, 2020 | Zoom | Meeting called to order at 6:04pm by Akil Middleton

# In Attendance

FSILGs attending: Alpha Chi Omega, Alpha Delta Phi, Alpha Epsilon Pi, Alpha Phi, Beta Theta Pi, Chi Phi, Delta Kappa Epsilon, Delta Tau Delta, Epsilon Theta, Fenway House, Kappa Alpha Theta, Lambda Chi Alpha, Nu Delta, Phi Beta Epsilon, Phi Delta Theta, Phi Kappa Sigma, Pi Lambda Phi, Sigma Alpha Epsilon, Sigma Chi, Sigma Kappa, pika, Theta Chi, Theta Delta Chi, Tau Epsilon Phi, Theta Tau, WILG, Zeta Beta Tau, Zeta Psi

FSILGs not attending: Alpha Epsilon Phi, Alpha Tau Omega, Delta Phi Epsilon, Kappa Sigma, Number Six Club, Phi Kappa Theta, Phi Sigma Kappa, Pi Beta Phi, Sigma Nu, Sigma Phi Epsilon, Student House, Theta Xi

AILG Board: Akil Middleton, Eric Cigan, Tyler Kemp-Benedict, Alice Leung, Mary Linton Peters, Cecilia Stuopis

MIT Administration and Other Guests: Brad Badgley (FSILG Office), Madi Clark (FSILG Office), Pam Gannon (DSL), Liz Jason (FSILG Office), Scott Klemm (FCI), Judy Robinson (DSL), Mark Thompson (FCI)

# Welcome and Introductions

Akil Middleton convened the meeting.

# Treasurer’s Report

Eric Cigan presented the Treasurer’s Report. The new fiscal year started July 1st; AILG has invoiced for annual funding from MIT DSL and IRDF that supports our SLI, BSF and Peer Visit programs; those are reflected in the balance sheet as accounts receivable. FCI’s payment to us for AILG member dues and SLI and BSF program support fees collected from FSILGs – and FCI’s billing of their fee to AILG for collection – were both slightly delayed this year due to COVID-19 and the timing of information about financial support to FSILGs from MIT. Including funds retained from previous years, we have a total of approximately $65,091.47 in the bank. Most expenses so far have been in Facilities – the normal fees we pay to FCI (which now provides BSF services). Nothing extraordinary.

# FSILG Office Update

Brad Badgley covered highlights of move-in, beginning with a huge thanks to AILG alums, “wonderful to work with!” There are ~900 students on campus; ~250 of those are FSILG students living on campus this fall. A mandatory 10-day quarantine just ended for students living on campus, and they may now socialize on campus, following health guidance (facemasks in public spaces and in the now-open gym). Social “pods” of up to 6 students are being formed; masks would not be required within pods.

Students will move out November 20–21, Thanksgiving break will be November 23–27, and classes will resume remotely November 30. A small number of undergrads will probably be granted exceptions and allowed to remain/return on campus. Last day of classes will be December 9; finals run December 14–18. IAP will be remote this year.

The tentative plan for Spring 2021 (announced in July) is that first-years, sophomores, and juniors (who choose to) are anticipated to be on campus. There is not yet a Spring 2021 plan for FSILGs; conversations about that will probably begin in October at the earliest, to allow learning from the experience of early fall.

FSILG GRAs have been hired for the fall regardless of residential status. They are maintaining relationships with students even though they are not living in the FSILG houses.

House corporations are encouraged to invite the GRAs to their meetings.

# MIT Medical News

Medical Director and AILG Board member Cecilia Stuopis presented on health and wellness of the MIT community. MIT started Covid-19 testing almost 6 months ago, earlier than many universities, initially in a tent, then in the E23 atrium, and eventually in construction trailers kitted out for testing, with high-tech ventilation and Plexiglas separators with built-in gloves to allow minimal contact and reduced need for PPE. There are six stalls for simultaneous testing. Community members are using a sophisticated check-in system tied into their ID via the Covid Pass app. They make daily health attestations – asked whether they have been in contact with anyone who may have Covid-19, and required to attest that they will follow the rules about masks and other protocols. Each person authorized to be on campus is tested twice weekly. On the highest-volume day so far, 3,395 people were tested (well over the entire daily count for the state of NH!) All testing at this point is PCR, and response time is 12–18 hours (very good!). Possibly in the future, other types of tests may be considered.

One person tested positive during return-to-campus testing. Numbers have continued very low in terms of percentages (inclusive of students, faculty, staff, and contractors on campus). Testing may need to increase eventually to >6K tests/week.

Johnson Athletic Center was set up early on with hospital beds in case of overflow need, but now it is being reconfigured for use as additional testing space. One person can observe up to three people at a time conducting their own tests.

Great educational materials are available at medical.mit.edu, with updates roughly every other day.

If someone’s COVID test is positive, they are required to isolate until at least 10 days after a positive test if asymptomatic. If symptomatic, they must isolate for at least 10 days after symptom onset *and* resolution of fever for at least 24 hrs. Anyone with severe illness must isolate for 10–20 days after onset of symptoms.

Anyone who has close contact with a known positive, if asymptomatic, must quarantine for 14 days from their last potential exposure. (There is no shortening of quarantine due to a negative test.) Consistent with CDC guidance, the app will pull people out of the testing protocol for 90 days after a positive test.

Support has been important from senior leaders at MIT willing to do the hard things and have hard conversations. The city of Cambridge is closely watching the numbers on MIT campus, working hard to keep things well under control. We are proud of our record so far.

Enrolled students living off campus can access testing if they need it. (For example, if they develop symptoms or have close contact with someone positive, or if returning to Massachusetts and need testing.) There is a different paradigm for testing people suspected of infection, to keep these patients separate from the general screening population.

Telemedicine is being used more – all mental health care is being delivered via virtual visits. Though mental health across state lines is getting tricky again, so we are doing some work to connect students with other sources of care.

Contact tracing – MIT will do it on campus (by agreement with the City of Cambridge). Tracers talk to the person about their contacts in the 48 hours before a positive test or symptom onset. There’s a protocol for who is notified – the name is not released, to protect privacy of anyone with a positive test.

We are learning that the distancing is hard for students; it’s good they are assigned one person per room (and 2–3 students per shared bathroom fixture). This density will probably be maintained if infection rates continue to look similar. Household contact – out in the community beyond MIT campus – is where a lot of transmission seems to be happening.

House corporations are not automatically notified if a student tests positive. Notifications are made on a need-to-know principle.

When students can return to living in the FSILGs, house corporations should consider hiring a daily cleaning service for bathroom fixtures, rather than relying on undergrads to do daily cleaning.

GRAs living in houses now are getting testing for access to campus. They will know their status, and if it’s positive, they would be moved onto campus for isolation (Burton-Connor, also some beds in some other residence halls). MIT has to notify first responders if someone is positive (not by name, but that they are in the building, and where). If a GRA is living in an FSILG, and they have to isolate on campus, the house corporation would be told. [check this]

Policies: <https://studentlife.mit.edu/covid19policies>

# IFC Update

Presentation by Nico Salinas ’21 IFC President, BTP affiliation, living on campus

Phi Sigma Rho, a female sorority, just became a full member of IFC

Recruitment planning started in July, when it was clear the houses would be closed. The overwhelming majority of presidents and rush chairs wanted not to have bidding in fall 2020, preferring wait until spring. (Most on-campus students in the fall are seniors.)

A new first-year engagement program, “Rush Circles,” started last Saturday (9/5), with 30-min informational presentations, 3 concurrent at a time, rotating each weekend through 9/19. About 150 students registered (the first time this has been tracked). Rush events will continue through November 20th (when student leave campus for the semester, before Thanksgiving). Chapters can host weekly events to interact with first-year students in a more informal setting. Events include movie nights, online games, AMA, tech tutorials, NFL watch party, poker tournament. There is lots of demand for these events, encouraging chapters to host more (within the allowed limits).

Rush Circle Captains temporarily “disassociate” from their organizations for the purpose of these events (modeled on a Panhel protocol).

Planning starts this fall for IAP/Spring Rush. Students are using gather.town (a new alternative to Zoom) to host virtual house tours and Rush conversations. Some anticipated challenges:

* Onboarding next year’s IFC executive board in mid-October to help plan timeline for spring
* Uncertainty around spring return plans, status of FSILG housing
* Engaging with first-year students virtually

Liz reported that IFC has also ramped up social media engagement. IFC blogs are being launched, with the hope this will also help with general awareness of the IFC organizations.

Brad reported that Panhel has been doing great work on recruitment. There are 250–260 registered potential new members, good numbers for maintaining class sizes. Chapters are feeling well supported. From peer institutions, we’re hearing that retention numbers are higher than in typical years, and we’re hoping to see that at MIT as well.

The five ILGs are not as structured, different by nature than Panhel and IFC. There was an orientation for parents, and a channel on the Slack platform is being used to coordinate. The independents are still individually thinking through what they want to do for recruitment.

Brad reported on the Multicultural Greek Council. These are historically Black sororities and fraternities, not necessarily recruiting for large numbers, but they did have a successful first-year event as well (using Slack), with about 10 potential new members.

Parents are engaged at a record level (virtually, similar to how CPW/CP\* was conducted in the spring). Parental interest was already increasing in recent years. Students report that parents are a tremendous support for them. Even pre-Covid, the number of parents/family members often outpaces the number of students at these events. The remote technology makes it easy. They have a lot of good questions. Gen Z parental involvement is typically much higher than in earlier generations. Parents are very invested in student life, want to understand what their children are experiencing, want to understand Greek life.

# FSILG Ops Team

Pam Gannon presented about the reimbursement process for FSILG organizations to apply for financial support from MIT. FSILG Summer/Fall Reimbursements will be based on June 1 to December 31 operating expenses (rather than on housebills as in the spring process). The model was developed largely through the “sustainability” working of the Ops team, with input from IRDF and lots of alum involvement. Applications are due 9/15. An aggressive schedule was set to make sure organizations that need it can get funding soon, but it’s fine to ask if your organization needs more time.

For summer, actual expenses are known, but for fall, you will have to estimate. Though it’s called a reimbursement, the payments will be made in anticipation of fall expenses. Please direct questions to Pam Gannon at pmgannon@mit.edu.

If you end up with more money than you need, you will need to return the extra. If you estimate low, you probably will not have a chance to get more reimbursement. If you’re not sure, it’s probably better to estimate high.

As far as we know, MIT is the only university providing financial support to its fraternity and sorority organizations. There is a great understanding at MIT of the value of the FSILG experience.

All the info is on the AILG website.

# Other Ops teams

In early summer, five working groups were formed within the FSILG Ops team, in addition to the steering committee, to consider responses to Covid-19 within the constraints of several proposed scenarios. The groups:

* Sustainability
* Housing Ops – Lifestyle
* Housing Ops – Logistics
* Student Live
* Alum Advising

Lots of volunteers from the community participated, taking lots of factors into account. Overall, it seems like the chosen approach is in the best interest of our students and communities. These working groups have mostly concluded their work for now. The steering committee is being reframed for ongoing problem-solving and coordination.

The AILG board is considering convening a new ad-hoc committee: Beyond COVID Year One. Its proposed charge would be to monitor the health of the FSILG community, anticipate potential issues, and consider the community’s state in the spring and beyond (up to 5 yrs). It would be made up of alum and undergrad members of the FSILG community, and it would work alongside existing AILG committees.

Note: working group members are still “on call,” and some working groups continue to meet.

# Announcements/Other Business

In progress:

* Sending belongings back to undergrads (the DSL FSILG office handled this for on-campus students, and there’s also a need for off-campus students)
* Collecting best practices for remote alum engagement
* Zoom accounts for alum boards – we will send out communication about this. It should be possible for at least one member of your board to have a Kerberos account, which confers access to the MIT Zoom account.
* Winter house management guidelines
* Financial support for undergrads in need (stay tuned – things are being worked on at a very high level now)
* Refinement of the alum contact directory – working on making it a better process/platform, so it can be accessible, searchable by alumni orgs
* IT committee – MIT will be swapping out/upgrading the wireless access points at the houses (some fall 2020, the rest in spring 2021)

Announcements:

* Facilities Committee – without students in your house, this is a great time to put work into houses (IRDF is still operating). We want to keep them in good shape, especially. as a nice new dorm is being completed.
* Con Congrats to ADP and WILG, who now officially own their own houses! WILG is the first women’s FSILG house to own their own building.
* Scott Klemm: Holmes Murphy (insurance) every-other-year inspections are happening next week. FCI can help with walk-through/access but cannot complete the questionnaires. Houses have to complete those for themselves and return them.
* Boston fire dept inspections (unless cancelled/postponed again) will start back up again next Tuesday. Josh or Scott will be walking through with the Boston fire inspector.
* Suggestion: create a google form to keep track of who is in the building on what dates. It really helps the GRAs to know who is coming in when.

Dates:

* AILG Board meetings: the first Thursday of every month at 6pm
* Alumni Leadership Conference: Monday, September 21 – Saturday, September 26
* FCI annual meeting and elections: Wednesday, October 21 at 7pm
* Virtual Family Weekend: Friday and Saturday, October 23–24; Saturday 3–5pm blocked out for FSILGs (but can schedule for any time)
* Plenary: Thursdays, September 10, November 12, February 11, and April 8 (6pm ET) – the second Thursday of every other month (mostly)

# Adjournment

The plenary meeting adjourned at 7:25pm.

# Abbreviations

AILG Association of Independent Living Groups

AMA Ask Me Anything

BSF Building Safety Facilitation

CPW Campus Preview Weekend

DSL Division of Student Life

FCI FSILG Cooperative, Inc.

FSILGs Fraternities, Sororities and Independent Living Groups

GRA Graduate Resident Advisor

IFC Interfraternity Council

ILGs Independent Living Groups

IRDF Independent Residence Development Fund

LGC Living Group Council

NFL National Football League

Panhel Panhellenic Association

SLI Safety, Licensing and Inspection Program