



AILG Board Meeting

Thursday, October 7, 2021 | Zoom | Meeting called to order at 6:02 pm by Akil Middleton

In Attendance

Board: Akil Middleton (ZP), Eric Cigan (LCA), Tyler Kemp-Benedict (pika), Mary Linton Peters (KAT), Cecilia Stuopis (AXO),

Administration, Staff, Vendors: Brad Badgley (FSILG Office), Pam Gannon (DSL), Scott Klemm (FCI), Jessica Morris (FSILG Office)

Other Alumni/ae: Bob Ferrara (TC), Patrick McCabe (TT), Tom Stohlman (KS), Mark Thompson (ADP), Stan Wulf (PDT, AILG Ombuds)

Review of Minutes (deferred)

Minutes of the September 2 meeting posted on the AILG website at <https://ailg.mit.edu/about/board/board-minutes> will be considered at the next Board meeting.

Treasurer's report

Eric Cigan presented the Treasurer's report. The balance sheet and P&L statements are posted on the AILG website at <https://ailg.mit.edu/about/board/board-minutes>.

- Income: we received the funds collected from AILG member organizations by FCI for annual member dues, Safety-Licensing-Inspection (SLI) program support, and Building Safety Facilitator (BSF) support. This means that we've received all income for the fiscal year (except for bank interest).
- Expenses: we had our regular monthly expenses paying FCI for the SLI and BSF programs and also paid \$2,559 to FCI for their collection fee for member dues, SLI support and BSF support.

This puts AILG at peak-cash for the fiscal year – from here through next summer we will be paying FCI and vendors for our expenses. We will be transferring funds to our CapitalOne savings account so we can earn a little more interest on AILG's account balances.

We have not yet set up the books for the Facilities Renewal program. We'll be adding income and expense categories to manage that program's finances (i.e., "income" from IRDF and expense through the contractor).

FSILG Office / DSL, and Council updates

Brad Badgley – Including a few later acceptances, there have been 317 IFC bids accepted, which is really good. Panhel had 162 new bids accepted, which is also expected to go up a little with informal recruitment. ILGs have ~20 new members (not including two houses who have intentionally not extended new bids this semester because their numbers are good). Those may go up as well, as there are students who have expressed interest in joining.

Ninety of the accepted bids are sophomores, and we think interest may grow among sophomores. FSILG office is less worried about generating enough initial interest from students in FSILG houses, and more concerned about retention, still encouraging the alums to work with students on that. [See more about this below.] Especially looking 3, 5, 10 years down the road. Some organizations have chosen for various reasons not to focus primarily on numbers right now. (And it's hard to compare this year with last year, which was so unusual.)

The legally required anti-hazing forms have been signed except for one house (which is often late with these). Regular advising meetings are happening. As GRA subsidy invoices come in, those are being paid. Social host training has been completed. Events started ~3 weeks ago, and there have been no major issues around events and parties – all is pretty quiet and going well.

We also require the students to submit a safety plan for each event, for both party and Covid expectations.

Brainstorming – Engagement and/or education opportunities for the membership

Eric notes that AILG has run up a bank balance with some previously regular expenses not needed during the pandemic, invites ideas for how to use those resources in a way that benefits the community, such as speakers or events. Brainstorm:

- House maintenance education, beyond the existing, limited-scope FSILG house manager trainings (which are largely to make sure resident house managers know whom to call in case something goes wrong – see https://ailg.mit.edu/sites/default/files/images/FSILG%20House%20Manager%20Role%202021_2022%20Initial%20Fall%20Meeting.pdf). “The lack of knowledge is our biggest problem right now. The students don’t know yet that these buildings are not like their homes.” Trainings might be held both fall and spring, for alums as well as students. This is referred to the Facilities Committee, to develop a syllabus.
- Develop a password-protected section of the AILG website, to host resources like recordings of virtual training sessions. Note: FCI could be used for this; it already has a login system.
- AILG retreat, possibly hybrid
- AILG holiday party, off-campus
- Speakers, at plenaries or other times. While COVID is still pushing gatherings remote, we have the opportunity to invite speakers from anywhere, from beyond the MIT community, which may draw more participation. Speaker suggestions:
 - alum and faculty member Paul [Hagian sp? Eric C please clarify name];
 - Victoria Alexander (<https://campuspeak.com/speaker/victoria-alexander/> – “What do we mean by ‘Values Based Organizations’? Race, class, gender, and sexuality in Fraternity and Sorority Life”);
 - speakers from national NPC and IFC, maybe about DEI (diversity, equity, inclusion). Note: MIT is very progressive on DEI. “We want to be careful that our students feel connected and supported by where the speakers are coming from.”
- Community barbecues – goals may need clarification
- AILG-hosted events for undergraduates. This could help engage students, make them aware of AILG, help organizations with their membership pipelines.

Brainstorming – Alums and retention

FSILG is having conversations with chapter presidents and alum representatives about retention. *In the context of this conversation, retention is about students who are extended a bid but do not join the organization* (NOT about leaving after becoming a member/resident, which is rare and usually about a member not living up to expectations or values of the organization and being asked to leave.)

A goal for this semester is to have intentional conversations about what we're doing after recruitment to retain members (e.g., Big/Littles, Family Lines). Which programs do we want, which ones are being resisted? We don't want to lose continuity in transition to new leadership.

In Panhel, since residency is not required, we can ask why some students choose not to live in the house, and frame residency as more of a positive. (The IFC and ILG situations are different, in relation to facilities.) Some parents may not like the idea of their student living across the river, so we need to make clear that's not required.

Note: there's a waiting list to get (back) into on-campus housing. Having a more liberal policy about getting back into the dorms would surely help, if we are talking about this period between pledging and initiation. But first-year students are not eligible to move into the houses yet anyway – and they go through new member orientation – so this residency question is really an issue only for sophomores and up.

Retention is not just a house issue, it's a system issue, including facilities. The money we put toward rush and recruitment needs to be revisited, because it doesn't correlate directly to more new members (any more?). What really connects is getting students to understand the "why" and values of why people join and remain in our organizations during college and after.

Upkeep can become a point of stress – more and more, students don't want to have a role in maintenance, which can be a barrier to retention. Houses are a bigger part of IFC culture than Panhel, maybe too heavy on the house for IFC, too light on the house for Panhel (during recruitment, since it's all held in the Student Center). Some of the retention loss we see in Panhel comes when they are asked to move into the house later, but that tends to be very Panhel specific. Can residency be framed more as a positive experience? How can alums help with this?

If recruitment happened in the second semester, students would have the chance to live on campus and learn about our wonderful FSILG system. That might benefit our organizations overall. "Fall term, first year is so stressful. They all think they got in by accident, they all are unprepared for the workload, they all are living away from home the first time – and in the first two weeks we ask them to commit to one of our orgs - it seems like too much." Panhel has done formal spring recruitment before. At that time, the students didn't like it (possibly because of higher academic expectations in spring) and fewer students have participated. This might be a good time to revisit the idea, though.

Right now, our students are having a different experience than in the past. They have been out of the houses from late sophomore to beginning of senior year and don't have experience of that process of retaining people between pledge and joining.

Just because you don't have an elected role doesn't mean you don't have a role in the house, and it would help to make that more clear. When members join, it can fall on a small number of officers. Some houses do better than others, empowering people to take on roles.

Career fairs can be one good opportunity for alum involvement, adding value to joining.

FSILG is asked to consider a 30-minute seminar *for the alums* on this, so they'll be more aware of these issues. Brad and Akil will talk off-line, maybe prepare a memo to AILG (email list) about this. **If you're interested in being involved with retention plans, let Akil know, and you can join this conversation about helping our alums help our students retain numbers beyond initial recruitment.**

Facilities Renewal Update

See the AILG website at <https://ailg.mit.edu/committees/fsilg-facilities-renewal-committee> for [slides](#) and recording of the Oct 6 meeting of the FSILG Facilities Renewal Committee. Pam can send the report to anyone who requests it.

The community survey is being conducted. People like the level of detail in the report. People are eager to get their houses scheduled. About six houses are already in queue. Two of the three pilot houses are eager to move forward, and the third is considering, so that will help us try out the process and learn.

Review of FSILG Forward Efforts / Next Seminars

FSILG Forward seminar ideas:

- Recruitment
- Connecting with your students and aligning priorities
- Finances
- Students of 2021
- National outlook on Greek life
- Winter facilities management

FSILG other initiatives:

- Community service
- Organizing alum mentoring offerings
- Speakers for plenaries
- Hybrid meetings
- Evaluating long-term finances

AILG Committee Chair Approval

Holding off on Community/Education, since Cody Chamberlain, the chair of that committee, is not present, but there are no proposed changes in current committee leadership.

- Finance/Insurance – Stan Wulf
- PVP – Roy Russell and Mary Linton Peters
- IT – Bob Ferrara and Bob Xavier
- Facilities – Tom Stohlman

This slate of committee leadership is approved. Thank you all for volunteering!

Nominating Committee

Forming such a committee is an idea for filling the pipeline of nominees for AILG board, committee chairs, etc. Membership on this committee could derive from some previous role automatically, such as previous IFC/Panhel presidents. What would be a good make-up? Let us know your ideas.

- It would be good to have a spread of years represented.

- Previous board members? (That might skew older, not a consistent influx)
- Subset of current alum board presidents? They know what their volunteers are doing.

Other News & Announcements

National news – DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) and sexual misconduct are the two areas that tend to make the most waves in the national university landscape. Students want guidance in and attention on these areas, and MIT continues to lead in those areas. We’re preparing students to be better citizens of the world.

With parents’ week coming up, sometimes parents arrive knowing only what they’ve heard in the national news, especially about protests at other universities. It is helpful to make sure they know how MIT is different, working in this network.

Family Week is virtual again this year, Oct 26–29. MITAA is hosting, some houses are, too, though there’s less interest in virtual right now.

<https://parents.mit.edu/s/1314/bp19/interior.aspx?sid=1314&gid=31&pgid=8377>

Melissa Nobles started as MIT’s new Chancellor just over a month ago. (She might be a good speaker for AILG at some point.)

Career Fairs <https://career-fair.mit.edu/>

FCI annual meeting (2nd virtual, 18th annual) is 6:30pm on October 20th. Please RSVP to sklemm@fsilg.coop.

Adjournment – 7:12pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Tyler Kemp-Benedict, AILG Secretary

Abbreviations

AILG	Association of Independent Living Groups
BSF	Building Safety Facilitator
DEI	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
DSL	Division of Student Life
FCI	FSILG Cooperative, Inc.
FSILGs	Fraternities, Sororities and Independent Living Groups
IFC	Interfraternity Council
ILGs	Independent Living Groups
IRDF	Independent Residence Development Fund
IS&T	Information Systems & Technology
LGC	Living Group Council
MITAA	MIT Alumni Association
NIC	North American Interfraternity Conference
NPC	National Panhellenic Conference
Panhel	Panhellenic Association
PVP	Peer Visit Program (formerly AILG accreditation process)
SLI	Safety, Licensing, and Inspections