



ICC AUSTIN
 COOPERATIVE HOUSING FOR STUDENTS • NOT FOR PROFIT

General Membership Meeting Minutes

October 22, 2016, 2-5pm, University Presbyterian Church Youth Room

Attendees:

Noah Vaughn	Avalon	Travis Neeley	HoC
Marina Chazco	Avalon	Matt Ward	HoC
Blythe Kamin	Avalon	Lainey Jackson	New Guild
Alana Brandt	Avalon	Gaby Joseph	New Guild
Josh Carroll	Avalon	Ryan Pumphrey	Royal
Michael Brown	Avalon	Nora Greene	Royal
Andrew Browne	Avalon	Eric Kubeczka	Royal
Laura Marshall	Avalon	Ludmila Santana	Royal
Marie Sells	Eden	Hayley McGaugh	Royal
Joshua McCauly	Eden	Juan Manuel Villareal	Royal
Katie Doherty	Eden	Kayla Blanchard	Royal
Patricia Sosa	Eden	Jake Bruner	Seneca
Kevin Yu	Eden	Camryn Kessler	Seneca
Josh Malett	Eden	Celia Shaheen	Seneca
Lana Porter	French House	Annie Biondi	Seneca
Elissa Goodman	French House	Dani Munoz	Seneca
Ransom Hefley	French House	Rachel Ellis	Seneca
Julie Fournier	French House	Sloane Palmer	Seneca
Huyler Marsh	French House	Carly Dunn	Seneca
Erin Dowd	French House	Luca Masters	Seneca
Wilson McElvain	Helios	Michael Zhang	Seneca
Scott Delhommer	Helios	Natalia Ruiz	Seneca
Marieke Alsguth	Helios	Erika Lawn	Seneca
Sabrina Amaya	Helios	Alberto Amatong	Seneca
Elliott Heidenreich	HoC	Gianni Luisi	Seneca
Julie Richards	HoC	Kevin Sharifi	Seneca
Melanie Blakeman	HoC		

Part 1: ICEBREAKER AND REPORTS

Ice breaker (members went around in circle saying “ha, ha, ha...”)

Report from Cara McConnell (ICC Austin president) entitled “Steering the Ship Towards Economic and Social Justice.” Discussion of the style of ICC Austin Board governance (policy

governance), and the need to make sustainable decisions that have broad consensus and democratic involvement. Ends Policy reading generates a lot of positive snappy fingers. ICC Austin economic and racial demographic information presented. Cara outlines organizational progress and conversations with respect to improving ICC Austin economic justice. The Board goals are presented, including showing how this GMM was an important part of the Board process. It may feel like ICC Austin isn't doing a lot towards improving social justice, but there has been a lot of work done. The reality is that ICC Austin is a slow-moving ship, but it is moving.

Huyler Marsh, Board Treasurer, gives a financial update. He explains the Board budgeting process this fall. The importance of profit margin is explained, in particular the need for it to be adequate. Profit margin has been too low for several years, but ICC Austin is on track to get it back up to 10%. The Ruth Schulze expansion project has had some hiccups and is a little behind the original schedule, but is now on track. Ask your House Board Rep or Board Officers if you ever have questions about the Board work.

Report from ICC Austin staff, Billy Thogersen, Executive Director. It is an exciting and nerve-racking time to be Executive Director. There is a lot of change and uncertainty: We face the potential loss of Avalon each year due to a rolling one-year lease, we are adding a fourth full-time staff member, restructuring staff, and losing Nick Hill the current Finance Director, and we are on track to start the Ruth Schulze expansion project. The good news is that we've known about, and have been planning, for all these events and have a good plan in place to manage the uncertainty. He is extremely excited to hear the small and large group discussions at GMM today, and reiterates the importance of these conversations to staff operations. (He regularly re-reads the minutes.)

Part 2: GOVERNANCE AND BOARD PERPETUATION

Andrew Brown (Avalon member) gives a presentation on the proposed Bylaw changes. He emphasizes that a referendum on anything can still be called by a petition signed by only 10% of the membership. Changes have been approved by Board, and will be sent out for a vote by the membership. "ICC" has been changed to "ICC Austin". "Class A" and "Class B" members have been changed to "Current" and "Alumni". The Board Role section has been changed so that it aligns better with what the Board actually does.

Nominations Committee endorsements are given and Noah Vaughn (Avalon) gives his candidate statement. Roxanne Zech (French House) who is not present has her candidate statement read by J.T. Election process explained. Members will be sent ballots via email.

BREAK

Part 3: SMALL AND LARGE GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Written Notes from Small Group Discussions:

Part 3 Small Group Discussion Questions/Prompts

At this GMM, the conversation topic is very open-ended. We are hoping to get members to reflect on social justice, both in terms of individual experiences and the organization as a whole. Then, some time will be spent thinking about how ICC Austin may be unwittingly working against social justice. Have someone in your small group jot down notes so that we can include them in the official GMM minutes.

Prompt 1: What does social justice mean to you?

The term social justice encompasses a wide range of concepts, many of which may contradict one another. When you hear the term “social justice”, what is the first thing(s) that pop into your head? Listen to what everyone has to say and then see if your group can find any consensus, or common threads about what social justice is.

Responses:

Group A

- No one is inherently disadvantaged.
- “Social Justice” is an umbrella term
- Forums, like dinners, can be used to discuss
- Defining social justice is subjective to person answering
- Creating an encompassing definition requires a lot of discussion
- Social justice = nuanced
- Equality
- Freedom to be who you are and wherever
- Voices in spaces

Group B

- Unfair opportunity to live in IC Austin
- Welcoming environment
- Accessible living
- Diversity and equality/equity
- Combatting systems of power through ICC Austin policies

Group C

- Freedom, environment, accessible, education, awareness, diversity, equal opportunity and outcome
- Equitability not through equality but through the means of education, affirmative action, etc.
- Videos are a great, a good way that we show our stripes to people who may have misconceptions, pre-conceived notions.

Group D

- Make world equitable
- Right historical injustices
- [be] Active
- Equal opportunities

Group E

- Liberation, equality, representation of all people, intersectionality
- Fairness
- Self-expression, speaking up, consistency
- The systems in place haven't/weren't fair
- Equality of opportunity
- Liberation from systems of oppression

Prompt 2: How is ICC Austin preventing movement towards social justice?

Much of what ICC Austin does, and how it does it, has been passed down from generations of co-ops (organizational inertia), and influenced by a society with many problems. For ICC Austin to transform society, ICC Austin itself needs to manifest the transformation it wants in the world. communities.

One suggestion for starting the discussion is for everyone to briefly talk about their “house education process” upon joining, how those processes made people feel, and how they might impact who ultimately gets to enjoy the benefits of living in ICC Austin communities. Did the education process prepare you for becoming an ICC Austin? What could be changed in the process to have better prepared you to be part of a social justice organization?

Group A

- Why do we even have the house process?
- Disparate housing processes
- Availability of membership officers
- Prospective members should not be interviewed/screened
- ICC Austin-wide guidelines
- Diversification through membership -> talk about what co-op is
- Everyone has to know it's [the house education process] not an interview
- Maybe don't focus on questions, just education
- [House education processes] Transparency

Group B

- House education process isn't enough – more outreach
- Be as open and inviting as possible; less “cliquey”, maybe open house?, all co-ops open to prospective members

Group C

- House education is not enough on the side of the applicant
- It's intimidating to meet 20 people who live together

Group D

- Major cultural differences – illegal activity, privilege
- Stereotypes or (illegible); uncomfortable to change; (illegible); restructuring

Group E

- Don't know what ICC Austin is doing for social justice
- Not talking about social justice:
- Lacking conversation on sexism, classism, racism
- Lacking education for new members/membership officers
- Flexible housing [house education?] process
- Clothing optional can be culturally exclusionary
- No universal house [education] process
- Stigma of “white spaces” in co-ops

Prompt 3: In what ways does ICC Austin, and what ways can ICC Austin, create or enhance social justice?

The ICC Austin Ends Policy states that the cooperative should be striving to “...transform society towards cooperation, justice, and non-exploitation.” How is ICC Austin moving the world toward greater social justice?

Group A

- How do we reach out to new membership?
- Accessibility – house [education] process is not an interview
- Broaden/strengthen community outreach
- Stress what a co-op is

Group B

- New house videos to promote acceptance to potential new members

- Reach out to people who wouldn't see themselves living in co-ops who need affordable housing
- Could possibly do tabling
- Volunteer as a co-op: ICC Austin volunteer day/kickball league
- Education officers should actually do educational activities instead of just parties: meeting with communities on campus, planned parenthood talk

Group C

- When we reach out, who do we reach out to?
- Could we reach out to people as a social justice org?

Group D

- Opportunities to mobilize in west campus: west campus mosque, queer awareness (illegible)
- Diversity -> marketing
- Scholarship? -> assignment: first generation college student, (illegible), EDC
- Prioritize safety before diversity

Group E

- Membership officer could offer rides to people
- Communities:
- Have community events
- Go to social justice events -> protests
- More action -> workshops/discussions
- Solidarities/outreach with other student groups
- More education
- We intentionally live
- Large scale events

Large Group Discussion:

J.T.: He will start the large group discussion using the prompts, but is interested in hearing other topics as well.

Huyler: **Question 1 – “What does social justice mean to you?”**

?: Group one talked about equal opportunity in ICC and how to be a welcoming environment, more accessibility, more diversity, and more quality of community; combatting systems of power with ICC policies.

J.T.: We like all those words

Josh M: (Group 6) We didn't spend too much time on the first question. We got more specifically into what ICC could do,

J.T.: Did anyone else want to share anything else on the definition of social justice?

Lana P: (Group 4) We had a similar response in terms of making decisions with a history of oppression and marginalization.

Gaby J: We started talking about things like liberation, representation of all people, intersectionality. Then we started looking at what those descriptive words would be as actions.

Cara M: We talking about self-criticism, speaking up, consistency, and that the systems in place aren't fair for everyone.

Shannon M: (Group 5) We started off broadly saying that with social justice no one would be disadvantaged because of inherent conditions. This is a very nuanced and subjective topic and it's important to make sure that everyone has as much a voice as they want to have in order to give equal opportunities for people.

Noah V: **Question 2: "How is ICC Austin preventing movement towards social justice?"**

Shannon M: There are variations between houses with the house [membership] process, and to some extent we are losing sight of the fact that it is not an interview or screening process. We should be focused on education people who are interested in being in ICC about what a co-op is and what the culture is like – not thinking of it as a way to deter anyone from living there.

Kevin S: We talking about what ICC Austin members can do when they feel threatened by other members. When a member review for physical or sexual assault is pending there should be a policy for temporarily relocating members. There should also be a process for bypassing the house member review process. There should be a procedure in place for the office to handle these situations directly because people are hesitant about moving forward [using the member-drive processes]. ICC should be reaching out to educate its members about what they can do in these situations.

J.T: (starts taking stack) Suggests that Ashleigh (membership director) might have some direct responses or useful information on these topics. Asks Keven to repeat the points that he just brought up for the record.

Ashleigh Lassiter (staff): She has written down the following point: 1. Temporarily relocate members to other houses [when appropriate during member review process].

Kevin S: College Houses has a policy like that [relocating members] and they budget for these events, including hotel relocation until the time leading up to member reviews. There should be a process for bypassing the membership review in certain cases with the office having control of the process. And, ICC should be making efforts to reach out and educated members about these processes.

J.T.: I'm going to ask Ashleigh to weigh in on this. I would like to note that ICC has tried many education events like mental health first aid, anti-oppression workshops, but they haven't been very well attended. He asks members to think about why.

Eric K: Safe Space Austin is working with Tender Demand [and ICC Austin group committed to education about consent] will be holding a meeting at Royal on Sunday November 6 at 5pm. They will be educating about bystander awareness, sexual assault, and how to handle those situations. They will also be looking at the related ICC Austin policies/processes. ICC Austin will be using Safe Space Austin in a number of different ways over the next couple of months.

Ashleigh: First draft of new sexual assault policy is done and is currently being reviewed by Safe Space. The next step will be for the conflict mediators to review the policy, (and will also be reviewed at the November 6 meeting mentioned by Eric – see above). Hopefully the new sexual assault policy will be in place by mid-November.

Eric K: He will be posting the November 6 event on Facebook – so no need for everyone to remember now.

J.T.: Is there a bypass to the member review process in place now.

Ashleigh: Yes. There is a contractual bypass for sexual assault currently, and the new sexual assault policy will be another option. So, members will have three options for handling sexual assault if you include the member review process.

J.T. Asks Kevin for further clarification to make sure the concerns have been captured.

Kevin S: These processes shouldn't be only if something has already happened. If someone feels threatened there should be a way of bypassing the member review because it might be awkward.

J.T.: What I'm hearing is that we may want to consider broadening the criteria under which the policy would apply. Currently what happens if the house process is bypassed? Who does it go to?

Ashleigh: Right now there this level of problem remains at the house level.

Luca M: For sexual assault it does jump to the staff level.

Michael B: What if the aggressor is not a house members, and you are talking about relocating a victim, that's totally different. But what if you are talking about a pending member review and there was some violent or felonious behavior, then why not contact APD [the police]? If someone rapes someone or beats someone, why not just kick them out of ICC?

Scott D: In response to that, I think that this is something that ICC is doing that is inhibiting social justice. My understanding of one of the reasons for adding a new sexual assault policy is that people seem very reluctant to file police affidavits, and this is something in our policy prevents social justice because people are afraid to go ahead with the police so you have to go through a very contentious member review process to remove members who may have committed a terrible act. I don't think that relying on police is necessarily the best approach for ICC Austin to fight the problem. Staff is being proactive with process revision, including

bringing in the appropriate external expertise – although I haven't seen the new policy yet. Our current sexual policy is inhibiting social justice, though.

Erin D: I think someone just feeling threatened is a very low threshold for kicking someone out. And it's not that it would never be justified, but having a membership review is a reasonable way to ensure that it [membership revocation] is justified. If you put in place a process to remove a member when nothing has happened yet, that become a really dicey area for justice for both parties. For example, if someone feels very threatened with just a little provocation, then you're removing someone at great cost to them. When the stakes are this high, you should have proof that the consequences are justified.

Julie: There are many reasons why someone might not want to go to the police for sexual assault. For example, the person might be a significant other. Because of this, there should definitely be other avenues. I'm glad that the sexual assault policy is being revised. But, there are other issues such as interpersonal violence, people with weapons, and people verbally threatening people. I think verbal threats are grounds for something to happen. I would be in favor of broadening the sexual assault policy to include interpersonal violence.

Katie?: I was just going to say what Julie said. The victim should not be forced to contact the police. Other avenues should be available.

J.T.: Encourages houses to come up with creative solutions for managing these problems, in addition to using central/staff resources. For example, if someone is feeling uncomfortable in a room that they are in – move them. [Note from staff – please contact staff if you ever do this as an emergency stop-gap measure because there can be extremely bad outcomes if members reside in rooms they don't have a contract for – including major eviction delays]

Gaby J: She clarifies that under existing policy, a member will be kicked out immediately if someone provides staff with a notarized affidavit.

Ashleigh: If there is an incident, and the victim (or other knowledgeable party) brings in a statement that has been notarized to staff, there would be an immediate contact cancellation of the accused party.

Brief discussion of where/how you get things notarized. ICC Austin staff are not notaries.

J.T.: When new policies come out, how do members hear about them and give feedback?

Asleigh: The new policy will be posted on the ICC Austin website and go out in the Weekly News. The new sexual assault policy is modelled on the Berkeley Student Cooperative process. There will be a policy meeting with the conflict mediators to review the policy because it relies heavily on their participation – everyone can attend though. As always, all operational policies are open to member feedback and change.

Scott D: Has anyone used the signed affidavit process for sexual assault?

Ashleigh: No. It has not been used. Ashleigh clarifies that it is not a police report, but just a notarized statement and that there are multiple places nearby where you can get things notarized.

Conversation is refocused on 2nd Question: How is ICC preventing movement towards social justice?

J.T.: There is a concern that ICC houses are not always safe spaces. Are there any things that have not already been discussed that we need to get out on the table?

Josh M: For the majority of group 6's discussion we talked about the culture of substance abuse in ICC. Should a house be made a substance free house? Would this make ICC more inclusive? There were a lot of good viewpoints. We talking about how a substance free house would be more inclusive in a lot of ways. There are a lot of illegal activities that happen at ICC. And when there is a culture of activities where the police get called, people can get arrested. In those cases people of color or without the same privilege as the [white] majority of ICC members have, they might be less likely to live there because of concerns of adding yet another reason to maybe get arrested. It's also not inclusive to people to don't have any interest in substance use, or dealing with addiction or recovery. There are many compelling reasons to set aside houses as substance free, or a queer house, or people of color. There were many perspectives that I had never heard before.

Melanie B: A lot of other co-ops around the country have themed houses, for example houses that are inclusive for queer folks, or folks of color, houses that are substance free. They are not exclusively exclusive, but if you want to live in that house and share that identity it could be a safe space for you. You normally have to sign a list of community agreements basically agreeing not to be a rude asshole. This would be good for ICC so that people can have safe environments that support their identity. A substance free would be a really cool way to start,

J.T.: How do people feel about the idea of themed houses?

Lainey: Our group discussed some ways that social justice is being prevented or blocked [at ICC Austin]. One example is the reputation of ICC: When you tell someone you live in a co-op, the reaction is almost always "you all have parties" or "you all smoke". The conversation is always on the party culture, not the cooperative living and how it could work for you. To change the ICC Austin reputation from a platform for these awesome parties to tell people what we're really about will be challenging: [How do we express] Yes, we party on the weekend, but at the end of the day this is why we exist, and why we live here, and this is what we're working towards. This is something we really need to do, but I don't even know how we'd begin to do that.

J.T: I did a survey of ICC members when I lived here in 2011 or so, and the vast majority of members heard about ICC initially through parties, so that's pretty much how people find out about ICC. On that note, invite your friends over when it's not a party, please (lots of chuckles). And also have events at your house that are not parties.

Lainey: We also discussed how people find out about ICC and what gets talked about after that. Most of us said we heard about coops at a party, or from a friend living in a coop. Some people are getting really excited about telling other people about coops. For example, there is a Facebook Roommate Finder with 10,000 people looking for apartments and leases. Somebody had been commenting, as well as someone from College Houses had been commenting, "Hey

I'm looking for a place \$600 or less. Help me out.” That could be a new way for ICC Austin to reach out to people to let them know that we are here and exist for reason; a way to broaden our marketing.

J.T.: Notes that staff is currently working on a detailed marketing plan. He invites members to talk to staff about it if they're interested. Staff “open hours” are from 3-4pm every Friday.

Cara M: Another thing discussed by our group was that clothing optional policies can actually be really exclusionary. Not everyone is going to be comfortable with a clothing optional house. I think that all houses are informally clothing optional? But maybe there could be a house where it is not allowed.

Camryn K: Themed houses may not be an excellent idea. If you have a house that is a safe space for people of color, or a safe space for queer people, it seems to imply that the other houses are not a safe space for those people. That is not a message we want to send. I realize the benefit of having a community of people like you but I wonder about the message that will be sent [if we have themed houses].

Dani M: There is something really powerful about an intentional community, especially one that goes beyond ‘we’re just all students’, or just a cheap place to live. Having themed houses could be really important and propel change more effectively. If there is a house that is themed ‘we celebrate racial diversity’ for example, it feels like just because they are trying to focus on race wouldn’t mean that they’d be anti-queer or something like that. Those things wouldn’t go hand-in-hand.

Noah V: We already have houses with themes. Avalon and French House are upper-division. At least for Avalon, this theme really does create a more studious environment. Having something like this is very possible and creates a culture that we are here for a reason. I believe you can do that with other houses too. In Berkeley, they have house called Afro House. At Avalon we had a straight white female who lived there [Afro House] and said it was one of the best experiences of here life; opened her eyes. Having a house like that at ICC Austin could be really useful not just providing a space that is safe for people of color, or queer, or whatever, but also for educating people who are not in those groups (straight, or white, or whatever).

Katie?: Going on the theme of ‘what our houses are now’ and individualizing them as a queer house, or whatever, a really good thing we could do differently now is build up who we are as ICC *rather than just a co-op*. People tend to group all the coops in west campus as one. I think ICC has a very different culture than College Houses. There are houses like Royal that have maybe one party each semester. We are not a party house. People might be better able to find their niche in coops if we built up the individual identity of the houses more: Who are we as a house? There are some houses that party less and some that party more. So, individualizing us at ICC and as individual houses would really help with that.

J.T.: It’s interesting how many houses are able to stay a certain way over time. I think that speaks to how we advertise to our friends, and our friends keep living there, and so on and so forth. I’d like to talk about the house “interview” process and how that might be a barrier to social justice.

Josh M: Returning to the topic of themed houses, and in particular the concern that creating a space for people of color somehow implies that other houses are not, well, the point is that the others aren't safe spaces for those people. In setting aside houses that are intentioned and work towards that goal is something that ICC is lacking. We already have some differentiated houses that always end up the same [continuing their individual sameness], but an important part of creating an inclusive community would be institutionalizing those differences. If we're already doing it on our own, then just writing down this house is for this, and that house is for that – and all this could change over time – but as long as there are houses for underrepresented communities, I don't think that would be bad.

Julie: I agree with what Josh just said. In addition, the new house videos are a great new tool for helping prospective members understand what they're getting in to. If a house wants to be more queer, for example, emphasizing that on the website would be helpful. Sometimes when people move in they aren't even sure what they're getting in to, and then they don't have a good experience.

J.T.: We used to call those people “scream and runs”.

Lainey: I have a question about not necessarily about themed houses, but maybe houses directed towards a goal, such as substance free or something like that. In order to maintain the autonomy of the houses, how would this work. For example, some houses are pet free. How did this come to be and what if members wanted to change?

J.T.: It's up to the houses to decide.

Lainey: I spoke with Ashleigh about how the Ruth Schulze house might be a substance free house. So, how would we manage making sure that happened without taking away house autonomy? How do we move towards themed houses given that?

Melanie B: I don't have the answer. It's really hard to figure out how to make this happen if we want to make this happen because our houses are not safe spaces in many ways. If someone were to bring a proposal to their house saying “I'd like to make this a house an intentionally safe space for queer folks”, they are risking harassment because their houses are not safe spaces. How do we make our houses more focused on social justice? How do we make safe spaces for people to even talk about and advocate for those things?

Lana P: I don't think implementing a policy like this [themed houses] would be about excluding people who don't identify with people in that group, but about creating policies that encourage accountability. For example, ground rules that say these are things that we are trying to achieve and if you don't align with that we are going to hold you accountable. You have to sign an agreement that you are willing to be held accountable. That's something that should be at all houses, whether they are themed or not.

Erin D: ICC might consider incentivizing houses to adopt themes through a grant program. I don't know exactly what the incentive would look like, though. Giving houses some benefit in consideration for adopting greater restrictions/targeting specific communities might be way of getting themed houses started.

J.T.: We should consider if for house themes we are talking about restrictions, community agreements, or more of a celebration. Now I'd like to return to the question of the house education process.

Dani M: We are talking about making the membership process more reflective of an inclusive organization. In our group, we discussed how the existing house processes, like coming to a dinner or a meeting, are not very inclusive. For example, if a prospective member is lower income, it is more likely they will have to work and may not have the same kind of free time to complete a convoluted house process. We talked about the possibility of making the [convoluted] process optional and offering other options like simply talking to the membership officer. The new, updated house videos are very helpful [prospective member education tools] for people who do not have the time to devote to doing the house process. The application process can also be confusing, with having both an ICC application and then another different one for all the different houses. These applications can be difficult to find. I had a hard time when I applied. Having a single universal application, or at least a single central repository for applications would be helpful.

Cara M: It used to be that ICC followed a similar model to College Houses where you would vote on whether to allow people to live at your houses. We do not do that anymore. If you apply to ICC, you can live in any house. I believe there is still some residual culture from the old way of that [voting on prospective members]. A lot of people when they come to the house process feel like it is application and interview; that they need to be fitting in to this culture. We could do a lot more to not frame it as a 'house application', since it's not really relevant since you can't be denied. Maybe we could change the house process framing from a bunch of processes that you have to go through to being an opportunity for the prospective member to get to know the houses. You wouldn't buy a house without seeing it first. Frame it that way.

J.T.: Does College Houses still vote?

Cara M: Yes. I think ICC does a pretty good job of not asking uncomfortable, sexually explicit questions. We have gotten rid of that for people who are applying [to live in ICC].

J.T: Maybe we need to have something on the ICC website "How is ICC different from College Houses?" (lot of chuckles). E.g. we don't ask a lot of sexually awkward questions.

Lainey: I think we can all agree that ICC is working towards being more inclusive and less exclusive. Part of that is recognizing that the house process is to educate members coming in, and not to screen them or interview them or in any way see would be a good fit for us. Rather, it should be for the applicant to determine if the house would be a good fit for them. Our application process can sound kind of scary. The Committee for Combatting Oppression has been discussing how the application language itself can be a sticky mess. I think 'New Member Education' would be a good thing to call it – to take out the 'process' term, or anything else suggesting it was some kind of interview.

Marie S: We keep talking a lot about how we need to get better, but I think we need to turn the conversation to what we are good at. What we are good at is upholding the system in the coop

where we require people to cook together. We require people to do chores. We require people to come to house meetings and attend GMMs and giving voice to their opinions. I don't know everyone's reasons for joining ICC, but I think one of the main things we can all agree on is this idea of living the co-op life. We have this ideal of group activity, of working together on similar goals, which is keeping the house together. So in my personal case: I happen to be a minority. I happen to come from the lowest income level. And I happen to not identify as straight. But, one of the things that made me feel so welcome at ICC when I did the house process; to see how the house works, how labor was organized, how they did groceries. That's what we're really good at. We still have people on campus who ask "what is a coop?". The idea of coop life is still foreign to a lot of students. I'm happy that Ashleigh is working on the marketing plan. I encourage those discussions that we can tell students 'this is what co-op is like'. We can focus the membership process on telling people about the nature of co-ops. This gives people, regardless of economic background, race, or origin, or any other factors that make us who we are. We focus on the productive goals that make us work together. I think that's the more general push to be taken on membership. Whenever you're welcoming people to a house, and I think Eden is doing a good job, you'll be asking where they're from, what are some of their hobbies, what they hope to see from living in a co-op. So, it's more of an education about what we can do. That way, when they start living there they can learn more. We already study at educational institutions where ideas are constantly exchanged and discussed. So ICC can focus more on what the co-op life is about, that we are about inclusivity. That's what we're good at. (applause)

Ransom H: I'm the membership officer at French House. Lots of good points have been raised about the membership process. But, I think there may be some things that we could learn from College Houses: One of my roommates from last year heard I was looking at co-ops, and he was looking for something affordable too. When I mentioned ICC co-ops, he said there's no way he would live there because he wouldn't fit it. I asked him a little bit more about what he meant. He said, well, "everybody is white", it was just an overwhelmingly white organization, and he was very concerned that he wouldn't fit in. And so he doesn't live at ICC. He lives at College Houses. On a whim he checked out the Super Co-op because he heard there were a lot of international students. He said that the deciding factor for moving in was all the international students and just much larger number of people of color. This made him feel at home and not like he would stick out. That's something to be considered, although I don't know all the details of the College Houses membership process or marketing. But it seems to be a much more diverse group of people than most ICC houses.

J.T.: Points out that neither ICC nor College Houses have much of a marketing budget.

Ransom H: I don't know if ICC ever tables at UT to catch freshmen looking for housing after their lease runs out on their dorms or next school year. Many freshmen don't even know that co-ops exist. That could be a great way to market ICC.

J.T.: The on-campus student housing fairs are really expensive. But, as a student organization ICC Austin can table for free.

Ransom H: A lot of small UT organizations table on the west mall.

Lana P: In order to table we would need to be a student organization, otherwise we have to pay. (someone notes that ICC is a registered UT student organization) Ok. Student organizations can go online and reserve a spot and a table for tabling.

Cara M: If anyone wants to table, just talk to me and I can reserve the space.

Ashleigh: We have two advertising flyers. One is done, the other will be completed this week. One flyer is very infographic and the other is more artistic. Once done, they can be used for tabling if desired.

Josh M: We were talking about how we wanted ICC to be more social justice oriented. To do this we should get away from telling people it's a cool place. I'd want to say 'our members are very educated', 'we have trainings', 'we are concerned with issues', 'we learn to recognize mental health problems', 'we learn how to be a good bystander'. If we want to be more of a social justice organization we need to market that way, *and we need to be that way*. Personally I would like to advertise that way, but I wouldn't feel comfortable saying that [we are a social justice organization] because of past mental health and anti-oppression events are not well attended. There is a lot of interest, but people don't go. For example, there was a mental health training and only one person from my house went. So, if we want to be a social justice organization, how can we actually be that and perpetuate that? We can't just market it. We have to both be it and perpetuate that.

J.T.: I took an advertising class at UT and tried to apply the concepts to ICC. It's difficult. How do you make a flyer "ICC: It's Safe (thumbs up sign)". (laughs from many). That's not showing confidence. It's tough to figure out. The best I came up with when living at ICC was that "ICC feels like a sleepover *all the time*". It's a way of saying 'it's safe' without undercutting the message.

Gianni ?: I'm a freshmen and living in a co-op has been a really cool experience. I'm also multi-racial. I also love food. If I was a struggling student walking through UT or ACC and I saw a flyer that said "Cultural Appreciation Pot Luck", I would have been there. I don't know how we could do that, but I think it would be a good way to get minorities: Come eat for free.

J.T.: You basically have a pot luck at every house dinner.

Gianni ?: Yes. So we would be sharing our counter culture.

Annie?: This goes back to question 2. A priority for me is making our houses physically accessible. Seneca and Arrakis have ramps, and designated ADA rooms, but I don't think they are marketed particularly well. I don't think a lot of people know about them. I have a lot of friends in chairs and they don't know that cooperative housing is an option. But then it's discouraging when you get to Seneca and realize that you have access to a tiny downstairs common space, but I can't get upstairs to the TV room and lounge. When I lived at Royal, we actually carried people upstairs to access the 2nd floor porch. I think we should prioritize 1st floor accessibility to all the houses. You want all your friends to feel welcome and come to parties and stuff.

Noah V: The new co-op is going to have an elevator, so all floors will be accessible.

Katie: [not audible] Thoughts on substance free houses.

Cara M: I want to do a plug for the Committee for Combatting Oppression. A lot of what has been discussed today is being looked at in more detail by the committee. Our next meeting is November 17 at Royal, with pizza. One idea we kicking around is having an 'open house' one Saturday for potential members. This will allow people to feel safer during the education process.

Gaby J: Dialogue about social justice at the house level is important. Some houses are really good at talking about racial issues, women's issues, or issues that concern minorities. I've gone back to New Guild with these ideas on my mind, but don't have a good idea for how to get the conversations going. If ICC had a structured way to get those [house level] conversations started, that could change house-level awareness of how we actually function, and how we perpetuate social injustices. I don't just go back to my house and just say 'is everyone ready to talk about women's issues', even though this is what I'm thinking about. I don't feel that there is receptivity and wonder if there is something ICC can do to foster it.

Katie (ro): In our group we talked about maybe requiring education officers to hold a minimum of three education events each semester, like racial diversity, LBGTQAx rights, feminism, etc.

Dani M: I like that idea. In order to make an event more engaging for a house, I suggest making the event topics less broad, and more directly connected to the house. For example, don't have a talk on feminism in general, but rather have the discussions on feminism be connected to how they impact ICC or houses. And then, those house-level conversations could be brought to the Board as well so they feel more intentional and meaningful.

J.T.: Emphasizes the importance of communicating with the ICC Board to enact change in ICC.

Lainey: I like what Dani said. All the issues we've been talking about are multi-level. They don't start or stop at the individual, house, or Board.

J.T.: Ends large group discussion. There are some houses with members that consistently don't attend GMM. Does anyone have thoughts to make the GMM more enticing?

The banner sent out advertising the GMM didn't actually say where the GMM was, but that may not be the larger problem.

Some people have told me that they just don't want to go to a church.

Encourage people who may be attending the post-GMM co-op crawl party to also attend GMM

Mandatory attendance from houses doesn't necessarily help. It's mandatory at my house and only a couple of people are here. Work is keeping a lot of people from coming.

The current time is about the best time overall for everyone, despite the attendance problems.

Talking to people who didn't go to GMM about the GMM might encourage them to attend next time.

For me this 2-5pm is a really awkward time. A morning or evening time would be better.

J.T.: Arrakis had zero attendees. If you know someone there, be kind to them and try to get them to come next time. New Guild has 31 members and only two are here. New Guild attendance has really taken a hit since GMM was moved out of New Guild. In 3rd place with 43% attendance is Eden. In 2nd place with 47% with Royal. And, for the forth damn time in a row, Seneca is in 1st place with 79%. (attendance trophy given out)

GMM surveys

GMM group picture

Pizza and donuts

GMM Ends

Fall 2016 GMM Feedback Survey Results:

(42 of the 53 attendees filled out member feedback forms)

Overall, how satisfied were you with today's event?

15 – extremely satisfied (36%)

24 – satisfied (57%)

3 – neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (7%)

0 – dissatisfied

0 – extremely dissatisfied

What did you enjoy most about GMM:

- Very resourceful/constructive/motivating conversations/discussion (15)
- Large group discussion (4)
- Small group/informal group discussion (4)
- Co-op love (picture of heart)
- Ideas and thinking; It stimulated my own thinking
- Hearing others speak on their perspectives
- Getting to interact with fellow co-ops; seeing everyone; being together; time to mingle; conversations with other houses (5)
- Discuss important issues about diversity; social justice (3)

- Snacks/pizza/food (7)
- Learning more about the organization
- House bondage
- Haus Love (heart)
- Updates from officers and staff
- Talking about important issues affecting ICC Austin and my life
- Problem solving issues that I have had
- Bringing up the topics of self-criticism that we tend to ignore on a day-to-day basis
- The reminder that I need to stay relevant as a board rep

List one thing you are taking away / learned from today's GMM:

- I need to do more for my house and ICC Austin
- I'm into the idea of a sober house/themed houses (6)
- That we should creatively focus on inclusion (2)
- Be more involved and incorporate social justice into events
- Social justice issues ICC Austin
- I want to work on promoting social justice as a membership officer
- To discover people to love
- There needs to be more house to ICC Austin communication
- How ICC Austin can work towards [illegible] a social justice organization
- How individual houses can make an effort at the house level to improve ICC Austin as an organization
- Specific ways in which ICC Austin members are happy and unhappy with ICC Austin and ways to improve
- Community attention to (compassion/expression/oppression?) and how wonderful that is
- Market ICC Austin differently
- I learned a lot about ICC Austin policy
- Knowing about sexual assault training
- Many people don't consider their houses to be safe spaces
- The flow of ideas currently in ICC Austin
- Motivation for implementing change (smiley face)
- New sexual assault policy in the works (2)
- Views of others from small group [discussion]
- We need to table on campus and/or do other things to widen our net
- Invite applicants [prospective members] to house social events
- Need for in-house discussions on social justice topics
- Learned way more about actual ICC Austin policies
- Things can change?
- Learned about ICC Austin processes and what ICC Austin is working on for the future

- We have lots of moving parts
- Efforts towards community improvements
- Steering in right direction [the ICC Austin ship]
- I need to provide better community education to my house
- That ICC Austin members don't know much about what ICC Austin is doing towards ends they care about
- ICC Austin is not racially diverse

List one thing we can do to improve future GMM's:

- More small group work
- I thought it was way good
- May handout for the meeting parts; a printed program
- Maybe send out ballot for setting best GMM time
- Continue using shirts and food as incentives! Follow-up email with summary and ways to get involved right after GMM
- Make mandatory
- Better attendance
- Co-op crawl closer to TMM to promote more attendance
- We could stick a bit closer to topics of discussion
- Ask to speak a bit loudly and slower for non-American members to be able to understand
- Different location/new venue (3
- Maybe more small group time/medium group time
- I liked today a bunch
- Large group size can be intimidating
- More focused questions
- Have a pre-GMM survey that members can fill out to help direct discussions
- Take less time
- Open bar
- Possibly change the time to be earlier in the day
- Powerpoint
- Clarify location
- Step up step back; no dominating conversations
- Maybe encourage board reps and/or trustees to heavily push for attendance in a positive, encouraging way; highlight the attendance award for best attending house
- Most of the pre-small group discussion was un-engaging. We might be putting too much effort into telling people about stuff
- Recaps during discussion before moving forward
- Balance interactivity and discussion
- Be on time; stay on track; some [members] have work
- Get more houses involved

- Set goals
- Multicultural events

Overall, did you find today engaging and worth your time:

- Absolutely, Very grateful!
- Yes (36)
- Mostly
- Somewhat
- Fun and interesting
- It could've been more engaging and faster

Anything else you would like to share:

- Thanks for everything y'all do for us!
- No (5)
- It can be a little mentally exhausting
- Love GMM!
- Co-op potluck open to anyone looking for housing
- (smiley face)
- ICC Austin forever!
- ICC Austin is the best (heart)
- I (heart) ICC Austin
- I really liked the engagement at the end [of the large group discussion?]
- Happy to live at ICC Austin; wish I would have known about ICC Austin sooner in my college career
- How do houses handle issues regarding mental health and sexual abuse?
- Thanks for organizing this! It was my first GMM and I had a great time
- We seem to have an echo chamber mentality to social justice
- Food was great, thank you
- I felt like discussion could have gone on longer
- I'm excited to look at the notes from my small group discussion
- I think a person of color house would be a good idea