Orientation / social chair combination

Summary:

Pros

1. All three social chairs support this change (see each chair's statement below).
2. Better balance of voting power between Hall Councilors and House Council.
3. A better balance of workload throughout the year and increased redundancy in the event a chair is unavailable (which was very important twice this year).

Cons

1. Good to have a point person on orientation - someone who knows they're expected to run it.
2. Allows SPEC to appoint to the best candidate to orientation.
3. May not be the best year due to HVAC.
4. VP of Res. Life shouldn't manage orientation.
5. Three good officers will get the job done - descriptions only matter when people don't do their jobs.
Pros (Reasons to Change to Three Social Chairs):

- Balance workload well
  - Worked very well this year (2015-2016) - see statements from each chair below
  - This workload-balancing will be especially important next year when the event attendance is expected to increase substantially
  - I believe planning 1 large social event at a time is all we can expect of a full-time grad student. I don’t think the orientation chair should orchestrate orientation and delegate responsibilities - we don’t have the infrastructure for that (it would be as if the social chairs reported to the orientation chair). We DO have the infrastructure for the VP of reslife managing 3 social chairs planning events during orientation. This worked BEAUTIFULLY.
  - Because there is redundancy - it's more feasible to have 2 chairs at every event rather than only 1 if someone is unavailable. This partially why we have redundancy in CH and Brunch - to compensate for unavailability.

- Reduces redundancy in training and experience
  - Social chair gains experience during summer
  - Orientation chair does not gain experience during the summer before orientation (perhaps he should anyway, though it’s not obvious in the job description)

- Job description is more accurate to have 3 social/orientation chairs
  - The orientation chair historically hosts social events in the second semester, including the large Wine and Chocolate event in February.
  - The social chairs have historically helped the orientation chair with the orientation events.
  - With the current titles, the social chairs feel less obligated to help with orientation which involves two very large events and two smaller events - these four cleanly divide between 3 chairs - one person takes the two smaller events and the other two host a large event. The orientation chair also feels less obligated to help during the socials throughout the rest of the year - and is a little confused about why they have socials in the spring to plan.

- In response to interfacing with GSC
  - This SHOULD be the VP of Res Life’s job, not the officer’s because GSC sees the VP of Res Life for the rest of the year, and the VP of Res Life applies to GSC for funding each quarter - seeing the orientation chair during the first few weeks then never again is confusing for everyone.
○ GSC basically leaves the dorms to their own devices because the dorms know how to run events. The only thing we do is schedule a time with them. We apply for funding from GSC-OC - which is no different than the rest of the year.

● In response to not allowing someone the opportunity to be able to demonstrate their passion for all things orientation and making them settle for social chair instead - which may be less appealing
  ○ With all the volunteer opportunities available people are welcome to be as involved as they would like with the orientation festivities.
  ○ I don’t think we are losing a large market for officer recruitment - Edgerton and Ashdown both have multiple social chairs and no orientation committee
  ○ In response to someone only wanting to do orientation because they think they can to get the job finished early in the year and relax for the rest of the year (maybe they are busy with quals or something else so they feel they can only contribute to the community early on) - we need to move Wine and Chocolate to the Social committee, not be able to rely on the orientation chair for picking up slack for the social chairs when they need it (this happened my year when both social chairs were unavailable for very good reasons and I filled in for them on an event - I understood this to be part of my job) - and this goes against the rest of ResLife and the Halls which expects ~1 event / person / month. We also wouldn’t want the orientation chair to relax - it’s part of the job to plan events throughout the year. Exceptions for quals, etc. are made anyway as needed.

● Logistically:
  ○ Voting between the HC’s and the officers will be more even by removing the orientation office and keeping the social office at 1 vote. (28 to 26 with 13 HC’s getting 2 votes each, will become 27 to 26 with 13 HC’s getting 2 votes each).

● In response to the reason the orientation chair was created originally is because we were worried about 1 or 2 people not doing their job and orientation flopping
  ○ Orientation is a super critical time of year when MIT is introduced to the wonderful community that is SP. We should protect this time of year with more resources - but not more than we need. Between last year and this year I feel strongly that we have way too much work for 1 orientation chair to do - especially as their first event, and we do not have enough work for 4 social chairs. If we had 4, I’m sure 1 or 2 would become un-involved. We have the right amount of work for 3.
- Officers not doing their job and causing SP events to not work out well is a risk in every office - and picking 1 orientation chair is MUCH more precarious than 3 social/orientation chairs where the VP of ResLife manages them.

- In response to - not having a point person for orientation: This would be the VP of Res Life's job, since she has to make sure all her office's jobs are done - orientation/social is no different.

- In response to - maybe we should see what this experience is like in a normal year without the HVAC and the ½ size reduction
  - This proposal would NOT be happening if last year, without any renovation, everything with orientation went smoothly and there didn't seem to be a reason to change it.
  - We did not significantly scale back the orientation events this year - and got our regular funding from all our funding agencies for all of them. We still threw an incredibly elaborate dance party and intense BBQ and had laser tag and collaborated on a dessert night - just as much work as we have always done.
Statements from this year’s chairs

Chair 1:
Organizing events as one of SP’s social/orientation chairs has been extraordinarily rewarding. But at times—especially around orientation—it can also get really, really demanding.

On the day of a big event, of course, things are intense, and you need every co-chair and helper you can find. But even more intense are the weeks beforehand, when you have to venture into the thicket of MIT/ODGE bureaucracy in search of the fountain of Alcohol Approval, beset on all sides by unsympathetic pencil-pushers who don't know how to organize a spreadsheet. Minor exaggeration.

The point is that (as you know) event prep is stressful and intimidating, especially for a first-timer: there are oodles of rules for every step of the process, as well as invisible meta-rules telling you which rules actually matter. I wouldn't have gotten past step one—or stayed on as an officer—if I hadn't gotten tons of help from last year's officers, this year's SPEC, and especially my current co-chairs. They guided me when I didn't know what to do, shared what they'd learned on the job, checked up on my events, and gave relief when I'd start to burn out. On the day of the Halloween Dance Party, for example, they were among the first ones there for set-up and the last ones to leave, and beforehand gave me invaluable advice about what snacks would work and what decorations to use.

So, here's the pitch. Without both of my co-chairs, I would have burned out. Fast. There's too much work and too steep a learning curve to do it solo, or even duo. I would know, because that's what almost happened: at the start of the summer, I had only one co-chair (Jaya), and I had to run three events in five weeks (BBQ, Dance Party, special Coffee Hour). If Jaya and Tiziana hadn't both been there for the next events, there's no way I could have kept going.

Anyway, I hope I've given you a sense of why I think it's so important to have three people there for social/orientation planning, and I hereby respectfully urge you to make three the new default! Your future socials will be much more fun—and your future social chairs much, much happier.

Chair 2:
I fully support this idea. It would have been impossible (and a really large burden) to plan all of the orientation myself. The BBQ was more than enough work and having this setup helped spread out the workload into more manageable sections. That said, it's very important for the
social chairs and their spec vp to clearly delineate the duties at the beginning of the semester (as we did).

**Chair 3:**
Since orientation is such a large event, it was really great to have three people to help manage. This allowed us to split up the events, so it wasn't too overwhelming at the beginning of the semester and also helped us learn the ropes. Three social chairs is also great as the semester continues, because the events can again be divvied up to minimize stress and allow each chair to focus on making a few events as awesome as possible.
Cons (Reasons to Keep Two Social Chairs and One Orientation Chair):

- In response to good workload balance: This should be the VP of Res Life’s job to ensure anyway. Clear expectations should be set as to what each chair should be doing.
- In response to orientation chair not doing their job: When SPEC is appointing officers, they can choose the best orientation/social chair applicant for the job, so the most responsible person makes sure orientation gets done, ideally with the help of the social chairs.
- If three good people are orientation and social chairs, it doesn’t matter what their title is, they will still get the job done. The only time titles and descriptions matter are when people don’t do their jobs. A separate orientation chair has this (unambiguous) expectation to ensure orientation goes smoothly.
  - Basically, we just need clear expectations
  - The scenario of having 3 social chairs and no orientation chair has been tried in the past. A hard working/smart SPEC decided that things are better done with an orientation chair dedicated for orientation events/period. They should keep that in mind.
  - Having 3 officers in the same office add a layer of difficulty, which is “good” team work, to doing the job. I believe that 1 (maybe 2) officers will end up doing most of the work.
- There is a value in having different job descriptions to appeal to potentially different candidates.
  - Different people have different interests, energy levels, etc…..some people like being “horribly busy” for a short period of time (intense orientation that is) while others like to have a reasonable workload over the year. It is nice to have/provide options for both groups.
- We are expecting a very challenging year ahead re-populating SP and recruiting for a full-sized government; it might be “wiser” not to launch new structure or change many parameters.
- VP of Res Life becomes manager of orientation (alternative is having three separate people coordinate with GSC)
  - Have a designated lead for orientation but still distribute load?
  - Sydney: VP of ResLife should be able to do this, not a lot of work
    - Good to know who’s in charge of each event
- Interacting with GSC and managing the orientation was the soft skills that Orientation chair candidates expected to learn and gain experience on.
  VP or ResLife doing this could lead to possibility of micromanagement.
- **Issue with larger offices:** disfunction spreads further
  - could potentially have two disengaged people, then one gets burned out and we get no social events for the year
- **Unique to SP:** small offices that collaborate well and depend on Helpers
  - draws people in
- **Overall concerns:** delegation and job descriptions
  - efficiency is not always better - inefficiency helps attract people to make it better