Few Students

With the announcement of the final plans for the Centennial Week celebration, and with the actual observance fast approaching, we feel it is time for a closer examination of the intern-timing and structure of the plans. The one-hundredth anniversary observance of the founding of MIT should reflect the aims and purposes for which Tech was created, and the aims and purposes that it presently proclaims to the world.

William Barton Rogers founded an institution for the purpose of educating undergraduates, and to this day all statements issuing from here state that MIT is primarily concerned with educating its resident students. For this reason, it is with great concern that we learn of the timing and structure of the celebration of the anniversary of Prof. Roger’s institution. Perhaps it was the simplest arrangement to have the ceremonies, panel discussions and speakers during the student body’s Spring Vacation, but was it the wisest decision, the decision most in keeping with MIT as an educational institution?

The presence of such men as Oppenheimer, Rabi, Beadle, and many, many others on campus is an unprecedented opportunity for giving the student, undergraduate and graduate, contact with the top men of science and education in the world today. Regretably, this opportunity is not being utilized; the only student participation in the Centennial Celebration is token. There will be a handful of students taking part in the panel discussions, and there will be a brief convocation of students. On the whole, the undergraduate has no feeling whatever in being part of MIT at this time. We wonder how many students feel there is anything special going on except possibly through greater difficulty in tracking down certain faculty and administration members.

The argument can be presented that the student is here currently only through accident of birth, and on top of that, the undergraduate body is only one of many groups involved with MIT. This might be a valid argument were the circumstances different: we feel that there has been too much emphasis on the non-directly educational functions of the Institute. Something else always seems to come first, generally faculty research, or public relations, or even the graduate student, before the undergraduate. This is just one more straw in the wind.

Lone Man

With the deadline for filing for candidacy for Undergraduate Association President a week away, the field remains at one man. The UAP is the most important undergraduate office, and it seems strange that only one student deems himself worthy of the office. It has been a tradition that several candidates suddenly declare themselves shortly before time runs out. The advantage to be gained by this seems a dubious one at best; one would wonder that the example of last year, when the first man to declare himself won in a landslide, would serve to devalue this approach.

With all the current interest on campus in national politics, it would be fitting if they would be some kind of reflection in local politics. This is the area where direct action has its quickest and best reward. There is no better way to negate the value of an office than to let it go by default, to anyone qualified though he may be.

"It’s just as well, John, We never see them anyway." Letters:

To the Editor:

We are pleased to see that at long last the Athletic Board has decided to make public its views concerning its controversial December legislation. In a shame, however, that commentary which was so long in coming was also rather sketchy and incomplete.

In his letter last week, Henry Wagner said: "The intent of the resolution is to define the difference between varsity and intramural athletes; so that with increased prestige, the varsity athlete will confine himself to intercollegiate sports. We feel that prestige is something which cannot be given to the athlete through legislation. We find it hard to believe that Henry Wagner, or the Board can be so firmly convinced that participation in intramurals causes the varsity athlete to lose stature.

Mr. Wagner talked also about relieving living group pressure on the varsity athlete. It is our belief that such pressure is not nearly so far flung or intensive as might be intimated from the A boards decision. Furthermore, the legislation just passed will leave many individuals in a much more difficult position than ever before, for they will be faced with irrevocable decisions and conflicting loyalties.

Finally, Mr. Wagner pointed out that passage of the rule will allow new people to take part in the intramural program. This, however, sounds as if the A Board were cutting off its nose to spite its face. Surely an alternative would be to enlarge the intramural program. Leagues of different caliber could be established. Even now many living groups enter a number of teams in a single sport.

The new rule is against anything that we hope MIT stands for. It attempts to provide an external means through which coaches may curtail certain activities of the individual. It substitutes controls for team loyalty and respect.

John Rollwagen ’62, Chairman Elect, IFC
Steve Levy ’62, Vice President Elect, IFC

Means To An End

The recent decision by the Director of Athletics to implement an Athletic Board ruling by barring varsity athletes from intramural competition has been subject to considerable criticism from many quarters on campus, some of it just. Before adding ours, we would have a few things clearly.

The Tech believes itself to be in general accord with the sentiments and overall objectives of the Athletic Board and the Director of Athletics. We’d like to see MIT teams win. We’d like to see MIT students, in and of themselves, take more interest in the team’s fortunes, both by going out for intercollegiate athletics and by attending the games. We think that being on a varsity squad very likely entails considerable sacrifices, and that MIT athletes often fail to recognize this.

So much for overall objectives. How to implement them? The Athletic Board thinks it has found a way. We have objected to it in the past and we will continue to do so, particularly since the interpretation of the ruling taken by Mr. Balch is such a severe one. We feel that the present situation wrongs the men involved, and may well be deleterious to athletics in general at MIT.

If, as the A. Board hopes, the present policy keeps men on varsity teams from playing in intramurals, intramurals are weakened by removal of those who sustain the level of competition and thus keep the program going. If, as is also possible, second and third string athletes decide they would rather participate in intramurals than sit on a varsity bench, the intercollegiate teams will suffer for lack of depth.

Aside from its effect on the athletic program, the recent ruling is undesirable in that it removes an element of free choice from an area of MIT life. A hard and fast rule, rather than a coach’s or an individual’s decision, determines what the individual shall do. What has become of the policy of letting students make their own decisions as adults?

Our basic feeling, then, is that we are in accord with the ends, but emphatically not with the means, which the A. Board and the Director of Athletics have employed. We do not think that the principle involved is trivial, or that the effect on athletics at MIT will be salutary. We hope that those who feel as we do will make their feelings known to coaches and members of the A.A. and A. Board, directly or via The Tech.

The issue must not be considered closed.

IFC Election

The curtailing of discussion in the Interfraternity Council presidential election last week after candidate and supporting speeches raises certain questions. With only one motion to abort debate was carried by a 2/3 majority, said flatly he did not care to discuss the matter. Ted Jarmain, who had intended to speak at the meeting, commented that having worked with both candidates he felt in a position to discuss them intelligently, and consequently the lack of debate seemed "not discretionary . . . not the thorough discussion typical of I.F.C. elections. . . ."

Without any intention of implying collusion or dark conspiracy, The Tech feels lack of discussion to be a serious omission in the election of the I.F.C. president. He represents one of a thousand students, and vocal consideration of the comparative merits of the candidates would seem to be crucial in his selection. Casting no aspersions on the duly elected president, we feel the election was carried without the representative comment which was available. The decision to stifle debate was a serious disservice to all concerned.

Progress Into The Second Century Note:

The new rule is against anything that we hope MIT stands for. It attempts to provide an external means through which coaches may curtail certain activities of the individual. It substitutes controls for team loyalty and respect.

John Rollwagen ’62, Chairman Elect, IFC
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The Tech announces new business hours Monday 1-3, Tuesday 10-12, Wednesday 1-3, Thursday 11-12 and Friday 1-3. Or call Peter Thurston, Business Manager, Ext. 3782 or KE 6-1139.