Public relations and MIT

What's news? MIT, that's what! MIT has, since the Centennial Celebration, been the subject of cover stories in Newweek, Holiday, and Business Week—among others. The New Yorker is now concluding a three-part series on what it terms the “scientific and technological world around MIT. Realities is planning a major story on MIT, and the United States Information Agency is now shooting a film here for worldwide distribution.

Kudos for getting MIT's name before the public eye goes largely to Mr. Jeff Wyile, a junior who is Associate Director of the Boston bureau and now Director of Public Relations for the Institute. Other staff members in the public relations staff: Mr. Wylie's desk is now several feet deep in recently delivered mail material which is already taking up a lot of our time. Wylie and his staff work often into the night while assisting representatives of the news media and explaining what MIT is really like to this public. This effort is commendable, since there is a great popular mythology about MIT that will take time to erase. However, the task of representing the Institute to the outside world should not always be passed to Mr. Wylie and the Public Relations Office. There is much that students groups can do to help.

For example, the MIT Athletic Association could contact Sports Illustrated and other magazines and fill them in on MIT's very excellent sports programs—and perhaps even on a little-known facet of the Institute. Jerry Luebbers, the former Undergraduate Association President, fielded such a direct contact over a year ago, but says that no student group has attempted to follow it up. Such contacts can work—Life's cameras came to Field Day and students field graphs, although the coverage was never published.

The most logical student group to help represent MIT to the public is the Public Relations Committee, a part of the Institute Committee. The PRC has attempted to publicize Incomemore than MIT, but there is no reason why it can't expand its horizons.

Making oneself understood is crucial in a complex and competitive world. The members of the new PRC, under Chair- man Doug Sprung '65, have a wide-open mandate. Let's help bring about this understanding. They ought to use it.

Social Action Committee

The provisional membership recently granted by the Activities Council to the Social Action Committee is the first formal student group whose primary role involves social service and community action movement that has long been active at MIT.

Last week the Institute Committee, after having examined through specific courses of action, decided to designate SAC as the sole administrative and coordinative organ of all social service work done by MIT students. The indications are that a planning board of representatives of the various organizations concerned with social service—Technology Community Association, Alpha Phi Omega, Varsity Band, the Debate Society, and others—will be formed this fall to aid coordination.

The Administration has shown its support of SAC by providing the part-time services of Richard L. McDowell '60, who will give SAC complimentary advice from the Dean's Office.

There have been hints of financial support by the Institute. If SAC succeeds in doing what we feel in sizable amounts only after the group has demonstrated its ability to work without a paid advisor.

Within the MIT community, SAC can serve a vital function. MIT students, aware of the vicious circle of ignorance, crime, and poverty which exists both on hand and throughout “the other America,” the isolated, sheltered life of the academic community at MIT tends to breed an inflated sense of superiority which exists literally at our doorstep.

Outside MIT, SAC will aid in a significant contribution by extensive programs of settlement house, juvenile counseling, and mental hospital work. Such programs are not unprecedented. Phillips Brooks House, an endowed and well-established social service organization at Harvard, has become the largest student activity on campus.

There is a selfish as well as an altruistic reason for social service—helping improve the local environment. Early in this century, a large clearance and re-building project at Harvard effaced the surroundings of the faculty and students. The University of Chicago and Columbia, too, have been growing slums around their campuses, are sponsoring community improvement programs.

The Institute, while concerned with local problems, has become too clumpy and monolithic in its community relations in Cambridge. Portents of change such as the Student Corporation Committee are a welcome addition to the campus.

Honor and awards

Last week the editorial entitled "Research and the Humanities," stated Prof. Kenneth R. Wadleigh '43, Dean of Student Affairs, received the first Goodwin Medal for his work in the teaching of the part of graduate students. Both Dean Wadleigh and Prof. Halpin '53 received separate awards in June 1952. Thus Prof. Ashley shares the honor with both Wadleigh and Halpin '53 during the first year of its presentation.

A single award of the Goodwin Medal which consists of a monetary recognition, and a cash award of $500—has been made in every year since 1932, with the exceptions of 1953 and 1956.

As we noted last week, such awards as the Goodwin Medal do much to stimulate excellent teaching—for which the incentives are often small when compared with the rewards for scientific research. More teaching awards like the Goodwin Medal should be established.

In Inside Inscomm

Insc Prem will try to bring election candidates to campus

By Bill Samuels, UAP

How can any level-headed person be for Goldberg? After all, it has been the principles of the Democratic Party that have guided this country in its great growth this century?

Disagree? Probably a few do, but this is the whole point. Next year is an election year and I see no reason why we should not encourage the discussion of political issues and controversy on campus. For this reason, Insc Prem is going to make a major effort to bring candidates and other political representatives to campus.

Tom Jones is in charge of this program. He has already held a couple of meetings on campus, and the Insc Prem will write a letter accompanying anyone who attends the event to explain the evening.

Interested in working on this? Call Tom soon—he'll put you on the program in an efficient manner. This program will probably produce a lot of debate. Hopefully, we'll get a much more national issue, but if we don't do it, no harm has been done. Let's see the initiative go out until the next two weeks.

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