Fraternities: a vital role

Last summer we often engaged in the typical student recreation called “campus comparison.” “At State we always...” but “At MIT, now...”. Everyone has these sessions with their old high school friends, and the difference is usually amazing. But scholarship is not the only topic—sometimes not even the most discussed. Personally, we have often been struck by the differences in fraternity systems and administration attributes.

Right now fraternities all over the country are having more hard times, and especially poor publicity. Denounced as “childish,” “medieval,” “undemocratic,” “immoral,” they are in some places fighting for their very existence. At more than one school they have been completely and efficiently killed by the administration.

MIT and fraternities

The attitude shown by the MIT administration is favorable to fraternities—so favorable as to be thought-provoking. This feature is not run by gung-ho alumni brothers, nor does the housing shortage alone account for the degree of freedom allowed or encouragement offered.

We believe that fraternities, ideally, are different here because they are not mere clubs, or even refuges; they are, or at least, a form of community. At MIT, in contrast, the pledges of other houses may not. They are expected to because during Rush Week, they promise that their Rush Week is over, pledges inevitably feel like Cinderella’s pumpkins—the magic of being the center of attention is gone. But the good fraternity realizes that rush is not the only, or even the most important function to be served.

A lot of things get said in Rush Week about the fraternity’s contribution to scholarship and to working with S.A., position in activities. More is said about the benefits of association with the outstanding brothers.

To take one outstanding feature of the MIT administration’s attitude is that they believe what the fraternities claim. They have faith in peer education, in student maturity, in undergraduate responsibility. They also feel that an important part of an education is gained outside the classroom.

This faith in the student is probably self-supporting—students who are trusted, respond accordingly. It is important to realize, therefore, just how different MIT is in this respect. Every fraternity should remember that the dorm residents may not believe their Rush Week line, and the pledges of other houses may not. Two groups who do believe it are a house’s own pledges and the MIT administration.

Not perfect

There would be no sense in writing this if the system were perfect, and all responsibilities justified and all the promises kept. But the inevitable comes slip in. Some seem to be compounding and disillusionment and deterioration of ideals. These are not serious enough to warrant a change in the Institute’s basic position; but they are not trivial enough to be ignored.

To feel it important that fraternity men realize one fact; that without active cooperation with the Institute, without striving for high ideals, without a mature responsibility to their pledges, fraternities at MIT are no different from the state university houses that cause a poor general reputation for fraternities. This faith in the student is probably the administration’s trust is not to be taken lightly.

Letters?

Just a brief reminder—in the past, we’ve enjoyed some good controversies and spirited discussions on this page. Lately, however, we haven’t received much from our readers. If you disagree with our opinions or want to vote for your choices, let us know. We reserve the right to edit as we see fit, but that doesn’t mean we reject letters. We feel that ought to be more than one “campus opinion.”

66. Apparently having coeds reside in the old second-floor of his Memorial Drive brownstone was too much for even the good nature of Dean of Residence Frederick G. Fesselt. Jr., President Stratton has announced Dean Fesselt’s appointment as master of Ashdown House.

67. Professor Shapiro replaces Professor of Geology Francis Bitter who resigned last spring. The main concern of undergrads in this whole affair is the fate of those fall Sunday afternoon house at which Mrs. Fesselt served endless supplies of cookies, cake and cider.

68. MIT has recently appointed head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering, Professor Arthur H. Shapiro, who led a panel of experts to study the September 24 issue of "Time." The team that three years ago Professor Shapiro constructed the perfectly symmetrical bathtub and proved that the vortex caused by draining the tub is more counter-clockwise in the Northern Hemisphere.

69. The report of the Carnegie Tech catapult project, after much international concern has been expressed by the Board of Directors, is to be published in the September issue of "Time." The board of MIT is no different from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, not that of MIT. The Institute is not run by gung-ho old alumni brothers, nor does the housing shortage allowed or encouragement offered.

Promises and faith

This doesn’t make any intrinsic distinction between fraternities and dorms at MIT; but the fraternities are expected to be more active role in the encouragement and direction of their members. They are expected to be because during Rush Week, they promise.

Kibitzer

By Mark Beal

Frosh Council, Spring Weekend Parents Weekend discussed

By Bill Byrn

Among other items of business that came before the Institute Committee last Thursday were Freshman Council, Spring Weekend, and Parents Weekend.

Frosh Council

The Frosh Council will be temporarily delayed in its organization from each of the 28 institutions. Representatives of Brunner House, 10 from East Campus, 6 from Baker House, 6 from Senior House, 3 from McCormick Hall, 2 from the Non-Resident Students Association, 1 from Billings Hall, and 1 from Student House. The house government is the only group that these three groups are responsible for determining, in any manner that the Frosh Council might find it worthwhile. They wish to have the best usage given to the Frosh Council.

Field Day orientation will take place on Tuesday, October 5 at 5:00 p.m. in the Student Union. A schedule of interview will be held to make field day preparation.

Bidding, East-West vulnerable, North dealer.

Inside Inscomm

Frost Council, Spring Weekend Parents Weekend discussed

By Bill Byrn

The names of delegates must be submitted to the Inscomm secretariat before Tuesday, October 5 at 5 p.m. The meeting of the council will be the following Tuesday, October 10, in the Student Union. At this meeting officers will be elected and preliminary planning for Field Day will be carried.

Along with the chairman and members of a Spring Weekend Committee to sponsor an Institute Committee meeting they have the following responsibilities: by April 26, the committee will be chosen. The committee will meet by April 17, no later than Spring Weekend, and will be the next one, i.e., second council. The next committee and members will be involved by the Inscomm secretariat that date. A schedule of interview will be held to elect the following council.

No restrictions were placed on the candidates-they may come from any class. The Institute Committee voted to run a Parents Weekend on the weekend of April 25. The chairman of the temporary committee will be elected at the first meeting. He will be able to appoint his own committee at the first meeting.