Student-faculty interaction

Last week's edition explored some of the reasons for social science education of which the student-faculty interaction is one. This week we would like to discuss the faculty's role in this education. The basic problem, we feel, is the ever-recurring one of student-faculty contact.

Talking with several professors convinced us that public lectures are not the answer to the problem. Students and faculty members often unwillingly participate in such events as debates, lectures, and the like, because the formal occasion stifles the openness and the real dialogue which many seek. And some professors simply dislike such interchanges.

We cannot condemn a teacher because he is unable to express himself glibly in public. But in more private, informal surroundings, such a man often proves to be more vocal and persuasive indeed. It is this sort of contact which we encourage. We think that the health of the faculty are doing as well as possible in their contact with students taking their subjects—although many, ourselves complaining about never seeing a professor, seem to want a private tutor in all their courses. But we may imply ability to his students does not end at this point of impracticality.

How, then, can a faculty member increase his contact with students without becoming too familiar? As we have said, the answer is more to education than pure science and engineering. We would like to see more talk among faculty members with the subjects of discussion limited only by the interests of the groups. We would like to see a talking among faculty and students, with experience, as well as knowledge—the experience of a well-educated student from the world over.

One professor told us of an informal seminar he and an associate had started. They met each Wednesday in the all-seniors in the course, so that they could always "talk shop" if other topics failed; and of course that seminar was the same common problem of using their education in the real world. Both students and teachers have something to learn. The most important thing, however, is to have regular weekly meetings enjoyable and informative. And they seldom had recourse to semi-social contact.

Student initiative

This illustrates one possible type of contact; before we enumerate others, let us make an exception. We may imply above that it is solely the faculty's duty to make contact with the students. This is emphatically not true. Indeed, many faculty members are only too willing to talk with students, but are unable to reach any such goal because of the beaver looking for an A in a subject. We feel, to put it bluntly, that students are making little if any effort to really associate with their teachers.

Let us proceed, then, on the assumption of student initiative, and faculty cooperation. We personally have received quite a few inquiries about MIT's record in the Nobel Prize game. Taking the position that any former winner must either have been a student here, or have been a faculty member when he won, we claim some credit for two previous Nobel winners.

Most of us are familiar with this year's two winners, as well as with the physics prize recipient, Charles H. Townes. (For six years last year for his development of masers. If our information is correct the only other MIT prize which we've been honored by the Nobel Committee is Dr. William Shockley, who received his PhD in physics here in 1936 and shared the 1956 physics prize for his work on the transistor. In Cambridge, incidentally, this comparison with the Nobel committee's former students from Harvard to win Nobel prizes.

According to Sunday Herald for October 24 the Institute paid $395,000 for a 19 acre tract of land on the conrner of Church Ave., and Pleasant St. in Cambridge. Since this property is just a few blocks from the River Street Street House, the Nobel committee's decision to purchase the site's use was called the authorities that be Dr. W. Crawford north of the procedure. The Nobel committee's heads of living groups and student government committees are concerned. But it's time to get the ball rolling now.

Vietnam Poll

We urge our readers to fill out the ballots in the poll below. We feel such a poll can be very useful, but only if a significant percentage of the student-faculty-bowling leagues.

Nature example

Perhaps the basic argument for these suggestions is that the best preparation for social contact with adults in the future is social contact with adults right now. Social maturity is demonstrated more forcefully by example than by instruction.

There is always more difficulty in starting a program than in continuing one; or in criticizing a program; for possible students and faculty members must take it upon themselves to organize all the things out at the start. We would like to offer our help; we also feel that the heads of living groups and student government committees are concerned. But it's time to get the ball rolling now.

Lobdell Room

The Student Center Committee has received several unfavorable comments on the quality and the prices of the food in the new Lobdell Room. We feel it only fair to see that this new facility gets an even break in its honest attempts to serve the community, so we'd like to get the facts straight.

Since the Student Center facilities are not subsidized, there is an inevitable raise in the cost for food and beverage items. A careful comparison of prices shows that the difference is seldom over 10c. And the new cooks and dining staff have a great deal to learn about the recipes they are using.

Mr. Fred Grother, head of the Stouffer's operations in the Center, has tried to offer specials, such as lobster or black bean dinners, at prices lower than reasonable prices. He has received very little feedback on the success of these specials, or indeed any helpful feedback on his menu's appeal and the preferred items.

The Lobdell Room and the grill room are unashamedly trying to cater to student tastes. We are interested in knowing what favorite dishes and price ranges will be tried. If students want $5.00 steaks, they will be available. In order to make the food more acceptable to everyone, the Student Center Committee is trying to give feedback to Mr. Grother. The cooperation of everyone is requested and needed if everyone is to be satisfied.