Visiting Committee looks at dorm status

(Continued from page 1) Baker House president Michael Mitchell explained Whelan's discussion with his own views of life in the dorm. "I mean," he noted, "the quality of life is very high." The fact that 70% of the dorm population would stay in that dorm in their freshmen year indicates that the students are somewhat satisfied. Undoubtedly, he explained, the tremendous renovations in East Campus and Burton and the composition of MIT's faculty have been major factors in maintaining this quality.

Mitchell took particular note of the house tutor system. A good tutor, an assistant editor, can draw together the students around the various personality group. But if the tutor remains passive, a major opportunity for increasing the interaction among students within the dorm has been lost.

Long-range problems

But there are long-range problems. Mitchell pointed to the continuing space shortage and rising financial burden as two key factors. "The fact that dormitory capacity is the lack of communication between students and housing administrators." Mitchell explained the time he had come back from his floor to the dorm to find his favorite yellow couch missing. "It was ugly," he said. "But so comfortable." He also complained that some decisions are often made without consulting students. The supply of electricity may prove another hurdle. Mitchell pointed out that some students leave couch to cook their own food. "The dorm electrical system can never cope with that," he noted.

The Analytic Studies Group

Protected by the Analytic Studies Group, a third member, Paul Teplitz, followed Mitchell's presentation. He pointed out the continuing space shortage and the apparent financial strain. Mitchell was reported to have pointed out that the student advisory group, since the various dorms do not offer social functions that would draw the foreign students out into the community. A "particularly acute" problem is social contact with the opposite sex.

Adaptation problems

Visiting Committee member Joseph Wheelwright discussed that total adaptation to American culture values could be harmful when the time came for the students to return home. Kwon proposed that MIT provide funds for foreign students to travel home for the summer. This would compensate for the poor commercial facilities, since many more students would leave the poor dorms that would ask to enter. But students who are willing to put up with poor room assign- ments do have the opportunity to occasionally vary their surroundings.

International Student Club (ISC) president Raymond Kwon was on hand to discuss another distinct problem - the social life of MIT's sizable number of foreign students. Out of 400 of MIT's seven or eight thousand students come from other countries, and in most cases these foreign students "are withdrawn from the community." Most of the foreign students stay together in a group, since the various dorms do not offer social functions that would draw the foreign students out into the community. A "particularly acute" problem is social contact with the opposite sex.

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