Dormcon decries rent hike

By Lee Giguere

The Dormitory Council, in the face of apparently inescapable rent hikes, is considering a proposal that would officially state its displeasure with the rising dormitory costs.

According to Larry Eisenberg '74, Burton House President, who introduced the motion at last Thursday's Dormcon meeting, the proposal is not to sanction the increases, but to call on the Institute to abandon its break-even policy. Eisenberg stated that the proposal would come up for consideration at the next Dormcon meeting, slated for the end of the month.

The measure, Eisenberg explained, was in part an effort to bolster Dormcon's credibility among students; however, he admitted that "there's not too much we can do."

Mike Wilson, Dormcon President, also admitted that in terms of practical effects, the measure "wasn't mean anything," but said it was instead a "statement of principle."

It is "most particularly likely" that the increases will be rolled back, said Wilson, who is a member of the joint student-administration committee that prepared next year's dormitory budget. He added, however, that the committee could be overruled by the top administration, for example President Jerome Wiener or Chancellor Paul Gray.

Since it is the top administration that sets the break-even policy, Wilson stated, the case would be brought to them. He stressed that the educational value of living groups was a point in favor of abandoning the break-even policy, although he was pessimistic about the chances of anything being done to change it.

Discussing the budget planning process, Wilson noted that students were valuable in pointing out where costs might be cut. He commented that the students on the committee were able to notice some things that the administrators didn't.

Eisenberg, elaborating on his proposal, stated that it would ask the administration to search for other ways to finance dormitory expenses.

Dormcon, he said, would be willing to assist in the process. The preparation of this year's housing budget came under fire last week by Baker residents, who claimed that they were denied representation in the process, even though four students, Wilson, George Phillips, Chairman of the Ashdown Executive Committee, Marica Keys, President of McCormick, and Paul Aikala, President of MacGregor, served on the Committee.

This year, students were involved in the decision-making process in the Housing Office at an early stage, and according to Housing Office officials they worked with the same information as the administration.

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