HIDDEN CURRICULUM POSSESSES HOUSING PROBLEMS

(Continued from page 1)

One immediate consequence of this lack of humanistic view-
points at the Institute is appar-
ent - the one area of housing and the dor-
morally system. The design of many hous-
ing units are deliberately
insulating dorms, halls and
houses, where students can get
gether for discussions and
meetings, is based on a liberal-
arts model. Students are encour-
aged to learn at Yale, Oxford and Cambridge.

"Discussions in the humanistic
and cultural model" - as en-
hanced by the MIT student
organization, is reflected in the
activities of the Housemaster-
Tutor (H-T) system, as de-
scribed by the CSE. The CSE
reports that the H-T system
was first implemented, when
students felt a lack of humanism
in the curriculum. The CSE re-
commends the H-T system be
expanded to include all students.

The hidden curriculum
also serves to maintain a
system which promotes open
discussions at a school where
the correct solution is sup-
reme, as seen by the CSE as a
reflection of the MIT hidden
curriculum. "Hidden curricu-
luum," a term once described
in this reporter as "the adminis-
trator's Word-of-the-Month Club
caption," is given little light
without doing the things in the
regular curriculum. This is
defined by the CSE as "the pres-
ures on a given student... to carry the
heaviest course load of which he
is capable, and to regard the
number of credit units as a
quantitative measure of his edu-
cation." A student who finds
himself to carry as many units as
possible, he seems to regard his
education as convertible into
courses, each weighed with N
units of importance. Bulling or
hacking - discussions with other
students - are seen as a waste of
time that could be better applied
to teaching, the "real business" of
an MIT education.

The CSE does not recom-
end a reversal of the present
policy of allowing a student to
carry any number of credits, but
does suggest that a study be
made of the effects of the exist-
tional attitudes of students
caused by this policy.

Houses as classrooms
The hidden curriculum also
enters another area regarded by
the CSE - use of the houses as
classrooms for seminars and
small informal classes. The
Graves Report encourages the
use of rooms within the dor-
morally as meeting rooms for
classes that are more open and
informal. The report notes that
"giving credit too often
tends to give credit too often
turns them into just another
long institute course, losing their
special character and student ini-
tiative." The CSE recommends
that credit be granted only when
it is in the only way of saving a
valuable activity, and notes that
this policy may be an effective
way of challenging the hidden
curriculum.

Housemaster-Tutor system
The "Housemaster-Tutor (H-T)
" system was first implemented
rather randomly, in the 1950's,
when individual faculty mem-
bers took up residence in the
dorms for brief periods. The
1953 CSE Report recommended
that this system be expanded
and set up a formal structure of
housemasters (senior faculty,
one per house); senior tutors
(junior faculty, one or two per
house); and tutors (graduate stu-
dents who would live in the
dorms or rooms, with one tutor
for every 35-50 students). Al-
though the '53 CSE Report provided
this structure, it did not set
specific descriptions of the
roles to be played by the house-
masters and tutors.

The '73 Report deals with
objections that the H-T system
is not accomplishing the goal of
improving student/faculty rela-
tions, and that the program does
not justify its costs. In answer to
the first, the Report points out
that a rule of one faculty mem-
ber to 350 students cannot be
expected to achieve wonders in
improving faculty relationships
with all students, and that the
benefits to the students who are
actively involved with the H-T
system are insupportable. This is
one of the many reasons why
the CSE does not recommend
the H-T system be expanded.

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