Academics, finances caused class size, housing decisions

(Continued from page 1) in the newly renovated eastern wing of Ashdown amid grudgs.

The decision to Ashdown was one of little or no alternative. As Assistant Dean for Student Affairs Ken Browning told The Tech, there was really no option. All choices were considered but none were really attractive.

One choice, students could have been housed off-campus in hotels (similar to the Burton- M exile of a few years ago). This was rejected as too costly and highly conducive to the development of a good social atmosphere.

Two, rennovation of Northgate apartments for undergraduate use would have taken until September 1975. Also, like the hotel, the atmosphere would not be what the Dean's Office would like, and living off-campus, even in the closest apartment, produced an added basis of getting back and forth.

Three, Random Hall could provide sufficient space for the extra students. However, Browning stated that he and others had felt that there was "little chance of putting together a successful living group," which is similar to the poor atmosphere argument. Because of the relatively high cost of rents in Random Hall, a substantial subsidy would have been necessary. Browning also indicated that the Dean's Office certainly did not want an all-frosh living group but doubted that upperclassmen could be induced to move out of dorms (especially the more modern ones) to the less convenient Random Hall. Lastly, the housing office, holding Random Hall in reserve, in case the newly renovated eastern wing falls behind schedule and is not ready for the Class of 1979. (Depending on overcrowding removes the usual cushion which allows for the plus or minus 25 admission acceptance variations.)

Fourth, Ashdown Hall provides a unique opportunity this coming year. With completion of the renovation, about 210 beds will be placed in the system. Putting 60 undergraduates in Ashdown will still permit an additional 150 to 170 spaces for single or double underclassmen. The 210 beds are expected to be available near the end of next fall, in time for the 1979 class to occupy them.

Problems with Ashdown

Browning stated that he did "not intend to develop an integrated group of grad and undergrads, although that possibility does exist for the future." The intention is to make two floors of the renovated wing into the underclass group, rather than mixing the two groups together. However, the expected higher-student body will not permit a problem because of the Institute's policy of guaranteeing single-sex housing to any student who requests such. Browning indicated that it may be necessary to make one floor in Ashdown coed because McCormick will likely be over subscribed.

To avoid having an all-frosh living group, the housing office will have to convince upperclassmen (and women) to live in Ashdown next year to "become the core of the living group in the new dormitory." The incentive will be the new dorms in 1975, the drawback will be that 110 more beds will be comparable to those of Burton and MacGregor. Browning did not know how the upperclassmen would be selected, but he expected that enough would be interested so that none would have to be assigned (a last resort).

The last irregularity in the decision was that no Ashdown residents were consulted. An advisory group (including Browning, Richardson, and twelve others) suggested the use of Ashdown to the Academic Council, and the decision was made a week ago Tuesday. The Ashdown representatives felt undersatisfied if they had not been asked for their opinions, but Browning pointed out that there really had been no viable alternative anyway.

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