Rents, Commons rising sharply

By Mike McNamee

Rents in MIT dormitories will be increased by almost 20 percent next year, with base rents ranging from $900 in Senior House to over $1000 in MacGregor, according to student members of the Undergraduate Association's Board of Review Committee.

The increase in rents and Commonals costs will be the largest in the history of the MIT dormitory system. Committee members said that energy costs, which have tripled in the past year, are responsible for the sharp increase.

The increases are the result of a three-option voluntary Commons plan next year, according to Burton House representative Dee Berman '74. In addition to the new plan, the Commons plan currently used, there would be a "One-Third" plan and a 7-day, 19-meal plan offered.

The "One-Third" plan would allow a student to buy tickets for 25 breakfasts, 25 lunches, and 25 dinners from the Dining Service, which he could use throughout the term. The 19-meal plan would provide four meals on Saturday and Sunday, which would probably be served in Loblolly only.

Base rents and differentials: The rents are decided on a three-part system. A base rent is set for the cheapest dorms in the system, and a "quality differential" is added to this for each dorm to determine the basic rent in the house. Charges for services which vary between the dorms, such as levels of desk service and maintenance, are then added to set the rates in each house.

Differentials were increased this year to make the rent differences in the houses more equitable, according to Jim Moody '75, the Baker House representative. Senior House and Belknap at zero, the differentials are: Baker and East Campus, $20; Burton and McCormick, MacGregor.

"I think the people on the committee are fairly happy with these differentials," Browning said. "They disagree, of course, with the expensive houses wanting smaller differentials and the cheaper ones wanting larger differences, but they've reached a pretty good compromise.

Browning said that he didn't expect "an mass evolve" from the housing system as a result of the increase. "We certainly won't have empty beds, with the overrevering we expect for next year," he said. "But I really would be surprised if many people moved out because of this.

Courses offer orientation

By Stephen Blatt

Every spring, as the time approach, to look for courses that fit their majors, various activities take place to help them make an educated decision.

Departments seek students' interest: The "meat sale" of the academic year is being held this week in the Student Center.

"We have been doing things this way to find out what is going on in the department, in a one-shot event, if you don't show up, you feel you can never get the information," said Professor Bernard Goodal of the Biology Department. "Our office is open, so when you come in and talk.

We have been answering things this entire academic year to inform freshmen what the Mechanics Engineering Department is and what career opportunities are, said Asster Shapiro, head of the Mechanics Engineering Department.

Professor Eugene Covert of the Aeronautics and Astronautics Department commented that "orientations are never particularly productive.

However, most departments seem to feel that open houses are necessary. As Professor Leon Crescenzo, executive officer of the Department of Architecture stated, "Freshmen don't come prepared to the initiative to go to departments. Most students we see ask 'What subjects should I take?' They don't like to say 'What are you all about?' — but it is not perfectly reasonable thing to ask.'

"Ongoing" forms of orientation and advising include the Undergraduate Seminar Program, which is open to advisors, and undergraduate students.

"Many of the smaller departments offer many courses and encourage faculty to participate. Students who take a department's seminars often major in that department. The Department of Urban Studies and Planning, for example, gets one-half of its majors through seminars. Of course, the department is trying to attract the students who take seminars or ask for freshmak advisors in a more personal way. It is interested in or have even decided on the department as their major.

Undergraduate courses are also used as an information source. Courses taken by large numbers of freshmen offer the students the chance to see the subject in some detail. "By taking all the required courses, you'll get an idea of what the course is," said UA official.

Courses are generally focused upon as "not required," but some courses are required.

The Undergraduate Association elections drew 1700 students to vote, which indicated a drop of approximately 500 votes from the number cast in the April 10 attempt to elect a UAP. That election was held by the student committees due to delayed ballots.

There were no formal protests filed with the UA concerning the election procedures. While Wallman stated, "there was no opportunity for fraud, stuffing or cheating," and UA official Stephen Shagoury '76 agreed that there was apparently no tampering with the ballots.

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