BSU's plan to help black admissions

By Philip G. Hampton, II

On Thursday and Friday, Oct. 25-26, the Black Student Union held a booth in Building 10 to distribute a BSU position paper on Admissions Office problems. The BSU members also solicited signatures from the members of the MIT community who supported the BSU's position on these problems.

During the next ten days, the BSU Admissions Committee and the BSU Political Action committee will work with black students, administrators, faculty, and John A. Ming, a former Assistant Director of Admissions, in order to clarify all of the issues and concerns to be discussed with Director of Admissions Peter Richardson.

This group decided that the MIT black admissions officer is a far worse problem than the BSU had believed. The very fact that the only persons who knew of the job opening were minority persons is a far worse problem than the BSU had believed.

Richardson, however, seems to be missing the point. He does not believe that to hire a black admissions officer makes any real difference to the MIT community. The BSU, on the other hand, believe that the hiring of a black admissions officer makes a difference.

The BSU has not decided whether or not to become a part of this mockery of fair play. Some black students do feel that any minute bit of input is better than none at all.

I am one however who advocates the position that if nothing significant is to be gained by being a part of a procedure, it is not a part of it. I am tired of just being a crumb-catcher or a rubber stamp.

I implore upon all members of the MIT community who are interested in the future of black people at MIT to lobby this interest to the Admissions Office. Ask Richardson to reconsider his search procedure, and to consider the idea of hiring a person without admissions experience and his offer of a bogus procedure for minority input in the hiring decision.

The second major issue - how to get black members of the class of 1980 recruited and admitted is still partially unresolved. Richardson happily agreed to an idea presented by John W. Arnett III, chairman of the BSU, that all 1000 of the top minority high school students be contacted through their black parents or minority people. The BSU agreed to provide people to look up phone numbers, compile lists of students by geographic locations, and to make phone calls. This proposal costs the Admissions Office very little money and if successful both its "black stats" and its budget will look good at year's end.

Although the BSU, of which I am a former chairman, is forging ahead with this idea, I must go on record in opposition to this plan. First, I do not believe black students should be penalized for being black. Black students are being asked to give up study time at the end of a semester as a basis that there is a progressive Admissions Office, the idea of hiring a person without admissions experience and his offer of a bogus procedure for minority input in the hiring decision.

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