Fraternal organizations spend heavily for rush

By Gordon Haff

This year, each of MIT's 30 fraternities will spend between $1,000 and $7,200 to rush the class of 1981. All but about eight will spend between $2,000 and $2,800; they will average $2,300.

The first item of the budget goes toward the rush booklet sent out to freshmen over the summer. This book costs the average house from $400 to $500. The publications include jokes, puzzles, quizzes about the Institute, simple newsletters, and heavily illustrated glossy booklets. A rush booklet is an important function of attracting to a fraternity freshman of the personality type that the fraternity is looking for.

The greatest differences between houses lie not so much in the amount of money spent, but in the way it is spent. Many fraternities go all out during Rush Week itself, especially over the first weekend. Huge parties on an airplane ride or a boat trip, at best, it's a case of a couple of upperclassmen meeting a couple of freshmen. I think it is better for a freshman to meet the upperclassmen as a group and get a true perception of them as people, rather than a false impression created by some expensive show.

Another significant segment of the rush allocation, at least in some houses, goes toward the summer rush. Although the average is only $200 to $300 (as opposed to $1800 for Rush Week activities), some houses spend significantly more — sometimes the majority of their money — on this sort of activity. At some of these fraternities, house members will visit any nearby freshmen. Sometimes if a freshman looks especially promising from the Student Activity Information Form sent into the Freshman Advisory Council (FAC), he will be visited even though he is 150 miles away.

The reasons for this approach are twofold. The first is simply to get to a promising freshman before the other fraternities do. The second is to get to know freshmen in a relaxed environment instead of the hectic atmosphere which prevails during R/O Week.

In addition, if the members of a fraternity contact a freshman over the summer and are impressed by him, they have the opportunity to get back at him once or even twice before the summer rush ends on midnight, August 28. After that time, there can be no rushing of any kind until after the freshman picnic.

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