Newman doesn't do enough as UAP

By Bob Wasserman

Barry Newman is off to a fast start in his term as Undergraduate Association President. Optimistic springs and strong beginnings become irrelevant the next fall, however, and Newman must increase his effort and dedication as UAP to make his a successful year in office.

Utility is based on "communicating," stressing better relations between students and administration as well as between students and the UA. The former type of communication is greatly needed. Most of the MIT administrators are open to student views, even Chancellor Paul Gray, but they receive little informal student opinion. Newman helped open UA channels, creating an efficient events board in Lobby 7.

Newman has found, however, in other aspects of his "s公益性" of communication. While running for UA last April, Newman said he would like to have student representatives on faculty committees report on important issues with which they are concerned. At the UA election a referendum urging this action was passed overwhelmingly by the student body. While Newman was promising student representative reports, though, he was failing to do anything about them. In the Nominations Committee, Newman made any concrete proposals for acquiring and publishing these reports, and he has not even revised the UA News so far.

The most important weapon of Newman's presidency is the fledging General Assembly. It is ridiculous to say that the dormant GA has been "reborn" because of barry Newman. Last spring, living groups have been going along with the idea, choosing representatives to the GA as needed, but Newman must get on the ball very soon to educate and interest these representatives before they become apathetic.

Assuming the GA does begin meeting with some regularity and success, Newman must devote all of his extra efforts to this body and its problems, rather than trying to get all student concerns addressed in the same year. Social events and concerts will plan themselves, Newman and his GA must concentrate on the larger issues concerning the student body. Newman, the student Legislative Chair of the student body, has thus far been working in the MIT CIA Committee on a public response to the ongoing problems with the MIT South African investments, and the lack of student representation on the MIT CIA Committee are all problems which need strong action from the GA through resolutions, referenda, and forums.

Despite Newman's experience with the disorganized array of MIT student organizations, Newman's DCC and student initiatives, he did promise a "network" to be formed by the UA that would react to issues of student concern. Newman's involvement with the "alphabet soup" has failed to discourage him from creating more bureaucratic structures on the undergraduate level. The GA, in fact, which had relatively a slight attendance at the first meeting, managed to form four committees from that assembly.

All of these problems, and more, are virtually inherited with the office of UA. Newman's characteristic over-involvement in MIT politics, however, is unique to his presidency. It is almost unbelievable that a UA would be something as time-consuming as R/O Chairman the same year, and this act of Newman's is deplorable. The major statement of policies and attitudes of both UA's Phil Moore '78 and Peter Birdwell G. Monty, Solomon. The Tech, as the pictures of the previous "nonstudent" administration and this one develop, I got the impression that there was something strange about the way the MIT community reacts to these situations.

It's not that we argue about issues. Far from it. Each of the incidents seems to reflect a real problem in the community. The writing program pointed out the ongoing problems with the humanities in general, and writing in particular. The Guide raised questions of privacy and freedom. And the Grogo incident demonstrated the amazing pull between the average student, oblivious to any racial issues, and those whose strong concern seems to be justified by some of the events of the recent past.

The disturbing thing about MIT controversies is the speed with which they die. At the height of the Grogo incident there were charges against students, calls for action against the professor who admitted instituting those charges, calls to separate the two. If this controversy runs true to form, the MIT student body will remain absolutely oblivious as the faculty decides about the rest of the issues involved: grade distributions, fresh, and year end final, letters of commendation and the rest.

By Kenneth Margulis

Shed light on the problem of racism, and a plan for freshmen courses to increase the sensitivity of MIT students. Now, a year later, the charges have been long dropped, no action has been taken against the professor, and the plan for courses has been effectively allowed to die in peace. But racist problems at MIT remain.

Later in the year Herb Lee became prominent as he charged the administration with persecuting him in retaliation for agitation against racism at MIT. But the student body as a whole seemed unaware of the people who attempted to generate press for Lee. That matter, there was no public response by the MIT administration to the charges.

The whole business had a certain Alice-in-Wonderland feel to it. At other campuses where friends of mine are studying, people don't seem to get collectively upset nearly as often. When they do, however, they seem to stick with things until they are resolved, or longer. At the University of Massachusetts at Amherst last spring a coalition of women's groups demanded that the campus daily newspaper, The Collegian, dedicate 4 pages (out of about 20) to women's issues and the issue is still up in the air. Here, it seems that the MIT administration can win any argument by simple endurance. It doesn't have to be this way.

One of the most important issues of recent history confronting the student body is the grading policy controversy. Last term the student body showed a high level of collective activism in successfully fighting the proposal to move the drop date to the fifth week of the term. However, the whole business took no longer than the average MIT brouhaha a month or two. If this controversy runs true to form, the MIT student body will remain absolutely oblivious as the faculty decides about the rest of the issues involved: grade distributions, freshmen year end final, letters of commendation and the rest.