Press leads science onto inter'l stage

By Robert D. Bernstein

Press has just returned from a year away from MIT, spent in California at Berkeley, where a school whose vast bureaucracy is infamous. My experiences with their administration were many, varied and almost always horrible. The essence of the problem seemed to be that the administration thought that they not only managed the school, but that they really were in charge. While this wasn't my only reason, it was an important reason for me to return to MIT, where I had thought that the feeling that the administration knew its place.

Well, apparently, things have changed, if in fact they were ever better. Since I have returned, I have had almost steady conflicts of steady streams with different administrations "serenely." When I returned in mid-August to look for housing, I found myself up against the worst housing shortage in any area's history. I had the greating experience of searching all day, until after midnight, when I finally discovered that there simply was no housing to be had in the greater Boston area.

There are many details of the administrative screw in housing, but I will mention just one. Through the graciousness of certain individuals, I was able to sleep in a large closet off of an office. After about three weeks there with no sign of any other housing prospects, I went to the Dean for Students Affairs office to see if I could stay there where I was until I did find housing — offering to pay rent if necessary — without it being illegal. Absolutely not, it was the col. "It would have to be as an official living group..." etc. There it was and I did not have any housing. Of the thousands of dollars paid out by the administration shows that it simply does not care. In other words, they are not doing their jobs as administrators or as human beings.

The payroll office, this term, like every time I have worked at MIT, a mistake has been made and taxes were taken out. Unlike every time in the past, however, this year they refused to give me a refund.

The admissions office. Actually the housing problem again. Bob Wasserman's article on housing was full of deep insight into the problem, and the administration's response consisted of finding possible errors in his data. The administration has already accepted more people than there was room for; it was not that there were so many more people than they expected. And, while it is nice that more people can take advantage of MIT in this way, the concept of accepting more people was in fact to get more money. They figured they could afford to lose a few students who couldn't tolerate living in essentially uninhabitable situations. I consider one room with three or more people in it, so how not a small, essentially uninhabitable - particularly for $140 to $160 a month that MIT is getting for a room. (The reasons for this kind of rent may be worth an investigation all by itself, considering that rents for comparable real world rooms when available $90 to $130 a month).

The medical department. I have already wasted hours of my time arguing with various administrators to get back money which doesn't belong to them. They claim I never filled a waiver form for their insurance and so, even though I paid for everything except the insurance, they assumed I wanted insurance. In fact I happened one day to follow their instructions to complete a certain form and for their insurance, and so, (perhaps we will get off of our backsides) and do it properly, try again. As in perhaps thousands of examples I will provide the administration shows that it simply does not care. In other words, they are not doing their jobs as administrators or as human beings.

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