Loosening the reins

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Student membership on some of the Institute's Student/Faculty Committees has just begun to bear fruit. What began in the late 1960's as a novel means of involving students in Institute policy-making and improving student-Institute communications is losing its effect. Although student funding is tight and competition for private and corporate donations and Institute funds is fierce. Ad- ministrators and committee members, department chairs, and committee members all have their own agendas. They keep plans and prejudices secret, securing funding and project momentum before mak- ing controversial decisions in the best interest of the MIT community.

In short, the protective and self-serving "politics" of Institute policy- making and financing is squeezing out student and even faculty par- ticipation.

In an atmosphere of vying for funding and priority, knowing that everyone is watching every move, the more you deviate from the administration's line, the more you risk being excluded. Individual student initiatives can, by the same token, be thrust into the spotlight for public scrutiny and criticism.

This level of fear approaches paranoia. When one committee or department head sees a student as a threat, he's going to take steps to ensure that he doesn't have to worry about similar activity by students on other committees. He will enter into secret negotiations with other committee leaders to ensure that his own students have more power than they would have if they belonged to independent committees.

This is the situation that has developed. A number of student committees have been formed, and the administration has begun to pay attention to them. These committees have been formed in response to administrative initiatives that are perceived by the students to be positively or negatively affecting their interests. When one committee or group of students is excluded from participation, it is sure to come up against resistance. A number of student committees have been formed, and the administration has begun to pay attention to them. These committees have been formed in response to administrative initiatives that are perceived by the students to be positively or negatively affecting their interests. When one committee or group of students is excluded from participation, it is sure to come up against resistance.

The reality is that the administration is capable of controlling the student committees. By making membership on the committees dependent on official recognition and funding, the administration can ensure that its own representatives have more power than their student counterparts. This is done by controlling the number of seats available on the committees and by setting rules that limit the amount of time and effort students can devote to their committees. The administration can also limit the amount of money available for student committees by controlling the allocation of funds. This is done by restricting the amount of money that can be spent on student committees and by requiring students to seek permission from the administration for any expenditures.

The administration's goal is to ensure that student committees remain under wraps. They are willing to give in to student demands, but only if they can maintain control over the committees. The administration is willing to make concessions, but only if it can still maintain its power over the students. This is why the administration is so concerned about the student committees. It wants to ensure that it remains in control of the committees, and it will do whatever it takes to maintain that control. The administration is willing to make concessions, but only if it can still maintain its power over the students. This is why the administration is so concerned about the student committees. It wants to ensure that it remains in control of the committees, and it will do whatever it takes to maintain that control.