Policy making trip exposes Washington
by David C. Liegelbach

Energy, environmental health, foreign policy, nuclear science policy. These are some of the most pressing issues facing Americans today. A group of MIT and Wellesley students journeyed to Washington, DC last week to get a first hand exposure to these issues under the auspices of the Washington DC Policy-Making Trip.

Sponsored by the Public Policy Program, the Technology and Public Policy program, and the Political Science Department of MIT, the trip allowed people interested in policy-making at the highest levels of government to ask national leaders questions such as: "What really happened at Three-Mile Island?" "Does our country really have an energy policy?", and "Who dictates the foreign policy?, and "Who dictates the Department of Energy was at Three-Mile Island?" "Does being run by David Cog IMgoa the White House; and the Department of Energy have a unique opportunity to meet with Professor of Political Science Department panelists on how our country is viewed. The Congressional Program, the Technology and Policy, the nation's economy, the political science, andadvocacy group), thereby giving a sense of balance to the exchange of views.

Participants also had the rare opportunity to meet with Professor of Political Science Lincoln Bloomfield of the National Security Council, on leave from MIT, and Commissioner Richard T. Kennedy of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

In addition to answering participants' questions in regard to the policy process, the trip also presented a unique opportunity to procure internships in Washington, the Executive branch, and private organizations. Although most of these internships are unpaid, they offer the chance to work at the very center of the American government.

The people involved in the panel discussions were among the most highly qualified people in Washington in their individual fields. Typically, the panels were composed of a member of the legislative branch, usually the chief aide to a senator or representative; a member of the Executive branch, holding an assistant secretaryship or equivalent within a Cabinet department or the White House; and a "private sector" representative (a journalist or a member of an advocacy group), thereby giving a sense of balance to the exchange of views.

What are the opinions of the panelists on how our country is being run? With respect to energy, the panelists seemed to agree that the Department of Energy was doing a generally poor job of managing America's energy problem, and yet they did not see the Energy Mobilization Board, which is currently being examined in Congress, as a solution to US dependence on foreign oil. Yet, many of the panelists could seem to agree upon a clear-cut solution to our energy problems, perhaps reflecting the general indecision of Americans as a whole.

In the arms control and disarmament panel discussion, the view was expressed that perhaps we were getting the "raw end of the deal" in the SALT negotiations. The Congressional representative also expressed the view that the legislative branch should become more involved in the SALT process, so as to spur quicker and more decisive passage of any SALT treaties that might come to Congress.

In a meeting with Bloomfield, Director of Global Affairs at the National Security Council, trip members were given some insight (Please turn to page 17).

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Campus has few problems with law on drinking age

"We have no problems. Sporadic incidents do surface but that is to be expected," stated Chief James Olivieri of Campus Patrol, commenting on the use of alcohol by MIT students.

Since the raising of the drinking age last April, MIT has few of the alcohol problems that have plagued other schools, in spite of the availability of alcohol at many campus social events. In fact, it is available at most fraternity and dorm parties if one has an ID. Yet cases of alcohol-related incidents, such as vandalism and drunken driving, are rare.

This is not true for many other schools. Despite many controls on student drinking, the University of Massachusetts has had forty-three alcohol-related incidents brought to the attention of the administration. The University of Connecticut has found it necessary to ban all alcohol from the campus.

The extent of the problems are reflected in the actions of the respective administrations. Anybody planning a social function must fill out a form from the Dean's office detailing responsible and consensual to abide by dance guidelines. Dorm parties are allowed to serve alcohol although an ID check is required. Fraternity parties are not interfered with.

At Amherst the administration has taken a much harder approach. They have imposed controls on the availability of alcohol. In response to the widespread problem meetings have been organized between students and the administration and the campus to arrive at a solution. There was an attempt on the part of the department to take all alcohol from the dorms either as policemen on duty or through housemasters.

Another possible action involves the arrest of students violating alcohol laws. Some of these options have been bitterly opposed by the college students.

A key question is why is there a problem at Amherst and not at MIT? Dean Robert Sherwood attributes it to the smaller size and more close-knit atmosphere. Dean Bob Holden sees it as a product of numerous factors. In his opinion, the MIT student is a different type of student; more mature and career oriented with much more at stake. Also, the work load at MIT requires that one spend a lot of time studying.

Amherst also has a dormitory structure very different from that of MIT. Much of it is in high-rise buildings which lead to a heavy concentration of people. A lack of pride in the living quarters encourages vandalism. A fourth possible reason is that Amherst is much more open and accessible, as evidenced by the large influx of people on the weekends.

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