MIT Republican Club returns to support party activities

By Sarah Blegen

A small group of Republican MIT students has revived the Republican Club of MIT for the purpose of "promoting the ideals of the Republican Party and sponsoring activities to achieve this purpose," according to president Winthrop Cody '82.

"We need a way to get information to the students on the primaries right now," explained Cody. "We want to bring the candidates to the students' attention and then they (the students) can decide for themselves."

The club's most recent attempt at this was a Lobby '80 booth display during IAP used to inform students of the various Republican candidates and their respective campaign platforms. Concurrently with the display they held a straw poll, which Representative John Anderson won, and a membership drive that joined 30 more students to their ranks.

At a recent meeting, club members emphasized the club's policy on campaigning. Although individuals may support certain candidates, "the club as a whole doesn't support anyone."

In that light, the club has invited all nine Republican presidential candidates to speak on campus. Rep. John Anderson responded by addressing the MIT community at the Sala de Puerto Rico on Jan. 31. This event was co-sponsored by the Lecture Series Committee (LSC), which has invited at least one presidential candidate to lecture here. The Republican Club will also sponsor candidate Harold Stassen, ex-governor of Minnesota to speak on Feb. 13; and candidate Ben Fernandez, a Mexican-American businessman from California, to give a talk here on Feb. 23.

Cody says the club's function is not merely to support Republicanism but the whole political process. "We support the Republican Party, but we encourage everyone to vote."

To help MIT students achieve a better understanding of politics, the club plans to hold a mock Republican convention in April. Operating under guidelines established by the organization, each dorm and fraternity will select undergraduate delegates and departments will choose graduate delegates, in numbers proportional to the size of the living group or department. Delegates will decide upon a party platform comprising of such issues as energy, inflation, and the draft. "The club will be used as a sounding board for ideas forming the planks," explained Cody. Prepared debates on issues are planned for the club's weekly meetings. "We will not get into candidates' stands, but issues within the club and party," he added.

After the presidential elections Cody said he sees a great potential for the MIT Republican organization in local and state politics. Cody hopes to work with state senators and congressmen. "We will also try to sponsor debates and bring speakers," he added.

Cody also hopes students from other area colleges, such as Boston University and Harvard, will join in these activities.

The Republican Club was reorganized at MIT last November by Cody after several years of inactivity. Cody said he saw a lack of Republican support on this campus as compared to other Boston area universities. The Executive Committee of the Association of Student Activities approved the club as an official student organization during IAP.

The club is a member of the Massachusetts College Republican Union, an alliance of Republican student and support group for campus organizations such as the MIT affiliates.

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