Inconvenient but necessary change

Students tend to wind their way through the Institute's bureaucracy guided primarily by lore, so very few realize that MIT possesses a branch of special terms in the dormitory system. Those students planning to move off campus next term therefore received a rude shock in a letter sent out last week by the Student Affairs Dean Bob Sherwood stating that such contracts would be enforced this year.

A small group of students had already believed that the administrative process of the past would continue and began to make plans to move out of the dormitory system. Their wasted efforts would now have provided input for the Dean's Office notice stating that the decision earlier in the term. The shift in the enforcement policy will minimize the number of empty rooms in the dormitory system, a problem which has been apparent since the beginning of the term.

MIT's housing system, unlike the dining program, is self-sufficient, receiving no subsidies from the Institute. The decision to cut losses, while inconvenient, is necessary. The managers of the housing system have not yet decided what to do about the deficit created by the rooms emptying during first terms; to open more rooms during second term would be costly and foolishly.

While enforcing housing contracts is a necessary interim step, a decision on how best to compensate for the loss of revenue from empty rooms must be made. The money could come from general Institute funds, from all the students in the dormitory system, or from a proportional contribution from students in the affected dormitories. Whatever the choice, the decision should be made soon enough to avoid surprising students yet again.

MIT, students, and national importance

Most MIT students realize that the institution they attend is a national leader in scientific and technological research and education. Few extend this knowledge to its logical conclusion: the influence, and hence the potential for greater affecting, national views, actions, and policies in these areas.

This semester has provided several excellent examples of MIT's leadership in influencing policies of the United States government and other educational institutions. The debate over whether MIT should affiliate with the multi-national. students are at present receiving the newsletter published by other universities and the national press. President Gray's warnings about the dangers of State Department interference with study and research by foreign students have proven necessary as the Department has contacted at least two colleges, including MIT, about potential restrictions. Last week, a Congressional subcommittee met to explore the extent to which the manpower needs of high technology, industry and the role of the university in meeting those requirements.

The Administration has rejected the theory that the quality of its research work and the quality and prominence of its faculty members and alumni. The Institute's potential for influencing fiscal policies and decisions, however, rests to a great extent with its current students. Part of the education these students will receive at MIT will take place outside the classroom, and an important aspect of this non-academic learning is the development of an awareness of current national events which affect and are affected by MIT.

MIT students in recent years have supported and made use of the provisions of the Higher Education Act of 1974. These provisions allow students to bypass the writing course requirement and still receive an acceptable ten page paper if he can write one acceptable ten page paper he can complete the final year without taking the writing requirement. However, to argue that writing is a necessary skill is absurd. Everyone should take at least one course in writing. How MIT students fare in this regard will be decided by their individual performance and the required course work. The achievement of the students will depend on the quality of their work and the quality and prominence of their faculty members and alumni. The Institute's potential for influencing fiscal policies and decisions, however, rests to a great extent with its current students. Part of the education these students will receive at MIT will take place outside the classroom, and an important aspect of this non-academic learning is the development of an awareness of current national events which affect and are affected by MIT.

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Opinion

Tell Reagan I'm willing to remove every missile from Europe.

Written by Steven Martin

FINBOARD clarifies its funding policies

To the Editor:

To respond to the November 20th letter submitted by the MASS. officers, I would like to clarify some points.

First, the comparison between 1980-81 and 1981-82 allocations is not valid. 1980-81 allocations represent those for the entire fiscal year while those presented for 1981-82 represent only annual allocations made during the fall. The 1981-82 Budget Compilations. From the unalloyed allocations, there are, of course, additional allocations throughout the year. This is according to standard procedure. This fall, we have allocated to cultural groups an additional $25,000 beyond the $2,500 listed, bringing that total to $5,000 with more than half of the fiscal year remaining.

Second, I would like to reiterate that FinBoard has no special standards for funding ethnic groups. Our funding criteria apply to all groups and reflect the following:

FinBoard funds only ungraduate activities recognized by the Student Activities and Student Activities Committee. These activities must be open to the entire MIT community.
3. Funding is based on the actual and comparative need of the group. (Please turn to page 2)

Shelia Davis '85

MIT should require term of writing

To the Editor:

What good is a rigorous and technological education if you can't express what you've learned on paper? FORTAN, LISP, and PASCAL may be understood by computers, but the average American cannot be programmed. When seniors go to the Writing Department in their senior year in desperation because they can't write a thesis or an argument that something needs to be done at MIT. Many research scientists and engineers regret not learning how to write because they depend on government grants to fund their research, which requires writing proposals. Writing is one of the few languages of communication shared by all.

In order to satisfy the proposed writing requirement, students could either take a semester of writing, write a ten page paper, or do well in the English achievement examination. This will not improve the quality of writing because many students will opt to write a ten page paper so they can avoid plagiarism. Some argue that MIT students have enough requirement to fulfill without having to take another writing course. A simple solution would be to consider the writing requirement as a Humanities Distribu-

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Feedback

Workshop on writing as a liberal arts course.

Writing, an important skill, requires a writing requirement far outweigh any inconvenience imposed by this requirement. Every student at MIT should take a writing course.

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