Status of art association hinges on definitions, history

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Space was allocated during the construction of the Student Center in 1964-65 for art studios and a silk-screening facility. Due to growing interest in the facilities, the Dean’s Office provided seed money, hired a director — Mimi Luft — and officially started the Student Art Association in fall 1967. A paid director has always processed the group's paperwork, hired instructors, bought supplies, and scheduled classes.

As more people took the group’s classes, fees accounted for a higher percentage of the group’s budget. Through the years, students have taken classes and have suggested new areas of instruction, but have never managed the association. Advertisements and flyers for the classes, including this fall’s distributions, have, however, carried the name Student Art Association.

The Student Art Association “has never been a student activity in the sense the Lecture Series Committee is,” said Andrew M. Eisenmann ’75, acting director of the Student Art Association and staff assistant in the Dean’s Office. “It was never solely or wholly run by students.”

The Student Art Association was “envisioned” as a student activity at its creation, he said. The group is a member of the Association of Student Activities, has a paid staff member, is supported by the Dean’s Office, and provides services to students.

A similar arrangement for the art studios, however, would leave unresolved the issue of scarcity of space for recognized student activities.

Since the Association of Student Activities holds the authority to distribute activity space on the fourth floor of the Student Center among its members, it might be obligated to remove the art studios or to reduce their allocated space.

If the Dean’s Office supersedes that authority, there may be little justification for the continued existence of the Association of Student Activities.

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