MIT bills activities; exemption sought

By Thomas Huang

MT is submitting monthly bills to student activities for the Institute's employee benefit program, but is still considering exempting the activities from the program, according to John A. Currie, 57, director of finance.

The Institute must contribute to the fund for all employees, including students, Currie said. MIT began collecting funds on July 1 from student activities for the benefit program, he continued.

Any group which employs students must pay an amount equal to 33.9 percent of its payroll toward the MIT employee benefit fund.

"The requirement was stated in MIT's negotiation with the government auditors," Currie said.

The auditors represented the Defense Contract Audit Agency and the Massachusetts Auditor's Re- search, according to William R. Dickson, 56, senior vice president for operations.

The Institute negotiated an agreement with the auditors to increase benefits from 25 to 25.1 percent of payroll last spring.

"The government says that we must" make raises for all employees, including students, "or none at all," Currie said.

The Institute made the change to reduce present research costs lower by paying research assis-
tants and teaching assistants tuition and health benefits under the new benefit plan, Currie said in March. "Our competition ... such as Stanford ... has looked at its research costs less.

Michael P. Witt, 54, president of the Undergraduate Association, said, "If the decision is made to compensate student activities without consulting the students, and the students are affected adversely, then they will show a lack of responsibility" on the part of the Institute.

Jane D. Smith, director of student employment, said she supports the student activities request that they be exempted from the requirement because they have a "legitimate concern."

"The surcharge was not meant to be a hardship on any group," she said. "I hope that whoever makes the decision on exemption will realize that the benefit program is new and things have to be worked out. The concern in which developed the program a year ago overlooked the problem with the student groups.

Currie said, "The bill is in the Dean's Office on the right now because the Dean's Office has to approve the students' request for exemption before Prov. Paul E. Gray '54 can withdraw the requirement."

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Activity participation falls

Leaders cite academic and financial pressures

By Ethel L. Spero

Leaders of several large student activities report declining participation in their groups, which some claim is a result of increased academic and financial pressures.

"It seems to me that students are spending less time actively pursuing activities," said Peggy Richardson, executive officer of the Undergraduate Academic Support Office.

"I, too, have noticed the trend of attrition, or the apparent attrition in participation in activities," said Kiri C. Allston '54, president of the Association of Student Activities, a committee of the Undergraduate Association.

Members of the Association of Student Activities have also noticed the trend, Allston said. "It is harder to find people to participate, especially for the positions of responsibility."

Increases in tuition and equity levels without compensatory increases in wages for student employees are one of the causes of decreased involvement, Allston said.

"People have to work more hours or they feel a greater stress to get better grades or to gradu-

ate in less time," she continued.

"We are looking to save people time," she said, "especially the time of those people on the ex-

ecutive boards [of different student groups] on the theory that what benefits them, benefits the other members of the group, by allowing the activity to continue to function."

"None of the more than 100 or-
ganizations which are members of the Association of Student Ac-
tivities has submitted statistics on changes in student participation, she said.

Cynthia B. Paschal '85, treasurer of Alpha Phi Omega service or-
ganization, said, "People have less time and energy to give for [Alpha Phi Omega] activities."

Susan G. Bachrach '85, the group's president, disagreed. "We don't seem to be having a prob-
lem. We've got as many people active as we have had in the past."

Paschal said, "We still have the same number of total members, but it gets harder and harder to find people to do things. We used to get 15 to 20 people every Sat-


Saturday spending six to eight hours on outside projects. Now we're getting 10, [and a maximum of] 15, under a heavily advertised project."

"It's not that people are less in-
terested," Paschal said. "They just feel that they have to put more time into studies and jobs."

Alpha Phi Omega had a good pledge class this year, Paschal said. She expressed concern, how-

ever, for "pledge burnout," be-

cause many of the fraternity's pledges participate in other stu-

dent activities.

The Undergraduate Center Committee also has a problem with student participation, according to Bill Hobbs '86, secretary of the com-
mitee. "People don't have the time. Basically, they have aca-
demic and other commitments."

"There are some things that we would like to do, but can't be-

cause we don't have enough peo-

tle to do them," Hobbs said.

The committee recently cancelled its Midnight Movies because it lacked a coordinator.

The Student Center Council will continue the series with funds from the Student Center Committee, Hobbs said.

Julia A. Inde '85, president of the Student Union Musical Theatre Guild, said the group has "a definite problem with student participa-
ty. People aren't willing to spend that much time on outside activities."

Higher offices not filled

Leo J. DeCosta '82, chairman of the MIT Lecture Series Com-
mitee, said, "We have enough people for the lower positions,

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