Editorial

UA government: a Wittless wonder

Ten months of rhetoric and promises have yielded yet another ineffective student government. To examine the accomplishments of Undergraduate Association President Michael P. Witt '84 would lead one to conclude that he was elected perhaps one week ago — or in time for a final resume draft.

Witt is Mike Witt, not Mike the Undergraduate Association over which he allegedly presides done since his inauguration ten months ago.

With the club of grand promises, Witt surely struck the nerves of the student body and its numb student government. Lack of communication and a poor rapport with the MIT administration were the weaknesses of government, be rectified. "You asked for change. We have promised it," he assures us.

"The present state of the Undergraduate Association General Assembly is not within my ability to work with," said Witt in a letter to The Tech on March 15, adding his willingness to "crash" the General Assembly if necessary.

The Undergraduate Association must be completely reorganized, he asserted in March, yet "we do not intend to railroad anything through." The tracks, apparently, have rusted.

On March 15, Witt said he hoped the Undergraduate Association would vote on his new constitution by Nov. 1. It has yet to be seen. Witt has spoken of many changes, but the only thing he has changed is his mind.

The General Assembly must assert its role as the sole legislative authority over all student organizations, Witt noted. The General Assembly should gain closer control over the Finance Board, the Association of Student Activities and the Nominations Committee.

Also on the list of campaign promises:

- The number of student government representatives should be cut to 40 or 50.
- The Undergraduate Association should obtain voting rights on MIT committees.
- The Finance Board should be restructured to include the treasurers of existing student organizations.
- The Finance Board should be totally separate from the Office of the Dean for Student Affairs.
- A steering committee of the MIT administration should be formed with student representatives.
- A shuttle bus service should be started, along with an underground shuttle service to the Student Union.
- The General Assembly should form a joint committee with the Graduate Student Council.

None of these plans have materialized, except for one issue of his newsletter, which was not distributed to the fraternities.

Witt made no arrangements for handling the Undergraduate Association during IAP. One should not take on the responsibilities of Undergraduate Association president if one wishes to spend six weeks on vacation — or a full year.

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Column/Joseph J. Romm

Give a Hoot, Don't Compute

First in a series.

Warning: Majoring in Course VI may prove hazardous to the health of MIT.

Do not be too surprised if the faculty votes to have separate admissions to Course VI. More importantly, do not be outraged by its decision if you have not done anything to prevent it.

If you like MIT the way it is and are within reading distance of this column, then you had better act now. Freemen, this means you! Give a hoot, don't compute. You owe it to yourself and to the Institute to consider all departments and avoid majoring in Course VI if possible.

I intend, in my own meager way, to help you make your choice, by describing each department in what depth I can, using the two traditional tools of journalism — boring, placed from friends in those departments — and downright lies, the promise of an contraceptive, and as many have said, warped imagination.

If I offend people and departments, prompting them to write to The Tech to yet the record straight, all the better. You, the freemen, will get more information. It should be pointed out, however, that no one has ever written a letter to the editor of The Tech about any of my columns since I began writing for this pathetic newspaper in the late fifties.

I begin with Course I. Civil Engineering is your course if you want to help the environment, which will certainly need it after Reagan leaves office. Civil is your course if you want to know which of the world's airports are safe. Civil is a damn good course if you care about good dams. Concrete thinking is encouraged.

I always get excited when I think about Civil Engineering, mainly because a friend was in the department. "Ah had her own special reason for going into Course I: it was the engineering department that made the least use of calculus. Bear in mind, potential Course I ma- jors who cannot integrate the square-root of sine(x)/32 from zero to the diameter of the universe in furballs. Miss II knew that the route to money was a SB in engineering and a masters in management. She is now a pro- ject manager for a large corporation, and in one year she earns more than the total cost of an

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Column/Stewart Cobb

City should stay out of Simplex

"You can't have your cake and eat it too." — Old folk saying

"This is a last stand ... [for] the whole city of Cambridge," says Bill Cavellini of the student radio station. "Simplex Street Committee [MIT's plans] should be stricken from our plans."

What are MIT's plans? MIT is trying, for the n-th time, to construct a building on its own land — land which, like the rest of MIT, happens to be in Cambridge. What is wrong with that? The Cambridge City Council, with assistance from the Simplex Street Committee and others, has already decided what it will permit MIT to build on the Simplex site. Council members say Cambridge needs "low-income housing." Either MIT builds housing on the Simplex site, says the City Council, or MIT builds nothing. This is a choice, by describing each department of the MIT. MIT's business is education and research, not charity. The Cambridge City Council is suffering from a fundamental misunderstanding, made evident by its vocabulary. "Housing," as a generic concept, does not exist. There are a large number of individual dwellings — apartments, townhouses, condops, duplexes, etc. There are many residents, and many landlords, and many relationships between them. But there is no such thing as "housing.

The Cambridge City Council should realize that "housing" exists. Furthermore, the Council believes that it can independently manipulate the quantity, quality, and price of "housing." That is a fallacy. Cavellini and his cohorts should have listened when their grandparents told them about eating cakes.

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