Column/Joseph J. Romm

Course XVII is for political decisions

We had better use what MIT already has a good body of students who can work computer problems and damned if those are not just the things that incoming students want to be problem in so. What are you going to do about it? Are you just sitting here or are you going to meet the problem head on? Are you going to challenge your students, or are they going to change you?

From what we can see, MIT is letting its students have the balls of letting, the tail wag the dog. MIT is letting one department be overrun, and foolishly going about its business, until faced with serious cancer, they smoke, it "solves" the "Course VI problem" in one fell swoop with restrictive measures on entry into Course VI that hurt MIT more than help it.

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Opinion

Malaria is one of the world's foremost medical problems

First in a series

A few weeks ago during the Technology Community Association's blood drive I was reminded of one of humanity's oldest enemies, malaria. After filling out the appropriate forms and having my temperature taken, the nurse asked me where I was from. I said that I was from Venezuela, a country where malaria is still a major problem, but that she need not worry because I do not have it. I told her that I had previously given blood four times and my blood was shown to be perfectly normal.

Malaria is the world's most widespread disease, threatening forty percent of the planet's inhabitants. Close to two billion human beings live in malaria prone areas today and this number is steadily growing. It is estimated that there are two and a half times as many people suffering from malaria today as there were in 1948. At one time, the World Health Organization acknowledged that the "crackdown" campaign undertaken 13 years previously was a failure and that new strategies had to be developed.

Since malaria is the leading cause of infant mortality in the world today, we can see easily why the major causes of death among adults. It is a serious obstacle to economic development in countries, and year after year the world's health is threatened. The situation has also deteriorated due to sobering conditions and malnutrition in part of the globe. Furthermore, previous efforts to eliminate the disease have met with obstacles because the mosquitoes that transmit malaria have developed resistance to many insecticides, and because the parasite itself has become resistant to the antimalarial drugs developed during World War II.

The malaria problem is not restricted solely to the lesser developed countries as many seem to believe. In the past, the WHO has stated that tourism and travel by people from industrialized countries, the risk of new epidemics in industrialized countries is increasing. In 1970, 11 traveling Americans contractors malaria. By 1977, this number had increased to 480, including three deaths. Last year, an American MIT student spent a semester in another country and returned to Boston with an unexpected guest in his bloodstream.

The increasing gravity of the malaria problem, the number of deaths caused by the disease, the awareness of Third World countries that malaria is hindering their development, and the awareness of clinical nations of the risk of "importing" the disease have strongly stimulated the search for solutions. One obvious solution is the successful development and application of a human antiparasitic vaccine against malaria. But before the clearance eradication of malaria (and other major global problems) can be accomplished, we need to achieve world cooperation. As an ambassador to the United Nations put it: "The global situation today is increasingly like the human body. It cannot be healthy in part. If an arm or leg, even a finger or toe, is infected the body as a whole is in danger of infection and ill health."

Column/Stewart Cobb

Drop mandatory meal plans

Welcome Class of 1984

War is Peace
Freedom is Slavery

---drop poster, 1980---

What do MIT and the Kremlin have in common?

The Russian tourist agency is called Intourist. "Fascist agency" is not the proper term, but it's as close as we come in America. If you visit Russia, you will be in the hands of Intourist the entire time you are there. You will sleep in Intourist hotels, eat in Intourist restaurants, and spend your days following Intourist guides to often uninteresting spots on a rigid and absolutely unalterable schedule. It is very possible to escape Intourist's clutches for more than a few minutes at a time. And you will not get what you pay for -- Intourist prices are often higher, compared to those in the rest of the Empire. The KGB thinks of Intourist not as a tourist bureau, but as a way of extracting hard currency from a few Naïve tourists while keeping them under strict control.

So what is the analogy with MIT? Consider the MIT Food Service. Its prices are high, often ridiculously high. From outward appearances, it is a bureaucracy devoted to extracting money from students over and above tuition, books, and room and board. But for roughly twenty percent of MIT's undergraduates, there is no escape from its control. Sound familiar?

In the 1983 Annual Report of the President, President P. E. Gray mentioned as one of the year's accomplishments that the transition to mandatory commons in the dorm system had been completed. This "accomplishment," was met with a blistering rebuke by the students, which affected even its origins in 1980. Last year, the residents of Baker House staged a one-night sit in to protest the institution of the mandatory commons, and as they ignored all other commons, there are rumors that Baker may try again.

Aside from high prices and lousy food, what is wrong with forced commons?

• It discriminates on the basis of living group. Roughly twenty percent of MIT's undergraduates live in dormitories. Of the ten dorms, the residents of only four have forced commons.

This means that MIT is discriminating against only about twenty percent of the undergraduates by forcing them to pay for meals whether they eat them or not. These costs are significant -- twenty percent of ten next year's freshman will have to shell out $122 extra each over and above tuition, books, and rent charges.

• It discriminates on the basis of sex. If you have to eat commons, McCormick Hall's dining room has the best commons food on campus. If you do not live in McCormick, that information does not do you any good. Theoretically, only residents on their guest list are allowed in the dorm commons.

In practice, it is relatively easy for a student to get in, guest list or no. Males have it much harder. With one hand, MIT forces us to eat commons meals; with the other, MIT blocks us from entering the best (Please turn to page 5)