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SCEP cancels Course Guide

By Craig Jungwirth

The Student Committee on Educational Policy (SCEP) will not publish its *Course Evaluation Guide* for spring term, 1985, according to Committee Chairman Mark Fister '86.

"It didn't come as that much of a surprise that we couldn't publish," Fister said. "A severe shortage of manpower" and "an increase in the number of courses evaluated" led to the decision, he said.

"They're not going to do anything second-rate," said Peggy Richardson, executive officer in the Undergraduate Academic Support Office. "Unless they get help, they're not going to do anything at all."

Students will have to rely on previous terms' guides and other resources, such as other students, for information on courses, Fister said. "I don't think they'll miss [the guide] until it's not there," he added.

"There are really only four people who are loyal workers," he said. "The last two chairmen were very involved . . . and they had problems in getting 'incomplete' in their classes."

"SCEP's biggest responsibility is to maintain communication with the departments," Fister explained. SCEP does this by conferring with departments before issuing the surveys for the guide.

The faculty views the guide as "a viable source of feedback," he added.

The guide "was inaccurate and sloppy in the early 1970's . . . and the departments refused to have anything to do with SCEP," Richardson said. SCEP stopped publishing the guide and began publishing again in 1979, she added.

SCEP "has not decided on a specific way" to encourage student involvement in the production of future guides, according to Fister.

"It's not hard work," he said. "It just takes up a little bit of time."

Richardson said, "It's damn hard work."

SCEP "has been operating on momentum that had been built up in the past," she added. "But three mainstays of SCEP graduated in June."

The Committee, for each of the last several terms, has evaluated between 175 and 200 courses, Fister said.

SCEP sends 7000-10,000 completed surveys each term to Boston College to be tabulated. Committee members then select comments representative of the class to include in the guide.

SCEP has the funding for scanning facilities, but it does not have the manpower to program the equipment. "We can't do basic functions [of SCEP] now," Fister said.

There is a "a big burnout" of student workers, he added, because of the constant demand on their time.



Tech photo by Jim Butler

Project Athena will soon expand to the Student Center Library, providing students with yet another alternative to the "fishbowl" cluster.

Project Athena seeks more involvement from students

By Charles R. Jankowski
Second in a series examining Project Athena.

Project Athena is trying to get more students involved, according to Jim Fulton '85, the only student staff member of Project Athena.

"The one major problem that is now being worked on is the issue of student involvement in the project," Fulton said. Only a small number of MIT students who have accounts on the system, he said.

"We're just about done building up the staff," he said, referring to Athena staff shortages. "I think things have been going

moderately well [with respect to integrating non-staff students into the system], but we still have a long way to go," he said.

A common perception among students is "that one of the main things Athena will do is get students on the system," Fulton said.

Project Athena will open a cluster of terminals exclusively for students in the Student Center Library soon. "The Student Center will be devoted to giving students a chance to go out on their own, something that hasn't been done at most places," Fulton added.

One of Athena's goals, Fulton explained, is to discover how students interact with computers. Students will be able to use the project freely, limited only by Athena hardware and software.

Small problems with Athena are understandable, considering the project's experimental nature, Fulton said. "People are realizing that [Athena] is still an experiment, and things happen that you cannot predict," he explained.

Students get free system
Equipment and software for Project Athena were donated by

the International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) and the Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC).

"MIT is not requiring its students to pay for their computers, but instead is letting others pay for it," Fulton said. Many other schools, such as Carnegie-Mellon University and Philadelphia's Drexel University, require students to purchase personal computers at discount rates.

Fulton proposed two reasons why IBM and DEC, the two largest computer corporations in the world, would donate \$50 million of equipment and service to MIT for Athena.

First, he said, students leaving MIT and Project Athena will be accustomed to working with IBM and DEC equipment, and will tend to use the same computers after college.

Second, Athena is a valuable source of information for IBM and DEC — the companies will see how students use and interact with their computers. The project also gives the companies an opportunity to test the software which is presently used in the system, Fulton commented.

MIT to review alcohol policy

By Edward Whang

Last in a series

An *ad hoc* committee on alcohol policy will review MIT's existing alcohol policies, according to Committee Chairman Leo Osgood, associate dean for student affairs.

The review was prompted by recently passed legislation to raise the Massachusetts legal drinking age to 21. The committee will recommend changes that the new legal drinking age will

necessitate. As of Oct. 22, Osgood said, 46 percent of MIT undergraduates were under the legal drinking age of 20.

Areas of concern include ID checks, Tank (the Spring Weekend drinking competition), the Junior-Senior Drink-off, kegs as prizes for competitions, Rush Week, and the development of a comprehensive alcohol education program, according to a memorandum from Osgood to committee members.

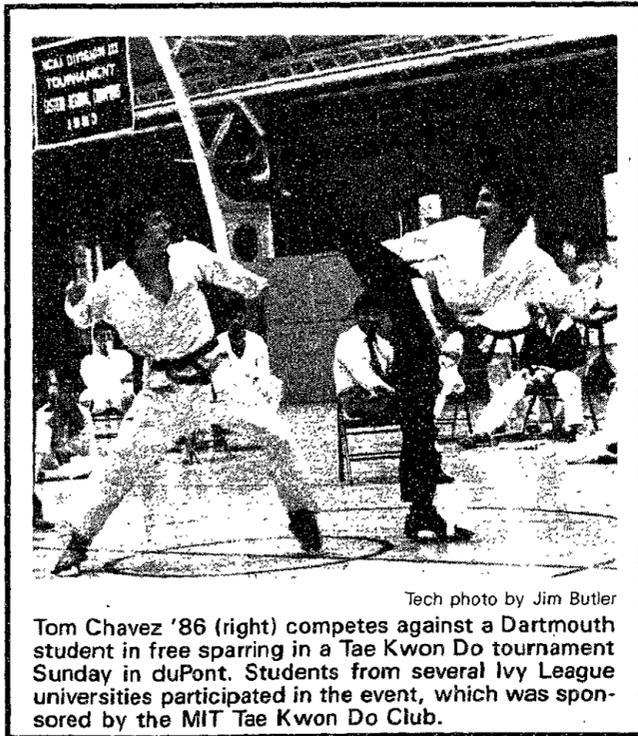
The committee is composed of representatives from the Undergraduate Association, the Student Center Committee, the Inter-Fraternity Conference, the Dormitory Council, the MIT Campus Police, the MIT Medical Department, the Graduate Student Council, the Association of Student Activities, the Office of the Dean for Student Affairs, and staff.

Brown University in Rhode Island has already had to deal with a legal drinking age of 21. Last term a group of students and administration members there were designated to work with the Associate Dean of Chemical Dependency to study the use of alcohol on campus.

According to Brown University's "University Policy on Alcohol," activities and living groups must adhere to state laws or lose social privileges and recognition from the university. Sponsors of social events where alcohol is served must provide food, as well as non-alcoholic beverages in proportional amounts. No alcohol is served at undergraduate events partially or wholly sponsored by university offices.

Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, where the legal drinking age is 20, has an alcohol policy very much like that of MIT. According to their official policy, "Dartmouth College neither encourages nor discourages the use of alcoholic beverages, but it does condemn the abuse of alcoholic beverages. The College commits itself to educating its constituencies regarding alcohol

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Tech photo by Jim Butler

Tom Chavez '86 (right) competes against a Dartmouth student in free sparring in a Tae Kwon Do tournament Sunday in duPont. Students from several Ivy League universities participated in the event, which was sponsored by the MIT Tae Kwon Do Club.

Profile

Toomre awarded MacArthur grant

By David B. Oberman

Alar Toomre '57 is an MIT mathematician who is recognized for his achievements in, of all fields, astronomy. He is a 1949 refugee from Germany. To top that off, his college roommate had a penchant for stinkbombs.

His colorful career led to the coveted MacArthur award last month. For his achievements in astronomy, he will receive the MacArthur Foundation's tax-free \$230,000 award over a period of five years.

Toomre, who was born in Estonia, escaped to the United States at the age of twelve in 1949, a refugee from war-torn Germany. He lived in Ohio for a year and Long Island for three years.

Toomre first discovered his passion for astronomy in high school. He was excited over an "apparent correlation" between

sunspots and planetary motion, and studied it with fervor. He now dismisses the idea as "statistical nonsense" and "a fluke," but the flame had been kindled.

Toomre described his years at MIT, which he entered at the age of 16, as happy and productive, though he once spent several days in the library after a disgruntled victim of his roommate's stink-bombing retaliated in kind. In addition to earning good grades, he became the head captain of Morriss Hall and president of East Campus.

Toomre was "intensely job-security conscious," and decided to enter the mushrooming aerospace industry. He was unable to enter the Air Force because of his poor vision, so, after graduating with degrees in aeronautical engineering and physics, he decided to attend graduate school.

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