By Earl C. Yen

The Undergraduate Association (UA) Council called for total divestment of MIT's holdings in companies operating in South Africa in a resolution it approved Dec. 5.

"It's not consistent for the UA to take a stand on such an issue," said UA President Bryan R. Moser '87, who supported the proposal. "This issue is of national and international importance, and it's also a campus issue. It's very appropriate now that the council take a stand."

The UA Council agreed to hold a student body referendum on divestment in the spring term. The council will vote on the referendum at its Jan. 23, meeting, said UA Vice President Mary S. Taiz '87.

Nine council members voted in favor and eight abstained, according to UA Secretary Sarah R. Thomas '87.

Moser said the high number of abstentions may have stemmed from the mixed feelings among many of the council members about divestment.

Thomas added that many UA Council members had not expected to vote on a divestment proposal at the meeting. Some of the council members were not sure how their constituents felt about the issue, she said.

Scott Saleska '86, member of the MIT Coalition Against Apartheid, asked the UA on the day of the meeting to consider taking a stand on the divestment issue.

"International pressure on South Africa can be effective," Saleska said. Many South African universities, such as Bishop Desmond Tutu and Niteľa Molansane, have called on US corporations to withdraw from South Africa according to Saleska.

"It's time to show support for the South African people," said Anne Kamaniwa '87, a representative at the meeting who introduced the resolution to the council. "It would be very good if other student associations also pledge support for divestment."

Saleska said that divestment is more than just a symbolic show of support against apartheid. "It's not just a withdrawal of capital from these companies. "Divestment helps create a climate of opinion against apartheid — it's a political action."

"There's always some amount of worry that divestment is a low-priority task for most faculty," Saleska said. "But this proposal is supported by admitting that the current organization of the advising system "doesn't work very well."

Faculty priorities are "promotion, tenure and money," said a humanities professor attending the forum. Advising system "doesn't work very well."

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