Graduate housing demands attention

In the Editor:

We, as graduate students, are very pleased to have The Tech taking an interest in graduate student housing problems and in graduate student concerns in general. In this letter, however, we would like to clarify some statements attributed to us in your article "Brown addresses lack of MIT graduate housing," Jan. 22.

Our main concern in being involved with the committee on graduate housing is not only making the system better for all graduate students overall but addressing the specific problem of housing for incoming graduate students. This fall the university accepted over 1200 new graduate students but only provided housing for less than 20 percent of them! The remainder either spent much money in making a special trip to MIT to try and find housing in a vastly over-priced and over-crowded Boston market, or, especially in the case of international students, were forced to just show up and try to find accommodations the week or two before school started while staying at hotels and such at exorbitant prices.

Contrary to what was so interestingly pointed out in another article in the same issue, ALL undergraduates are GUARANTEED at least eight terms of housing by the university. This doesn't seem very fair considering the university derives much of its prestige from the research that graduate students perform.

We are not favoring a specific solution to this problem, such as a two-year tenure as erroneously reported in The Tech, but any solution which would alleviate this abysmal situation. These solutions could involve some sort of softer readjustment, a cap on the number of incoming graduate students, a revision of the lottery system, or, in the most advantageous situation, NEW graduate housing. We think that the university should have a responsibility to its graduate students, especially new graduate students, and we are working hard to make them realize this obligation.

James J. Hickman
Alison Burgess

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