Dickson explains arrests

By the Tech staff

The MIT administration has begun to explain its demolition of Alexander Township, which resulted in the arrests of eight members of the MIT Coalition Against Apartheid four days ago.

Senior Vice President William R. Dickson '56 said that his office acted when it learned of a number of threats to the shantytown made by other student groups.

Dickson also said, "I think that when the referendum passed, people thought that [the shantytown] had served the purpose that was originally intended, and that the space really should be made available to other, greater communities.

"We did not tell [the protesters] exactly when the physical plant workers were going to come to take the shanties down, but they knew full well that they would be down in that time frame," he said.

The protesters "knew our position: that basically we would have permitted their erection unless there were threats that the shanties would be taken down by March 13," Dickson said. "When they went ahead and erected the structure, they knew full well that they would be down in that time frame.

"Quite frankly we were concerned that if we didn't remove them, that others on the campus might choose to do it," he said. "There is no one here that wanted to see open conflict between the two groups of students."

Associate Dean for Student Affairs Robert A. Shewcross confirmed that his office and others had received telephone calls, personal visits and petitions from a diverse set of students threatening to remove the shanties.

"The dining workers would come out whole," he said. "The company would also retain all support staff, including cashiers, servers and clerks. The management staff members of MIT Food Services would not be guaranteed positions. Rather, the outside company would give them interviews for any open positions.

"James J. Fandel, manager of labor relations in the MIT Personnel Office, hinted last week that the union contract contained a "successor clause." If an outside company replaced MIT Food Services and took the union contract, that clause could require the company to maintain wages, benefits and working conditions."

MIT is currently discussing a third type of loan is available from the Institute itself, Gal- lagher said. For this loan, MIT borrows money from a lender and relents it to students, he said. This kind of loan is much easier to work with, since only MIT's money is involved and the rules are not as stringent as with federal loans, he continued.

"GSC stars housing petition

By Thomas T. Huang

MIT Food Service workers will keep their jobs with no pay reductions should the Institute replace dining service with an outside management company, according to Gene Brammer, director of housing and food services.

MIT would require the supervising company to take the current union contract, Brammer said. The company would be required to keep all 100 union employees in their current positions at the same wages.

The requirement would last at least as long as the union contract remained valid. The union contract will expire in one year, Brammer said. Renegotiations will take place at that time, he said.

Five houses to host Athena

By Robie Silbergleit

Project Athena has selected five living groups to receive computer workstation clusters in the pilot phase of the Project Athena living group experiment, according to a release made last month.

In the release, Project Athena Director Steven R. Lerman '72 and Department Manager Alene Erickson announced that Delta Upsilon (DU), Zeta Beta Tau, and Upsilon (DY) are five of the eight member groups of the MIT Coalition Against Apartheid that participated in the shantytown protest against a student-to-student confrontation, he said.

The groups were selected because of their diversity, which will allow Athena to experiment with different types of workstation sites, stated the release. The chosen groups are geographically spread between Boston, Brookline, suburban Cambridge, and the MIT campus.

Proposals from living groups short on space or otherwise requiring substantial construction to prepare for computer installations, including those dormitories, were deferred from the pilot project, according to the release.

Installation will begin this summer, Erickson said. Optimistically, at least one living group cluster will be up by September 1, she said. More realistically, however, the living groups will probably be connected during the fall, she continued.

The default rate at MIT has been declining recently since 1977, when the default rate was 14.97 percent on the NDSL, and 16.9 percent on the GSL. According to figures released to the Student Loans Collection Department (SLCD), which was added to the Bursar's Office in 1977.

"And the situation," according to Stuart E. Brown, a member of the GSC, "is growing worse because the number of graduate students is increasing and the availability of off-campus rental units is decreasing.

"The reason for the urgency behind this problem drive, Brown said, is condemnation conversions and rapid increases in apartment rents, which are making the problem grow rapidly worse.

Brown contrasted MIT with Stanford, which is committed to housing half of its graduate student population. The GSC estimates that half of the graduate students want to live on-campus, according to Director of Student Financial Aid Leonard X. Gal- lagher '54.

The default rate on these Institute loans is considerably lower than the national average, according to Assistant Bursar Ann McCormick.

In 1982 the national default rate on National Student Loans (NSL) was 10.4 percent, while the MIT rate was only 2.69 percent.

The default rate at MIT has not been declining recently since 1977, when the default rate was 14.97 percent on the NDSL, and 16.9 percent on the GSL. McCormick said. She attributed this decline to the Student Loans Collection Department (SLCD), which was added to the Bursar's Office in 1977.

The Bursar's Office tries to keep in close contact with students by telephone and mailings to avoid default. McCormick said. If attempts to negotiate payment fail and the student neglects to make a payment within six months, the loan is declared in default.

McCormick said that inability to house students is a major problem leading to defaults. As a result, the SLCD has made increased efforts to maintain good communication with students who have outstanding loans, she said.

The office has received a good deal of emphasis on retail inter- views with the students, she said.

In these interviews, SLCD members meet with seniors to re- mind them of their loan obligations and to gather information on close relatives who will know of the students' whereabouts, McCormick said.

The Financial Aid Office grants the NDSL and the GSL based on eligibility requirements deter- mined by the federal government, and that clause could require the company to maintain wages, benefits and working conditions. The drive culminates a long- standing GSC effort to make the availability of on-campus graduate student housing a priority in the MIT Planning Office, hinted last week.

"There is no one here that wants to see open conflict between these groups," Brown said. "There are those that are refused MIT housing must look for a place to live even as they adjust to a completely new environment.

Another problem off-campus graduate students face is the high incidence of crime in off-campus localities. The GSC survey held on Registration Day revealed that out of 1000 respondents living off-campus, 100 had been the vic- tims of some crime, Brown said.

"The GSC is looking into a number of solutions to the hous- ing problem," said Allen G. Fox G, chairman of the GSC housing committee. The only feasible solution is to gather information with the students, she said.

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