Athena requests a 3-year extension

By Steven R. Lerman, director of Project Athena and professor of civil engineering, said that negotiations are "going well." According to Lerman, the extension request comes because, at the project's inception five years ago, project founders underestimated the ambitiousness of its goals. "We originally underestimated what Project Athena would take. Five years was not enough," he said.

But Daniel Geer, systems development manager, said last week that he believed the problem was merely a time miscalculation but a lack of specific goals and a lack of clear planning. And, he added, the current continuation proposal suffers from the same lack of focus. "It promises nothing in detail and everything in general — which is exactly the problem we had in the first place," he said.

If the sponsors accept the continuation proposal, then the extension three years will be the project's last. When Project Athena ends, MIT will retain ownership of all donated computer equipment but will have to maintain it at its own expense, which it doesn't do now. Also, financial support for systems development will end.

The continuation proposal contains two major changes in Athena's general direction:
- The number of public workstations will increase from around 600 to around 1000, down from the originally scheduled 2000.
- Athena will no longer directly fund such projects and will limit the number of projects that its applications development team is involved with.

Public workstations expansion to be scaled down

Project Athena has curtailed its plan to provide universal access to group workstations service. According to Lerman, the initial proposal, which was adopted at many universities, has been motivated by the inability of the UA to meet activities' funding requests for several years, according to Rodriguez. Last fall that the UA had only $20,000 in its budget to cover a period when activities requested $160,000, Rodriguez said. The fee would give the UA direct control of its budget, which is presently allocated from tuition by the Office of the Dean for Student Affairs. The fee would appear as a line item on all students' term bills, Rodriguez said. The UA Council has considered an activities fee — effectively a student government tax — for at least five years, but has never approved placing the issue on a referendum. The fee, if set at $20, would raise $160,000 for the year. He said the CUSA's fee (gives the UA only $5,000 yearly at present), a figure that corresponds to 37 cents per term of each student's tuition.

UA considers student activities fee

By Michael Gojer

The budget for student activities could increase threefold next year — if the student body affirms a May 9 referendum to establish a student activities fee. The Undergraduate Association Council will vote this month on whether to place the referendum on the March elections ballot, according to UA president Mauel Rodriguez '86.

Rodriguez estimated that the fee might be as low as $20 next term.

The proposed fee system, which has been adopted at many MIT campus, has been motivated by the inability of the UA to meet activities' funding requests for several years, according to Rodriguez. Last fall that the UA had only $20,000 in its budget to cover a period when activities requested $160,000, Rodriguez said. The fee would give the UA direct control of its budget, which is presently allocated from tuition by the Office of the Dean for Student Affairs. The fee would appear as a line item on all students' term bills, Rodriguez said. The UA Council has considered an activities fee — effectively a student government tax — for at least five years, but has never approved placing the issue on a referendum. The fee, if set at $20, would raise $160,000 for the year. He said the CUSA's fee (gives the UA only $5,000 yearly at present), a figure that corresponds to 37 cents per term of each student's tuition.

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