Committee Calls for Longer School Year

By Sarah Y. Keightley

The Institute Calendar Committee proposed lengthening the academic year yesterday, ending a year-long effort to increase the number of teaching days each term. The immediate results of the longer academic year include a shorter summer term, an early start to Residence/Orientation Week, and other more subtle, but potentially significant changes.

The committee recommended that each term be lengthened to 67 days, a number it felt should be fair- ly consistent every year. Under the current calendar, the typical fall term is 61 days and a typical spring term is 64 days.

To allow the longer semesters, classes would start before Labor Day in three of the next seven years. Classes would then start one week earlier after Labor Day. The committee would be about one week later than usual.

The calendar committee finished its final draft of the proposal yesterday. Recommendations will be presented at the April 21 faculty meeting and will be voted on at the May 19 faculty meeting. The UA will hold a forum on the proposal, possibly using electronic voting.

"The calendar proposal is very subtle, but it can have a huge effect on undergraduate education," Chitaley said. Chitaley noted that the shortened summer term "is going to be one of the major issues of concern" because the summer term will only be about 10 weeks long. This will affect students' internships and other activities, he said. He added that the committee considered many options when studying the calendar, even switching to a quarter or trimester system.

UA President-elect Hans C. Godfrey '93 agreed that the summer term would be greatly affected by the proposal. Not only could it affect students' jobs, it would also affect student activities, including the Interphase program and athletics, which would have to start earlier, Godfrey said.

Godfrey also noted that though the academic calendar would be almost two weeks longer to help reduce the pace and pressure at MIT, these two weeks would be taken away from students' summer terms, giving students less time away from school.

Broad range of issues

The Institute Calendar Committee was formed a year ago by President Charles M. Vest, and is chaired by Professor Robert J. Silbey.

The major issues the committee addressed were: the length of terms, the length of reading and exam periods, the use of Independent Activities Period, spreading out term vacation periods, the implications of starting Residence/Orientation Week earlier, and the length of the current term.

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New Alcohol Policy

By Hyun Soo Kim

The Dormitory Council's new alcohol initiative was approved by the Office of Residence and Campus Activities early this term as a supplement to the Institute's alcohol policy.

As part of DomCon's proposal, two programs will be implemented by fall 1994. The Office of Residence and Campus Activities will train some dormitory residents to mix drinks and to serve alcohol safely at open parties through bartending courses and serving techniques.

Each house will also be required to have student monitors who are trained in first aid at parties. "It's a better way to approach the problem," Smith said.

"I've seen people uneducated about what alcohol can do to you. They abuse it because they are not educated," Smith said.

Individual dormitories will be responsible for implementing the policy at each of the dormitories.

The DormCon's 1991 alcohol policy proposal was rejected by the Residence and Campus Activities office because it would have allowed a large proportion of the house tax to be spent on alcohol.

This is the scenario that nine teams made up of freshmen and sophomores tackled last Wednesday, at MIT's preliminary Tau Beta Pi design contest. Tau Beta Pi is a national engineering honor society.

The teams were given one day and a half hours to digest the bits of information given to them. They then had to come up with a set of briefing charts. The MIT team was randomly selected to present its design first.

"It was a lot of fun," Hurda said. "It was a lot like one of the systems problems we do in Unified Engineering [16.001-16.002]. At least that's the way we attacked it.

But apparently hampered by a natural tendency to over-analyze the problem, the team did not fare as well as the district level. They proceeded with an extensive numerical analysis while other teams' analyses were more qualitative.

According to Lin, the winning team had an early start to Residence/Orientation Week and other more subtle, but it can have a huge effect on undergraduate education. Chitaley said. Chitaley noted that the shortened summer term is "going to be one of the major issues of concern" because the summer term will only be about 10 weeks long. This will affect students' internships and other activities, he said. He added that the committee considered many options when studying the calendar, even switching to a quarter or trimester system.

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Students Face Airport Design Task

By Jackson Jung

The city government has asked your firm to make a design bid for the new airport. You need to optimize the number, size, and placement of runways and gates based on expected traffic patterns. Of course, you also need to minimize the cost.

And you need to be done in one and a half hours.

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