Dorm Location Deemed Major Drawback

By Michael K. Chung

The new dormitory building MIT is planning to rent at 620 Huntington Avenue is a good idea, but the simple fact is, it is too far away from the main campus to be convenient for MIT students to make the experience worthwhile.

MIT housing officials look to rent the building for a year, and expect to need to extend the lease for a second year. MIT's goal in so doing is to reduce the number of crowded students from 226 (this past year's number) to 165 on campus. The current plan is to rent those of the five floors, giving MIT rooms for ninety more students. Students were recently sent letters saying that this new dorm would be opened to them this fall.

The various benefits include: substantially lower cost ($75 per person per term in a double, which is the same size unit as 12x2), guaranteed on campus housing after staying there one year, and guaranteed first- or second-choice housing after two years at Huntington Hall, a parking lot (but so parking lot guarding), discounted monthly MBTA combo subway-bus passes, as well as access to MCA's recreational and physical education activities.

There are many disadvantages to living at the new dorm, however. Inconvenience of location cannot be emphasized enough. The dorm is located near the Museum T-stop on the E-train of the MBTA Green Line, and about one and one-half miles down Huntington Avenue off of Massachusetts Avenue. Can you say "Sleep in through morning classes"?

As for food, a meal plan will be provided for students to eat at the MCA cafeteria, across the street (they even pack your lunch for you). Luckily, the dorm rooms, designed for doubles, will have enough room for refrigerators (partly because of meager furnishings - a desk, chair, closet, and bed, but don't count on any full-size kitchens to show up on your new hallway. The only kitchen that may be built will be "small," and designed for use by students who cannot eat the MCA cafeteria food (if it's through ARA Food Services, you'd better get to the kitchen early). Plus, there were no visible grocery stores in the area.

Another thing - there are currently no personal telephones, only hallway pay telephones. And you people living in freshmen know how much of a mess public phones bring about. And what if someone wants to log into Athena, since there is no Athena cluster? Is Information Services going to install those nifty easy-access Athena modern lines (that will go into dorms on campus) over there in Baker Hall? Not with our phone lines in place. In tetris, it is to the students that they "are actively investigating the feasibility of installing pay phones in each room and providing an Athena Cluster.

Another issue - safety of the students. Apparently, A Safe Ride will incorporate Huntington Hall as a new stop on its schedule. (Can't wait to work for a true free ride for once, eh?) WILL MIT Campus Police still transport to and from Baker Hall during the other hours if requested? Or will ZBT, ET, and Baker Hall do the carpool thing? (And how about delivery of The Tech to your dorm?)

There will be a 24-hour security guard, but, as mentioned previously, no protection of the parking lot. In an area of one of the highest vehicle crime rates in the nation, much personal security will be required to maintain automobile security. Picture it now - late at night, people trying to sleep, when all of a sudden, car alarms go off, so one knowing which one is which. Can you imagine the paranoia? In fact, the Housing Secretary of MCA discourages cars use, stating that they don't want to have to deal with a lot of students' cars on campus.

And, near or most importantly, what if not enough students choose to take this offer? Will graduate students be given the option to live there? Rent the rooms to young faculty and other MIT workers? Or just leave the thirty rooms alone, or the MIT, or even worse, all other dormitory residents, namely; for the difference?

The same letter that went out to students describing the dorm and whatever little it has to offer, said that "we may have to require moves by some students who would normally be assigned to other dormitories. We do not expect that this will happen and hope that it will, but if it does, we will notify you of any change of your fall term assignment immediately."

Quite simply, the Undergraduate Education, and Student Affairs and Residence Cam- pus Activities Offices are trying to put a fast one on the current upperclassmen in order to make a quick solution to a recurring problem within MIT housing. By sending abbreviated information about the dormitory (for instance there were no photographs of the building or of the surrounding area), potential residents are getting put on the spot. If a student signs the form, given a room, and then decides that he or she wants to cancel the obligation, there is currently no option to retract the decision.

If there are students willing to trade with them, then may as well work, but there is no guarantee on that happening.

If they are interested, there seems to be almost no way for people away from MIT to go to the summer to see the place for themselves. The most crucial part is that there may be able to see what the dorm actually looks like, and then form a more complete picture of what is being alcaprimly presented to them.

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