Letters To The Editor

Bush Fund Brouhaha Obscures Issue

Now that both the Thistle and The Tech have exhaustively covered the story of the beleaguered Vannevar Bush Trust, I believe it is the right time to cut through the misinformation, and give you my perspective.

The critical donor document of the Bush Trust says: "without accountability." It says that no one, not the president of MIT, not the undergraduate or graduate student bodies of MIT, is surprised to have any say in how this fund is spent. I agree that everyone should know about the existence of the fund; but how the fund is spent is between the Undergraduate Association president, MIT (through Arthur C. Smith, dean for undergraduate education and student affairs), and Vannevar Bush, who did all his talking forty years ago.

People complain that the UA has staged a cover-up concerning the Bush Trust, and that is should have done this or that. As far as I know, no UA president has ever given much thought to the matter. Although $4,500 may seem like a good chunk of money, it's nothing compared to the money that various deans, officials, and departments have in discretionary funding. I'm more than happy to sit down with students and student groups to discuss the sources of funding if none are apparent—up to this point I've always been able to squeeze a couple of bills here and there out of MIT.

Before I lay the matter to rest, I want to do a couple of things. First, apologize to the students for any manner of conduct that has occurred in the UA Office. We've said the following: Ignore everything that you've seen in print about this issue. The facts of the matter have become so convoluted that it's hard to distinguish them from fiction. I will say that there are several investigations going on both internal and external to the UA government about the appropriateness and legality of certain individuals actions (not me, if you're wondering) and reports will be issued in due course. I (and probably The Tech) will keep you posted on any further actions in this matter, but do not feel that it is proper for me to malign others as they malign me.

Despite the personal effort this issue has had on me, any main concern lies in the effect it might have on the student body and student activities. The information on the Bush Trust is kept in the same database as the student activities accounts. Unfortunately, each group must keep an account with the UA or the Dean's Office must now question whether or not its information is safe from similar manipulation. I can not answer that question for the student groups, but I urge them to speak with Dean Smith or me if they are afraid that this may happen.

I am also afraid that people who don't care about the student body will new run for office in order to get their hands on the Bush Trust. I spent enough time in the UA office that when I wake up in the morning and I want to talk to Hans, my first impulse is to pick up the phone and call the UA office. Ask anyone who lives at Kappa Sig, "Where's Hans?" You'll get the same response, "I don't know. Probably the UA office."

So should Hans have personal control over a $500 per month stipend. Also, the Bush Fund has not, and never has been, part of student activities accounts. Money is not being diverted away from any student activity. With that in mind, and the fact that Hans is self-supporting, I could not care less if he spent the money on an all-expense paid trip to Jamaica. I'm just happy that he decides to spend the majority of it on student projects that would otherwise go unfunded.

Now for the people behind this imbroglio, people who have not conveyed as such, I am truly sorry. Everyone seemed to forget that I am always available to talk about any issues related to the welfare of MIT's undergraduates, and if I have not conveyed as such, I am truly sorry. From now on through, if any of you have questions or concerns on any issues, please stop by the office, write e-mail, or call and I would be more than happy to talk.

Now for the people behind this imbroglio, and what it means for the future. I can only say the following: Ignore everything that you've seen in print about this issue. The facts of the matter have become so convoluted that it's hard to distinguish them from fiction. I will say that there are several investigations going on both internal and external to the UA government about the appropriateness and legality of certain individuals actions (not me, if you're wondering) and reports will be issued in due course. I (and probably The Tech) will keep you posted on any further actions in this matter, but do not feel that it is proper for me to malign others as they malign me.

Despite the personal effort this issue has had on me, any main concern lies in the effect it might have on the student body and student activities. The information on the Bush Trust is kept in the same database as the student activities accounts. Unfortunately, each group must keep an account with the UA or the Dean's Office must now question whether or not its information is safe from similar manipulation. I can not answer that question for the student groups, but I urge them to speak with Dean Smith or me if they are afraid that this may happen.

I am also afraid that people who don't care about the student body will now run for office in order to get their hands on the Bush Trust. I spent enough time in the UA office that when I wake up in the morning and I want to talk to Hans, my first impulse is to pick up the phone and call the UA office. Ask anyone who lives at Kappa Sig, "Where's Hans?" You'll get the same response, "I don't know. Probably the UA office."

So should Hans have personal control over a $500 per month stipend? My answer is that four grand is not enough for the amount of work that he puts into his job. If the UA received an official salary, I might have a problem with it, but the UA doesn't, so I don't. The student body president of Northeastern gets full tuition and a $500 per month stipend. Also, the Bush Fund is not, and never has been, part of student activity funds. Money is not being diverted away from any student activity. With that in mind, and the fact that Hans is self-supporting, I could not care less if he spent the money on an all-expense paid trip to Jamaica. I'm just happy that he decides to spend the majority of it on student projects that would otherwise go unfunded.

Why don't we focus on real issues that affect the lives of our fellow students more than the Bush Fund? Why can't a student feel safe when walking across campus at night? How is the quality of teaching at MIT? What are these card reader things that are going on the dorms? These are the kind of issues Hans focuses on every day. So if he buys himself dinner, good for him.

If people want to focus on sources of inefficient or "questionable" spending, find out how much the Institute spends on renovating offices. Or how about how much money is spent on flowers for the President's house? That figure alone probably makes the Bush Fund pale in comparison.

Ron Peters '94

CEG NEEDS HELP!!!

Do you want to see the CEG die??
Do you want to see the end of student opinion on classes??

Without your help, the CEG will not be published this term!!

Please help out and come to a meeting on Monday Nov. 15 at 7pm in the UA Office, Room 401 Student Center

Hans C. Godfrey '93
Undergraduate Association President

UAP Deserves Free Use Of Bush Fund

As an Undergraduate Association Council member and a brother of Kappa Sigma, I see Hans in and out of the UA office. He spends so much time in the office that when I wake up in the morning and I want to talk to Hans, my first impulse is to pick up the phone and call the UA office. Ask anyone who lives at Kappa Sig, "Where's Hans?" You'll get the same response, "I don't know. Probably the UA office."

So should Hans have personal control over a $500 per month stipend? My answer is that four grand is not enough for the amount of work that he puts into his job. If the UA received an official salary, I might have a problem with it, but the UA doesn't, so I don't. The student body president of Northeastern gets full tuition and a $500 per month stipend. Also, the Bush Fund is not, and never has been, part of student activity funds. Money is not being diverted away from any student activity. With that in mind, and the fact that Hans is self-supporting, I could not care less if he spent the money on an all-expense paid trip to Jamaica. I'm just happy that he decides to spend the majority of it on student projects that would otherwise go unfunded.

Why don't we focus on real issues that affect the lives of our fellow students more than the Bush Fund? Why can't a student feel safe when walking across campus at night? How is the quality of teaching at MIT? What are these card reader things that are going on the dorms? These are the kind of issues Hans focuses on every day. So if he buys himself dinner, good for him.

If people want to focus on sources of inefficient or "questionable" spending, find out how much the Institute spends on renovating offices. Or how about how much money is spent on flowers for the President's house? That figure alone probably makes the Bush Fund pale in comparison.