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Sankaran also wants to work on improving communication with the MIT administration. “The important thing is for them to respect us,” he said, and the UA needs to show strength and the support of the student body to gain that respect.

Better Finboard relationship

A major difference between Sankaran and Muh and their opponents is that they want a close relationship between the Finance Board and the UA. The UA Finboard allocates student activity funds to the Office of the Dean for Undergraduate Education and Student Affairs, subject to the approval of the UA council.

“I think Finboard should remain part of the UA,” Sankaran said. “UA input to the whole thing would be valuable,” he added.

The problems of the past year between Finboard and UA were “a special case,” Sankaran said, and do not justify separating the Finboard from the UA. However, he wants to make sure that Finboard members “don’t feel slighted.”

Muh and Sankaran say they will not use the Vannevar Bush ’16 fund, the UA’s discretionary fund of approximately $4,000, to benefit the UA or themselves. “We are only going to use it for student activities and student groups which we feel will benefit the majority of the student body on campus,” Muh said.

Tuition, UROPs, and harassment

The current rate of tuition increase is “completely ridiculous,” Sankaran said. “We need to mobilize our efforts better,” he said, because “I don’t think we get what we’re paying for all of the time.”

Sankaran also wanted the UA to play a greater role in saving the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program. Currently, UROP funding will drop significantly because of new federal regulations governing overhead costs.

Sankaran would like to institute a “directed letter writing campaign” from students to U.S. government officials. Muh said that the UA would work on writing student representatives to lobby members of Congress.

The candidates are also concerned about the issue of harassment. MIT’s harassment policy should be changed so that it represents “the views of the majority of the student body,” Muh said. Sankaran and Muh will “talk to as many students as possible” to find out exactly how they feel about the harassment policy, Muh said.

Food, overcrowding concerns

Two other important issues for Sankaran and Muh are the perceived concerns about the quality and availability of food, and the overcrowding of the undergraduate dormitories.

“I want to make sure that Pritchett and the Next House and Baker dining halls remain open.” Muh said. It is often difficult for students to get meals on campus because of the schedule of when dining facilities are open; multiple dining options are also important, she said.

“I think dormitory overcrowding is a very serious problem,” Sankaran said. He cited the overcrowding in MacGregor House lounges and Baker House quinquettes, saying that the overcrowding problem would be “something that we would want to take to the MIT administration.”

Page, Evans Would Institute Regular Gripe Sessions

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Additionally, Page wants to have regular “gripe sessions” where students can raise their concerns with various administrators. These sessions would remove the need for the typically crisis-driven student forums, he said.

The administration would also be in favor of these regular forums, Page said, because administrators are often “complaining about not finding out about what we want.”

“If we did nothing else but that [gripe sessions] ... we’d be doing a lot.”

Funding proposals

Page and Evans want to separate the UA from the Finance Board, which allocates funding from the Office of the Dean for Undergraduate Education and Student Affairs to various student groups, subject to approval by the UA Council.

“I would like to see the Finboard separate from the UA as much as possible,” Page said. He proposed creating a priority system to decide funding allocation that would avoid the student “groups holding juices” bias that enter upon present Finboard decisions, he said.

Evans suggested seeking alternative sources of funding for student activities that allow for student funding. “There is a lot of money at the school,” Evans said. “I don’t think it’s being appropriately channeled.”

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Colin M. Page ’95 and Michael R. Evans ’96

In the way of providing “tangible student services,” Page said “the most tangible thing I can offer is I’m planning on using the Bush fund for some major project.” The Vannevar Bush ’16 fund is an approximately $4,000 discretionary fund under the control of the UA president.

Page plans to have a group of student brainstorm ideas for the use of the fund. One idea is to “make some kind of memorial like a statue or plaque for students who have died at MIT,” Page said.

Only $2,000 to $3,000 of the Bush fund would be used for this project, Page said, leaving “a thousand or so around for an emergency.”

Harassment, safety also important

“I don’t think that the current system and the current guide are adequate,” Page said, regarding MIT’s harassment policy. “I think the guide was just a long enumeration of what was already current policy,” he said. According to Page, MIT needs a “more centralized system” for dealing with harassment complaints.

The UA should “have a forum [on harassment] like the GSC had, for undergraduates,” so that “undergraduates can be informed about what the options are.” Page would then represent the students to the administration and other student organizations as well.

Candidates Vijay P. Sankaran ’95 and Carrie R. Muh ’96 will run for Undergraduate Association president and vice president in the elections next Wednesday.

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