UROP Introduces New Funding Rules

By Ramy A. Amanot

In a departure from the old Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program application process, summer proposals will be accepted over a three-week period from April 1-22, according to the summer UROP guidelines.

With this change, "there is no advantage to being first — that's what we're trying to eliminate," said UROP Director Norma McGarvey. Instead, the UROP approval committee will focus on variety, she said. "We want proposals from a wide range of areas," she said.

As of July 1, the Institute will no longer be able to waive overhead and employee benefit costs on UROP student wages. The new policy, a result of new federal guidelines, will effectively make UROP students eligible for expense subsides as before, according to McGarvey.

Wages earned through the end of June will not incur these costs, so students should save their vacation time for the end of the summer, according to UROP guidelines. The UROP office will also give preference to students who work full-time rather than part-time.

However, beginning July 1, wages paid out of sponsored research funds will be subject to employee benefit costs of about 40 percent. This sum will then be subtracted to overhead expenses of over 50 percent, thereby doubling UROP costs, McGarvey said.

These costs were waived last year for about 2,500 UROP students who earned nearly $5 million last year, according to McGarvey. Overhead costs include physical plant and administrative services, and employee benefit costs, include health plans and vacation time.

Though employers usually earmark a portion of their employees' salaries for employee benefits, the situation is different for UROP students. Students will "contribute to the UROP office will also give preference to students who work full-time rather than part-time."

By Eric Richard

Employee Attacked at Media Lab

On March 15, an individual posing as a janitor assaulted an employe of the Media Laboratory when asked for identification.

According to a Campus Police report, a Media Lab staff member confronted the individual about a bulge under his jacket. The individual then struck the staff member in the face and fled the premises.

The bulge was a laptop computer, an Apple Macintosh Powerbook belonging to Technical Services, according to an electronic mail message from Gregory L. Tucker, research engineer at the Media Lab.

The Powerbook was the only item reported stolen, according to Chief of Campus Police Anne P. Glavin. The staff member was not seriously injured in the attack, Tucker said.

There has also been a separate report of a person following a Media Lab employee into an elevator, but it is not clear how the individual responsible, Glavin said. "It isn't clear how [the individual] got in the Media Lab," but it seems that he simply walked in, she added. "No suspect identified."

"We believe that we have identified the individual responsible," Glavin said. "The hard part is that the victim cannot positively identify the suspect," she added.

The Campus Police has received information identifying the assailant's vehicle, Glavin said. "We suspect [the person] had an idea of where he was going," Glavin said. "It isn't clear how [the individual] got in the Media Lab," but it seems that he simply walked in, she added.

In addition, no other individuals were found who could identify the assailant. "We've turned over every stone that we have," Glavin said.

Incident raises safety questions

"We've sent out warnings to people about the incident and warned from not to confront suspicious individuals," said Lauren H. Gallant, administrative officer at the Media Lab.

"Our primary concern ... is that we don't want individuals running into confrontations like this fellow did," Glavin said. "Sometimes, despite the best laid plans it is difficult to keep people out, she said.

"If you see somebody who looks suspicious to you, call us immediately," she said.

These incidents have prompted Nicholas P. Negroponte '66, director of the Media Lab, to address the issue of security in the Media Lab.

As a member of you know, we are experiencing more and more crime at the Media Lab," Negroponte said in an electronic message passed to the media lab. "During the nine years ... of occupancy of the Wexner Building, we have been burned with a high degree of safety and with an absolute minimum of theft.

Negroponte proposed additions to the Media Lab's security system, but he concluded, "In the final analysis, the only way we can combat this problem is to keep our collective attention high, have our eyes and ears open, and he alert and ready to help."