MITES Comes Under Fire for Admissions Policy

By Steve Kroft

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Page 19

THE TECH

MITES, from Page 1

generated by the first article in
The Wall Street Journal, according to Trilling. Jennings “was a marginal applicant,” Trilling said.

“With some hesitation, we accepted him. He was far and away the best student in a not-very-good high school,” Trilling said. “His SAT scores were low,” Trilling said. Jennings scored a 510 out of a possible 1600 on the SAT.

Despite the low score, “we thought he had potential ... and it was worth taking the chance,” Trilling said.

Ramsey, however, said that Jennings was accepted “before the first [Wall Street Journal] article.”

At the beginning of the program, Jennings had “adjustment difficulties” but was eventually “acclimated and accepted by the others,” Trilling said.

Jennings agreed that the adjustment was difficult at first but that he learned about “getting along with different personalities,” something which helped him gain “more of a sense of who I am,” he said.

Academically, Jennings “had his struggles,” Ramsey said. “His expectations were very high, and he discovered that it wasn’t as easy as he thought it might be,” he said.

Jennings said that he had the most difficulty with physics and did best in calculus. He said that he wants to pursue mathematics as a career.

 Warned against admission

During the fifth week of the program, Trilling met with students individually for “20 minutes of conversation” to discuss their performance in the program. “I don’t look at academics except in a very general way,” Trilling said. He said he often does not evaluate the students.

Jennings “was so focused on coming to MIT,” Trilling said. “I had told him I was encouraging him but chose instead to warn him his chances of admission were not very good,” he said. “The academics weren’t very good.”

“I didn’t want him to say what he was going to say,” Jennings said.

“Told me, ‘Your records aren’t good enough. Your college boards aren’t good enough,” Jennings said. “I was angry.”

Trilling suggested that Jennings apply to the University of Maryland and Howard University “because they are the two best engineering schools in the greater Washington (D.C.) area.”

Jennings had expressed an interest in going to a college near his home if he could not attend MIT, Trilling said.

Trilling also said that he made the suggestion because the two schools are involved in a project with MIT called the Engineering Coalition of Schools for Excellence in Education and Leadership.

“Because of MIT’s partnership in the program, it would be easier to transfer from them to MIT,” Trilling said.

Jennings said that there were racial overtones in Trilling’s suggestions, but Ramsey disagreed. “[Trilling] gave similar advice to several students,” Ramsey said.

Jennings is planning to apply to 17 schools, including MIT, “so we if I can get in,” he said. MIT is now “somewhere around number 10.” His first choice is Brown University, where he is applying for early action, he said. “I’m going to prove them wrong,” Jennings said. “I can get into MIT.”

“MITES should be more geared towards people who are disadvantaged environments,” Jennings said. “The city schools are overlooked. There should be more focus on those who really need it.”

Undergraduates are cordially invited to attend an information session on career opportunities in Corporate Finance, Public Finance and Sales, Trading & Research at Lehman Brothers.

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