Plan Would Move Senior House Residents to Ashdown

Robert M. Randolph is among the restructuring options being considered by the committee, Randolph said. However, the committee's plans call for renovating both Senior House and East Campus, according to the source who spoke with a committee member.

"Senior House is in need of substantial upgrading and should be high on the priority list," said President Charles M. Vest.

Smith pushed for discussion of the renovation because he did not want to wait around for another decade before we did something about Senior House," he said. Vanishing Senior House has "been talked about for at least 20 years in one way or another," Randolph said. Any renovations suggested by the committee "will not exclude it from housing undergraduates," he said.

Future housing should be able to be "utilized in a variety of ways," Randolph said. Displaced undergraduates from Senior House would possibly be housed at Ashdown House, currently a graduate dormitory on west campus, Randolph said. Ashdown is not ideal for graduate housing but may be better suited for undergraduate housing because its suite format is similar to some undergraduate dormitories, he said.

"Ashdown is architecturally well configured for undergraduate housing," Smith said. "It thought it would be an obvious place ... to house undergraduates." Problems with Senior House

Every fall, many students and parents of students assigned to Senior House, which typically has a low popularity in the housing lottery, "react quite strongly about Senior House," Smith said. However, it is unclear as to what extent the complaints are the result of the run-down building or the "Sport Death banner and other accoutrements of Senior House culture," Smith said.

"Dormitory cultures are important and ought to be treated with care," Randolph said. However, the committee also needs to consider "the whole totality of the community" when formulating restructuring plans, he said.

The restructuring plans do not typically account for the residential culture "because cultures tend to shift and change," Randolph said. "Student culture is fleeting and is developed organically by each generation as it comes along," Vest said. "It can't and shouldn't be dictated or designed. Hopefully one's culture isn't determined solely by the structure inhabited."

Student, faculty involvement

The committee's work to date has not been public, Smith said. The administration would have the final say in the restructuring process, he said.

"You don't do anything on this campus unless you have a consensus," he said. "I would be very surprised that the senior administration would make any decision [regarding dormitory renovations or overall residential restructuring] without a full and open consultation with the faculty and the students," said Professor of Physics Robert L. Jaffe, chair of the faculty. The administration will take the advice of the faculty, students, and alumni when making a final decision, Jaffe said. However, the administration would have the final say in the ultimate decision, he said.

Following the Randolph committee's report, a policy committee would probably be formed which would look at the issues, Jaffe said. The policy committee could conceivably finish its work within the time of one semester, he said.

Ramy Arnous, Andrea Hove, Jeremy Hyton, and Sarah Y. Keigbely contributed to the reporting of this story.

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