Plan Would Separate Undergrads and Grads

The proposal to move all undergraduates to west campus and to turn East Campus, Senior House, and Walker Memorial into a "Graduate Center" is a plan whose time has come ["Dean's Consider Moving All Undergrads to West Dorms," Nov. 1, 1994]. There is altogether too much friction between undergraduates and graduates, and separating them will help alleviate the problem.

Furthermore, I believe that Dean Arthur C. Smith and Senior Associate Dean Robert M. Randolph should ban graduate students from the Student Center and make it a pausetime offense for undergraduates and graduates to speak. They should consider segregating the institute hallways as well, perhaps only allowing graduate students on the odd floors, and undergraduates on the even ones.

Kent Landberg G

Alumni's Feelings Should be Considered

The Tech received a copy of the following letter sent to Senior Associate Dean Robert M. Randolph.

Dear Dean Randolph

As a former resident of East Campus (from 1983 through 1987, including summers), I must say that I am very disturbed to hear about plans to convert both East Campus and Senior House to graduate housing. While I do agree that East Campus (and probably Senior House) are in dire need of extensive renovation, I believe that the long history that both buildings have had as undergraduate dormitories demands that their change in status be seriously considered.

Dormitories is not like housing at other universities, where students are randomly assigned to dorms by lottery. At MIT, students choose their living groups, and generally remain with them for their entire undergraduate career. The dorms at MIT are therefore not mere housing -- they are living groups which alumni feel a great bond toward.

This past September, while visiting MIT for the Alumni Leadership Conference, I met new the newly-implemented security so that I could visit my floor -- third west at East Campus. Even though I had never seen any of the current residents, I felt a bond with them connected to them -- because of what we had in common: third west. This is probably not unlike the bond that fraternity brothers feel towards the current brothers in their houses. I spent an hour over on the floor, talking to the residents about the "way things used to be" when I was a resident. And they listened, and they were interested.

But as I looked forward to the times when 3W alumni visited the floor when I was an undergraduate -- during our yearly formal floor dinner, C-league backing -- were "50% which recent alumni participated", and at the random circle that happened to be in town. And I listened when they told me how it was when they were on the floor. I know from informal surveys that when you ask a random group of undergraduate alumni who group at MIT they identify with, most strongly, the majority will answer that it is their living group -- not their course, not their class, but their living group. It is East Campus, and my friends from my floor. I think of first when I think of MIT. Please don't break that bond by putting graduate students in my living group! Please consider the feelings and reactions of alumni when deciding the future of East Campus and Senior House.

Jack Leifer
Secretary, Class of 1987

MITES Student's Racism Charge Seems Unfounded

I am writing in response to the article "MITES Controversy Attracts National Media Attention" [Oct. 25, 1994]. I have problems with the charges made by Codric Jenmgs, the student who charges Professor of Aerosciences and Astrophysics Leon Trilling with being racist.

First, given that the Minority Introduction to Engineering and Science program is a program for minority students, how can Professor Trilling's candid advice to Jennings be considered "racist?" It seems to me that Trilling was giving honest academic advice to a student who did not want to be African American. If there were white students in the MITES program, no doubt Trilling would have advised some of them the same way.

I'm sure Professor Trilling often advises high school students who are white, Asian, and of many other backgrounds that they probably will not get accepted into MIT because their Scholastic Aptitude Test scores are not quite MIT caliber. As MITES Administrative Director William H. Ramsey '51 points out, Trilling did indeed give similar advice to other students, but only Jennings condemned his advice as somehow racially motivated.

Second: What is it that Jennings wanted Trilling to do? To give him false hope and insincere advice based on the information he had on Jennings' academic profile by encouraging him to apply to MIT? This would have been unfair and unprofessional. There seems to be a dangerous and growing trend in this country: students lending charges of racism and sexism as instructors or institutions that tell them truths that they do not want to hear -- truths that have nothing to do with race or gender.

If I submit a paper to a conference and it gets turned down because it's not good enough, easy for easy for the people on the part of the male conference organizers rather than accept that the paper isn't as good as it could be and work toward making the next one better. Of course racism and sexism do exist in academia, but such charges should not be made lightly, as the result of a bruised ego.

Letters and cartoons must be the author's signatures, address, and phone numbers. Unsigned letters will not be accepted. No advertising. Letters and cartoons without the express permission will be deleted.

To Reach Us

The Tech's telephone number is (617) 253-1541. Electronic mail is the easiest way to reach any member of our staff. Mail to specific departments may be sent to the following addresses on the Internet: news@the-tech.mit.edu, arts@the-tech.mit.edu, photo@the-tech.mit.edu, arts@the-tech.mit.edu, tech@the-tech.mit.edu, circulation@the-tech.mit.edu. For other matters, send mail to general@the-tech.mit.edu, and it will be directed to the appropriate person.

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