Ashdown Housemasters Express Concern

About Proposed Move

The Tech received a copy of this letter addressed to President Charles M. Vest.

We are very concerned about the potential serious situation that is threatening to affect the living and learning environment of a large group of graduate students, those at Ashdown House. We are concerned that in the present endeavor to restructure student housing, too much attention is focused on bricks and mortar and rental income and not nearly enough on the very important educational component of residential student life.

Ashdown is home to some 160 international students and some 80 women, among a total of 419 residents. Some 20 years ago Professor Emeritus Robert I. Hulsizer Jr. PhD '48 wrote, "... responded to a perceived need - the need for graduate student(s) to communicate with each other. They started the weekly Coffee Hour which still occur every Thursday evening in what is known, appropriately, as the Hulsizer Room. Conversations during Coffee Hour deal with events and studies in foreign countries, in the United States, and in different laboratories. The value of the cultural, ethnic, religious and political education that occurs is enormous."

Out of Coffee Hour, over many years, a real community has evolved. Community is hard to define, but one would find little disagreement in today's fractious world that community is far more important than previously realized. It is not easy to establish and where it exists, it must not be destroyed.

As one very successful student volunteered to us, "Graduate study at MIT is a wonderful opportunity, but it is also an incredibly isolating experience. I don't know how well I would have done without the Ashdown community."

Another student, here only a few months, stated, "I came here from a country where family is very important. These people may not be just my friends, they are my family."

We are very concerned about the potential consequences that may be occurring. We represent the opinion of the author, not necessarily that of the newspaper. Edited and published by THE TECH, the daily newspaper of Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Letters may be condense letters; shorter letters will be given higher priority. Once submitted, all letters become property of THE TECH. The Tech's Office of Editorials, Columns and Opinions reserves the right to edit or not publish letters, editorials, features, essays, columns, editorials, news, editors, and opinion editors. Letters and cartoons must bear the author's signatures, addresses, and phone numbers. Unsigned letters will not be published. No political affiliation is implied or required. All letters become the property of The Tech, its editors, and/or its publishers and are subject to copyright. LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: To Reach Us, THE TECH, Room W20-483, 84 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139-7029. Third Class postage paid at Boston, Mass., and at additional mailing offices. Published Monday through Friday, except on holidays, by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Telephone (617) 253-1541. Subscription rates available. (617) 258-8226. Ad copy deadline is 3:00 p.m., business deadline is 4:00 p.m. (Monday through Friday, except on holidays). (617) 253-1300. National Sales: Bob Loyal, Robert M. Loyal. (617) 258-8181. Subscription rates available. (617) 258-8181. Printed in the United States of America. Copyright © 1994 Massachusetts Institute of Technology. All rights reserved.