Fall Planning Shifts Away from Housing

"Welcoming to the Academy" is New Focus

By Keith J. Weinstein
NEWS AND FEATURES DIRECTOR

The focus of Orientation planning will shift further away from residence selection, following Monday’s final meeting of the Residence System Implementation Team.

A new committee, chaired by Dean for Undergraduate Research J. Kim Vandiver PhD ’75, will now examine "how best to welcome these new members of the community to the Academy," said Robert P. Redwine, the dean for undergraduate education, who is appointing the committee.

"Now that Rush is not a significant part at all of Orientation," Vandiver said, "we can focus the programming in Orientation on things that will add value to the academic experience of the students when they first get here."

"We would like to do a much better job welcoming students to the Academy," he added, echoing Redwine’s words almost exactly.

"That’s really the principal notion behind this. Imagine activities involving more faculty.

The committee will look into “anything that will make it possible for students to connect sooner and better to faculty and ... people who can show them what the intellectual experience is all about," he said.

The membership and charge to the committee have yet to be established, Vandiver said. "We will have significant student membership," he added. "I’m presently working with student leaders to choose student members."

The shift in planning follows a gradual shift in emphasis over the last 20 years, as the last days for freshmen have gone from "Rush" to "Residence/Orientation," and in 1997 briefly to "O/R" and then "Orientation."

It was another committee chaired by Vandiver, the Orientation/Residence Fall ’98 Committee, that was responsible for the latter two name changes.

RSIT report suggests as expected

The RSIT’s final report, which closely mirrored a draft reported in The Tech this week, made no recommendations for changes in the residence system, and as expected was generally vague on the new system, sparked by the 1997 death of freshman Scott S. Krueger at a fraternity event.

"Those involved ... generally agree that the overall framework designed for 2002 is generally effective," the RSIT said in an executive summary.

"It really was a very successful transition," Redwine said, adding that dramatic changes in residence selection for next year were very unlikely.

"Clearly there remains some lack of unanimity on certain aspects of how to go forward," he said, but "we probably are not far away now from where we need to be. I think this system of having the squating has worked out on the whole very well."

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Suit Weighs on Admissions Policies

By Nathan Collins
NEWS AND FEATURES DIRECTOR

The Minority Introduction to Entrepreneurship, Engineering, and Science program, or MITES, saw a major shift earlier this week after anti-affirmative action groups filed a complaint with the federal government.

The shift comes at a time when university affirmative action programs are under fire around the country. The Supreme Court will soon consider Grutter v. Bollinger, a case challenging the University of Michigan’s race-based admissions policy, and Princeton University last week said it would end or modify a summer program similar to MITES.

MIT announced Monday that it has decided to allow high school students of all races and ethnicities to apply to MITES.

Race will continue to be a factor in making admissions decisions, MITES Director Karl W. Reid ’84 said. Reid said that only twelve percent of engineering students were minorities, despite a national population that includes about twenty-five percent minorities. Therefore, he said, "we feel a need to have these intervention programs" to encourage minorities to consider science and engineering careers.

Groups filed complaint

MIT’s decision to modify the application procedure came after two groups filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights.

Robert Clegg, a lawyer with the Center for Equal Opportunity, said that his group and the California-based American Civil Rights Institute filed the complaint after a student who applied to MITES was "excluded because she was not the wrong skin color."

"A program that is open to disadvantaged children of all races would be perfectly permissible," Clegg said. "The mix of students [in the program] is irrelevant ... what matters is that the way stu-

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Institute Warns FSILGs Not to Let Frosh Move In

By Marilisa Vogt
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

The administration appears to be guarding against the possibility that freshmen who have pledged fraternities may attempt to move into fraternities, sororities, and independent living cooperatives.

A recent e-mail to leaders of FSILGs stated that housing freshmen could cost them financial support from the Institute.

Associate Dean for Student Life Programs Barbara A. Baker, one of the authors of the message, said that the purpose of the e-mail was to "get the word out to remind fraternities" of MIT’s policy of housing all freshmen on campus and outline possible disciplinary actions.

"Both freshmen and the fraternities that house them, will be in direct violation of this policy, and both the student and the fraternity will jeopardize their Good Standing with the Institute and may be subject to a judicial hearing," the e-mail said.

Baker said the e-mail was sent in response to questions from parents and information from other students and the housing office, and was not the result of any particular violation of MIT’s policy.

Financial support at risk

The message went on to say that freshmen who join fraternities after completing their first year would not be financially supported from the Institute.

"FSILG's found responsible for violating this policy will also be in jeopardy of forfeiting their Financial Transition Reimbursement," the e-mail said.

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In light of today’s annual MLK breakfast, I originally wished to discuss the special relevance of the month of February. While my Monday’s assignment with MITES and Interphase having a similar, or worse, given the more rigorous standards of admissions to MIT, would most benefit. At the same time, there should be fears that the presence of minority students, many of which I had never seen or heard of before. I did not know whether they practiced some of the cultural rituals I did. Because I did not want to offend anyone with what I did or give a bad impression of myself, I decided to stay away. Many people I had been around all my life. I soon found out that it was not the only one who responded to their fears in this way. These actions lead to the self-segregation we see practiced all over MIT.

Though I began my diversity education freshman year, it was in my sophomore year that I enrolled in 11.023, Bridging Racial and Cultural Differences taught by Dr. Clarence Williams. It taught me about my own background, while also teaching me about many others. I obtained a more in-depth understanding of the people who lived in my dorm, set next to me in class, and who did not belong to others, countries of the world. The education I received in 11.023 caused me to strive for more, for the NES program. I will always remember what I was learning on a variety of different levels. I am still seeking and will continue to search for a bigger step. As Civil and Environmental Engineering Professor Steven R. Lerman could begin taking full advantage of the environment, we blind ourselves to the reality and the future. As we commemorate Black History Month, it is time to increase our ethnically, and culturally aware. We need new classes to teach students and faculty members to see. Dr. Williams, in his class, Sitting Together in the Cafeteria, said, "As an institution, we will need to pay attention and be willing to increase our efforts over the coming decade if we are real-ly going to succeed." It is time to increase our efforts.

This expansion could come from a required class. It could be a HASS-CI class, adding only one of the Writing Requirement. It would include alumni participation, improvements in advising and mentoring, and feel moreso a part of the crowd. They would be greatly benefited by hetero-d.textBox
Write for the Tech!

a license is something you can live with.

A motorcycle operator license is more important than race, Grutter said that if the decision affects the student population is a compelling interest. “I don’t think a desire for diversity justifies a separate admissions system. Four additional issues are considered in undergraduate admissions, it ought to impact other selection decisions as well. “I don’t know if it’ll threaten the program,” Reid said, noting that whether MITES will be affected depends on the details of the Court’s decision.

A second issue is whether the Michigan admissions policy is sufficiently narrowly tailored. In addition to establishing the standard of compelling state interest, the 1995 Adarnd Corporation v. Pena decision stated that affirmative action programs had to be narrowly tailored, meaning that the programs must be carefully designed and subject to judicial review.

“Requiring strict scrutiny is the best way to ensure that courts will consistently give racial classifications a detailed examination, as to both ends and means,” wrote Justice Sandra Day O’Connor.

Debate began with Bakke

The legal questions about affirmative action programs in higher education started with Regents of the University of California v. Bakke, the landmark 1978 Supreme Court case that declared racial quotas unconstitutional. The case considered a U.C. Davis Medical School admissions policy that put some minority applicants into a separate admissions system. Four justices argued that race should not be used as a factor in the decision, and four argued that Davis’ policy was constitutional.

Justice Lewis F. Powell, Jr., wrote the key opinion. He argued that the Davis admissions method was not allowed under the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, but that diversity was important and race could be considered in some circumstances, though it could not be the only consideration.

Powell wrote that “the goal of achieving a diverse student body is sufficiently compelling to justify consideration of race in admissions decisions under some circumstances,” but he also wrote that “racial and ethnic classifications of any sort are inherently suspect and call for the most exacting judicial scrutiny.”

With Adarnd, the Court took a more toward toward the anti-affirmative action side. Twenty-five years after Bakke, the Supreme Court will reconsider affirmative action in college admissions and may well overturn the doctrine put forth in Bakke.

The particular question in Grutter v. Bollinger is whether the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment or Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prohibits the University of Michigan’s affirmative action programs in higher education. Similar to Bakke, the program uses a point system to choose a diverse student body and requires student applicants to have a minimum amount of points, which is a means to an end.

Students have complained that the program may be a violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and is still in need of some revisions. I find it difficult to adapt to a system that’s so unfamiliar with,” said Suzanne E. Luther ’06, a student currently enrolled in 8.02.

“Though there are some things I like about the program, there are other things that I’m rather skeptical about,” Luther said. “I’m not convinced that this may be the best approach for everyone.”

Piccini’s professor and 8.02 instructor John W. Belcher, however, said that the TEAL version has proven to be a significant improvement over the standard lecture format.

“Students through the TEAL version have performed statistically better,” Belcher said. “The program is still in its evolutionary stage, but much is continuously being done to improve the structure of the course.”

Many students have complained that the TEAL version has proven to be a significant improvement over the standard lecture format. Among the most common complaints are that the TEAL version has been more difficult to adapt to, and that it is a more active learning environment.

“The system is very flexible and different this term, soon Physics I (8.01) may be converted into TEAL as well.

The Department of Bioengineering and Biomedical Science at MIT is offering the chance to experience the benefits of a distinctive learning environment for advanced undergraduates.

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Weeds that continue to be an important issue in selecting "First and foremost, it is about race," he said. "Minority students tend to be over-represented in lower socioeconomic levels," so race and socioeconomic status are not easily separable, Reid said.

MITES will be open to whites and Asians, in addition to blacks, Native Americans, and Hispanics, but the program will target minorities and use race as a selection criteria, Reid said.

"I'm looking for students who will benefit the most ... and we hope that large numbers of those will be underrepresented minorities," Reid said.

Diversity a contentious issue

Reid, and others at MIT, believe that encouraging minority students to pursue science and engineering is an important goal, and a core question in the Grutter case is whether achieving a diverse student population is a compelling state interest.

Clegg said that diversity is not a compelling interest. "I don’t think a desire for diversity justifies a separate admissions system," Clegg said.

It is unclear what impact a decision in Grutter would have. Clegg said that if the decision affects