Unified Proposal for the MIT Residence System

***Presented by*:**

Strategic Advisory Committee to the Chancellor

In collaboration with:
Undergraduate Association
Graduate Student Council
Dormitory Council
Interfraternity Council
and the MIT Community

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We dedicate our work to the memory of
Laverne Kelly, mother of SAC member Shawn Kelly.

1. Introduction

The Unified Proposal for an MIT Residence System is a comprehensive and systemic design. We believe it addresses the interests and concerns of all relevant stakeholders: future MIT students, the parents of undergraduates, Fraternities, Sororities, Independent Living Groups, Theme Houses, Residence Halls, graduate students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

The Strategic Advisory Committee to the Chancellor and the united student governments of MIT: the Undergraduate Association, the Dormitory Council, the Interfraternity Council, and the Graduate Student Council composed and submit this proposal to Lawrence Bacow, the Chancellor of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. We recommend that the Chancellor adopt this proposal as the blueprint for the future of MIT's residence system. Moreover, we believe this proposal demonstrates that students can be involved in all levels of planning related to student life issues, and can reconcile diverse interests through integrative design and negotiation.

1.1 Motivation

The Strategic Advisory Committee to the Chancellor (SAC) was created by the Chancellor in Fall 1998 as a continuation of the Student Advisory Group to the Task Force on Student Life and Learning. The purpose of the SAC is to provide student views and proposals to the Chancellor on an Institute-wide scope. The residence system is a natural area of concern for the committee, both because of its importance to the students of MIT and because the Chancellor will be making important decisions regarding its future.

The student governments have paid close attention to the future of the residence system since the announcement by President Charles M. Vest in Fall 1998 that all freshmen would be required to live in residence halls in Fall 2001. The Residence System Steering Committee (RSSC) was charged by the Chancellor to design and submit a proposal for the residence system and will do so in October 1999. The membership of the RSSC was drawn from the undergraduates, faculty, alumni, and staff of MIT. We applaud the Chancellor's commitment to community-based decision making and the countless hours of work the members of the RSSC devoted to creating their final proposal.

When the RSSC released a first draft of their proposal in April 1999, the student governments produced the Unified Student Response to the Phase II Status Report (USR). The USR included a section on the key values for the MIT residence system and responded to a number of the recommendations of the RSSC, but was not a comprehensive proposal for the residence system. The Final Report of the Residence System Steering Committee, released in September 1999, was significantly different from the Phase II Status Report, and some of the changes made to the Final Report were recommended by the USR.

Following the release of the RSSC's Final Report, the Student Advisory Committee to the Chancellor and the student governments (especially those students who had worked on the USR) jointly met, and decided to sponsor a community-based process to develop a substitute proposal for a residence system. Our motivations for doing so were as follows:

We believe that the residence system proposal adopted by MIT must include a comprehensive study of all major facets of the residence system. The MIT residence system is very complex and we believe that a broad approach is crucial to design success. Consequently, this proposal addresses issues ranging from programming to capital expenses to management and governance, and considers related student life issues that need to be evaluated further. The RSSC Final Report's scope is quite limited; most policy recommendations are limited to residence selection procedures.

The recommendations in this proposal do differ from those in the RSSC Final Report. We have substantial evidence to justify our disagreements with the report.

A key requirement for the RSSC was to build a "consensus for change" in developing a new residence system. Many of the project members have attended the feedback sessions sponsored by the RSSC, interviewed faculty, staff and alumni about the Final Report, and have been monitoring a number of e-mail lists devoted to student life issues. We conclude, unfortunately, that the RSSC Final Report has not built the needed consensus.

We believe that our experience, expertise, and perspective, enhanced by the work of the Clay Committee, the Task Force on Student Life and Learning, the Lewis Commission, the office of Residence Life and Student Life Programming, and the Residence System Steering Committee could produce an excellent system and we believe we have done so.

1.2 Methodology

The Unified Proposal for an MIT Residence System was announced to the public on September 14, 1999. The committee actively advertised its efforts to the community at large through both paper and electronic publicity campaigns, and was featured prominently in campus media.

Unique among similar efforts to date, the process used by the committee has been completely open and public—notes from all meetings were posted on the web for public perusal and comment. We have received invaluable contributions to the content of the report as a result of the process's transparency.

The text of the report was written primarily by student members of the committee. However, we solicited and received comments from faculty, staff, and alumni, and these comments have been significant recommendations to this report.

In developing the report, we used as our basis those documents identified by the Institute as providing overall guidelines for the residence system. These reports include, but were not limited to, the report of the Task Force on Student Life and Learning, the Institute Dining Review, Principles for an MIT Residential System ("Clay Committee"), the Phase II Status Report and the Final Report of the RSSC, and the various proposals submitted to the RSSC as part of the January 1999 Residence System Design Contest.

The committee would have preferred to begin designing the residence system by a community-based needs analysis, followed by several iterations of community feedback, proposals, and amendments. Unfortunately, we were unable to do so due to time restrictions. Nonetheless, we are confident that the proposal is based upon the needs of the community. In addition to using the reports listed above, many project members attended RSSC community sessions, and had detailed notes of those sessions. Consequently, we have been able to use the RSSC's community input as a (limited) facsimile for our own input. The project group has been open to the community, and involves many community members who have been most involved with residence system issues, including several student government presidents. Further, the transparency of the process has allowed the committee to receive vital input as the proposal has been developed.

Through this process, we now sense a growing consensus among the MIT community of what the new residence system should be. Perhaps because of this common direction, we found it relatively easy to integrate the several separate sections drafted by internal task forces. We are encouraged that, to date, community members have responded to our calls for review and feedback by providing positive comments on our effort, and providing recommendations that have helped us build a better system. As a result, this document represents the consensus of all members of the Strategic Advisory Committee to the Chancellor.

1.3 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Study

1.3.1 Requiring Freshmen to Live in Residence Halls

The committee hoped to have the ability to design what would be a globally-optimal residence system. Unfortunately, we are limited from doing so by the rigid constraint that freshmen not be allowed to live in independent living groups.

It may well be that the optimal residence system does feature freshmen living only in residence halls. However, we cannot make that statement for certain, because we did not consider any options that had freshmen living in ILGs.

1.3.2 Graduate Student Housing

The committee recognizes that this report is heavily dominated by undergraduate housing issues. As much as possible, we have tried to include graduate housing issues as referenced in existing material. Many of the community involvement programs discussed in Section 4 apply to graduate students just as they do to undergraduate students. Further, in Section 3, Capital Expenditures, we call for the construction of two new graduate residence halls. For more information on graduate student housing issues, see Section 9 of this proposal.

Nonetheless, graduate housing still must be explored in depth. We recommend that a separate community-based process expand this proposal to address fully the needs of graduate students. This process must include a detailed needs assessment; to date such an assessment has not been done.
In general, information on graduate student housing needs is much sparser than information on undergraduate needs.

Despite this recommendation, we are adamant that the estimated $100 million for graduate student housing called for in Section 5 be allocated on schedule. As discussed in Section 5, the need for new graduate student housing is clear and pressing.

1.3.3 Other Aspects of Student Life

The committee recognizes that the residence system is but one part of the entire academic community of MIT, and of a student's educational experience. Through the course of our research, we have identified other areas that should receive the same thorough review and redesign as the residence system. The results of those redesigns would work in concert with an excellent residence system to provide a top-notch total education for MIT's students.

Faculty and Staff Involvement in the Community. We recommend a focus on finding what programs have involved faculty and staff successfully. We also suggest studying which motivations are likely to encourage faculty and staff involvement.

Community Issues Outside the Residence System. Major topics identified by the community for review include support for athletics, classroom renovations, student and community activities, and the development of community spaces in the academic buildings.

Academic Issues. We suggest that MIT pay careful attention to areas highlighted in student surveys as having a large gap between importance and satisfaction. These areas include development of self-esteem, quality of instruction (especially first year subjects), quality of advising, and development of professional skills such as communications skills, teamwork, leadership, and creativity.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 Objectives of the Residence System

We recognize three major objectives of the residential system.

House. On the most fundamental level, MIT must provide housing for its students. This housing must be safe, clean, and affordable.

Home. The residence system must support its students psychologically. Students must be able to find the close friendships that will support them during their stay at the Institute and beyond. On a larger scale, they must find residential communities that support their well being.

Community. We support the recommendations of the Task Force and the Clay Committee in that the residence system needs to be a pillar in MIT's efforts to encourage community interaction and provide informal but invaluable educational experiences.

2.2 Community Interaction and Student Support

1. Faculty and staff must recognize the value of participating in the residence system, and ensure that students have enough time to do so. The faculty must rigorously enforce existing academic regulations, and departments should carefully consider the content and instruction quality of their subjects.

2. The recommendations of the Institute Dining Review should be implemented and fully funded.

3. The Faculty fellows program should be greatly expanded. $25,000 per year should be devoted to faculty-student activities.

4. Living groups should be responsible for at least one community-wide event per year, which would be funded by MIT.

5. A "Student Development Program" should provide instruction and internships in leadership, communications, and management skills. The program would also find internships for students wishing to build leadership skills.

6. MIT should support the creation of an informal network of peer advisors throughout the living groups.

7. Graduate Residents should receive substantial peer counseling and conflict-resolution training.

8. MIT should provide a variety of rewards and recognition for people participating in the residence system, including publicity in Technology Review.

9. As part of the tenure process, junior faculty should be able to submit recommendations testifying to their contributions to student life.

2.3 Capital Expenditures

We recommend completion of the following capital projects beyond those currently given in MIT's Capital Plan. These projects are staggered in three stages.

2.3.1 To be completed (or have funding earmarked) by the summer of 2001.

Renovations to reopen dining halls and create new community space: $15 MM

Funds to renovate FSILGs and buy or rent bed spaces from FSILGs: $30 MM

Near-term renovations to Stratton Center and Walker Memorial: $5.5 MM

Total for Phase I: $50.5 MM

2.3.2 To be completed by the summer of 2004.

500-bed graduate dormitory: $50 MM

400-bed undergraduate / flexible dormitory: $40 MM

Housing Renewal and Renovation Plan, Phase 2: $6 MM

Renovations to East Campus: $25.5 MM

Renovations to Stratton Center: $2 MM

Total for Phase II: $123.5 MM

2.3.3 To be completed by the summer of 2009.

Second 500-bed graduate dormitory: $50 MM

Housing Renewal and Renovation Plan, Phase 3: $18.5MM

Walker Memorial Renovations: $31 MM

Total for Phase II: $99.5 MM

Total, all phases: $273.5 MM

2.4 Governance and Management

We propose several new programs and policies that will help bring about successful oversight of the residential system.

The MIT senior administration, ODSUE, student governments, faculty committees, and housemasters should jointly hold a conference in Spring 2000. This conference should: (1) assign the responsibilities for oversight and management of the residential system to the conference parties, and (2) define how the parties shall communicate with each other on pending issues and resolve disputes.

A Student Life Council should be responsible for strategic planning for the student life system, monitoring student quality of life issues, and supervising community-wide programming. The Council would include six students, four faculty, and four administrators, including the Deans for Student Life and Undergraduate Education.

The Student Life Council should be responsible for monitoring the state of the residence system, and run annual surveys, focus groups, and facilities inspections to do so.

All senior administrators responsible for the welfare of the student life system should be eligible to receive a bonus based on the status of the student life system, and achievement of system goals The bonus regularly achievable would be 10-15% of the administrator’s base salary, with greater bonuses being awarded for exceptional performance. Bonuses would be decided by committees established by the MIT Corporation.

Student life decision-making should be done in accordance with modern project and process management techniques.

2.5 Orientation and Residence Selection

We believe that these recommendations would best foster the goals of providing a supportive home for freshmen as well as providing for community interaction.

2.5.1 Residence Hall Selection

Freshmen should receive information about residence halls over the summer, and would pre-select a residence hall or theme house.

During orientation, time should be set aside for freshmen to tour the residence halls. Freshmen would then confirm their summer choice of residence, or enter a lottery with a new ranking of residence halls. In this new lottery, up to four freshmen may staple their choices together.

Following this second lottery, dormitories should do internal rooming assignments by a mechanism determined by the dormitory governments and approved by the Student Life Council. During rooming assignments, entries and suites may request that particular freshmen to live with them, but may not prevent a freshman from living with them. Information about which freshmen have received positive requests shall be confidential.

2.5.2 Orientation

Freshmen should not be required to pay additional fees to participate in Pre-Orientation programs.

We recommend a variety of new activities during Orientation (see report for details). Primary among these are a Carnival, explorations of Boston, a joint picnic with other colleges, and sessions that will discuss student resources that every incoming student should know about. We also recommend that Parents' Weekend be moved to the start of Orientation.

2.5.3 Theme Houses

A limited number of theme houses would be a valuable addition to the MIT community. However, new houses must contribute to the diversity of the system, and must reinforce MIT's educational mission.

Houses should be given a choice of two options for recruiting new members. Houses may recruit rising sophomores, much as independent living groups do. Alternately, houses may require incoming freshmen to meet with a house leader and sign a form committing them to the house duties required for active membership.

2.5.4 Recruitment and Selection for Independent Living Groups

The Interfraternity Council, in consultation with the Residential Life Office and the Student Life Council, should set guidelines for the new member recruitment and selection process.

The Institute should make every effort to encourage freshmen to consider their upper-class housing options and to facilitate and support that process.

2.5.5 Fall and Spring Residence Lotteries

MIT should actively support voluntary moves within the residence system for all residents, not just sophomores. Any undergraduate should be able to request a move quickly and easily.

A dormitory lottery should be held in November of the fall term and March of the spring term. These lotteries should be mandatory for all dormitory residents, with one option being the guaranteed confirmation of their current residence.

2.5.6 Housing Guarantee

Housing must be guaranteed for four years to all undergraduates. In the event of short-term population distortions due to the evolution of the FSILG system and dormitory lotteries, we recommend the following measures be taken (in order of preference):

1. Provide incentives for students to move to residences that are underutilized, including FSILGs.

2. Crowd existing dormitory space and spread such crowding as evenly as possible between residence halls.

3. Rent non-residence hall space for undergraduates.

2.5.7 Support for Independent Living Groups

Starting in June 2001, MIT should transfer funds to each FSILG equal to 35% of total house capacity times the standard housebill. This subsidy should decline to zero over five to seven years.

Independent houses that are in particular financial trouble may apply for special funding.

MIT should support any single-sex fraternity that wishes to become coeducational. This support may include the purchase of the current chapter house from the fraternity's national organization.

FSILGs should have the option of being listed as graduate housing options in MIT's publications for graduate students.

MIT should provide logistical support to FSILGs that wish to move closer to campus.

2.5.8 Special Notes

Requiring freshmen to live in residence halls. The Committee makes no claims about the desirability of having freshmen living on campus. We did not consider any options that had freshmen living in ILGs.

Graduate students. The Committee recommends that a separate community-based committee redesign the graduate housing system. However, we are adamant that the $100 million-plus in capital for graduate student housing be provided on schedule.

3. Fundamental Objectives of the MIT Residence System

3.1 Why Have These Objectives Been Created?

The MIT residence system evolved. When MIT was founded, students came from the Boston area and commuted to school. A residence system was never planned, nor was it formally established; it was simply the result of different fraternities and other independent MIT-related residences being established in the Boston area, followed by the move of the Institute itself and the subsequent addition of MIT-owned residences. The growth of the system was due to the establishment of individual buildings, while the system itself was never established with specific objectives in mind. We believe that when a new residence system is established, it should be established based on some fundamental objectives so that it can evolve with specific goals in mind.

We believe that there are three fundamental objectives that should describe the purpose of the MIT residence system. The objectives are based on what we believe are the most important resources provided by the current residence system as well as what we believe are the most important resources lacking in the current residence system. They are also philosophical and subjective, and so might lead to different conclusions under different circumstances. We have given each of these objectives a one-word description, and in the following section we describe the philosophy underlying each objectives and give some examples of the more specific goals which we believe to be directly implied from each objective.

3.2 What are the Objectives?

3.2.1 House

Philosophy: The first, and perhaps most easily overlooked, fundamental objective of the residence system is to provide students with housing. This includes the basic requirements of a particular place to live, along with the space to sleep, to store and use personal effects, to read, to work, and even to entertain guests. Housing provides students with personal space, which, however small, is necessary for emotional well-being. Essentially, all aspects of a student's physical survival and comfort are described by this objective. Though this is a very simple objective, it is a very important one. If there is not adequate housing for students at MIT, it makes the MIT residence system that much weaker. The very existence of the system depends on its ability to provide all students with a place to live.

Implied Goals: The major implied goal to be taken from this fundamental objective is that the MIT residence system should house as much of its student population as possible. It is clear to us that if the MIT housing system housed fewer students than it could, it would be a step backwards toward the days when MIT had no residence system at all. The system would become even less valuable than it is now. One must keep in mind that the guarantee of four years of housing for undergraduates is one of the strongest aspects of the residence system as it currently exists. Another implied goal derived directly from this is that if the current amount of housing is inadequate to house the student population, MIT should take measures to ensure that it becomes so.

Educational Mission: Housing provides a necessary foundation for university education. Shelter allows students to concentrate on their studies, knowing that their basic needs are fulfilled. The experience of living in university-affiliated shelter also powerfully reinforces the role of the university as a self-contained community within its surrounding city. The physical design of housing, and the resolution of issues such as access to housing, contribute to and mold this community. Housing, then, is more than just a roof: it is a foundation for community and an educational tool with far-reaching effects.

3.2.2 Home

Philosophy: The second fundamental objective of the residence system is to provide students with a home. Though this objective is not necessarily a unique feature of the MIT residence system, we believe it is an especially important objective at MIT for multiple reasons. One is that a very large portion of the student population of MIT comes from outside the area, many even coming from other countries. With so many students moving very far away from home, often with little chance of their being able to travel back on a regular basis, it is important for students to establish a "second home" at MIT, as opposed to just "temporary accommodations". Therefore a student's living environment must be as comfortable and welcoming as possible. Another reason is that MIT is very academically challenging, and when things get stressful for a student it is important for the student to receive personal support. We believe that the best immediate support a student can get is from those who live nearby, and therefore a friendly relationship with one's living community can be necessary to a student's surviving the academic rigor of the Institute. Support could come in the form of volunteer tutoring (which at MIT can be just as common and useful as organized tutoring), or even just in the form of a friend to talk to or a group of people in which one feels welcome. A friendly living environment, which is what we believe describes a "home," is one of the most treasured aspects of the MIT housing system as it now stands.

Implied Goals: One goal implied by this objective is that students should be able to exercise some choice in where they live. Different students may have different needs with regard to their living environments, and it is therefore possible that students may feel more comfortable in one living environment than another, or that a particular student might not feel comfortable at all in a particular living environment. The objective of providing a home implies that a student's comfort should be maximized, and so not only is it important for students to have a wide range of options from which to choose, it is also important that students know as much as possible about each of their options before making their decisions. Another goal is the proper maintenance of current and future facilities. A dangerous or decaying infrastructure is not very supportive of student needs.

Educational Mission: The educational mission of the home is to provide students with a base of support, and with the opportunity to contribute to that base of support for the benefit of themselves and others. There is perhaps no life experience more nourishing and energizing than a happy, stable home life; and there is perhaps no experience more draining and stultifying than a troubled, chaotic home life. For this reason, a refreshing, supportive home life is a basic necessity for students at MIT, and, as noted above, the current system provides it remarkably well. The educational role of the home, then, emerges as an opportunity for students to contribute to and build the refreshing and nourishing aspects of their life at home—and to work out the conflicts that do arise between friends who live together—starting from a foundation that is supportive enough and stable enough to satisfy students' basic need for support and thereby make the home a place to which they will want to buy in and contribute.

3.2.3 Community

Philosophy: The Presidential Task Force on Student Life and Learning establishes the following working definition of "community":[1]

> "Community" refers to students, faculty, staff, and alumni who have come together on campus for the common purpose of developing the qualities that define the educated individual…informal personal interaction can be considered the life of the "community": student activities, casual social get-togethers, cultural events, and daily encounters with friends and colleagues are a few general categories of such interaction.

Looking at the social dynamics of Institute from afar, it seems clear that the greater "MIT community" is made up of a wide diversity of smaller communities—everything from living groups to academic departments, from laboratory teams to student activities. The informal action described by the Task Force occurs both within these group boundaries, and in a cross-group fashion. The overlapping membership and activities of these groups contributes to inter-community interaction, but many times this intermingling is weak, and it is usually unplanned.

Implied Goals: In general, the goal of residence system reform, with respect to community, is to increase interaction among students, faculty, staff, administration, and alumni, both intra- and inter-category. But

[1] *Report of the Presidential Task Force on Student Life and Learning*, p. 33.

not just any interaction will do. In the words of the Task Force, the purpose of "professional, recreational, and social interaction" is to "build a culture of discovery and learning that distinguishes MIT from other universities." Given the structure of MIT's social patchwork, two distinct sub-goals become obvious. One is to improve the strength of the "community-in-the-large" through campus-wide events and programs. The other is to intentionally encourage mixing and overlap between existing "communities-in-the-small" in ways which preserve the valuable intra-group interactions those communities foster.

Educational Mission: The Task Force further states:[2]

> If the goal of an MIT education is to develop the elements of reason, knowledge, and wisdom that characterize the educated individual, MIT cannot rely on structured learning alone. In the past, MIT has drawn upon the research university model of Von Humboldt, who proposed educating students by exploiting the informal interaction between research and academic study. In the future, the third element of the triad—community—will play a larger educational role.

The educational mission of community can be summarized as "citizenship education." Learning to be an effective citizen implies a wide range of skills: leadership, conflict resolution, sensitivity to cultural and intellectual diversity, teamwork, cooperation, and consensus-building, initiative, constructive negotiation, responsibility and accountability, the ability to think critically about social issues, and the skill of knowing when and where to use these other skills—all of these are important components of an MIT education. They are also increasingly necessary: students and employers have clearly expressed that they want them. Some of these elements might be provided by the residence system, either through planned activities, or through the experiences students have which are facilitated by the nature of the physical and social structures they inhabit. Note that not all of the goals encapsulated by the broadly defined "third pillar" of the educational triad might be accomplished in the residence and dining systems alone. Student activities, athletics, academic societies, campus-wide programming, and supportive academic and research experiences also have strong roles to play in this area.

3.3 What Makes These Objectives Valuable to MIT?

We have explained how these fundamental objectives are important to MIT students, and thus should be considered important to MIT. But the Institute should also recognize the educational value in having a residence system founded on these objectives. First, the objective of providing housing has educational value by allowing students to live close to where they study, making education more accessible to students, as well as by saving students from the worry of having to live on their own, a worry which might force students to spend more of their time concentrating on things other that their education. There is educational value in having a roof over one's head. A home also has educational value, not only by providing the support students need to survive a rigorous academic discipline but also by allowing people the opportunity to learn from each other. The educational value of a community similarly lies in the tendency of a wide range of students, faculty, and others from all corners of MIT to interact and learn from each other. True education, as stated before, is not only to be found in books; it is to be found in life. The educational value of a residence system can make it a very important asset to a University.

3.4 How do These Objectives Interact With Each Other?

When thinking of these objectives as a set, it is important to recognize several things about them. First, they are mutually supportive in many respects. Without adequate housing, it would be impossible for students to create the kinds of homes they would need. Also, if there are no students living "at MIT" (in dorms or FSILGs), there can be no such thing as an MIT community. In the other direction, the benefits of an MIT community would emphasize the need for housing, as it has pushed for the construction of a new dormitory. Also the strength and support of a home would support the call for new facilities and

[2] Ibid., p. 33.

improvements to the physical aspects of housing, as is the case when dormitories lobby for weight rooms and dining halls and FSILGs install such facilities themselves.

There are ways in which the three objectives can be mutually exclusive. For instance, one might conclude that to support the house objective it would make sense to build bigger dormitories. On the other hand, larger buildings might reduce the closeness of students within a living environment and detract from the home objective. One of the most important conflicts tends to be that between home and community. Promoting interaction among different living groups becomes difficult if students rely on constant interaction within their own living groups. Also, when faculty members interact with students within their living groups, it can be seen by some as the academic part of the Institute encroaching on the "sanctuary" of a student's home. However, since we recognize the equal importance of home and community, we cannot simply say that the preservation of one objective demands the rejection of the other. Our goal in this situation is to strike a balance between the two, and to provide that the promotion of one objective does not go so far as to undermine the importance of another.

There also are certain mechanisms that tend to support all three objectives. For instance, common dining space provides students with physical sustenance (which is related to the "house" function), provides living environments with space in which to meet and socialize, and a place for members of the larger community to come together. In a different way, FSILGs also support all three objectives by providing additional rooms to the system, providing close living environments in which students to receive support, and broadening the MIT community as a whole. Thus the three objectives are very closely related and can sometimes be treated as one.

However, there are also mechanisms that have somewhat mixed effects on the three goals. Crowding is an especially enigmatic mechanism. On one hand, it provides more places for students to live, thus promoting the house objective. But it also decreases each student's personal space, seemingly detracting from the house objective. From a different perspective, one might think that crowding makes students less comfortable, thus detracting from the home objective. Alternatively one might think that it creates closer relationships between students by forcing them to live closer to each other, thus supporting the home objective. So the effect of mechanisms in meeting objectives are not always clear-cut, and sometimes one must weigh the benefits and costs of a mechanism to decide to what degree it should be implemented. In the case of crowding, one cannot simply say it is bad and discard it nor can one say it is good and implement it universally, one must try to find the way it can benefit the objectives of the system the most while detracting from them as little as possible.

3.5 How do the Objectives Relate to the Design?

These objectives have been set forth as a means of evaluating the mechanisms proposed in the following design and of recognizing the benefits and problems they might create for the residence system. Most any idea that might be implemented within the system can be thought of in terms of how it influences house, home and community. The ultimate goal of this design is to maximize the achievement of all three goals together while maintaining a level of balance among them, that is not allowing one objective to become overemphasized at any great cost of another. Mechanisms that equally support one or more of the objectives are ideal. However, in areas where trade-offs must be made between certain objectives, we have tried to figure out how to provide the optimal balance among the three.

We recognize that in the real world there is no way of telling whether a proposed system is "perfect". However, we believe that these objectives can be used as a guideline in comparing different concepts of how the residence system should function. Therefore they might be used to decide whether one of two or more options is best. So one should always have these primary objectives in mind when evaluating the mechanisms given in the design and should use them as a way of understanding their purpose.

4. Community Interaction and Student Support

The current residential system fosters strong communities within the individual living groups. These communities provide a preliminary structure for campus-wide interaction and a strong base of support for students. An ideal residence system—house, home, and community—ensures student happiness, thus supporting academic success. To this end, the system must contain both formal and informal advising and mentoring. The residence system also must encourage interaction between all members of the MIT community, including undergraduate and graduate students, alumni, faculty, and staff. Interactions of this sort, while sometimes spontaneous in nature, often require an additional degree of organizational support. The idea is not to force interactions within and between communities, but to break down the barriers that may prevent these interactions and increase the total number of possibilities.

4.1 Faculty-student Interaction

Many documents have established the need for a stronger commitment to faculty-student interaction. In particular, the Task Force noted, "Collaboration among students and interaction with faculty, whether they take place in formal or informal settings, are the distinguishing qualities of the academics, research, and community activities that take place at a campus-based university."[3] MIT students are surrounded by some of the world's most prestigious and enthusiastic professors, yet some students have never spoken personally with a member of the faculty. In turn, the faculty wonder why they are so distant from the students whom they see each day in class, but who rarely approach them with questions. Currently, MIT has implemented a few programs to improve the situation, but more and better support is needed. The House Fellows program has brought a handful of faculty in contact with undergraduate residential life; the housemasters of dormitories provide another handful of involved faculty. However, both of these programs are undersupported by the administration.

4.1.1. Recognition of the Value of the Residence System

The basis of faculty-student interaction within the residence system must be a general understanding that participating in the residence system (and other student life activities) is a valued activity and part of MIT's educational mission, and that the community should explicitly make time to do so.

This understanding implies that faculty and staff must ensure that students have enough time to participate in the residence system. Consequently, the Faculty must rigorously enforce existing academic regulations, and departments should carefully consider the content and instruction quality of their subjects to ensure that students are not doing work that requires substantial time for little intellectual gain.

Similarly, faculty and staff should not be penalized for spending time on student interaction, but should be encouraged to do so. Indeed, MIT should consider contributions to student life in the tenure process for junior faculty; participants in programs should be able to submit recommendations testifying to their commitment in this area.

4.1.2 House Fellows

The House Fellow program needs to provide incentives and means for faculty to get involved. The program coordinator for residence life should work hand in hand with students to seek appropriate house fellows for the individual cultures of each residence. Faculty who volunteer for this program should be compensated in a manner similar to freshman advisors; that is, they should receive on the order of $1500 in research grants. Ideally, the number of house fellows should be approximately the same as the number of GRTs in the dorms and FSILGs. The administration must provide more financial support for programs and events sponsored by the house fellows, to allow increased participation more significant programming. Programs should range from practical to cultural and from social to intellectual. Faculty could arrange trips to Red

[3] *Report of the Presidential Task Force on Student Life and Learning*, p. 18-19.

Sox games, the Boston Pops, hikes or service days, or conduct study breaks or other house activities, like installing a hammock.

4.1.3 Housemasters

Currently, Housemasters have severe constraints on their schedule, including teaching, research, and family. To facilitate residential programming and faculty-student interaction, the administration should provide staff support for housemasters. These support staff would assist faculty in the day-to-day dealings of the residence, and in planning student events for the residence, leaving the faculty with more time to interact with students. This support should be in the form of one half-time assistant for each housemaster. This would require seven full-time or fourteen half-time staff members, at an estimated cost of $250,000 in annual salary.

The current event funding level for housemasters is inadequate. Housemasters currently must share one small pot of money with their GRTs. This situation is not acceptable. GRTs require a separate allocation, and Housemasters should have event funds increased.

4.1.4 Additional Programs

The Subcommittee on Residential Programming of the Student Life Council should be responsible for events and programs to encourage student-faculty interaction. By sponsoring events and facilitating student-run events, the subcommittee can generate interaction between students and faculty inside and outside of the residences. Promising events include student-faculty gatherings in the Bush Room, dinners or study breaks with faculty at living groups, and family-friendly events such as carnivals or picnics. The Subcommittee should have a budget of $50,000 per year for such event grants.

4.1.5 Alumni Interaction

Alumni/ae are one of the most valuable yet often overlooked community group at MIT. They combine the wisdom of age and experience with an intimate knowledge of the MIT experience. Incorporating the larger body of alumni into the MIT community will benefit both alumni and students.

Alumni interaction can be accomplished in many ways. The same programs described for faculty would also be effective for alumni, especially those alumni residing in the greater Boston area.

We especially encourage a further rollout of the student-alumni advising program. This program, piloted with European students and alumni, matched students one-on-one with alumni who shared a common academic/professional interest in a similar geographic location. This program should include all students, beginning with the first year.

If treated in these ways, alumni would be utilized as more than potential donors, but rather as important contributors to the MIT community. This recognition may in the end be cause for alumni to be more active donors.

4.1.6 Central Staff Support

The goals and programs outlined in this section will require significant centralized staff support. The current residence life office is already extremely overworked and will not be sufficient to staff the new system. The Student Life Council, in consultation with current residence life staff, should determine appropriate staffing roles and levels.

4.2 Student Support and Development

4.2.1 The Impact of Academics

Much has recently been made of the emergence of the residential communities as a haven of sorts from the harshness of MIT. Many community members believe that this "sanctuary" dynamic of the residences works against the development of Institute-wide community. We agree. However, in the rush to place blame for this dynamic, we believe the residential system has been unfairly accused. We agree that there is at least something of a "fortress mentality" in the residence halls, expressed most often in the form of a vehement and near-unanimous opposition to the idea of academic classes encroaching into the residences. However, we believe that this "fortress" feeling is an effect rather than a cause of the problem.

We believe that the "freshman malaise" (as the familiar first-year loss of enthusiasm has come to be called) is primarily due to the quality and quantity of academic work during the freshman year. Indeed, not much has changed about the freshman year since the 1994 Freshman and Senior Surveys. Forty-three percent of freshmen did not enjoy first-year core classes.[4] When first-year students, bright with ideas and the spirit of innovation, are forced to spend their first year drudging away at uninteresting problem sets, memorizing material that they know they will not need in the future, cramming for exams that are meaningless and dry, is it any wonder that they turn to the home for refuge? Add to this the Physics Department's questionable practice of failing a significant percentage of students taking 8.01, and the Writing Requirement's policy of giving five-sixths of the freshman class a taste of failure (in the Freshman Essay Evaluation) as soon as they arrive, and you have a much more plausible candidate for the cause of the "freshman malaise" than any story about poor advising by upperclassmen.

Moreover, we do not believe that this "fortress" mentality is particularly self-perpetuating. In contrast to some who have recently argued that the advice of upperclassmen—an entrenched factor—is to blame for freshman cynicism, we believe that upperclass advice amounts to commiseration rather than corruption. The freshmen are already disappointed with MIT by the time they go to upperclassmen to complain. If the cause for this disappointment were removed, so, we believe, would be the commiseration dynamic. The fact is that most students are deeply disappointed with MIT's first-year academic offerings. If their love for learning erodes during freshman year, we, as students, submit that this disappointment is why.

4.2.2 Peer Advising and Support

MIT is a stressful and difficult place to live, and the emotional well-being of students is crucial to their academic success. Currently, the residence system provides informal mentoring and support by upperclass students in living groups. While this support is one of the successes of the current residence system, the system could benefit from a more established framework. MIT should support the development of an informal peer support network throughout the living groups (both graduate and undergraduate residences). This network would comprise students trained in each of the following areas: MedLinks, Student Resource Serivce, Mediation, RCC, Associate Advising, Judicial Committee, Nightline counseling, and other students with valuable knowledge of support skills. The network would help provide publicity and training to its members, support peer advising and support events, and compile a database of members that would be made available to all students.

One of the recent recommendations in this area has been to create undergraduate Residence Advisors. While we support the desire to improve student life, we disagree with the creation of an undergraduate RA program for the following reasons:

- *Social stratification*. An awkward social dynamic may emerge from placing undergraduates in positions of responsibility over their peers. This dynamic occurs at other institutions which use undergraduate residential advisors, where RA policing of rules divides the community.

[4] *Survey on the Freshman Year*, 1994-5 and 1995-6.

- *Numbers*. Implementing an undergraduate RA network of one for every ten undergraduates requires 400 students who will devote some amount of their time to the RA program. RA program requirements will limit the other activities in which these 400 RAs may participate, and deplete the leadership of student activities.
- *Liability*. The issue of liability when an accident occurs under the watch of an undergraduate RA is a difficult one. MIT should not hold undergraduate RAs liable in cases where one of their advisees engages in inappropriate behavior.
- *Informal counseling*. As stated, the residence system naturally maintains a network of informal peer advising and counseling. Improvements should build upon the existing network.
- *Training*. Sufficient training of 400 undergraduate RAs would be a substantial enterprise. The training would have to be more substantial than the current GRT training.

4.2.3 GRTs

The few days of training given to GRTs is inadequate, and should be augmented with substantial training in peer counseling and conflict resolution. GRTs also should receive training in programming within the living group, as well as a substantial increase in funding for programs. Some GRTs have been forced to plan events with as little as $50 per term for a floor of sixty students, or $0.83 per student per term.

In addition to their current student support role within the living groups, the GRTs and FSILG resident advisors should plan and implement residence-wide and campus-wide events. Each tutor should be responsible for one dorm-wide social or educational event per term. In addition, the tutors of each dorm should collectively be responsible for one campus-wide event, held outside of the residence hall. RLSLP will provide appropriate funds for GRT events.

4.2.4 Resident-Directed Programming

Residence hall programming seems to have been generally successful, though the results of a recent Planning Office survey of Housemasters neatly summarizes a number of areas that could use improvement.[5] We would like to underscore the need to provide highly customized programming to each residence hall, based on the needs and wants of the residents. Once again, additional funding and administrative support are also required, especially for those programs which successfully engage the participants of residents and other members of the MIT community.

4.2.5 Professional Development

The need for leadership and professional development programs has been much discussed at the Institute, from sources ranging from Institute efforts to look at leadership development to requests from companies seeking students with superior managerial skills. Consequently, MIT should support a 'Student Development Program' (SDP) which help students develop non-classwork competencies that will serve the student well in future career positions. This program will provide instruction in the following areas: teamwork, communications skills, leadership, service, self-management, and inter-personal relationships. Particular classes and experiences would be developed and controlled by individuals and groups, with MIT providing funding and coordination. Participation should be voluntary, but should be well-integrated into the residential (and academic) experience.

As part of the SDP, students should have the opportunity to participate in internships that build SDP competencies such as leadership. MIT, through RLSLP and OCSPA, should actively create, and solicit for the creation of, these internships. RLSLP and OCSPA would publicize their existence and coordinate hiring, and sponsor concurrent seminars that would allow participants to share their experiences and trade suggestions.

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[5] "Residence Hall Programming: Summary of Responses to Housemaster Query." Draft, July 13, 1998. Available at http://web.mit.edu/residence/systemdesign/residence_hall.html.

4.3 Community Events

Building community requires interaction between individuals in a social setting. In the ideal case, faculty, staff, alumni, undergraduate and graduate students, would spontaneously plan lunches and outings in order to better understand one another and develop a strong sense of community. In reality, opportunities and incentives are required. Specific events designed for the entire community will provide opportunities to talk with people previously thought inaccessible. Improvements to the dining system will allow all members of the MIT community to interact with one another over a meal in a relaxed setting. As an incentive, MIT should recognize and reward students, faculty and staff for their contributions to the development and improvement of MIT's educational community. Finally, members of the MIT community should be encouraged to use spaces designated for the community, and should have easy access to these spaces.

4.3.1 Campus-wide Events

Regular campus-wide events maintain and foster campus-wide community. To this end, living groups should be responsible for one event per year which is open to the community and held outside of the living group. These events need not be large enough to accommodate the entire community, but should be of interest to a variety of students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Various events of this sort exist currently; the new "Tuesday Nights at Baker" program, although not sponsored by Baker House itself, is an excellent example. Occasional larger events may be co-sponsored by several living groups. To facilitate planning of these events, MIT needs to reorganize its administrative structure to engender cooperation amongst the various program coordinators, including CAC, athletics, departments, living groups and RLSLP.

On a broader level, one very common solution to the problem of a weak "campus-wide community" has been to propose various campus-wide events. Some events, like the Infinite Buffet have been wildly successful (if judged by attendance) but resource-intensive.[6] Others, like concerts, debates, or traditional "school spirit" events, do not necessarily appeal to a cross-section of campus denizens. Programs meant to engage the attention of the whole MIT community should appeal to some fundamental common interest of the population of the Institute. For example, the 6.270 robotics design contest is very popular among mechanical engineering and EECS students, but the showmanship of the final contest also appeals to a much broader audience.

If the Institute is interested in facilitating faculty-student interaction, it must not merely provide a room and label it "interaction space." Instead, it must either provide a new or utilize an existing real-world motivation. For instance, an organized MIT-wide "Find a UROP Day" would almost certainly draw considerable interest, while simultaneously fostering research opportunities and communication—communication with a purpose. Careful advertising to area alumni could also bring increased participation and valuable perspective to campus-wide events. Adequate funding and support for large events is also critical to their success.

4.3.2 Dining

A crucial aspect of residential programming is a residential dining system.

> "The dining system is another setting in which community is created and sustained. Yet much of the dining system at MIT has been allowed to languish."[7]
>
> "[MIT must] support dining halls as well as personal cooking. As was noted by this Committee in the community-based planning phase of Residence2001, the two most

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[6] MIT News Office article: http://web.mit.edu/newsoffice/tt/1997/nov26/buffet.html; Tech news article: http://www-tech.mit.edu/Issue/V117/N60/infinite.60n.html; Tech column: http://www-tech.mit.edu/Issue/V117/N61/altschul.61c.html; video: http://caes.mit.edu/mvp/html/infinitebuffet.html

[7] *Task Force on Student Life and Learning,* Chapter 4.

> successful community dining programs in the current system are Baker Dining and Random Hall's floor kitchens."[8]

Designing a first-rate residential dining system required much thought and investigation. The Food Services Working Group (FSWG) conducted a very thorough investigation of the community's dining needs, concluding in its 1998 Institute Dining Review (IDR). Unfortunately, MIT has implemented only a small subset of the IDR's recommendations. MIT must make dining a central piece of its residence system. The senior administration must allocate resources to run a first-rate system (see Chapter 5, Capital Expenditures).

We endorse in full the following recommendations of the IDR.[9]

> **In general**. The campus dining system will (a) provide students with a nutritious, high quality diet in a convenient manner and at reasonable cost; (b) provide opportunities for students to meet and dine with each other and other members of the MIT community; and (c) provide opportunities for students to develop leadership and citizenship skills through their dining program.
>
> The Review recognizes the value that our unique student residence have for the student body and the MIT community. Therefore, the dining program in each residence hall should be structured in cooperation with the residents of that hall to ensure that the dining program is consistent with the hall's particular characteristics and culture.
>
> The Review recognizes that students' freedom of choice is an important aspect of the undergraduate experience at MIT that must be maintained. However, it is neither practical nor feasible to provide all dining options in all halls at all times. Therefore, a full range of residential dining options will be provided system-wide, allowing students freedom to choose a dining program that best meets their particular needs.
>
> **Management of Residential Dining**. Each residence hall will have a local oversight group. The groups will assist in developing dining programs for their respective houses. In houses centered around personal cooking, the oversight groups will arrange cooking and food purchasing programs, as well as plan catered meals and other related special events for the house. In houses with dining halls, the oversight groups will help the vendor with menu selection, relations with the house, and planning programs and events around the dining hall.
>
> **Dining Halls**. The following houses will have dining halls: Ashdown House, Baker House, Burton-Conner, MacGregor House, McCormick Hall, and Next House. Baker and Next currently have operating dining halls. McCormick's hall should be reopened by the Fall of 1999, and the hall will be a pilot program for the new dining system. MacGregor's hall should also be reopened as soon as possible. Reopening Ashdown and Burton will require substantial renovations, making these longer-term projects.
>
> Dining hall hours will be changed. In general, the halls will serve dinner seven nights a week during 2.5-3 hour time blocks, including during IAP (a few halls would be kept open during the summer, as well). However, dinner will be eliminated in Lobdell to encourage dining in the halls and through community meals. Improvements to Networks and the dining halls will satisfy the remaining need for "quick dinners."
>
> A convenience store (like the one currently operating in MacGregor) will remain open. However, the store probably will be moved to Burton-Conner, since MacGregor probably

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[8] http://web.mit.edu/buildings/residence2001/10-09_sac.html.
[9] *Institute Dining Review*.

will not have enough space to accommodate the convenience store and full kitchen facilities.

Finally, Pritchett will serve as a dining hall-like facility, providing dinner to residents of East Campus and Senior House. Pritchett is already hosting community meals for East Campus residents.

All dining halls will be open to all students. We realize that issues of security are of serious concern, but we believe that the Office of Campus Dining can work with the dining halls to establish proper security programs.

Support for Personal Cooking. Dining programs will be centered around personal cooking in the following houses: Random, Bexley, East Campus, Senior House, New House, Eastgate, Westgate, Green Hall, Edgerton, and Tang. (Ashdown and Burton will be cooking houses in the short term, as well.) These houses will provide appropriate support for individual cooking, as well as run regular community meals.

Residents in all halls will be provided with convenient and secure kitchens (including some convenience kitchens provided in houses with dining halls). MIT will provide for basic kitchen maintenance in all halls. Day-to-day cleaning tasks will be required, but will vary by house. Halls may choose to have cleaning services contracted out (the cost added to house rents), form a cleaning schedule for students to share cleaning duties, or some combination thereof. The House Managers will be charged with the enforcement of the sanitation and maintenance standards.

Meal Plans. Meal plans will be made available to the MIT community. These plans will offer packages of meals at significant savings over the regular a la carte prices.

To further relieve financial burdens on students, vendors will be required to offer low-priced "value meals." These meals will include an entree, side dishes, and a beverage. They will be full, healthy meals (not "junk food") and will cost under $5.00.

Mandatory, system-wide meal plans will not be implemented. The residents of a house certainly may require meal plans to build a house dining program, however.

4.3.3 Rewards and Recognition

> "If participation in the community is to become an integral part of the MIT experience, in accordance with the principle of the educational triad, the Institute must explore ways to recognize participation in the community appropriate to its educational role."[10]

MIT needs to provide a variety of rewards and recognition for people participating in the residence system. These awards should range from recognition of one-time efforts to sustained contributions over periods of time. One easy example would be to have a column in each issue of Tech Talk highlighting community-building accomplishments of MIT faculty, students, and staff. A more substantial example would be to give greater consideration to a faculty member's community involvement as part of the tenure, promotion and performance review process.[11]

Another substantial example would be to provide academic credit for student leadership in the community, in conjunction with a faculty member's guidance. One way to provide this credit would be to expand classes such as 17.903, Community Service: Experience and Reflection. In this class, students receive credit (units arranged) for traditional community service, in combination with related reading and writing

[10] *Task Force on Student Life & Learning*, Chapter 4.
[11] Ibid.

assignments and a seminar. The Management, Urban Studies, and Political Science department curricula would be natural homes for such a venture.

Further examples of community rewards and recognition are outlined in chapter 6, Governance and Management.

4.3.4 Easy Access to Community Facilities

Many dormitories have spaces which are intended for use by the entire MIT community—Baker Dining and MacGregor Convenience, for example. The current arrangements in many dormitories often either prevent easy and convenient access to these spaces by the public, compromise the security of private areas, or both.

Currently, for example, residents have also often become dangerously accustomed to opening doors for anyone who requests entry, on the assumption that they are on their way to a community area visiting a friend. Visitors also often find explaining themselves to desk workers to be a hassle, which discourages them from visiting friends at other dormitories, or eating in another in-dorm dining hall. On the other hand, due to the high volume of legitimate traffic in many entryways, desk workers are not always diligent about questioning every person who wanders by. To take one concrete example in particular, there is currently nothing to stop a student visiting Baker Dining from wandering the entirety of the dormitory.

MIT should conduct a comprehensive review of physical security in its residence halls, with the aim of accomplishing all of the following goals:

- Allow members of the MIT community easy and convenient access to those areas of the building which residents designate as "public"
- Effectively restrict access into areas designated by residents as "private" to current residents and their guests
- Allow residents creative flexibility in designing access restrictions to the facilities of their dormitory.

MIT must implement the changes requested as a result of this review process. This implementation will require a minor but important commitment of Institute funds toward updating the physical security infrastructure of its residence system.

In a dormitory with a dining hall, event space, or similar common areas, residents may opt to give 24-hour (or limited-hour) open access to all members of the MIT community in order to promote inter-residence interaction. Weight room, music practice rooms, and similar facilities might be allocated by a reservation mechanism controlled by the front desk, with priority given to residents of that dormitory. Additional card readers or key locks might be requested on entries to private hallways from public areas. Additional security "checkpoints" would allow different access policies for different areas in a given building.

Students in many floors and entries enjoy the social and physical benefits they get from being able to leave their doors open all of the time. In other places, students would prefer ease of public access to common hallways. Taking into account these differing preferences is important, and under no circumstances should the security policies of a building be changed against the wishes of the majority of the residents.

4.3.5 Transportation

An expanded all-day campus shuttle, including service into Boston, will lower travel barriers from living group to living group, and between living groups and the main campus. The shuttle will help build community by facilitating interaction between living groups and increasing attendance at community events.

5. Capital Expenditures

In this section, we present recommendations for $273.5 million in capital projects. We provide a timetable for completing these projects, by dividing them into three phases: projects that should be completed by the summer of 2001, projects that should be completed by the summer of 2004, and projects that should be completed by the summer of 2009. In making these recommendations, we hope to address the first two challenges identified in Principles for the MIT Residential System:[12]

> "There is an inadequate supply of housing to meet our current commitment to provide housing to all undergraduates and fifty percent of graduate students who desire to live in MIT residence halls."
>
> "While much of our housing is in relatively good condition, we face a backlog of deferred maintenance."

None of the following recommendations are currently in MIT's Capital Plan.[13] Nonetheless, the great majority of our recommendations are critical if the objectives of the residence system and the educational mission of MIT are to be carried out—and the remainder are very important. The old model of a narrow technical education has lost the appeal it once had, due both to changes in the employment market and to changes in society.

MIT is not the only institution to respond to the onset of the Information Age. Our non-technical peer institutions are quickly building up and endowing their science and technology curricula for future success. Students, meanwhile, increasingly need a broad education, including informal learning, which MIT has only started to recognize as important, and which our non-technical peer institutions currently provide much better than we do. MIT also faces a threat from Internet-based universities, which promise to provide excellent academic materials at a fraction of the cost of a residential university. MIT's future thus depends in no small part on the quality of our community education, which depends in turn upon the residential system.

In short, these capital outlays are critical to MIT's continuing status as a first-tier institution. MIT has been a second-tier institution before, and we can be a second-tier institution again. Today, MIT is a first-tier institution with a first-tier educational mission. This educational mission—the Educational Triad—requires a first-rate residential system.

We recognize that MIT will have difficulties financing our recommended projects through traditional debt service, because the projects on the Capital Plan reach MIT's debt ceiling.[14] Nonetheless, we believe that completion of these projects is quite feasible. The proposed plan has a ten-year time horizon, and the majority of the projects are back-loaded. Consequently, MIT could fund the plan by allocating $27.5 million per year, which is approximately 3% of MIT's annual budget. We present recommendations to help fund the capital recommendations at the end of the section.

Other institutions have committed substantial capital to their residence system. The University of Pennsylvania's recently concluded a residential redesign process. In 1998, the university announced that it would move to a residential college system that would house a greater percentage of its student body. To enable this monumental change, the university pledged greater staff support and a commitment to an enhanced residential dining program. The university will add 870 on-campus beds, and will renovate its existing on-campus housing. The university also committed $300 million over 10 years to its Housing and Dining Renewal Project.[15]

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[12] *Principles for the MIT Residential System: Report of a Working Committee*. September 1998. Section 2.
[13] *Budget Book, Fiscal Year 2000*. MIT Office of Budget and Financial Planning. April 28, 1999. Section 6.
[14] John Curry, Executive Vice President of MIT. Open forum on graduate housing , Spring 1999.
[15] Available at: http://www.upenn.edu/resliv/renewal.html

Cornell University's 1997 Residential Initiative responded to a decision to move all freshmen to its North Campus. To enable this initiative, the university is constructing two residence halls with a total of 558 beds, creating more community space by building a Community Center, renovations of campus dining facilities, and providing funds for Fraternity and Sorority facility improvements. This initiative will cost at least $200 million.[16]

5.1 Principles for Capital Expenditures

To develop recommendations for capital projects, we considered projects that would help the Institute meet the following goals:

- All undergraduates should be able to live in the MIT residence system, if desired. This commitment specifically includes the ability of transfer students, students returning from internships / junior years away, and students moving from independent living groups, to find space in an MIT residence hall.
- All first-year graduate students should be able to live in the MIT residence system. At least fifty percent of graduate students should be part of the MIT residence system.
- Housing that is part of the MIT residence system must be well-maintained, safe, clean, and affordable.
- The residence system should provide the facilities and programming support needed for community interaction (within the house and with other members of the community).
- The FSILG system should remain vibrant and diverse.

Satisfying these goals is critical if the objectives of the residence system are to be achieved. The capital projects relate most directly the goal of Provision of Housing, but provide vital support for the Home and Community objectives, as well. Further, all of these goals have been identified in many student life reports, including the Report of the Task Force on Student Life and Learning, Principles, and the Institute Dining Review Final Report. They have been accepted as Institute goals.[17, 18, 19]

These principles imply certain statements about the residence system.

- Because MIT has such a pressing need for housing, the Institute should attempt to keep as many beds as possible in the system. For example, this statement implies that if an independent living group folds, MIT should rent or buy the house to keep the beds within the housing system.
- Housing labeled as being part of the system should be part of the system in fact. For example, we recommend that apartment complexes owned by MIT as part of the real estate portfolio not be labeled as part of the system. Discussions with the Real Estate Office have made clear that these apartments should be treated like any other market apartments in Cambridge (especially given their market rents).[20]
- Deferring maintenance on residence halls must be avoided.
- Crowding should be avoided except on a voluntary basis. Rooms crowded on a voluntary basis must still allow an acceptable amount of space per person, and should be actual dormitory rooms rather than mis-appropriated spaces (i.e. lounges).

The committee recognizes that the following capital plan is preliminary. The actual capital plan used to alleviate the Institute's housing problems should include substantial social research and decision analysis to identify exactly which projects will best meet housing needs at minimum cost and risk. Nonetheless, we

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[16] Available at: http://www.campuslife.cornell.edu/Residential_Initiative/
[17] *Task Force on Student Life and Learning*, Section 4, "Community."
[18] *Principles*, Section 3.
[19] *Institute Dining Review Final Report*. November 13, 1997.
[20] Graduate Student Council.

believe that the following plan is an excellent first-order estimate of how much MIT will have to spend to bring its housing system to the elite level that is its avowed objective. We have used the common "placeholder" technique: for each need, we recommend the corresponding projects that have been most discussed, most researched, and in some cases committed to.

The following subsections explain each project and its rationale in some detail. The numbers for the cost estimates of these projects are taken from our own work and various Institute sources, most notably "Renewing the Foundation of MIT," the February 1998 facilities audit conducted by RLSLP and the Planning Office. "Renewing" also contains some of the renovation recommendations listed here. We have followed their implementation timetable (in most cases) in placing their recommendations into the three phases.

In brief, the following table compares the accepted needs to their corresponding projects:

Need	**Responses**
All undergraduates should be able to live in the MIT housing system.	• Construct a second undergraduate / "flex" dormitory. ($40 MM) • Provide funds to retain FSILG beds within the housing system. ($13.7 MM) • Provide renovation and transition funds to FSILGs. ($16.3 MM)
50% of graduate students should be part of the MIT residence system.	• Construct two new graduate residence halls over the next ten years. ($100 MM) • The "flex" dormitory may include some housing for graduate students to support mixed communities. (above)
MIT housing must be safe, well-maintained, and affordable.	• Carry out the unfunded portions of the Housing Renovations and Renewal Plan. ($24.5 MM) • Renovate East Campus. ($25.5 MM) • Provide renovation funds to FSILGs. ($10 MM—counted above)
The residence system should provide the facilities and support needed for community interaction.	• Renovate residence halls to reopen dining halls and create program space. ($15 MM) • Provide regular maintenance to Stratton Center and Walker Memorial. ($7.5 MM) • Renovate Walker Memorial ($31 MM). • Provide direct funding and new staff support for residence activities. (To be determined)
The FSILG system should be vibrant and diverse.	• Provide renovation and transition support to FSILGs. ($16.3 MM, above)

The total budget request above is $273.5 million dollars, not counting ongoing staffing and programming support for the residence system.

Again, the committee recognizes that the above capital list is not a final list, and is not a substitute for a detailed capital plan. In addition, certain synergies in the above projects can be realized. For example, funds to retain FSILG beds that are moved to the flexible dormitory should not overlap; similarly, if the flexible dormitory includes a percentage of graduate students, the size of the second graduate dormitory could be reduced. (Attaining more than $15 million in savings from these synergies seems unlikely, however.) The projects themselves are subject to variation.

Nonetheless, the projects on this plan are highly representative of any set of projects that would address the needs of the Institute's residence system. **Therefore, it is almost certain that improving the residence system will cost at least $200 million, and highly likely that it will cost at least $250 million. The**

committee recognizes that this is a substantial outlay, but also recognizes that the Institute has no choice but to provide this level of funding if it is to keep its promises regarding the Residence System.

The committee believes that providing this level of support will be difficult, but will certainly be feasible. We discuss funding and fund-raising issues in the last subsection of this section.

5.2 Projects with Completion Dates in Summer 2001

5.2.1 Renovation to dormitories to re-open dining halls and create program space ($15 million)

These expenditures will allow MIT to carry out large portions of the "Community" recommendations in the Task Force on Student Life and Learning, the Institute Dining Review Final Report, and Principle B3 of the Principles, "Build Supportive Communities". The Task Force has recommended that housing and dining facilities need to foster community involvement, which will require renovations (at the very least, to reopen dining facilities). The Institute Dining Review described in detail the critical value of residential dining as the result of research that included discussion with hundreds of students and many faculty and staff, including housemasters. The Principles also called for an improved residential dining program, and also pointed out the importance of common space to build community.[21]

We emphasize the need to implement the residential dining recommendations of the Institute Dining Review. With the exceptions of the hiring of a Dining Director, improvements to the card system, and pilot projects that use dining spaces as-is, MIT has delayed implementation of the Institute Dining Review for various organizational and monetary reasons.

This allocation will allow proper use of residential dining halls, which is an integral part of the residence system. Code considerations and general neglect mean that renovation of the McCormick kitchen will approach $5 million alone (according to studies done by request of the Dining Implementation Team), and renovations of Burton-Conner's and MacGregor's dining spaces (as enhanced program space or as dining) also carry significant price tags.

5.2.2 Funds to renovate and support FSILGs, and buy bed spaces if necessary ($30 million)

MIT has recognized that FSILGs are a vital part of the residence system, and must remain so in the future. These critical recommendations will help ensure the vitality of the FSILG system, as well as carry out the principle that MIT must maintain spaces currently within the residence system.

The first part of this fund would be used to renovate FSILGs. Much as many of the residence halls have suffered from deferred maintenance, many of the FSILGs need substantial work. Providing funds to renovate FSILGs would have three very important benefits. First, these funds would improve the quality of life for FSILG residents. Second, these funds would help ensure that FSILGs remain competitive as housing options for rising sophomores, other upperclass students, and graduate students. Finally these funds would help rebuild the ties between MIT and the FSILGs, which have been severely strained by the decision to house freshmen in residence halls beginning in 2001.

The Alumni Interfraternity Council recently commissioned a facilities audit of all the FSILGs, which estimated that the houses needed $8.2 million worth of renovation work.[22] Given this estimate, we believe that approximately $10 million should be earmarked for renovation grants, presumably done through the Independent Residence Development Fund (IRDF).

The second part of the fund would be used to rent or purchase housing spaces from FSILGs, as necessary. We believe that there are three situations where such support will be invaluable.

[21] See notes 8, 9 and 10.
[22] *Vanderweil Facility Audit*. Spring, 1999.

- MIT should support purchasing houses for those sororities currently lacking houses. Demand for all-female housing continues to grow, and sorority houses would help alleviate this demand.
- MIT could help support all-male fraternities in their efforts to become co-educational. It has been widely discussed that changing demographics will dictate that a number of fraternities will need to become co-ed. Doing so, however, often involves separating the local fraternity chapter from the national fraternity, which may require the purchase of the house from the national fraternity.
- There may be situations in the near term in which an FSILG may fold. When this happens, we believe it is important for MIT to retain those spaces in the system. In the short-term, these beds may provide critical buffer space to house students. In the longer-term, MIT has a vested interest in supporting the diversity of the housing system by creating (or restarting) an ILG or theme house.

Between these three demands, the committee (in conjunction with the IFC) believes that a safe estimate of the number of houses that may require supporting would be seven (assuming the transition funding for FSILGs is provided). Assuming a real estate value of $2 million per house, $14 million should be reserved for space purchases. Hopefully, with the exception of purchasing new houses, little of this allocation will have to be used.

Finally, the third part of the fund would provide transition support for FSILGs. Budgeted for approximately $6 million, this support is discussed in more detail in Section 8.

5.2.3 Renovations to Stratton Center and Walker Memorial ($5.5 million)

While Stratton Center and Walker Memorial are not technically a part of the residence system, they provide vital support to it. They provide dining facilities for students when dining facilities cannot be open; indeed, one can argue that Walker Memorial is the "dining hall" for residents on the east side of campus. They also provide facilities for residents to socialize during the day, and provide vital community spaces that will be needed to carry out our Community Involvement recommendations (Section 4). This particular allocation would carry out some much-needed maintenance on the two buildings.

Total by summer of 2001: $50.5 million

5.3 Projects with Completion Dates of Summer 2004

5.3.1 Construction of a 500-bed Graduate Residence ($50 million)

MIT has promised a new residence hall for its graduate student community since before the end of rent control; indeed, official Institute statements in the Fall of 1998 promised the dormitory would be completed by 2002. Unfortunately, MIT has revoked this pledge, as the Capital Plan does not include budgeting for a new graduate dormitory.

The construction of new graduate housing is one of the most pressing needs in this proposal. Doing so is critical to carry out our House objective, especially given the current housing situation. The end of rent control made graduate student life much more difficult, as rents in some apartments—including some owned by MIT—have quadrupled. Beyond rent control, Boston's recent economic boom has led to rental shortages and much higher rents in general, as has been oft reported in all major Boston publications. The upshot of the rental shortage is that, unless significant measures to house graduate students are taken, MIT may not be able to fulfill its obligation to ensure that graduate students can find safe, clean, and affordable housing, which means that many of the "best and brightest" graduate students will be forced to attend other universities.

A new graduate hall (with 500 beds, at $100,000 per bed) will alleviate both graduate students' concerns about finding affordable housing and the pressure graduate students exert on the Cambridge housing market, an important issue to the Cambridge City Council. The extra capacity will increase the percentage of graduate students housed on-campus from 29% to 38%, in partial fulfillment of the 50% target.

5.3.2 Second new undergraduate / "flex" dormitory ($40 million)

Even before the decision to house freshmen in residence halls was announced, the need for a new undergraduate residence hall has been widely known. The new hall would alleviate overcrowding that has sometimes reached damaging levels in recent years. It would also provide much needed flexibility to deal with demographic shifts, ideas for residential experiments, the eventual need to take Random Hall off-line, and so on.

The decision to house freshmen in residence halls makes the need for a new undergraduate dormitory much more pressing, as it dramatically decreases the flexibility of the current housing system. The following table shows the housing shortages that will result if not enough students pledge FSILGs. It uses the following assumptions: total undergraduate population is 4400, with class sizes of 1100 (including transfer students); about 4% of undergraduates will continue to choose to live outside the system; and the total number of residence hall spaces is 3,036 (2916 regular spaces, plus 120 "regular" crowds).[23]

Percentage of each class pledging FSILGs	Shortage of system spaces	Percentage of each class pledging FSILGs	Shortage of system spaces	Percentage of each class pledging FSILGs	Shortage of system spaces	Percentage of each class pledging FSILGs	Shortage of system spaces
20	764	25	544	30	324	35	104
21	720	26	500	31*	280	36	60
22	676	27	456	32	236	37	16
23	632	28	412	33	192	38	0
24	588	29	368	34	148		

Table 1 Results of prospective Rushes. The asterisk (*) denotes the 1999 Rush percentage.

Obviously, maintaining the viability of FSILGs is important, and not just for the sake of preventing housing shortages. The renovation fund for FSILGs, as well as the support discussed in Section 7, will, hopefully, prevent serious shortages. Nonetheless, it is clear that more flexibility is needed: even at current pledging levels of around 31%, the system would be short 280 beds. We believe that forcing students out of the system is not an option for ethical and political reasons—it would violate the objectives for the housing system and MIT's educational mission, and would seriously disrupt MIT's ability to attract and retain the best and brightest. Consequently, more housing is needed.

In the long term, as the new residence system reaches equilibrium, the housing provides the valuable flexibility discussed above. With the 350-400 dorm spaces, MIT could:

- Permanently eliminate dormitory overcrowding.
- Safely take Random Hall off-line when doing so becomes necessary.
- Provide space for residential experiments, such as new theme houses or "on-campus" ILGs.
- Provide mixed housing including graduate students, undergraduate students, and staff and junior faculty. This was a recommendation of the Student Advisory Committee to the Task Force,[24] and the need for graduate and staff / junior faculty housing has been well-established.

5.3.3 Renovations to East Campus Houses ($25.5 million)

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[23] Number of housing spaces from Phillip Bernard, Residential Life Program Director.

[24] *Putting Education First: Final Report of the Student Advisory Committee to the Task Force on Student Life and Learning*. April 22, 1998. Section 4.

The "Provision of Housing" principle requires that student housing be safe and well-maintained. The East Campus dormitory violates this principle, and presents pressing renovation demands. While the structure is essentially sound, the internal works of the building are in a poor state. Drastic increases in the amount of power consumed by students over the years are putting a tremendous strain on the antiquated wiring, which is not properly grounded (and, ominously, includes cloth-covered wires). The building is not properly grounded, placing the residents and their electrical possessions at risk. The plumbing does not meet the current needs of students. The basement is in a particularly poor state. The buildings are not properly ventilated and frequently flood, preventing students from utilizing the space effectively. Institute estimates have put the price of properly renovating East Campus at $25.5 million.

5.3.4 Housing Renewal and Renovation Plan, Phase II ($6 million)

This recommendation carries out the current maintenance plan for dormitories through 2004, which includes a combination of deferred maintenance and needed life/safety improvements.[25] Much of the maintenance plan has been funded through the Capital Plan: $45 million, so far, has been allocated. This recommendation covers the $6 million in renovations that have not yet been funded.

5.3.5 Renovations to Stratton Center ($2 million)

As discussed, Stratton Center provides vital support to the residential communities. This allocation would carry out needed maintenance on the building.

Total by Summer of 2004: $123.5 million

5.4 Projects with Completion Dates of Summer 2009

5.4.1 Construction of a second 500-bed graduate residence hall ($50 million)

A second new graduate dorm would bring on-campus graduate student housing to 47%, helping MIT reach its long-promised goal of housing 50% of graduate students on campus.

5.4.2 Housing Renewal and Renovation Plan, Phase III ($18.5 million)

This allocation would cover the maintenance schedule for dormitories through 2009.

5.4.3 Renovations to Walker Memorial ($31 million)

We have already noted that Walker Memorial is an important support to the residential system, providing valuable community space and serving as the dining hall for residents on the east side of campus. Unfortunately, most of the current space is antiquated and is in very poor repair—even to the level of causing health hazards (note the recent bird infestation and closing of the Morss Hall balconies, for example). Much of the space is unusable.

Further, the only way to implement a competitive dining system (as the Institute Dining Review specified) is to renovate Walker Memorial into a space that can serve as a flagship for the center of campus. In addition, a new Walker Memorial would provide badly-needed program and activity office space. The $31 million estimate comes from the recent Walker Memorial renovation committee work.[26]

Total by Summer of 2009: $99.5 million

5.5 Funding for Capital Expenses

[25] *Renewing the Foundation of MIT*. MIT Facilities/RLSLP, February 1998.
[26] MIT Campus Activities Complex.

The committee recognizes that this section contains a substantial capital request, totaling $273.5 million not including programming and staff support. Nonetheless, these renovations are critical—we see little alternative if MIT is to carry out the objectives of the residence system and its educational mission. Without support for ILGs, residents may find themselves in substandard conditions they are unable to fix, and the viability of the FSILG system may be threatened (and with it, the stability of the residential system.) Without graduate housing, the goal of providing housing will not be met, and graduate students will be forced into substandard or unaffordable rentals (or will not come to MIT at all). Without a new undergraduate dormitory, the system may see critical housing shortages that threaten to undermine the system; further, the opportunity to end overcrowding and provide much needed flexibility will be wasted. Without carrying out the maintenance plan, students will be forced to live in substandard and potentially hazardous environments, which is not acceptable for a university of MIT's status. Finally, without carrying out renovations to Stratton Center and Walker, important supports to the residence system (and community life in general) will degrade to the point of embarrassment.

We recognize that MIT will have difficulties in funding the program. As has been discussed, the Capital Plan reaches MIT's maximum debt ceiling. Further, we do not recommend removing items from the Capital Plan, as those items are critical for the well-being of the Institute as well.

Therefore, we recommend that MIT take all measures needed to raise the money for this program from alumni, with off-balance sheet funding being used to bring projects to completion on schedule. In discussions with committee members, several administrators have strongly claimed that alumni do not give donations for housing projects. While we believe that there is some truth to this assertion, we also find that continued belief that alumni will not donate to housing projects is a self-fulfilling prophecy. The central importance of the residence system to the core educational mission of MIT should underlie any pitch to a potential donor.

We believe that finding and allocating the resources for the residence system is likely to be successful if:

- First and most importantly, the senior administration and capital planners recognize the well-being of the student life system to be a priority equal or greater to any other Institute priority. This means that critically-needed student life projects must be among the first allocated when planning the Capital Campaign and the Capital Plan, not add-ons. The committee recognizes that doing so may mean diverting campaign resources (and other Institute resources) away from less pressing areas, or using special allocations from endowment funds. Nonetheless, we have little choice. From a support perspective, the residence and other student life systems are entering into a crisis stage due to decades of insufficient Institute support; other areas of the Institute have not suffered nearly as greatly.
- Our understanding is that Capital Campaign funds are usually raised in a general manner—funds are raised for "education" or "community" rather than specific projects. These funds can be directly applied to residence projects without going through the perceived difficulties of raising funds specifically for these projects.
- When raising funds directly for the residence system, MIT should point to the value of the residence system in its educational mission, and how a thriving residence system will be vital if the Institute is to maintain its leadership role. At the recent Alumni Leadership Conference, Ray Stata, chair of the Capital Campaign, listed expansion of the housing system as the second priority. This recognition is an excellent start.[27]
- MIT must be honest with its alumni, and explains to them how the Institute simply cannot provide much debt service for all of its critical capital needs. This should address the current problem of alumni not funding housing projects on the grounds that "MIT should build dormitories itself."

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[27] Raymond Stata, Chair of the Capital Campaign. Remarks to the Opening Plenary Session of the 1999 Alumni Leadership Conference. October 2, 1999.

- Students should be involved in fundraising processes for student life projects. This support could include participating in sessions with donors; organizing house alumni (recall that many MIT alumni have close relations with their houses); and arranging tours for alumni and administrators that will graphically show the extent of the residence system's needs.

We conclude with a hopeful note in this area. At the Alumni Leadership Conference, Ray Stata announced that an alumnus has donated $20 million towards the construction of the new undergraduate dormitory. To start the program, we recommend that the $20 million that has been released by this donation be devoted to renovating dining halls and community spaces, and renovating ILGs.

A first-rate residence system is essential to preserving MIT as a first-rate institution. The entire MIT community looks to the senior administration to do what it takes to preserve MIT's stature. Success is the only option.

6. Management and Governance

Successful management and governance of the residential system is vital if the new system is to fulfill its objectives. In this section, we propose several new programs and policies that, we believe, will bring about successful oversight of the residential system. As in the previous sections, we base most of our recommendations upon previous residential system reports or generally-accepted techniques from the relevant academic literature.

6.1 Division of Responsibilities

The MIT senior administration, administrators of ODSUE, student governments, and appropriate faculty committees and housemasters should convene a conference in the Spring of 1999. This conference shall create a general agreement that: (1) assigns the responsibilities for oversight and management of the residential system to the conference parties, and (2) defines how the parties shall communicate with each other on pending issues and resolve disputes.

The RSSC's final report best explains the rationale for this proposal:[28]

> In our many discussions with hundreds of students, faculty, staff, and alumni/ae about our residence system, a fundamental issue is always one of authority, responsibility and accountability. Not only our are students unclear on these matters, so too are our staff and faculty. We would submit that the residence system cannot possibly function well if its contributors do not understand where the authority, responsibility, accountability, and resource control lies.

MIT's current system of overlapping responsibilities—including administrative offices, student governments, and faculty committees—is confusing and awkward. The system leads to a lack of accountability by making it possible for any entity to avoid final responsibility for any issue. The result can be a "runaround" that wastes time and energy, and prevents the accomplishment of many good ideas by raising the threshold of effort required to effect positive change. We believe that if all parties involved met, divided the relevant responsibilities, established mechanisms for mutual accountability, and agreed on methods for reevaluation of the system, the efficiency of Institute governance would greatly improve.

6.2 The Student Life Council

We recommend that a Student Life Council, outlined below, be proposed to the Conference for consideration. The purposes of the Council shall be similar to those specified in *Principles for an MIT Residential System*:[29]

- Provide a predictable forum and venue for the regular interaction and consultation among residence system stakeholders.
- Assure that student life issues will get ongoing, not episodic or disjointed attention.
- Provide a framework to ensure that initiatives reflect a consensus on academic / residence matters, student life, campus affairs and management issues related to the student life systems.

We believe that the purposes for this recommendation are self-explanatory, and that this recommendation will further mitigate the division-of-responsibilities problems highlighted by the RSSC above.

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[28] *Final Report of the Residence System Steering Committee*. September 7, 1999. Section 6.B.1.
[29] *Principles for the MIT Residential System: Report of a Working Committee*. September 1998. Section 3.D.

We do differ with the Principles document on the scope of the Council. The Principles recommends a council that would deal solely with residential issues. We believe that the various aspects of a students' life at MIT—including residence life, community involvement, academics, and research—are far too integrated to allow for a single area to be addressed by itself. Hence, we call for a "Student Life Council" that would address all student life issues from an integrated perspective.

The Student Life Council would be responsible for strategic planning for the student life system, monitoring student quality of life issues, and supervising community-wide programming. To fulfill these duties, the Council shall:

- Serve as a forum for student life-related, cross-cutting issues, and advise senior Institute officials and the Corporation on any and all matters pertaining to student life.
- Consider capital projects, including proposals for new construction and proposals for renovations. The Council shall identify the scope and goals of these projects.
- Develop a unified strategic plan for the student life system, focusing on those areas under the jurisdiction of ODSUE. This plan shall be updated annually. It shall include a statement of needs and priorities that shall be the basis of ODSUE's budgeting process.
- Monitor the state of student life at MIT, and make (or advocate for) any changes implied by the results of the monitoring process.
- Coordinate community-wide programs.

Most of these roles for the Council have previously been specified by the Principles document. This proposal expands these roles to cover the entire student life process, and clarifies the calls for strategic planning and monitoring in the Principles to include specific deliverables.

The roles do extend the authority of the Council somewhat. In the Principles, the Council had a strictly advisory role; here, we recommend that the Council be the primary body for doing strategic planning and evaluation. We recommend this change for several important reasons. First, we strongly support principles of community-based planning. We recognize that all of the interests and expertise of MIT's student affairs community must be included in the planning process if the community's student affairs needs are to be properly identified and satisfied. The Council would provide the unifying body for all student life offices and all members of the community needed for inclusive planning. Second, including representatives of the community in the planning process will greatly improve the chances of building consensus for improvements, and will do much to alleviate the inter-community strains that have seriously undermined efforts to improve student life (as identified by the both the RSSC Final Report and the *Principles*).

Several important issues exist which cannot be fully addressed by any contemporary proposal for residence system reform. These include:

- Ensuring FSILG and residence halls are safe places for students to live.
- Ensuring that MIT's standards of conduct are upheld in all living groups.
- Future relationship of FSILGs to MIT, considering that "freshman housing status" is no longer an applicable designation.
- Future details of the RA program in FSILGs.
- Community relations for MIT-owned properties in Cambridge, and for FSILGs in Cambridge, Boston, and Brookline.

These issues will require ongoing attention for many years to come, and thus SAC or any other extant body cannot resolve them in any static report. SLC would serve a critical function in identifying important issues in the residence system (including these, other current issues, and future unforeseen ones) and making recommendations and binding decisions with regard to some of them. An examination of the division of responsibility and jurisdiction between SLC, ODSUE, student governments and other regulatory bodies must be conducted in an unhurried, transparent, community-based review process.

The concept of community-based planning has met with broad acceptance. Major works concerning community-based planning (inherent value as well as implementation methods) include those of Keeney,[30] Gregory and Keeney,[31] and Susskind.[32] Further, the Harvard Cooperative Society's Board of Directors provides a powerful "existence proof" of the value of community management. The Board of Directors comprises the President (a professional manager), eleven members who are alums or staff of Harvard and MIT, and eleven student members. The alumni and student members have jointly been responsible for developing and implementing a number of initiatives vital to the continued health of the Coop.[33]

Students and faculty may be found in important decision-making entities at other institutions of higher learning, as well. The Dorm Design Team found such a body in England's Cambridge University, on their observational visit in April, 1999. (A similar "Student Life Council" was included in that team's entry in the 1999 IAP design contest.) The following excerpt from their report illuminates the structure of the University Council.[34]

> Since the 1960s, students have had a significant role in the governance of the university. The University Council includes three student members, two of whom are undergraduates. These students are permitted a one-year leave of absence from their studies so that they may concentrate their attentions on the business of student governance. Other members of the Council are drawn from heads of colleges, professors, readers, and lecturers. The Council provides a critical forum at the highest level of the administration, at which students, some of the most important stakeholders in the university, are involved in the process of executive decision-making. The Council structure is a working example whose role is similar to what we envision for our proposed Student Life Council. The Council's function is not advisory to any other body; it is the university's most senior executive decision-making body.

In addition, this proposal would not require a significant cessation of power on the part of the Dean's Office. The Dean of ODSUE would be the President of the Council, and the Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee (see below). The various subcommittees of the Council may be expanded to include those staff members who should have a say in strategic planning, as well.

The Council shall have the following standing committees:

- Strategic Planning Committee
- Programming Committee
- Monitoring Committee

Membership on these committees shall not be limited to the members of the Council; the Dean of ODSUE, as well as the Council as a whole, may appoint other members of the community to these committees.

The wider membership of the three committees offers a formal venue for overlapping and complementary student government structures (usually committees of the UA, GSC, Interfraternity Council, Dormitory Council, and Association of Student Activities) to confer on pressing student life issues. Currently, the

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[30] Keeney, R. *Value-Focused Thinking*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.
[31] Gregory, R. and R.L. Keeney. "Creating Policy Alternatives Using Stakeholder Values." *Management Science*, Vol. 40, No. 8, 1035-1048.
[32] Susskind, Lawrence, and Jeffrey Cruikshank. *Breaking the Impasse*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1987.
[33] Comments of John S. Hollywood G, who is a third-year member of the Coop's Board of Directors.
[34] *A Creative Tension: The report of the Dorm Design Team to the Residence System Steering Committee on the Cambridge college system and its American analogues*. April 26, 1999. Available at http://web.mit.edu/residence/systemdesign/cambridge1.html

various organizations each maintain separate committees and subcommittees that pursue relevant agenda items. The three SLC committees should further recent attempts at effective, close inter-governmental cooperation, and should help make that process easier and more permanent. The central authority of the SLC also allows student, faculty, and staff interest groups and governments to more productively channel their lobbying efforts. Today, grievances must often be directed at a variety of administrators in a number of locations, none of whom are fully accountable for any one issue at a broad level. Many times, students and faculty are unable to navigate the Institute's organizational chart far enough to discover the person or body with jurisdiction over a particular policy.

The Strategic Planning Committee would be the subcommittee responsible for developing and maintaining the strategic plan for student life. It would be chaired by the Dean of ODSUE, who may appoint other staff members to the Committee, such as Department heads.

The Programming Committee would coordinate and fund campus-wide activities. It would have approximately $200,000 annually to spend on these events. This Committee is discussed in more detail in Section 4. It should include both members of the Council and all staff and students who direct most of the current on-campus programming.

The Monitoring Committee has two major roles. First, it would be responsible for managing regular evaluations of the student life system. To do so, the committee would sponsor annual surveys and regular focus groups of students, faculty, staff, and alumni. The group would also meet regularly with members of other bodies concerned with student life issues, such as the Institute Committee on Student Affairs, the Committee on the Undergraduate Program, and the Committee on Graduate School Program. Second, the Committee would compare the status of the student life system with the goals set in the strategic plan and other Institute goals concerning student life, and would report its findings to the Compensation Committees of the Corporation (see section 6.5).

We also propose a Self-Assessment Committee to review the effectiveness of the Student Life Council. This would be a recurring committee that would meet every four years. The function of the Self-Assessment Committee would be to monitor the progress of the SLC itself and of system-wide governance. If necessary, the Self-Assessment Committee would be able to convene another Conference such as the one proposed in Section 6.1 above.

6.2.1 Comparison to the Institute Committee

The Student Life Council bears some similarity to the old Institute Committee—MIT's mechanism for student government and community decision-making that dissolved in 1969. The Student Life Council would differ from the Institute Committee in important ways, but it would also bear some similarities. Many documents and accounts indicate that the Institute Committee was a successful mechanism for dealing with most campus-wide issues, in a setting in which students, faculty, and administrators could work together.

The reason for the Institute Committee's dissolution was not that it was ineffective in itself, but that in the midst of the Vietnam War and tensions surrounding MIT's participation in weapons research, the elected student leaders and the faculty and administrators were largely unable to work together. The reason for forming a separate Undergraduate Association was that, although InsComm had worked well in the past, it was not able to deal with MIT's campus conflicts in 1969. It would be safe to say that many of the issues in student life have been dealt with awkwardly since that time.

The Vietnam War is long over, and we believe it is again time for MIT to have a formal structure where students, faculty, and administrators could work together on campus issues. However, our proposed Student Life Council would differ from InsComm in at least one important way: it would not be a mechanism for student government. We believe that student government—that is, the functions of representing student views and working to ensure that student priorities are addressed—is best left to the existing student-government organizations. Where the need exists for an Student Life Council today is in decision-making. We envision the Student Life Council as the Institute's primary mechanism for making student-life decisions at or below the Dean level. The Dean of Students and Undergraduate Education would be the President of the Student Life Council, which would exist primarily to provide ODSUE the ability to make decisions in a central, efficient, informed, community-based way. The SLC would have the status of an Institute committee, and would therefore not be a part of any student-government organization.

6.2.2 SLC Membership

The Council shall have the following officers:

- The Dean of ODSUE shall be the President of the Council. She shall present a report and agenda to the Council for each meeting. She shall represent the Council to other MIT bodies.
- Two members of the Council shall be elected Chair and Vice Chair of the Council. They shall be responsible for organizing meetings, preparing the agendas, facilitating the meetings, and ensuring that minutes are written and distributed in a timely manner.

This arrangement is similar to that used by many corporations, including the Harvard Cooperative Society's Board of Directors. The Council shall include the following members:

- Six student members, three graduate students and three undergraduate students.
- Four faculty members.
- Four members of the Administration, including the Dean of ODSUE.

All members will serve one-year terms. However, a member may succeed himself multiple times.

We believe that this distribution of members successfully represents the various parties involved in student life issues (students, faculty and staff) while keeping the size of the Council manageable. We would be willing to add alumni members, as well, if there is an interest in doing so on the part of the MIT Corporation or the Alumni Association.

We recognize that there are some members of the community who oppose placing students in positions of responsibility with the Institute. However, we offer the following arguments as to why students can and should be included on the Council:

- Students are more experienced with student life systems and programs than anyone else at MIT, as they "live the current system". They therefore have vital insights that will be needed if the student life system is to meet its goals. Further, students, through research, classwork and experience, often know about the latest developments in management, planning, and organizational learning. These developments often provide invaluable assistance to strategic planning and evaluation processes.
- One objection sometimes heard is that students cannot motivate major improvements. There are a number of "existence proofs" that counter this objection. At MIT, students successfully served in management roles during Student Services Reengineering, even managing teams that included administrators. Students largely designed the procedures and evaluation techniques used during the Institute Dining Review. Finally, students have spearheaded several vital initiatives for the Harvard Cooperative Society.[35]
- Some administrators and faculty members object that students tend to be a conservative influence—that is, that students advocate for whatever the current system is, and that if the current system were different, the student voice would be for that different system. However, MIT has seen little corroboration for this theory. Students advocate for systems that are well-liked, such as the housing system; but they have also outspokenly opposed many aspects of the MIT status quo. For just a few examples, students have worked to change funds distribution for student activities, excessive workload dynamics, the campus dining system, restricted access to some academic subjects, graduate-student

[35] Comments of John S. Hollywood G, who is a third-year member of the Coop's Board of Directors.

orientation, and the Institute's academic calendar. We submit that this present document could not be classified as conservative. Therefore, the familiar adage that "students are conservative" fails to withstand scrutiny.

- We appreciate concerns that students (or non-supervising staff or faculty) should not be viewing confidential personnel information. Since the Student Life Council will be concerned with general strategic planning and evaluation, members of the Council have no need to see such confidential information. While it is true that the Monitoring Committee will make regular reports to the Compensation Committees, these reports will be limited to information about overall progress toward student-life goals on an Institute-wide level. The Monitoring Committee will not set bonus awards, nor will they see any personal information about them.

- The professional caliber of the students will be ensured by the selection process described below.

The student members shall be chosen as follows:

- One member shall be the President of the Undergraduate Association, or a designee approved by the UA Council.

- One member shall be the President of the Graduate Student Council, or a designee approved by the Council.

- The four remaining members (graduate and undergraduate) shall go through the following selection process:

  □ They shall first be interviewed by a Nominations Committee appointed by the Student Life Committee.
  □ The Nominations Committee shall select several candidates for each position.
  □ The student body shall then receive ballots listing the candidates for each position, along with a c.v. and statement from each candidate.
  □ The students shall then rank their choices for each position, and the top two vote-getters from each student constituency, as determined by preferential balloting, shall be appointed to the Council.

By setting these selection procedures, we believe that we will ensure that only the most experienced and professional students will be appointed to the Council. The GSC and UA Presidents are the recognized representatives of the graduate and undergraduate student bodies, and should therefore win seats on the Council. The other four student members are appointed by a process similar to that used by the MIT Corporation in selecting recent alumni members.

To foster transparency and accountability, the Council shall:

- Post edited versions of Council and Council Committee meeting minutes to public web sites.

- Ensure that members regularly attend the meetings of other student life organizations, such as student government meetings, Institute Committee meetings, and Housemaster meetings.

These recommendations are intended to ensure that (1) the Council receives the input it needs to make decisions in the best interest of the Community, and (2) the Community has faith in the efforts of the Council. Both are vital if the Council is to succeed.

In fulfilling its strategic planning, programming, and evaluation roles, the Council and its Committees shall use standard procedures that conform to Level 3 of the Systems Engineering Capability Maturity Model.

This recommendation will ensure the continued effectiveness of the Council through organizational learning. We recognize that there is a great deal of anxiety that organizational learning requires unacceptably voluminous paperwork and red tape. In the last subsection of Section 5, however, we will explain Level 3 in detail, and show (1) that it can be done with reasonable effort (only a few minutes per week for most activities), and (2) that the results are well worth the effort.

6.3 System Assessment

The residence system must be regularly evaluated to insure that its goals are being met. As discussed above, we recommend that the Monitoring Committee of the Student Life Council be responsible for coordinating the monitoring of the residence system and other student life systems. We make several recommendations concerning system evaluation.

In evaluating the residential system, the Monitoring Committee shall use the principles established by "Principles for the MIT Residential System", as supplemented by the principles and objectives established in Section Three of this report.

Further, the Committee shall use the following measures:

- Progress in carrying out the programming recommendations listed in Section 5, and in carrying out the capital projects listed in Section 6.
- Progress towards meeting the "Characteristics of an Excellent Residential System" as described in Section 5 of the RSSC's Final Report.
- General approval measures, as received from students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

The Committee shall use the following techniques to measure system performance:

- Surveys. At least one major survey shall be sponsored by the Committee per year. The survey shall include general approval questions along with specific questions related to the indicators listed below.
- Focus groups. The Committee shall sponsor at least one round of focus groups about various student life issues per year. The focus groups shall include sessions with all members of the community, including students, faculty, staff, and alumni.
- Facilities inspections.
- Deliberative evaluations, which shall include input from other student life organizations, such as Institute Committees and student governments.

The measures relate directly to the recommendations in this report and in other recent residence system reports. The techniques given are those generally used to do evaluations, and balance traditional social research techniques with thoughtful deliberation. The regular evaluation schedules ensure that the MIT community will have access to accurate information about the state of the residential and student life systems.

6.4 Performance Management

> ...Striking too was the fact that so little has changed in our residential system: shortcomings identified a generation ago, including overcrowding and the perceived dichotomy between the academic and out-of-classroom experience (the residence as "refuge"), still persist. In some ways, conditions have worsened in recent decades, witnessed by the elimination of common dining in many of the residence halls in the 80s, the effects of deferred maintenance, and our difficulty in establishing and enforcing a uniform code of conduct in all living groups.
>
> —From "Principles for the MIT Residential System"[36]
>
> As pressing as these [residence system] resource problems are, however, it is not fair to expect them to be meaningfully addressed until faculty and staff professionals are personally responsible to produce excellent results within the residence system.

[36] Principles, Section 1.

> Resources tend to flow to those areas upon which professional advancement depends. Where the delivery of an excellent educational product within the residence system becomes a primary metric of advancement, we anticipate additional resources will be made available.
> —From the "Final Report of the Residence System Steering Committee"[37]

The recommendations in this section are likely to be some of the most controversial in the entire proposal. Nonetheless, we believe that they are also some of the most critical if the goals of the residence system are to be achieved. In brief, we believe that those charged with maintaining the residence system must be evaluated on how well the residence system meets its goals.

As far as we are aware, this concept is a new idea for MIT. In much of the rest of the world, performance management is now widely seen as a necessary condition for the success of fundamental reforms, such as reengineering projects. The importance of performance management is taught in classes such as 15.568 (Management Information Systems, taught by Professor John F. Rockart), and 15.901 (Strategic Management, taught Professor Starling Hunter). Indeed, we have heard that one well-known management consulting firm, Ernst & Young, now advises its Reengineering clients that they will be unlikely to succeed unless their employees are compensated, in part, on well how the objectives of the Reengineering effort are carried out.[38]

We make the following recommendations concerning performance management.

All senior administrators responsible for the welfare of the student life system, and in identifying and providing resources to the student life system, shall be eligible to receive a bonus based on the status of the student life system.

- The bonus regularly achievable shall be 10-15% of the administrator's base salary. Greater bonuses may be awarded for exceptional performance.
- Bonuses shall be decided by committees established by the MIT Corporation. No students shall serve on these Compensation Committees; however, all Committees will include at least one Corporation member who has received a degree from MIT within the last ten years.
- Administrators who shall be eligible for student-life bonuses include the President, Provost, Chancellor, and Executive Vice President of the Institute; the Dean of ODSUE and all other ODSUE administrators holding the rank of Dean; and other administrators that the Corporation may designate.
- Compensation committees shall use the following guidelines in making bonus determinations. At the start of every fiscal year, the committee shall determine a set of goals for the eligible administrator in consultation with that administrator, along with monetary awards for achieving each goal. During the same time, the committee shall review the progress of the administrator in achieving the goals of the previous year, and shall grant awards in accordance with the administrator's progress.

This process is very similar to compensation processes for senior executives used by many organizations. We have made several changes to the basic process. First, in most organizations the Board of Directors sets compensation for senior Executives; at MIT, that role is played by the Corporation. Second, we have eliminated students from the Compensation Committees in response to concerns that students should not have access to personnel information. However, we do recommend that at least one member of each Committee be a recent alum of MIT, as recent experience with the MIT student life system will be vital in evaluating progress within it.

All employees involved with student life systems should be evaluated, in part, on the progress of student life systems.

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[37] Final Report, Section 6.B.2.

[38] John S. Hollywood G. Hollywood completed 15.901 and 15.568, and worked on a 15.568 group project with a consultant from Ernst and Young.

- Annual evaluation mechanisms (e.g. Annual Personnel Records) will include entries for individuals to record participation with, and achievement in, student life systems.
- All employees shall have the opportunity to receive bonuses based on achievement within student life systems. These bonuses shall be adjudicated by compensation committees within the MIT administration.
- Salary and promotion decisions for staff members (including senior administrators) shall reflect positively on achievements within the residential system.

If the residence system (and all other student life systems) is to be successful, rewards for progress must be expanded to all student-life employees responsible for its day-to-day operation. Again, this recommendation is similar to employee recognition programs in other organizations, and follows similar recommendations in the RSSC's final report.[39]

Rewards and recognition for achievement within the residential system should extend to all members of the Community, not just staff members. However, recognition for faculty, students, and alumni needs to be thought of differently than the conventional performance management recommendations discussed in this section, since they are not employees of the Institute charged with the welfare of the student life system. Consequently, recognition for students, faculty, staff, and alumni was discussed in Section 4.

6.5 Process Management

Student life decision-making and implementation should be done in accordance in modern project and process management principles. In particular, making and implementing student life policy should be done in accordance with Level 3 of the Systems Engineering Capability Maturity Model.[40] Projects should be managed in accordance with the Project Management Institute's "Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge" (PMBOK).[41]

We believe that this recommendation is also one of the most important. Currently, there is little formal planning in making new student life policies. There is also no organizational learning that allows new designing and implementing groups to learn from previous groups. The unfortunate result has been that many efforts designed to improve student life have met with failure.[42] Consequently, in the words of the RSSC's Final Report, "the 'Characteristics of an Excellent MIT Residence System' . . . describe a system that in many respects is very different from the current one."[43]

The benefits of project management (which includes planning and implementation techniques) will include the following:

- Project members and the MIT community will have a clear understanding of what a given project is supposed to do (the "scope" of the project). This will give the project clear goals to address, and provide a clear baseline for performance measurement. Knowing the scope of the project will help prevent the project from being sidetracked.
- Project planning guides tradeoffs between quality, cost, and time of project completion. It also identifies critical risks. Further, planning allow senior managers to coordinate efforts to make sure that all projects have the resources and information needed to be successful.

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[39] Final Report, Section 5.A.3-4.

[40] Carnegie Mellon Software Engineering Institute, Roger Bate, Chief Architect. Systems Engineering Capability Model. November, 1995. Available at: http://www.sei.cmu.edu/cmm/se-cmm.html

[41] Project Management Institute. *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge*. 1999 (updated regularly). Available at: http://www.pmi.org/publictn/pmboktoc.htm.

[42] Concerns over repeated failures over student life improvement groups reached such a high level that in 1995, a group of faculty led by professor Larry Bacow was asked to study why previous efforts failed.

[43] *Final Report of the Residence System Steering Committee*. September 7, 1999. Section 6.B.1.

- Project execution techniques ensure that project members work on tasks necessary to completion of the project, that quality is maintained, and that the scope of the project remains in focus.

The benefits of organizational learning, as defined by the Capability Maturity Models, include:

- Student life decision-makers and implementers will be able to learn from previous efforts, both in terms of what went well and what pitfalls to avoid. To paraphrase MIT's Chancellor, Larry Bacow, using organizational learning will free decision-makers to "make new mistakes" without repeating old ones. This is particularly important considering that MIT experiences high turnover, especially among students.
- Student life decision-makers will be able to organize what works best into standard processes. Standard processes will greatly expedite the amount of time it takes to do tasks common to all student-life improvement efforts, and will greatly improve on the quality of the results of the efforts.

The work required to carry out project planning and organizational learning in the student-life would not be burdensome, and the benefits would far outweigh the small percentage of time needed for these managerial activities. In brief, performing project management entails:

- Developing a 1-2 page scope statement that explains the justifications for the effort, the deliverables of the effort (reports, plans, blueprints, budgets, etc.), and objectives used to evaluate the deliverables.
- Developing a work breakdown structure that identifies all the separate subtasks of the project. Schedules and budgets which set timetables for the completion of the identified work. (Note: many people often make scheduling and budgeting far more complicated than it actually is. For student life efforts, one can accomplish scheduling in a few hours using post-it notes, butcher paper, and a calculator.[44])
- Performing elementary risk assessment and creating contingency plans.
- Assigning the subtasks to project participants, and providing expectations for the completion of the subtasks.
- Use of ongoing monitoring techniques to ensure that the project is on track, and taking corrective measures if needed.
- Use of simple techniques to ensure that meetings are productive.
- Use of change-control techniques to ensure that projects remain within scope while needed changes are made.

The work required for organizational learning is also misunderstood. In the student life context, organizational learning entails:

- Commitment to using the project management techniques above.
- Brief documenting of the subtasks: what they were, why they were done, how long they took, and what lessons have been learned.
- Compilation of the project documentation into a brief "after-action" report that describes what went well, what could be improved, and what lessons will be valuable for future projects.
- Use of the project after-action reports to develop standard processes for student life efforts. Standard process are brief documents that describe what steps generally should be performed in developing new policies and systems, along with standards and useful insights for performing them.

7. Orientation and Residence Selection

[44] *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge.*

7.1 Strengths and Needs

Overall, our residence system is a strength of the Institute. Of our peer institutions, the MIT residential experience is rated highest, according to the Spring 1996 Cycles Survey (86.8% satisfied). Compared to the average of the peer institutions, significantly more students are "very satisfied" with MIT's residential experience (52.30% vs. 34.3%). We are above average in inter-residence interaction, social life, and ranked third in campus community.[45]

We interpret the unusually high satisfaction levels reached by MIT's residence system to be a result of the large amount of housing choice and customization that the Institute allows its students. This interpretation seems justified, given MIT's extremely high ratings in his area despite providing less financial, programmatic, and logistical support for its residence system than peer institutions with much lower ratings. It is also supported by the perceptions and experience of the student body.

The Orientation 1998 survey indicates that 89 percent of student were satisfied with their choice of living group, up 2% from 1997 and 9% from 1994. In fact, 70% of students were "very satisfied" with their choice of living group, up from 63% in 1997 and from 45% in 1994. In 1998, only 3% of students were "very dissatisfied" with their living group selection, down from 7% in 1997 and 12% in 1994. As Associate Dean Alberta Lipson points out in the Orientation Survey results, 1998's Orientation represented "a break from the past." Orientation had a significantly diminished focus on residence selection, while still allowing freshmen choice during Orientation.[46]

However, a non-negligible number of our students have a difficult, stressful time selecting a living group. Two-fifths of incoming freshmen in 1998 and one-third in 1997 indicated that the housing decision was difficult. One-eighth of the 1998 freshmen and one-fifth of the 1997 freshmen students felt that they had insufficient information to make a decision. One-fifth of the 1998 freshmen and one-third of the 1997 freshmen felt that they did not have sufficient time. Also, according to the 1998 Senior Survey, 21 percent of students had a negative attitude towards choosing a living group during the first week; 22 percent of students in the 1994 Senior Survey expressed a similar attitude. It is crucial that a new residence system address this 10-30% of students who did not have optimal residence selection experiences, while preserving the strengths of the system experienced by the remaining 70-90 percent.[47]

MIT's residence halls and affiliated FSILGs do provide a diversity of supportive living environments for undergraduates. In particular, as remarked by the Phase II report of the RSSC, "the FSILG system has been a leader at MIT in mentoring and advising freshmen."[48] A number of FSILGs currently provide more affordable housing and meal options than is possible in the residence halls. Perhaps due to their independence from the Institute, FSILGs also generally provide rich programmatic options for their residents, including educational and formal support programs. Despite minimal funding and support from the Institute, residence halls have demonstrated their own ability to run successful programming. The unique social and educational opportunities created by the Language and Cultural Houses is another strength of the current system which must be preserved.

All classes of residence have been outstanding in providing informal support networks to provide transitional, emotional, and intellectual support for the student body far above and beyond what the Institute itself has been able to give.

Two other notable strengths of the MIT residential system are the four-year housing guarantee and the new and innovative Pre-Orientation programs.

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[45] Committee on the Financing of Higher Education. *1996 Spring Cycles Survey*.
[46] MIT Educational Studies Working Group. *1998 Orientation Survey*.
[47] MIT Educational Studies Working Group. 1994 and 1998 *Senior Survey Reports*, and the 1997 and 1998 *Freshman Survey Reports*.
[48] *Phase II Status Report of the Residence System Steering Committee*. May, 1998. Section 3.3.

We acknowledge that MIT's residences are not perfect. MIT has grossly under-recognized and under-supported the residence system for most of its history. This lack of Institute support has caused serious weaknesses, including poor facility maintenance, low faculty involvement in residential life, a shortage of graduate student housing, and unwarranted crowding in the residence halls. The key challenge of designing a residence system for 2001 and beyond is to carry the strengths of the current housing system—notably its freedom, diversity, and strong peer support—into the housing options that will be available to undergraduates in the future while addressing its serious weaknesses.

7.2 Approach to Orientation and Residence Selection Redesign

7.2.1 Stability and Predictability

Life in the MIT residence system should have a high degree of certainty and predictability. If students are unable to predict whether they will have housing in the future, they will need to waste time and energy making contingency arrangements. Stability is educationally desirable because it allows residential support and mentoring networks to form. Students also tend to invest more in their living groups if they feel a sense of at least semi-permanence and of being at "home."

A closely related goal is the preservation of the strong, supportive communities that exist in all of MIT's living groups. These communities underlie many of the most important strengths described in section 7.1. We have implemented these principles through a carefully considered residence selection process.

7.2.2 Informed Choice

The previously cited orientation surveys show that some freshmen still have insufficient amounts of information when making housing choices. While a reduction of the number of options available to freshmen in 2001 may help to reduce the difficulty of gathering and providing enough information to freshmen, the problem will not be easily solved.

Anyone who listens to enough undergraduates recount their residence selection experiences will soon notice a very common and striking trend. Many students are fairly certain of their housing preferences after reading Institute-provided literature over the summer, but often change their minds as they see the actual buildings, and, more importantly, begin to meet the actual residents in person. This change is not surprising. For example, one would not move into an apartment (or buy a used car, or piece of equipment) "sight unseen." One also would not move into a living arrangement without meeting his or her neighbors.

MIT's living groups have distinct characters. Though no one place may be the "right place" for any given person, putting someone in a living environment where they do not feel that they belong undermines the objectives of home and community for that person. Consequently, we believe that "informed choice" must include the ability to meet the upperclassmen residents of a living group in person.

7.2.3 Diversity of Practice in Residence Halls

Through resident-driven programming and a set of unique cultural practices, residence halls, as cited above, do an excellent job of tailoring the MIT experience to the likes and needs of individual students. A system in which each dormitory was merely a microcosm of the larger MIT community would be unable to accomplish this goal as well.

As the experiences of thousands of undergraduates show, the real essence of living group character is transmitted in person. This fact is why we place such a strong emphasis on personal visitation as an element of truly informed choice. We also believe that the elimination of such personal interactions would mean the eventual homogenization of the dormitory system.[49]

[49] Cambridge University's college system shows this happening in practice. Students applying there chose their college based on printed literature, and perhaps a pre-admission visit. (Students actually apply for admission to a particular college, rather than a university.) Those of us who visited Cambridge found that

Investment in a stable and unique community within each residence is an important factor for alumni satisfaction. MIT alumni are unusual in the frequency with which they return to their undergraduate living groups to tell stories, give advice, and enjoy the company of people who are identifiably part of the same community they themselves experienced.

We encourage diversity of practice through the protection of the diverse set of existing communities, and through a mechanism increase this diversity—Theme Houses, introduced in section 7.5.

7.2.4 Encouraging Movement

While we strongly object to the view that FSILGs are primarily providers of beds rather than a rich collection of educational and living options, we do recognize that a large percentage of upperclassmen must join FSILGs to prevent unacceptable overcrowding of the residence halls, as our calculations in section 5.3 show. Considering the crucial support networks that form in living groups, especially during the freshman year, this could be a difficult task. Moreover, it should be easy for undergraduates to change residence halls, to deal with uncomfortable situations, to promote inter-community interaction, and to maintain balanced demographics.

This need may appear contrary to the principle of stability, and thus requires extremely careful attention. We believe we have managed this delicate balance by encouraging voluntary movement, while preserving the right to maintain one's housing status quo. We do this by giving FSILGs as much creative flexibility as possible to recruit new members (within guidelines to protect the educational and other interests of the greater MIT community) and by an innovative dormitory lottery system.

We believe that incentives are preferable to mandates when movement must be further encouraged. We encourage the proposed Student Life Council to create additional incentives if the need ever arises.

7.2.5 Diversity of Experience

While the Institute's various self-selecting residential communities may compose a diverse system, it is also important that the individual student experience that diversity firsthand. Students cannot have that experience if living groups exist as isolated social and cultural pockets. As the Task Force says, "the divisions among campus groups—such as among living groups, or between graduates and undergraduates—sometimes leads to intolerance and lack of understanding not in keeping with MIT's principle of diversity."[50]

Students also need to be a part of their own community to experience the diversity of social activity that happens there.[51] This belonging is part of the reason why a sense of "home" and some ability to relate to the other members of one's living group on a social level are beneficial.

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students become very attached to their respective colleges. We also found because of their large size and weak ability to self-select members, the colleges were more alike than different. The actual culture one experiences in a given college at Cambridge varies drastically from year to year as an entirely new batch of students arrives every three years. This, despite the fact that the unique physical environment and often centuries-old formal traditions of the organization change much more slowly. We note that Cambridge University, despite its fairly homogeneous residence system, achieves outstanding levels of student satisfaction and academic performance. However, it does so with a nearly one-on-one tutoring and advising system that in effect creates a custom programming experience for each student, something which is unfortunately currently infeasible at MIT. For more information, see "A Creative Tension: The report of the Dorm Design Team to the Residence System Steering Committee on the Cambridge college system and its American analogues." April 26, 1999. Available at: http://web.mit.edu/residence/systemdesign/cambridge1.html.

[50] *Final Report of the Task Force on Student Life and Learning*. September, 1998. Section 4.3.3.

[51] *Task Force*, Section 4.2.3.

Section 4 of our report, "Community Interaction and Student Support" recommends solutions to work in concert with the new residence selection system. Encouraging movement across the residence system also will increase cross-residential community.

7.3 Residence Hall and Room Selection for Freshmen

The committee recognizes the importance of having the residence selection process allow freshmen to choose their residence hall based on the culture and community that it offers, not just the physical characteristics of the building. We also recognize the importance of accommodating those freshmen that feel it is important to know one's residence before arrival on campus. We believe that a two-phase selection process will satisfy both of these needs.

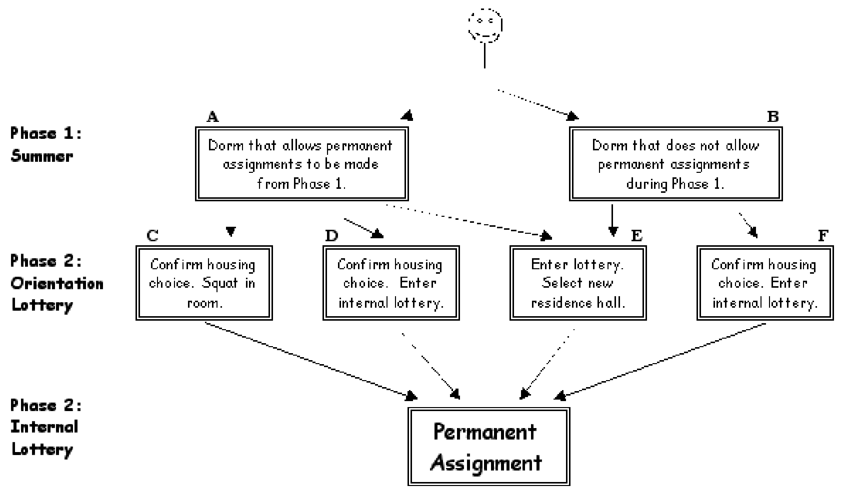
Phase 1. In Phase 1, incoming freshmen will select a residence hall based on materials received and reviewed early in the summer before arrival. Dormitories will provide freshmen with various media about the residence hall, along with contact information. This information will increase the ability of the freshmen to pick an housing environment where they would feel welcome and comfortable. The freshmen will submit a ranked list of residence halls and information about their preferences in a living environment and will be assigned a dormitory room and roommate(s) during the summer.

Dorms may specify in their literature that freshmen room assignments within the dorm may be permanent. Certain dormitories have cultures that are evenly distributed throughout the living space; it would be feasible for these halls to accept freshmen interested in permanent assignments upon arrival at the Institute. Other dormitories may choose not to identify themselves this way, thereby allowing for internal rush to occur after the secondary lottery has occurred.

Phase 2. Phase 2 comprises residence hall selection activities, a secondary housing lottery, and internal dormitory rush. Following residence hall rush, freshmen will submit either a confirmation of their current residence choice, or a revised ranking of residence halls. Those revising their choices will be lotteried into available spaces in the residence halls of their choice. This secondary hall selection process is critical—it enables freshmen to change their dormitory if their choice, based on limited information over the summer, is not what they expected. Internal rooming assignments would then be carried out by the individual residence halls in a manner approved by the SLC.

The following flow chart illustrates the options available to freshmen. A and B represent the options of choosing (via the summer lottery) to live in a dorm that allows permanent room choice based on Phase 1 information. In situation C, the student chooses to confirm their choice of both residence hall and room during the Orientation lottery. In D, the student confirms his/her room, but opts to enter the hall's internal lottery and get a new room. In option E, the student chooses to reenter the lottery for a new residence hall. This student will enter his/her new dormitory's internal rooming lottery and receive a permanent assignment. This situation is most similar to the current system. In situation F, the student chooses to confirm housing in his/her residence hall, and will then go through the internal room assignment of that dorm. The difference between F and D is that a student confirming a selection in F must go through the internal room assignment process, while a student confirming in D has chosen not to remain in their original room assignment. There are several variables in this process, allowing for a diversity not only in housing options, but in how one arrives at one's final choice.

Residence Hall Selection Options



Students will be allowed to staple together with other students that they feel they would like to room with permanently. This stapling can occur both at the residence hall selection level, where freshmen can choose other freshmen that they would like to live with, possibly as roommates; and at the internal level, where freshmen may actually choose who their roommate(s) is/are.

Up to four freshmen should be able to staple together during the hall selection lotteries. This number accommodates those freshmen that anticipate living together in higher-occupancy freshman rooms. We believe that groups larger than four should not be permitted, to prevent the creation of isolated groups within dormitories or be incompatible with internal rooming assignments.

Dormitory governments should have the authority to set stapling levels for internal lotteries.

Internal Rooming Selection. Following the secondary hall selection lottery, dormitories will do internal rooming assignments by a mechanism determined by the dormitory government and approved by the Student Life Council. The freshmen will have the opportunity to meet residents and examine rooms from all parts of the dormitory. Upperclassmen should be given the ability to positively select freshmen for internal divisions of a residence hall (e.g. the halls of East Campus or the entries of MacGregor) but not the ability to deny or "blacklist" a freshmen the ability to choose a particular internal division of a residence hall. Upperclassmen who share rooms or suites with freshmen must be given the ability to chose mutually acceptable living arrangements.

We believe that upperclassmen, because of their experience with and knowledge about the living groups within their dormitories, are able to positively contribute to the freshmen selection process, but we recognize that granting them power to deny freshmen a particular room is inappropriate. Giving upperclassmen the opportunity to preferentially attract freshmen with compatible personalities will improve the frequency and productivity of future informal interaction and close friendships. Upperclassmen should not have the ability to unkindly bounce a freshman somehow labeled as "undesirable" from place to place, nor should an exclusionary attitude dominate the beginning of the MIT experience. Any positive selection means should be confidential and only available to rooming chairs.

An example scenario: A dorm that has several distinct cultures/halls within it will be home to fifty freshmen. The freshmen explore the living group and start to form opinions of the different areas. Upperclassmen interact with these freshmen, discovering that the freshmen either show signs of fitting in, or signs of unhappiness with the culture. The upperclassmen may notice signs that indicate the freshmen would be particularly happy in another part of the dorm, and they tell the freshmen this, tell that other section this, or both. At the end of this selection period, the cultures/halls sit down and make lists of which freshmen they think would be happy on the hall (and that the hall would be happy with). If ten spaces are available on a hall, the lists may consist of anywhere from zero to fifty names, depending on how much the hall wants to exert an influence on their living arrangement and how many freshmen they liked. Freshmen will be assigned to halls based on their own rankings of the halls, with preference to halls that they ranked high and that ranked them high. If a hall cannot be filled with freshmen solely from its lists, freshmen that ranked that hall high will be placed there, regardless of whether they were on the hall's lists or not. Halls that have many freshmen they like are more likely to be filled with freshmen that they like with whom they are comfortable.

Summary. We believe that the proposed residence selection system will help eliminate roommate, floormate, and housemate "horror stories" from the MIT experience, by allowing freshmen and upperclassmen to make mutually compatible living arrangements in a informative, low-pressure, and informal social environment. The proposed system removes much of the pace and pressure of orientation while enabling a degree of the self-selection which has produced the current vibrant communities in residence halls.

7.4 Orientation

> "The central purpose of orientation should be to create the feeling of joining a single, campus-wide community. To do this, there should be more activities that involve faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students in shared experiences. Orientation events must be more than pro forma exercises to be endured. If each orientation experience has a constructive purpose, students could be
> expected to take them seriously."
> —From the Report of the Task Force on Student Life and Learning[52]

We believe that any evaluation of Orientation should include both the subjective judgments of freshmen, as has been the case in past Orientation Surveys, but also specific questions for freshmen about specific goals being attained during Orientation. From the Task Force's recommendation and our own experience and wisdom we suggest freshmen should be able to do the following by the end of Orientation:

- describe the purpose of the General Institute Requirements
- describe the purpose of UROP
- briefly describe all five schools and name at least ten departments
- name two faculty members with whom they have had real conversations
- name at least a dozen freshmen and upperclassmen with whom they have had real conversations
- name at least half-a-dozen graduate students with whom they have had real conversations
- name four off-campus restaurants and three cultural opportunities in Boston/Cambridge
- name all residence halls and be able to give a brief description of at least one-third
- name at least a dozen FSILGs and be able to give a brief description of at least one-third
- name at least half-a-dozen undergraduates on different athletic teams and activities
- briefly describe MIT's research agenda
- summarize the educational mission of MIT
- describe the mission of Academic Services, Counseling and Support Services, and the Office of Career and Pre-professional Advising
- know the name, email, and phone number of their advisor(s)
- honestly say that Orientation was a worthwhile and enjoyable time

[52] *Task Force,* Section 4.5.4

To achieve these goals, we believe the following events need occur:

- Pre-Orientation
- introduction to academics, especially the General Institute Requirements
- introduction to research, especially the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program
- introduction to resources for students and advisor(s)
- introduction to student activities, residence options, and athletic opportunities
- ample time for informal interactions with community members, including not only undergraduates but also graduate students, faculty, alumni, and staff.

Pre-Orientation programs should continue to be supported and developed. The goals should be to accommodate all freshmen that wish to take part in a Pre-Orientation program and to raise freshmen interest to near 100%. In order to provide equal access, freshmen should not be required to pay additional fees to participate in Pre-Orientation programs. Corporate sponsorship, such as that obtained for the inaugural Freshman Outdoors Program, may be beneficial. These programs should provide experiences not typically available during the term and enable freshmen to get to know each other and other members of the MIT community.

One possible Orientation schedule is presented below. It is not meant to be an actual schedule, simply an attempt to show how the above events might be put into a real schedule.

Sample Orientation Schedule

Day	Morning/Afternoon	Evening
Saturday	Freshmen arrive for Pre-Orientation programs. Parents' Orientation occurs.	
Sunday	Pre-Orientation begins. Parents Orientation continues.	
Monday-Wednesday	Pre-Orientation.	
Thursday	Presidents Convocation. Freshmen meet Orientation Groups.	Faculty Welcome Dinner.
Friday	Academic Expo. Core Blitz. Meetings with Advisors.	Residence Midway
Saturday	Athletics Gateway. Activities Midway.	Carnival begins.
Sunday	Carnival. The Carnival is intended as an evening and day of fun for freshmen and will take place primarily on Briggs Field. Events may be run by residence halls, student groups, academic departments, FSILGs, or staff, and should be integrated with GSC Orientation if possible. The Student Life Council should set minimal guidelines for such events.	Residence hall open houses/social events.
Monday	Introduction to MIT's research agenda (with graduate students). Introduction to UROP. Freshmen Lab Explorations.	Residence hall open houses/social events.
Tuesday	Meetings with Advisors. Introduction to Alternative Freshmen Programs.	Residence hall lottery preferences due by 5pm.
Wednesday	Meetings with Advisors. Explorations in Boston with Orientation Groups and graduate students.	Residence hall lottery results out by 5pm. Dormitory meetings and internal tours in the evening.
Thursday	Move into rooms. Pre-registration due.	Open time with residence hall.
Friday	Community service event with graduate students, staff and faculty; Picnic with Wellesley/BU/BC.	Open time.
Saturday-Monday	Open social time, including student groups and FSILGs.	

7.5 Theme Houses

Small, close-knit communities, such as the existing Language and Cultural Houses, FSILGs, and certain dormitory floors, entries, or other subdivisions can provide especially suitable environments for fostering a family-like atmosphere and sense of belonging. Undertaking communal responsibilities such as meal preparation, facility maintenance, self-government, and new member integration provides students with special opportunities for self-development. Living groups centered around a particular culture, a particular lifestyle, or particular activities have the potential to considerably enhance the MIT educational experience.

Consequently, the Committee proposes the creation of a new, diverse set of living group options to be known as "Theme Houses." Existing Language and Cultural Houses should be integrated into this system. Residence halls and subdivisions thereof may apply to the Student Life Council for Theme House status. FSILGs may also apply, but may be required to make significant and fundamental changes in order to be integrated into the MIT residence hall system.

The formation of theme houses should be student and community driven. Each Theme House:

- Must promote a theme of common interest that is compatible with and actively furthers the educational mission of MIT.
- Must not duplicate the function of existing living group options, unless enough interest exists for both the new and old groups to co-exist harmoniously.
- Must satisfy the SLC that the theme would not be as educationally beneficial if pursued as a student activity, or through other non-residential means.
- Must provide a plan satisfactory to SLC for the adequate supervision and safety of its members.
- Should participate in cross-residential programs and/or hold events which invite non-members to participate in the house's theme.
- May choose to invite non-students, such as faculty, visiting scholars, and other members of the MIT and intellectual communities, as appropriate, to become guests, members, or otherwise affiliate themselves with the house.
- Should provide the same opportunities for residence-driven programming (especially for incoming students and other new members) as would be available in a non-Theme House residence hall.

The details of ownership, programming, supervision, etc., should at some appropriate point before Fall, 2001, be collectively negotiated between all parties interested in obtaining Theme House status, and the SLC and/or ODSUE. The SLC shall establish clear policies and explicit language against which to judge all Theme House applications. This negotiation does not preclude the creation of theme houses after 2001, though we expect the 2001 guidelines to apply to future applicants.

Theme Houses must maintain character through some sort of selection process. The Theme House should have the opportunity to fill all vacancies within their assigned areas in either one of the following manners, or they may use a combination of the two. The first method consists of recruiting Freshmen, Sophomores, and Juniors at the end of a Spring Term to live in the House in question starting at the beginning of the following Fall Semester. The second method consists of requiring all future freshmen to sign a commitment, approved by the Student Life Council, that says they will be willing to do the House duties that are required of them for membership. If the commitment is violated (as in the house member in question refuses to complete the work required of him), then an administrative channel will exist which will allow the house to have the member moved out of the house and replaced with a person who has their approval.

7.6 Member Recruitment and Selection for FSILGs

As was discussed in the Needs and Strengths section, Fraternities, Sororities and Independent Living Groups fill a valuable niche in MIT's educational mission, provide critical support to students, are a cost effective housing option for undergraduate students, and provide co- and extra-curricular opportunities not available in residence halls. The Institute should make every effort to encourage freshmen to consider their upperclass housing options and to facilitate and support that process.

The Interfraternity Council, in conjunction with RLSLP and the Student Life Council, will set guidelines for the new member recruitment and selection process. The IFC has demonstrated the ability to run recruitment fairly and to hold its member organizations accountable to its recruitment rules. As recruitment will fundamentally change in the fall of 2001, the IFC will need to reevaluate its rules to continue to provide a safe and positive experience for rushees and a level playing field for its member organizations. In acknowledgement of the independent nature of these living groups, and to maximize the effectiveness of FSILG recruitment, self-determination should be preserved in the recruitment process as much as possible. New member recruitment should be managed cooperatively between the IFC and FSILGs, the Student Life Council, and ODSUE.

The Institute should mandate that the IFC will not run recruitment activities that compete with established Orientation activities, though Orientation should contain an introduction to the FSILG system. Notably, FSILGs should participate in Orientation's Residence Midway (see section 7.4). The administration should work closely with the IFC to ensure periods of recruitment that fit well into the MIT calendar and are as free of academic pressure as possible given the time(s) of the year.

The IFC, in cooperation with the Residential Life Office, currently is redefining what the purposes and standards of new member recruitment will be in the post-2001 environment. Until this process is completed—and recruitment is defined—it is premature to attempt to define dates for recruitment. Consequently, the committee makes no particular recommendations concerning the timing of recruitment activities. We do, however, recommend that recruitment activities not conflict with orientation or periods of great academic stress (i.e. end of term). We also suggest that future recruitment activities take be informal and low-pressure events that take advantage of the lengthened residence selection schedule, and that these events not be limited to a single brief period.

7.6 Fall and Spring Dormitory Lotteries for Upperclassmen

A dormitory lottery will be held in November of the fall term for housing in the following spring term and March of the spring term for the following fall term. These lotteries will be mandatory for all MIT undergraduates currently living in residence halls. They will be extensions of the current housing confirmation process. Students will have the option to either confirm their current residence choice, or enter a lottery to move amongst available spots in other residence halls.

It is important that the lottery algorithm be well-designed and well-tested. The algorithm should be developed with support from faculty familiar with such "assignment problems," such as faculty in the Laboratory for Computer Science or the Operations Research Center. Further, for the past several years, the lottery algorithm has been rewritten by a separate person every year; this lack of continuity has led to assignment problems in some cases. Unless there is a pressing reason for changing the algorithm, it should remain the same from year to year.

Our stapling policy is based on two principles: freshmen should be able to choose their roommates, and upperclassmen should be able to choose their social groups. Consequently, stapling will be more flexible for upperclass lotteries than for the freshmen lotteries. More than four upperclassmen may staple together, with dormitory governments determining the maximum group size they are willing to receive.

This system lowers the barriers to change residence halls, making it much easier for students to experience more than one living environment, should they choose to do so. As the RSSC notes, the current system can perpetuate the idea that each student has only one place where they could find a home. Institutionalizing and socializing the idea of residence flexibility will encourage cross-community interaction because students are likely to visit their friends in former residence halls and in residences they are considering for the future.

We believe that producing systemic instability by removing the ability of freshmen to stay in their freshmen year residence hall is incompatible with our goals of "house, home and community" by forcing people out of their home, their support structure. We understand that this system could cause the evolution of dormitories with disparate ratios of freshmen to upperclassmen, if living group demographic balancing does not happen on it own. Similarly, we understand that there may be scenarios in which large numbers of upperclassmen try to leave a few houses, unbalancing the system. We have no evidence to believe that this would happen, but should this be the case, the Student Life Council should interfere. The most effective strategy for the SLC is likely a system of economic incentives. Further, a large number of residents trying to leave a house is almost always an indicator that the house is suffering from severe maintenance or social problems. This should be a sign for MIT to investigate problems at the house, and provide help to solve them (either maintenance or counseling support). Treating the underlying problems should effectively address mass departures. A blanket removal of squatting rights should be avoided.

We have also considered the argument that allowing freshmen to remain in their freshmen dormitories may decrease the incentive to consider Fraternities, Sororities, and Independent Living Groups. We do not disagree with this argument, but we believe that the effects of squatting on new member recruitment will be minimal and, more importantly, that the costs of eliminating squatting are too high.

7.7 Housing Guarantee

Housing must be guaranteed for four years to all undergraduates. The current guarantee of contiguous housing for students is a valued part of the recruitment process of MIT and an important part of the educational value of the residence system. The pace and pressure of the academic rigors of the Institute are widely acknowledged, and the housing guarantee removes a potential source of significant stress. Consequently, this guarantee should extend to transfer students and students who have taken time away from MIT for personal, medical, or other reasons. Students who transfer into residence halls from FSILGs should receive equal status with a dormitory-system native. The fall and spring lotteries described in Section 7.6, and construction of the "Flex Dormitory" discussed in Section 5, should greatly facilitate this flexibility.

Weakening or eliminating this guarantee would cause substantial difficulties for the student body. Undergraduates have limited financial resources with which to afford off-campus accommodations and have limited amounts of time in which to search for housing. The natural stress of searching for housing would be compounded by the Cambridge rental market. With the elimination of rent control and the effects of general demographic trends in the Cambridge area, affordable housing is at a premium, with the market at approximately 98%+ saturation. Cambridge residents are concerned about the prospect of MIT students (and those of other area colleges and universities) flooding the system. Students, on the other hand, are disconcerted by the prospect of finding acceptable and affordable housing in such a constrained environment.

In addition to the regular, four-year guarantee of housing, Masters of Engineering and other five-year academic programs represent a serious unaddressed problem in the residence system. Little investigation has gone into determining the impact of these programs and the housing needs of fifth-year students. The problem will only get worse as more and more departments consider adding these programs. This situation only underscores the need for an additional "flex dorm" (see Section 5); the Student Life Council should conduct an in-depth investigation into this matter.

The committee recognizes that in the short term, the evolution of the FSILG system may also result in more undergraduates needing Institute housing. Though this effect may be temporary, as FSILGs learn to recruit in a radically new environment, the problem must still be addressed in the short term. We recommend the following prioritized solution:

1. Provide incentives for students to move into residences that are underutilized.

2. Crowd existing dormitory space and spread such crowding as evenly as possible between residence halls. Such crowding should be done on a voluntary basis, with the Institute providing lower rents for students choosing to live in crowded rooms.

3. Rent non-residence hall space for undergraduates, either on a per-room basis or entire buildings.

4. Utilize graduate student housing for undergraduates, and provide non-residence hall housing for graduate students. MIT should subsidize such housing so that the price would be equal to that of in-system rents. Such housing would be in the form of a "temporary residence hall" (i.e. an entire apartment building), that would be safe, well-maintained, and allow for convenient access to MIT.

Under no circumstances do we recommend the following:

- Utilizing graduate student housing for undergraduates and displacing graduate students into the Boston area housing market.
- Denying housing to undergraduates.

8. Transition Support for FSILGs

The diversity of FSILGs at MIT is unparalleled in higher education. While FSILGs are not for everyone, they often provide more opportunities for leadership, service, and responsibility than some residence halls. Many FSILGs also offer lifetime membership in international or national organizations—communities that will last decades after the student has left MIT. As is noted by the Task Force on Student Life and Learning, "The 1994 Senior Survey showed that 93 percent of independent living residents were either satisfied with their living group experience, compared with 80 percent of dormitory residents."[53]

In accordance with the recommendation of the Task Force on Student Life and Learning, MIT should provide direct financial support to FSILGs during the transition process. Supporting the FSILG system is important from an educational standpoint because of the different environments FSILGs provide for MIT students to live and learn, as briefly described above. FSILGs will be facing a radically different recruitment situation in 2001 and they must be given the opportunity to evolve to fit the new system.

Supporting the FSILG system also makes sense from a financial standpoint. The cost to create and maintain a 'bed' in an FSILG is substantially less than in a residence hall. To make the point dramatically—MIT could give every FSILG $1 million, for a total of $38 million, and the total contribution would still be less than the $45 million estimated cost of building the new 330-person residence hall—and FSILGs house more than 1400 students. An attempt to save money by being parsimonious with FSILG support would be foolish.

The purpose of transition funding is to allow FSILGs to experiment, learn, and adapt in a new system. Students would lose an invaluable educational opportunity if a house were to close its doors because it was not given the chance to prove itself. Houses may choose to reposition themselves in the housing market, perhaps emphasizing the 'theme' of the FSILG more than during previous recruitment efforts. Some single-sex groups may decide, by principle or by looking at MIT's new demographics, that becoming a mixed gender living environment is desirable.

For the FSILG system to emerge from this evolutionary time vibrant and successful MIT must provide substantial financial support. We believe that in the first year of the new system, houses should be provided with more funds than the number of empty beds would indicate. These monies would allow houses to experiment with programming and reposition themselves in the upperclassmen housing market. We recommend that MIT should transfer funds to each FSILG in June 2001 in the amount of (35%)(total house capacity)(standard house bill). During a period of five to seven years, this support should diminish to a steady state of zero support. The precise formula for this reduction should be determined by the IFC and Alumni IFC, in coordination with the relevant administrators.

We believe that the initial support should be greater than the predicted shortfall in house bills to allow FSILGs to invest in their future. The new member recruitment and selection environment is a large unknown and will require experimentation to optimize in the new environment. Just as the Institute is investing in educational experiments to improve the undergraduate curriculum, it should invest in the FSILGs so that they can experiment to improve the education and support they provide to undergraduates.

We recommend that transition funding be fixed as a proportion of the entire house, rather than the number of empty beds at any particular time, for several reasons. We should not penalize houses who are successful at adapting to the new system. Our system allows houses a more predictable budget situation than an empty-bed system, which would be tied to the uncertainties of recruitment. The incentive in a empty-bed system is that you receive less funds for an empty bed than a full one—this pushes houses toward focusing more on getting people in beds than in building an educational community. Most importantly, our system also provides for a steadier evolution, while an empty-bed system is likely to cause a downward spiral. Imagine a house that does not successfully rush in the first fall of the new system. Because the empty-bed

[53] *Task Force,* p. 66.

system would fund only a portion of the empty beds, they are now in an even worse position to be successful the following year. Each year they do less well, and get fewer funds. The empty bed system relies far too much on the first year of recruitment in an entirely new environment and does not allow for houses to evolve and change as needed.

Further, we believe that the transition support should be based upon a standard house bill because the marginal cost of an additional member is minimal compared to the fixed costs of running the residence. Though we do not strongly object to basing support on the 'fixed cost' proportion of a house bill, we believe that such a change would be minimal and difficult to quantify and document. We also fear clashes between FSILGs and administrators about the difference between marginal and fixed costs. For example, consider the apparently obvious marginal cost of food. After consulting with kitchen managers, house treasurers, and professional house cooks, we found that the marginal cost of food is NOT proportional to the number of persons eating. The marginal cost is complex and non-linear, because food costs are variable and because small changes in menu can result in greater changes in cost than the addition or subtraction of individual members. We must stress that the social and member recruitment budgets of FSILGs do not vary according to membership size but according to program and that it would be inappropriate not to fund them.

We recommend that independent houses in particular financial trouble may apply for special funding beyond the direct support granted to each house, and perhaps extending to a period beyond the regular period of support.

Sample calculation:

House bill = $5000/year
Average FSILG size = 40 beds
# of residential FSILGs = 36

($5000)(40)(.35)(36) = $2.52 million in the first year.

If, as may seem reasonable, the funding declines linearly for a period of five years to zero, the funding in subsequent years would be:

Year 2 = $1.89 million
Year 3 = $1.26 million
Year 4 = $630,000
Year 5 = 0

Total cost = $6.3 million.

Please note that for the equivalent of 63 new dormitory beds (assuming an average of $100 thousand per bed), MIT will have supported more than 1400 beds in FSILGs.

Graduate students should not be seen as a means of transitional or permanent support for FSILGs. Nonetheless, FSILGs that wish to recruit graduate students as members should be allowed and encouraged to do. Given the current housing shortage, graduate students would benefit greatly by rooming as boarders in empty FSILG beds. To encourage this practice, MIT should subsidize grad student residency in FSILGs. The RSSC's proposed subsidy of 80% of the housebill, declining 10% per year and becoming zero in 2006, is appropriate.

In addition to transition support, we recommend that MIT allocate additional capital funds to support FSILGs. This allocation was discussed in Section 5 (Capital Expenditures), but is expanded upon here. The total recommended allocation for all FSILG support—including the transition funding described above—is $30 million.

We recommend that MIT make a one-time contribution to the Independent Residence Development Fund of $10 million, to be used to pay for needed renovations identified by an Alumni Interfraternity Council facilities audit. MIT is currently sponsoring renovations of its residence halls and, as our Capital Expenditures sections shows, we expect that to continue. We believe that providing FSILGs the financial resources needed to upgrade and repair aging homes will improve the living environment of the resident students. As we have said elsewhere and as faculty and administrators should be quick to appreciate, the quality of your home can significantly affect the quality of your work. MIT should invest in its students' homes.

We recommend that MIT purchase houses for the two sororities that are currently un-housed. MIT's admissions demographics have changed but other parts of the system have been slower to adapt, as recent reports have noted. The sorority system at MIT has grown dramatically since the founding of Alpha Phi in 1984. Three sororities currently have houses and the two un-housed sororities have more than sufficient members to fill a house. The sex balance in the Institute, on an undergraduate level, continues to move towards a 50-50 ratio, and the availability of housing options should reflect that. McCormick does provide a valuable choice in the residential system for women seeking an all-female living environment, and adding more independent living group options will only enhance the choices available to women.

We recommend that MIT support any single-sex fraternity that wishes to become co-educational. This may include the purchase of the current chapter house from the national organization or the purchase of a new house. This is important both because of MIT's policy of non-discrimination but also to allow the demographics of the FSILG system to change with MIT's demographics.

Finally, we recommend that MIT support FSILGs that wish to move closer to campus. The Institute can provide this support in allowing three basic options will be: (1) an FSILG may lease land from MIT and build a building on it; (2) an FSILG may lease a building built on MIT land; and (3) an FSILG may purchase land from a non-MIT entity and build a building on it.

9. Implementation

The highest levels of the administration must commit to a timely implementation of the new residence system. That commitment, combined with broad-based community support and knowledge of the system's future, will enable MIT to maintain our current preeminence among institutions of higher learning. The implementation plan for the residence system, and its priority, must be widely disseminated. A regularly updated web site may be a good method of distribution.

The implementation plan should include specific roles and responsibilities and a firm schedule including clear signposts and metrics.

We present a possible implementation schedule below. One of the main purposes of the Spring 2000 conference will be to establish roles and responsibility for the residence system. The plan, therefore, specifies roles and responsibilities only up to that conference, though it does include a proposed schedule for several key events through fall of 2001. Planning beyond that date is difficult because of the uncertainty in a new system, though we do recommend that resources be identified for Phase II of the capital plan by 2004.

9.1 Fall 1999

MIT senior management should commit to Phase I of the capital plan and identify resources or potential resources. This will include making the residence system a priority of the Capital Campaign, as part of MIT's commitment to implementing the Educational Triad of the report of the Task Force on Student Life and Learning. This should be completed by the end of the fall 1999 academic term.

The Chancellor, Executive Vice President, Chair of the Faculty, Dean for Student Life, Section Head of RLSLP, Chair of the faculty Committee on Student Affairs, a representative of the Housemasters chosen by the Housemasters, UA President, GSC President, DormCon President, and IFC President, should determine the membership of the Spring 2000 conference. This conference shall act with power. The membership of the conference should be finalized by the end of the Independent Activities Period.

9.2 Spring 2000

The Institute will begin construction of the first new undergraduate dormitory in the first months of the spring 2000 term so that the dormitory will be ready for occupancy by August of 2001.

The Spring 2000 conference will determine roles and responsibilities for oversight and management of the residence system. The conference will also establish how the involved parties will communicate and how they will resolve disputes. We anticipate that this conference will recommend, in part, a Student Life Council. The conference should use a transparent, community-based process, as described in the Governance and Management section of this report. The conference should complete its work by April 2000.

The Interfraternity Council will complete the new plan and schedule for member recruitment and selection for 2001 by April 2000.

The government and virtual membership of the first new undergraduate dormitory will be finalized by April 2000.

MIT senior management will identify potential resources for Phase II of the capital plan. This should be completed by the end of the spring 2000 term.

FSILGs should receive the first year of financial support. These monies should be given to the house corporation, rather than directly to the undergraduate governments of the FSILGs. These monies should be transferred by the end of the spring 2000 term.

Planning for the short-term renovations to Walker Memorial and the Stratton Center will be completed by the end of the spring 2000 term.

The IRDF should receive the funds for FSILG renovations. These monies may be requested through IRDF's normal process by FSILGs and should be available by the end of the spring 2000 term.

9.3 Summer 2000

Short-term renovations to Walker Memorial and the Stratton Center will begin. This project will be completed during the summer of 2001.

9.4 Fall 2000

The client team for the first new graduate dormitory will be reconstituted and begin soliciting proposals.

The membership in the 2000-2001 (academic year) Student Life Council will be finalized by the beginning of the fall 2000 term.

9.5 Spring 2001

Details for the schedule of Orientation 2001 and the plan for residence selection in Fall 2001 will be finalized.

9.6 Summer 2001

The first phase of renovations for current dormitories will continue.

Near-term renovations on Stratton Center and Walker Memorial will be completed by August 2001.

The first new undergraduate dormitory will be completed by August 2001.

The renovations to reopen dining halls and create new community space will be completed by August 2001.

Incoming freshmen receive information regarding the new residence system.

9.7 Fall 2001

The new residence system is in full effect.

The client team for the second undergraduate 'flex' dormitory will be constituted and being soliciting proposals.

Planning for Phase II of the Capital Expenditures section should be completed by the end of the fall term.

10. How Have We Met Our Objectives?

10.1 House

We believe that the provision of well-maintained housing for all undergraduate students and at least half of the graduate student population is important enough to warrant the capital expenditures we have proposed, to create new housing and upgrade old housing. Having safe, clean, comfortable and affordable living space requires the allocation of Institute funds. By providing the "House" for MIT's students, MIT brings its community together and enhances the total education at MIT.

10.2 Home

We believe that resident-directed programming can have a positive effect on a student's feeling at home within a particular living group. We recognize that there is diversity among the living groups, and therefore programming which is specific to a particular group will help to foster the unique spirit that exists within that group. We also believe that peer support is vital in maintaining the student's educational, emotional and moral security. We have observed the value of informal peer support within living groups and think that such support might be expanded and formalized, so that living groups are recognized for the strong role they play in bettering a student's educational experience. We believe that house dining, both in the form of serviced dining halls and in kitchens, can also play a part in fostering interaction among people in a particular living group, thus helping a living group to function more like a family. Therefore the reopening of dining halls and the renovation of existing kitchens should be a priority.

Lastly we believe that allowing students to make as free and informed a choice as possible regarding the group within which they will live is vital to maintaining the diversity of living groups and providing students maximum happiness and security in their living environment. A home in the strictly temporary sense, especially when it only lasts for one week, is not a home, and therefore a permanent living group can be selected before arriving at MIT to provide security. However, students will have more information about the living groups after being at MIT for some time. Therefore, students should have as great an opportunity as possible of changing their respective living groups to find a place in which they feel more "at home."

10.3 Community

We believe that a strong House Fellows program along with the strengthening of the House Masters program will help to foster community by establishing relationships between students and faculty. We also believe that campus-wide events hosted by living groups have the potential to create closer relationships among people from different living groups and draw faculty, staff and administrators to participate in the residence system. Providing access into public areas of different houses for members of the MIT community is another step in bringing the community together.

We believe that renovations to residence halls and other centers vital to student life, specifically Walker and Stratton, would provide better space in which to support the MIT community at large. We also believe that a residence-based dining program could benefit the community by bringing members of the larger MIT community directly into specific residence halls. We believe that the system of residence selection, allowing students greater freedom to move from one living group to another, would bring the community closer by establishing more inter-group relationships.

The Student Life Council will be the most important mechanism in supporting the new MIT community. It will provide many benefits to the community, such as organization, leadership, and planning by students, faculty and staff, in a coordinated manner never-before-seen at MIT. Most importantly, the Student Life Council will monitor student life at MIT to make sure that the goals that we have set for the residence system, and the community at large, are met.