



Graduate Residents vs. Dollars

Recently, we have become aware of a possible plan on the part of the MIT administration to identify the cost of the tutor system and have the dormitory residents bear it. This is a very interesting proposal, because it gives us pause to consider the purposes and benefits of the graduate residents.

There are two groups of students in Baker House that receive special treatment from our housemaster, Nafi Toksoz: The Tutor Selection Committee and the Client Team. These committees meet in the relative comfort of his apartment and enjoy refreshments which are usually provided during the meetings. It occurs to me to wonder what sets them apart from other House groups.

In both cases, the committees are dealing directly with the MIT administration. The prospective tutors are fed to the Tutor Selection Committee by the Dean's Office. We can now be certain that a good deal of pre-selection is done by the Deans. In the March 11 issue of Thursday, an example of this was published a la Daniel Schorr in the form of an intercepted memo from Alice Seelinger (A.D.S.A.) to all Faculty Residents. The memo divides a field of thirteen prospective tutors into three classes: "Good People", "Interesting/good/enthusiastic People", and "Unsuitable". Evidently, the Dean's Office believes it should influence the opinions of the tutor selectors.

What criteria are appropriate for the selection of tutors? I doubt if any student really knows. The T.S. Committee is apt to spurn the ideas of its previous incarnations--it has very little continuity. However, one thing is certain: The ability to provide academic assistance is not relevant. Upperclassmen are always more helpful to freshmen, and tutors are usually useless to upperclassmen with specialized interests.

I conclude that the primary usefulness of the Graduate Resident Program is to the administration: The housemasters and the deans. The tutors are responsible to these authorities. In Baker House, the tutors meet monthly with Nafi, and presumably fill him in on various tidbits that he would otherwise never hear about. To my mind, the reason for the pre-selection process, and the purpose of Nafi's direct influence on a perennially novice Tutor Selection Committee, is to find tutors that will be "suitable" for this purpose.

Given all this, why should we agree to foot more of the tutor bill than we already do? Certainly the tutors are good people and friends of ours, but we are already subsidizing fourteen bed-spaces and nine commons contracts.

Because this is a controversial issue, the Baker Letter would like you to give the House your opinion:

Question 1.:

Which of the following three alternatives would you prefer?  
(mark one)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The tutor system is maintained at a cost of \$20-30 per resident (per year).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Baker House indicates to the Dean's Office that it is unwilling to increase payment for this service, implying that we would be happy to keep the tutor system as it stands now.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The tutor system be abolished (retaining house-masters and junior faculty residents) at a savings of about \$100 per dormitory resident.

Question 2.:

Indicate whether you would be in favor of an experiment in which no tutor is assigned to a floor next year, and the duties performed by the tutor be performed by students.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Indicate support by checking at left)

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Wouldn't it be great if we could express the same arrogance to graduate schools as they send us in their letters of rejection?

Dear Sirs:

Every four years, we receive many fine offers of admission. This year, due to the high number of applications sent out, I've had an especially large and well-endowed pool of graduate schools from which to select. I am very sorry that I cannot accept your offer. You may be consoled by the knowledge that you were one of the select few schools I actually considered.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you luck in attracting other fine students to your school. Perhaps it would be helpful to point out that more attractive financial arrangements would help there.

Yours Truly,

Mortimer Gnuerd