

31 August 2003

MacGregor Residents:

The house representatives wish to address the following points concerning this year's Entry assignment process:

- We apologize for the misleading information that was distributed to freshmen, parents, and Graduate Residence Tutors regarding Entry assignments.
- We want to explain the process that occurred the night of in-house rush and emphasize that we will continue to improve upon the system for future years.

Freshmen were given an information packet indicating that we would determine their Entry assignments by a computer algorithm developed over the last year. However, on the night of this year's rush, several Entry rooming representatives were unsatisfied as the computer algorithm did not allow upperclassmen the ability to select the freshmen they felt were suited for their entries. The rooming representatives voted and the House Rooming Chairs (mac-rac@mit.edu), as a result of the vote, chose to revert to MacGregor's traditional Entry assignment system, as written in the House Bylaws. The failure to deliver what was promised to you is inexcusable, and we are deeply sorry for misleading residents to believe that we would be using the computer algorithm when the possibility existed that we would not.

MacGregor has used the traditional system for many years. However, it has inherent flaws that can ignore the freshmen's Entry preference rankings. If a freshman's first and second choice entries are oversubscribed, it becomes possible that he/she will not get either of those entries since the traditional system allows for oversubscribed entries to select which freshmen will live there. (An Entry is "oversubscribed" if more freshmen rank it first than there are slots available.) Moving down the rankings, a freshman may not get his/her third through sixth ranked entries because they may have filled up with other freshmen who ranked those entries first and second. Ultimately, a freshman can move into an undersubscribed Entry that he/she gives a low preference ranking. (An Entry is "undersubscribed" if low numbers of freshmen give it a high preference ranking in relation to the number of open spaces the Entry has.) The nature of this system does not give undersubscribed entries the power to select freshmen that are suited to their cultures. The use of the traditional system results in some entries and freshmen being very satisfied, while other entries and freshmen are not. This result is a fault of the system, however, and not the fault of any individual or group of individuals.

The purpose of MacGregor's in-house rush process is to assign freshmen to entries in a way that is mutually agreeable to both freshmen and upperclassmen. To continue to move towards our goal, we are establishing a taskforce to reconsider the consequences of a computerized system, and to propose alternative solutions to our traditional system. We will have a concrete plan in place before next year's rush. This procedure will be approved by the House Committee, amended into the House Bylaws and filed with the

Office of the Dean of Student Life. In addition, a MacGregor House Master will be present during the Entry assignment process next year.

As all residents of MacGregor are members of the House Committee, we invite all of you to join this new taskforce so that your opinions and experiences may be a part of improving the system for future years. Furthermore, as a group, the members of the MacGregor House Team (comprised of House Officers, Entry Chairs, GRTs, and House Masters) are committed to a policy of complete transparency regarding this issue. If you have questions or concerns about the subject of this letter, all of us are more than happy to speak with you. If the need arises, we will arrange for a community-wide discussion so that you may better understand the justification for the decisions and actions we have taken over the past few days.

Sincerely,

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