

opinion

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Student Center may stay open on holidays, but problems remain

(Editor's note: The Tech received a copy of this letter addressed to Stephen D. Immerman, director of special services in the Office of the Senior Vice President, and also a reply from Immerman.)

The recent robbery of the Student Center Committee Game Room over Thanksgiving weekend ["Vandals rob SCC Game Room," Dec. 1] is an unfortunate consequence of the Institute's policy of locking the Student Center on major holidays.

When I was a student, the Student Center was open 24 hours per day, 364 days per year. (It was closed on Christmas Day, but not on Jan. 1.) A small core of students stayed in the Student Center over holidays such as Thanksgiving and were an effective deterrent to robberies and other mishaps.

As a student who was often unable to go home for the holidays, the warmth and cheer that I found at the Student Center often gave me something for which to be thankful.

I hope that you will reconsider the increasing frequency with which students are being locked out of their building.

Simson L. Garfinkel '87

(Editor's note: Immerman below responds to Garfinkel.)

Thanks for your note about the Student Center closings. Your ongoing concern and interest are both welcome and appreciated. I do, however, need to correct some of your assumptions about the closing of the Student Center and the recent robbery of the SCC Game Room.

First, let me acknowledge that I understand and share your desire to have the Student Center remain open during major holidays. I initiated the additional closings in 1985 (two years before your graduation) in order to allow the staff the opportunity to spend time with their families. There has been no "increasing frequency" of closings of the Student Center, and no additional closings are planned.

As you are aware, the personnel in the Student Center are a dedicated group who work around the clock in support of facilities in the Campus Activities Complex and of student and community events. I continue to support their need to have some time away from their Institute duties such that none of them must forgo important family holidays.

As you have indicated, such a policy ought not to diminish the service from which the community has become accustomed, and I agree.

I have spoken to Phillip J. Walsh, director of the Campus Activities Complex, who succeeded me over a year ago. He has been reviewing the closing policy

and will be bringing the issue to the Undergraduate Association in the near future. Phil will be asking for their assistance, along with the Advisory Board of the Campus Activities Complex, in developing options toward the end of keeping the building open 365 days a year. One option which will be considered is using student staff to help keep the building open during holidays.

I must take issue with your assumption about the student presence in the building as a deterrent to theft. It is entirely likely that the robbery was accomplished by someone very familiar with the operation of the building and of the Institute as a whole. That is not to suggest that

the theft was an "inside job," but rather to help you remember other thefts in the Student Center which were accomplished during the times when the building was fully occupied.

We must be mindful that the renovated building now requires a higher degree of security than that which we may have been comfortable in accepting in the past. Activity in the building may not necessarily be an effective deterrent to theft or vandalism.

Please do not hesitate to be in touch with either myself or Phil Walsh should you have any further ideas on this issue.

Stephen D. Immerman
Director of Special Services
Office of the Senior V. P.

Current housing system helps individual search for diversity

With Residence/Orientation Week memories still fresh in my mind, I can state unequivocally that R/O should not be removed

for the duration of their MIT career. Heavily emphasized was the fact that each independent living group and each dorm, even the

