**Fraternity Background – adapted from Steve DeFalco ‘83**

Pressure on MIT Fraternities:

1. Freshman in Dorms Policy

2. MIT demographic shift toward women

3. Meal policy for freshman

4. Age of houses and cost of upkeep given code changes

5. Handiness skills of this generation of students

6. Boston unfriendliness toward fraternities domiciled in Back Bay

7. Presumed financial pressures to cost less than dorms.

MIT issues concerning fraternities:

1. Shift in student preferences to be on/near campus

2. Rising parental expectations for MIT’s role in “supervising” its students

3. MIT owning reputational (and legal?) risks in areas of safety, alcohol, and sexual assault without full control of properties

4. Risks above are compounded since houses not under campus police jurisdiction

5. Required part of housing mix to meet student occupancy requirements

6. Title IX implications and potential responsibilities for off campus properties

Reason fraternities are a positive influence at MIT:

1. Leadership roles and responsibilities on campus

2. Provides community within community for IM sports and other campus activities

3. Pre-Frosh who stay in fraternities have higher admit rate

4. Fraternities provide leadership opportunities that develop into successful life skills

5. Fraternity alumni feel better connected, have greater success, and donate more generously than non-fraternity peers

6. Residential selection allows students with similar goals and ambitions to push each other and design their own culture.

7. Social safety net

8. Adds to diversity of housing choice

**Potential Solution**

Without a defined plan, Boston based fraternities will continue to weaken and slowly close which will substantially escalate their risk profile and further alienate a core and important group of alumni. While MIT gives these FSILGs a great amount of resources through professional staff support, IRDF, Annual Fund & donor recognition activities, the reality is this support is propping up a system which is challenged with today’s realities. Unfortunately, these challenges are expected to grow in the future. This system needs to adapt and realign to today’s circumstances.

A potential solution is to relocate these houses to campus into a newly developed fraternity row. This could be accomplished by MIT designating a tract of land (or buying new land?) for development, sale of existing houses, and a substantial alumni fundraising campaign tied to the current campaign effort.

The goal would be to reach out to fraternity alumni who feel disenfranchised by a perception that MIT’s actions have weakened the system with a positive message of a viable plan to preserve these institutions in a more competitive new form across the river.

It is important in this effort to prune/realign to support the strongest houses and get the right demographic mix of coed, fraternity, and sorority housing to match MIT’s going forward demographics. Achieving the right mix of FSILGs versus dormitory housing will create an environment for long term financial and leadership sustainability.