

BERMAN, Sara Mae ^{1983 Mar 9}
Women Students Interest

Women's Student
Affinity Group

From: Sara Mae Berman 5/9/83
To: Linda Vaughan
Subject: My activities on behalf of women students

*File Women and
Students
Interests*

Created and found funding for The Cheney Room Papers, a tri-weekly newsletter for women students; developed a mailing system with the help of Peter Brown, who supplies me with mailing labels; I mail to undergraduate women on and off campus and to graduate women in their offices or off campus, also mail to women faculty, major MIT administrators, housemasters, tutors, ODSA staff, and others who requested the newsletter; also mailed to heads of Schools and Department chairs with a request for information about outstanding achievements of women in their areas. At least half the newsletters's copy is written by people other than myself, or contributed by others (sometimes more).

Held three luncheon discussions in the Cheney Room, making arrangements for all the speakers, publicity, and lunches. I chose the speakers for their experience and their ability to help women students think more positively about themselves and gain insight into what they will face in the workplace as professional women. Have received positive feedback from many of those who attended.

Surveyed women who use The Cheney Room on how they use the rooms and what improvements they would like to see; held four meetings with staff and students, three of those included Victoria Sirianni, MIT Space Planner and Interior Designer, to decide what ideas to carry out; so far, the shower has been re-tiled, the shower head raised and the shower curtain replaced; getting the windows into better operating condition is now on Charles Newbold's action list; the lockers will be repainted and additional box-type lockers will be obtained this summer; I encouraged a group of women graduate architecture students, who have now presented us with a proposal for design and construction of necessary renovations; these will be reviewed at our next meeting (5/10/83).

As staff to The Advisory Committee on Women Students' Interests: I have produced four sets of meeting notes and made arrangements for four meetings, including inviting additional participants; at the suggestion of Pat Bell-Scott, I invited and handled all the arrangements for Prof. Sheila Tobias to come to MIT, and in response to various people's needs, organized a faculty breakfast, a luncheon, and an afternoon reception (in the Cheney Room) to take full advantage of her being here; also kept Mrs. Gray informed of her schedule so she could arrange to meet Prof. Tobias, again.

Manage two women's bulletin boards, one near the Admissions' Office, the other the Women's Kiosk in Lobby 7; also supply interesting items to the Cheney Room bulletin boards.

Maintain a calendar of events in The Cheney Room, answer requests for using the Room and assign dates and times. Have publicized the Room's existence and rules for its use in the newsletter.

Organized exhibits of famous alumnae in the enclosed bulletin boards just off Lobby 7 at the front of the infinite corridor, changed the exhibit twice; materials came from the MIT Museum with great cooperation from Joan Loria; Sue Laing let me keep the exhibits up for two months; exhibited alumnae architects on the third and fourth floors; exhibited alumnae pictures in ODSA offices.

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Produced meeting notes for Dean McBay's four IAP luncheons, where the ODSA services to international students, graduate students, women students and minority students were discussed.

Held two luncheon discussion meetings in The Cheney Room to follow-up on issues raised from Dean McBay's IAP luncheons.

Held Registration Day ice cream party in The Cheney Room on Jan. 31; 51 attended.

Attended SWE and AWS meetings or functions. Attended two meetings (one in Dec., one in Apr.) on creating a Women's Resource Center at MIT. Attended other meetings on women students' and women faculty issues.

Reserved space and made two drop posters to advertise Cheney Room functions.

Attended WAG meetings, and have taken surveys on the use made of the two women's lounges, 8-219 and 10-384.

Met twice with the Women's R/O co-ordinators to offer myself and The Cheney Room as resources for Women's R/O activities.

Met three times with Admissions personnel on how to encourage more women to come to MIT; attended their Telethon.

Initiated idea of a Cheney Room 'Award to Outstanding Women' to be role models for MIT women students; arranged meeting of staff and faculty, after discussing concept with several people, to develop the idea further: now we suggest a Cheney Room sponsored Annual Lecture-ship, to be presented by an outstanding woman in any field, whose time on campus would include scheduled times for meetings with students. (A more detailed proposal will be forthcoming.)

Miscellaneous: have met with many individual women students on a variety of issues, and have referred several to appropriate staff to handle serious situations. Answer phone requests for information. Constantly seek information about women students' and women faculty activities and achievements. In the early part of my job I talked with dozens of women staff and faculty on the nature of the MIT environment for and history of women at MIT...I try to maintain contact with some of them. Am learning to send mail on the AI and Computer Labs' computer network (My daughter is teaching me.) to advertise Cheney Room functions. Read 12 folders on MIT applicants and 62 freshman essays. Attended three meetings relating to Women and International Development, but was unable to help because of lack of time.

Not listed are the activities for the other half of my job under Steve Immerman.