By DOUGLAS ROSS

Housing office promises
rooms for all students

Although as of last week some 180 students who earlier indicated they want university housing for next year had not been given rooms, Director of Housing Garcia Kimball says with assurance, “I expect by the end of next week most students wanting campus housing will be assigned to it.”

Today the housing office is expected to post room assignments to the 12 small houses Tufts will be converting to dormitories next year. While those new “dorms” will house a large number of the currently roomless, utilization of the small houses will still leave 40-60 of those students unroofed.

Space for the leftover 40-60 has not been found yet, Kimball admitted, but the housing director expressed confidence that “the problem would work itself out” by September.

The annual lottery for room assignments held this year in March left more than 400 students desiring on-campus housing frustrated. After deciding not to use Lesley College again for these “losers,” Dean of Students James Steindler announced that Tufts was to have its own trailer park — “mobile homes” were to be bought and lottery losers were to be housed in these trailers, to be “conveniently” located between Cozens gym and the Eliot Pearson school.

However, according to Kimball, student dissension to the university’s trailer park solution to the dearth in housing was so adamant that in mid-May the mobile home plan was abandoned.

To replace the spaces the trailers were to supply, Steindler announced, the university would lease 12 small private houses from a Tufts controlled private development corporation, Walnut Hill Properties. 

All of these are to be unisex dorms despite the fact that 92 percent of those students who voted in this spring’s election indicated on a special referendum question that they would prefer a coed dormitory to a unisex one.

Steindler explained that the 12 houses are to be unisex due to the high cost of hiring graduate students as head residents, a requirement for coed dormitories. Unisex housing only requires one undergraduate advisor. Steindler also cited a legal requirement for separate bathroom facilities in coed dormitories as another factor in the decision to keep the 12 houses unisex.

Housing Review

This was Kimball’s first year as housing director, succeeding the beleaguered Michael Bower. It was also the first and last year that Lesley College of Cambridge was used to house students that could not be squeezed into regular dormitory facilities on campus.

Last August the housing office still had not been able to accommodate 200 students from the 1973 lottery. With little over a month left before students returned for the fall semester Lesley College offered six of their houses to Tufts. Without that offer this year’s housing situation would have been in utter chaos. Tufts as late as August 1 was not actively seeking housing for the 200 1973 lottery losers.

Kimball said that she “shuddered to think what would have happened if Lesley had not made their offer.”

Problems soon arose at Lesley. No formal contract was ever signed between that college and Tufts. As a result neither institution was overly eager to assume responsibility for security or fire safety. However by the end of the first semester new locks had been installed and fire regulations were finally adhered to.

Approximately 100 students remain at Lesley now and most of these express satisfaction with their living conditions. However, Tufts decided early this semester not to use these facilities next year. Steindler said that the decision was made because administrative difficulties, high costs and a troublesome bus service had not left Tufts totally happy with the arrangement.

Another housing crunch was expected this year by the housing office but in reality turned out to be worse than even the most dire predictions, when the housing office found it was unable to provide accommodations for 400 students. As Tufts did not want to place these disadvantages at Lesley and could not accommodate them in existing facilities a new solution had to be sought up.

It is still unclear exactly whose brainchild the idea of mobile homes was. However in early March Steindler announced that mobile homes would be purchased to house the homeless. The trailers, costing approximately $8700 each, were to be retained for a few years only.

Steindler noted that the university has a present undergraduate population of 3800 which is up 300 from three years ago. Tufts is aiming to get back to the 3800 level within a few years.

But the strong negative student reaction to this project was stronger than expected. The proposal was scrapped and the decision to utilize the 12 university owned small houses was made.