Systems stressed

New management program offered

The School of Industrial Management will begin an experimental undergraduate program in September. The program has as its primary objective that students be trained in industrial management by stressing the concepts of systems analysis and practice as applied to the case of a firm. About ten percent of the students will be from the junior and senior years.

The experimental program will depart from the usual format of separate academic subjects. Instead, the student will undertake an on-going research program in systems dynamics. "Study units" in this program will be selected for the student to complete as they are finalized and made available in the school.

It is anticipated that academic grades will be replaced by verbal and written evaluation of each student's progress and weaknesses by the faculty.

A major deficiency in business education has followed from an inability to deal with industrial systems in sufficient depth to show how the component relationships within the system create observable behavior. The Systems Curriculum Committee hopes that the new program will produce a student who is able to look beyond the obvious parts of a system into the interactions that underlie its behavior.

A future manager should be able to assess certain inventory and employment policies can interact to create the desirable production system. The traditional emphasis is placed on how risk-taking propensity and integrity influence the success of marginal projects; how the traditional performance of an organization becomes its standard of performance, and how standards can shift downward as actual performance approaches the traditional standard. A manager is expected to merely evoke counterpressures within the system to defeat the effort.

The program will depart from the conventional sequence in all basic material first in a sequence of prerequisites that eventually lead to the interesting substance of the field. When the conventional sequence is followed, integration is postponed while the student is forced to look for and understand the basic elements. The Systems Curriculum Committee feels that it is entirely possible to start with a meaningful attack on an important problem and gradually to penetrate the necessary underlying disciplines.

Following:
1. The general Institute requirements, most of which will be covered in the first two years.
2. The Humanities and Social Science electives in the junior and senior years as needed for the general Institute requirements.
3. An unspecified elective subject in each academic term of the junior and senior years.
4. All remaining time will be spectacularly utilized and no time will be wasted on a program of research and guided study. The research core will consist of a series of projects in the study of dynamic systems.
5. The "minor" requirement in a field of science or engineering has been eliminated.

During the last few years there has been much dissention in the faculty regarding the merit of having a grading system. The Systems Curriculum Committee feels that the tone and atmosphere of the experimental program will be considerably enhanced by handling the grading question as it is now being done in the freshman seminars. That is, all grades of satisfactory or unsatisfactory will be retained and used for further distinction.

The committee has expressed: "We feel there is often conflict in work which will obtain good grades and work which achieves true education. In this program we wish to replace evaluation and feedback based on long-term and educational objectives, rather than on the short-term preparation for quizzes.

The present is to accept, about ten students per year into the program at the beginning of their junior year. One phase of the program will terminate with a B.S. degree in industrial management. For qualified students, there will be possible to continue the same style of program into graduate study.

If interim indications are promising, the experiment could continue another four years until the first five-year group will have been trained. The MIT for two years, A time that the system is built, there will be no basic for deciding whether or not the program can continue into other centers to make agyment education.

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