

Academic incest

As the term gets into full swing, the members of the Class of '67, many still dazed from the traumatic experience of corralling a thesis advisor, are being hit with the realization that now is the time to apply to graduate school.

Unfortunately for many undergraduates one highly rated graduate school has no desire to accept any MIT seniors in their field. That misguided school is the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Surprising as it may be to some, some undergraduates develop such a fondness for the Institute and its programs during their undergraduate years that they very much desire to work for their advanced degrees here. That desire may or may not be fulfilled, depending in some cases almost exclusively on which field the student decided to concentrate as an undergraduate.

If an MIT senior has a good academic record and majored in some form of engineering he has an excellent chance of being admitted to his departments graduate school. MIT seniors are also welcomed into graduate programs by the Departments of Geology and Geophysics, Food and Nutrition, Industrial Management, and the graduate programs in the School of Humanities.

However if the senior has majored in physics, chemistry, or mathematics, as many MIT students do, he is very likely to find his department passing over him in favor of another student whose record is no better or even less impressive, but who does come from another university.

It strikes us that there is something drastically inconsistent in this behavior.

We have heard two arguments advanced for a department's refusal to accept its own undergraduates into its graduate school. The first is that it's a sign of a weak graduate program when any department starts accepting its undergraduates. The argument runs that a department turns to its own products only when it is unable to attract students from other schools.

This argument is fine when applied to schools with a low grade undergraduate output, but other grad schools seem happy enough to accept the product of MIT's science departments. After all, the Institute likes to talk about the high quality of its undergraduates and surely the major science departments do at least a reasonable job educating their share of these undergraduates. We also wonder how the School of Engineering, which has been accepting its own undergraduates for decades, managed to get itself ranked first nationally among engineering graduate schools.

The second argument advanced for not letting undergraduates attend their departments graduate school hinges on the "academic incest" theory, which, roughly stated is: "Son, you know...all we can teach you, so go somewhere else and listen to somebody else's point of view."

It is undoubtedly true that many MIT undergraduates would be better off attending another university for graduate work. Another viewpoint, another set of people, and even just another town and campus would undoubtedly do many of us a world of good. However it seems that all departments forget this argument at least every third year or so when a really outstanding undergraduate comes along.

So we end up puzzled. Are some MIT departments guilty of harming their undergraduate students educations by incestuously allowing them to attend graduate school here, or are some departments arbitrarily excluding almost all of their undergraduates, even the brightest, because of a vague fear for their reputation?

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Front page photo of MIT taken by John Havekotte

Arts and science

The announcement of a full-scale humanities major at the Institute has undoubtedly caused more than one member of both the faculty and the student body to mutter to himself: "I wish this place would stop trying to be another *\$#* Harvard, and get back to training the best damn engineers in the world."

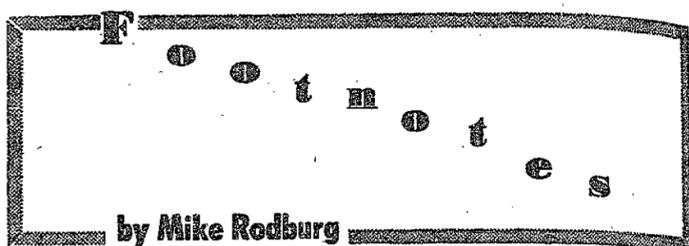
This old-line viewpoint of the Institute's function is of course outmoded, but many reasonable people are concerned about the possibility of the Institute moving into new areas of endeavor so fast that its resources will not be able to keep pace. These men are afraid that hastily conceived majors will not be able to offer the outstanding type of education MIT is known for, and at the same time many of them feel that the effort and money spent in developing full programs in the humanities and social sciences might be more profitably spent in insuring the continued strength of the Institute's traditional technical departments.

However, the new degree program in humanities has some impressive credentials. The fact that a co-major in a field of science and engineering is no longer required is a tribute to the quality of the teaching staff in the School of Humanities and Social Science, a staff that now numbers 149, equivalent in size to the total faculty of many small liberal arts colleges.

At the same time there need be no worry about the number of "Tech Tools" qualified to be liberal arts majors. This year's freshman class had enough verbal aptitude to score a median of 690 on their college boards, considerably higher than the entering classes of most liberal arts schools.

From the undergraduate point of view the new major provides one more option in choosing the academic program best suited for him.

The decision to bring the Institute closer to the concept of a complete university has been made. We are sure MIT's Corporation and administration will now fulfill the Institute's motto by providing the men and the means to make MIT outstanding in both the arts and science.



by Mike Rodburg

100. President Johnson conducted a relaxed, informal press conference for representatives of the Institute's major publications Tuesday. The group met in his office free to range over any particular topic of interest. Asked if he had enjoyed the inauguration, the President replied that he had had a good time, better, in fact, than he thought possible.

Some of the topics covered in the hour and one-half discussion included the Inner Belt and MIT's commitment to the Cambridge community; the housing shortage and the solutions now underway; the difficult decisions involved in the problem of tenure at the Institute; the new liberalization and stress on the humanities at MIT; and the rising cost of college tuition.

Of the last of these, the President remarked that he hoped no one in the class of '70 would see a tuition rise as undergraduates, but with the pressures of inflation we are now experiencing...

All in all, it proved a worthwhile and informative discus-

sion. President Johnson indicated that he would be agreeable to further press conferences of this type, and we think it is an excellent idea.

101. The Center for Materials Science and Engineering was one of five designs awarded prizes from the New England Region of the Council of the American Institute of Architects. The design is on display on the Sturbridge commons as part of its annual conference.

102. MIT has received \$272,472 as part of a federal grant for general clinical research given to six Boston area hospitals and universities, including Harvard, Boston City Hospital, and New England Medical Center Hospital.

103. Professor Harold Edgerton, while engaged in mapping the Boston area ocean bottom with sonar, discovered a small hill beneath the sediment between Marblehead and Boston. The hill rises nearly 125 feet below sea level, starting over 131 feet below. It has been dubbed Mt. Shrock.

Inside Inscomm

Mammoth conference planned by Inscomm for spring 1968

By Frank March, UAP

By Frank March, UAP
Do you remember the 'Urban Challenge Conference'? Now, planning has begun for another conference of this magnitude to be held at MIT in the spring of 1968. A committee will be chosen to determine if such a conference is feasible and, if so, to pick the topic for the conference.

1968 Conference

Although these are the only formal objectives for this committee, it is possible that if the topic is accepted by the Institute Committee, the committee might also begin planning the conference. It is necessary that the committee be chosen at this early date because funding for the conference must be accomplished by next summer in order to take advantage of large foundation grants.

The committee and its chairmen will be chosen by the Executive Committee of Inscomm. Anyone interested in running should sign up for interviews before Tuesday, October 25, in the Inscomm Office.

SC Conference

The Student Center Committee

is now making final plans for attending the Region One Student Center Conference. There, mutual problems of Student Center administration and planning will be discussed with representatives of other colleges in New England which have student centers. In addition, the Student Center Committee plans to make a bid to have next year's conference here at MIT, to let other universities see our Student Center.

Open House

Ed Seykota, newly elected Open House Chairman, has asked that anyone wishing to work with the Open House Committee please contact him at East Campus or leave your name in the Inscomm Office (even if you have previously signed up in the Inscomm Office).

Several people have asked that the Inscomm phone number and my home phone number be printed in this column. The Institute Committee has four numbers, x3680, x2696, 547-3086, and d19-798. I may be reached in the evening at x2857, 876-0219, and d19-781.

Letters to The Tech

Shoo fly pie

To the Editor:

Lately we've been sharing our none-too-large servings in Lobdell with an increasing number of flies. The little buggers are abundant in both the serving and dining areas, and they get first taste of the trays, silver, food, drink, glasses, water, money, condiments tables, chairs, salt,

pepper, sugar, napkins and air. We're not sure what good Mr. Lobdell died of ('... gave his whole life to MIT...') but...

We have tried putting suggestions in the Suggestion Box, but the flies don't read (although they did fly off with the remaining blank slips!). We have tried fighting it out directly with the flies, but they are better nourished than we and always get away. Soon we shall have to notify the parents of undergraduates that their sons and daughters have been elected to Phi Lambda Upsilon (PLU) National Food Service Technology Honorary, and enclose a portrait of the National President 'Musca Domestica.'

Yours in sickness and in health,
Cynthia and Daniel Whitney (6)

