Forum defines Lincoln goals

By Alex Makowski

"The primary goal of Lincoln Labs is to bring interdisciplinary teams together to focus on large-scale goals." The Lab was created to tackle tasks too immense for any one MIT department rather than to serve educational ends. Any attempt to justify the Lab's existence on solely educational grounds will fail. These points were emphasized by members of the Lincoln staff at an open forum on the Lab held Tuesday.

Lincoln meet:

Many of those participating in the forum were concerned with pinning down the value of Lincoln for the Institute. The potential for vigorous faculty-Lab interaction was repeatedly stressed, though the present dearth of such contracts was admitted. The Haystack radio-astronomy antenna was cited as a specific example of the coordination possible.

And the "peripheral activity" surrounding such projects as ABM radar development does attract roughly two dozen graduate students each year. They come to take advantage of the equipment and experience available at Lincoln.

"MIT prestige"

Lincoln, one employee insisted, does need MIT. Comparing the vitality of the Lab with such independent facilities as the MITRE Corporation, he resisted attempts to label the close ties between the Institute superfund.

Another advantage is the prestige that Lincoln derives from the label "MIT." When dealing with outsiders, the Lab need not fear pressure to contract for some undesirable project.

A largely unresolved issue concerned the effect of the Lab on other departments not directly related to it. One professor voiced his feeling that MIT should loosen its ties with Lincoln, meanwhile forming relationships with industrial labs. His goal was to give other departments the same benefits Lincoln provides.

The forum opened with some general factual information about MIT's controversial facility. Approximately one-third of the 1800 employees are labeled professional; 200 have PhD's; almost 400 more have a Master's. Fifty percent of the work done is classified.

Security clearance

Security clearance is not required to begin work, although all employees must file for clearance. There are essentially no "closed areas" inaccessible to the staff or their guests. "About the only place you can't see," remarked another staff member, "is the inside of the safes."

Attendance at the forum was surprisingly poor, as the six staff members from Lincoln were met by roughly the same number of MIT professors. Only one graduate student was present, and undergraduates were totally ab sent.

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