70's Commission starts

By Richard King

"Our commission will be judged on what it does, not on what it says." - Professor Ken- neth A. Meyer, chairman of MIT's Commission on the Nature and Purposes of MIT Education. This is to be their guiding principle, a mixture of thinking and action by which Hoffman expects to get more done than by either alone.

The other faculty members of the commission are Louis Smullin, EE; Sheila Widnall, Aero and Astro; Samuel Bodman, Chen E; Arthur Steinberg, Humanities; Leuter, Theor. Economics; Daniel Kem, Chem- istry; and Erik M. Christian, Meteorology. Two graduate students, Marvin Sirbu in Electric- cal Engineering and O. William Lever, Jr., in Chemistry will also serve on the Commission, as will Charles Mann '72, and Lawrence Storch '71.

The 70's Commission, as it is called, will not directly have any power, but its word will be heeded by the administration. Hoffman sees the lack of direct power as a good thing as it makes the Commission feel less autonomous.

Hoffman feels that a major problem will be making sure that there is sufficient participation to allow the ideas generated by the commission to reflect the wishes of the community. He is less worried about the possibility of disturbances by pressure groups than about the possibility of the whole thing dying out of apathy. The Commission cannot serve its purpose without a large number of people giving input, as its purpose, in Hoffman's opinion, is to strike a balance between consensus and philo- sophizing and to arrive at a pur- pose of MIT education. Then and only then can they make recom- mendations concerning the nature of education.

Consistent with this policy, they will have few closed meetings: the meetings will be open unless they concern them- selves with nominations or a similar special purpose. Three meetings will take place in room 26-110.

End communication

Hoffman likes to consider the whole MIT community as part of the Commission and wishes no one to feel himself an out- side. Anyone should feel free to talk to someone. The offices will close, permanent offices will at Building 26 will be worked out later.

Communications among the parts of MIT will be helped by regular and frequent coffee hours to probably be held in the Student Center. These coffee hours would be an opportunity to talk informally with Com- mission members.

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