E-Lab seeks student participation

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concerning the present and future scale of Man's activities which shape the atmosphere, the oceans and the land, the effects might become widespread.

The SMIC Report, containing specific recommendations for types of research, studies of previous climate changes, theories and models for climatic change, consideration of the modification of upper and lower atmospheres, and the analysis of actual and possible effects of man-made surface changes, has just been released. It is here and is available as a $2.95 paperback.

The fourth E-Lab project, "Exploration of Mammalian Cell Cultures in the Biosoay of Environmental Chemicals," is just getting underway. Headed by Professors Gerald N. Wogan, Daniel C. Wong, and William G. Thilly, it is shaping up as an exciting program of measurement of immediate and evolutionary effects of low concentrations of chemicals on mammalian cells. The cells, with a twosome and a half decades experience, should provide some of the first valid information on the long range effects of two significant molecules of their actual, non-laboratory components.

This is the first of the E-Lab's research projects in which the policy of using existing space and facilities may become a problem. However, at the time of its formation, E-Lab was assured by then Provost Weiner that "the Institute would be met by the hardware..."

SCSP

Last year, Professor Carroll Wilson also directed the Study of Critical Environmental Problems (SCSP): "Man's Impact on the Global Environment." Some forty or so relevant projects from over a dozen fields worked for nearly a month on global climatic and ecological effects of several specific pollutants in the atmosphere and the ocean. Also explored were the procedures of focused research, monitoring, and education that will be required to understand further the nature of potential threats to the environment; and the ways that effective action can be taken to avert such crises.

The major objective of SCSP was to raise the level of informed public and scientific discussion and action on global environmental problems. To this end, in attaining this goal, a thorough report of all the SCSP work has been prepared by the key faculty and costs $2.95. Subjects covered include "Carbon Dioxide from Fossil Fuels," "The Role of Clouds," "SST's in the Stratosphere," "DDT and Related Persistent Pesticides," and "Oil in the Ocean." Also considered are the definitions of the implications of change and remedial action, other climatic and ecological effects, monitoring, industrial products and policies, domestic and agricultural wastes, and energy products.

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The E-Lab was only a year old; it grew out of the suggestions made by the Environmental Quality Task Force in July 1970. The task force of faculty and students stated in its report to the community that "the organization should have the authority to undertake largescale research projects," and would not only engage in major research efforts but also "include tasks of interest to individual faculty"

E-Lab now

The E-Lab is still small, it is primarily a "data bank" budget mostly from "outside sources," especially the National Science Foundation, and it has hardly touched its initial financing from the Institute. It is likely that its size will be controlled to keep it as an integral part of MIT in order to insure the continuing cross-flow of ideas among students and faculty of all departments.

Professor Raymond F. Redhead, head of the Department of Chemical Engineering, chairman of the task force, and Director of the E-Lab, feels that much of the Lab's slow start can be attributed to "a serious lack of communication with students and especially Faculty. However, now our desire to build student involvement into the E-Lab from the beginning, and we realized that this would mean that it would be some time before it really got rolling.

A faculty member with a major concern is to present it to the Interdisciplinary Environmental Council which oversees E-Lab operations. If the project is not within the bounds of a single department and outside support seems available, the proposal has an excellent chance for acceptance provided that interest and response among the MIT community can be generated.

In response to the SESP report which greatly impressed the task force, the MIT Class of 1924 has chosen E-Lab as the recipient of its 50th Reunion Gift. They will provide for a Lab Fund, hopefully reaching $100,000 by 1974, to be used to support faculty in environmental research and instruction, support preliminary research necessary to secure substantial funding from other sources, support professional MIT staff who are pursuing advanced environmental studies, and providing facilities money to be used in the environmental area. Class members are also being urged to solicit gifts from industry.

Environmental Council

The Institute formed the Interdisciplinary Environmental Council (IEC) to take an overview of all education and research activities that relate to environmental concerns. This reflects recognition that successful endeavor in this area requires involvement of a number of disciplines, and faculty and students of all departments.

The IEC is available to any MIT group for advice and assistance concerning research and educational programs dealing with environmental problems.

The E-Lab is what the MIT community wants it to be, and I personally am delighted and moved entirely off-campus.

I EC has the continuing responsibility for formulation of policy on issues that relate to interdisciplinary environmental work at the Institute. A primary concern is to review interdisciplinary educational opportunities at all levels.

According to Redhead, "The IEC, not the E-Lab, has course responsibility. The IEC handles the academic program and courses and coordinates the E-Lab's mission-oriented work. The IEC also has the responsibility for maintaining the association of... environmental work at MIT with the primary objectives set by the task force. The chairman of the IEC is the Provost and its membership includes both faculty and students.

Our objective is to make the bringing on campus of large, interdisciplinary mission oriented environmental research with educational value." Redhead continued, saying, "It is highly desirable to bring this ecological problem here, where great student and faculty involvement is possible.

The primary concern is to provide an educational experience. The E-Lab is what the MIT community wants it to be, and my responsibility is to make it work in the best way possible..."

"To reemphasize: although the Lab serves to carry out research and solve environmental problems, it is primarily educational in purpose. We feel that the faculty who take from one to two years to two out of the twenty years on a project will return better equipped to deliver their courses. It cannot be said that E-Lab will directly or indirectly improve the quality of the environmental education in the classroom..."