Undergrad education: could it be eliminated?

By Paul Schindler

Disconcerting information has reached The Tech in recent weeks which casts doubt on MIT's institutional dedication to undergraduate education. "No one can doubt the current administration's commitment to undergraduate education," said informed sources, "but the institute's mistake in another direction: research and graduate education."

Employees in one section of the Dean for Student Affairs office noted that many there feel a "learning commitment" to undergraduates and undergraduate education, made clear in the budget-cutting priorities. "Student-oriented activity seems to be getting hit hardest," noted one staffer, "just as we were making some progress in humanizing the environment."

The major rationale for cutting out students seems to be money. A highly placed Sloan school official noted that: "In spite of the modified state of the budget, it's clear that undergraduate education loses a great deal of money."

The official went on to note that, "Undergraduates are not as useful as research in graduate students are; thus graduate students are relatively less expensive to educate." He noted that a year ago, there was "noticeably more" sentiment against undergraduate education than there is now. "Financing for the elimination of undergraduates doesn't seem to be going on any more, at this point."

The source noted that one way to make elimination easier would be to follow current plans to create a separate undergraduate division. "If the funds for this facet of MIT's operations were separate and visible, the probable losers would be easier to point to," he noted, increasing pressure to drop the unprofitable enterprise.

He concluded by noting that, "The Corporation very probably has final say in this kind of matter, their approach could well be considerably more pragmatic and considerably less idealistic than that of the administration."

Kenneth Hoffman, former chairman of the Committee on MIT Education, whose report suggested the creation of an undergraduate division to cover the freshman and sophomore years, called such allegations, "untrue." He added that "We were trying to point out new directions for undergraduate education, to which most of us here are firmly committed." He seemed to think that some turmoil over the proper balance of undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate education, between scientists and humanities, for example, was visible. Others have speculated that this turmoil might be mistaken for indecision about all of undergraduate education.

On numerous occasions, both Chancellor Gray and President Wemner have re-affirmed their personal commitment to undergraduate education, in both the long and short haul at MIT.

MIT-wide evaluation starts

By Lee Giguerie

The first Institute-wide subject evaluation to be administered under way today and tomorrow, with approximately 20,000 questionnaires being distributed is MIT living groups. The questionnaire will consist of three parts: "The Course," "The Teacher," and "Comments," preceded by a brief explanation of the program identified to students who in addition to their plan to "pinpoint strong and weak points in MIT's course offerings." Under "The Course" will be questioned (asking for responses on a one to five scale) probing the organization and general value of the subject; "The Teacher" questions will explore teaching techniques. While the "Comments" section welcomes "anything you would like us to know," the questionnaire contains personal remarks in five areas: peer, interest, text and lectures, homework, and quizzes. The questionnaire also asks the student to identify his year and major as well as the subject teacher and his instructions.

Baker, outlining the development of the program, said that he idea for the evaluation originated with the class of '72 offered last spring but lay stagnant and fall. Concurrently, a TCA independently began dis- investigating subject evaluations, primarily focusing on the class of '72 offering last spring but lay stagnant and fall. The TCA, independently began dis- investigating subject evaluations, primarily focusing on the class of '72 offering, virtually in unique charge — the Secretary of State seemed willing to delegate these matters fully to him, and there appeared in those days not to be the kind of same capability para-omnipotent, para- omnipotent, White House secre- tariat, of the kind we have come to know and love over this past decade, an audience rooted with laughter.

After skipping a few quotations French into his lecture, Breton Reichman got to keep on quoting French because President Podroupsky said we must. I've got to show that some of us still can.

With comments such as these, the MP ingratiated himself with the audience of appropriately 200 who struggled to follow him tomorrow to distribute questionnaires to non-resident students. Baker also noted that after the questionnaires have been compiled, they will be sent to the instructors involved some time after grades are out.

GATT's (General Agreement on Trades and Tariffs) twin, the Breton Woods agreement, is now being called in question on all sides, GATT critics. The monetary consequences of August 19th could well blow sky-high much that has remained unchanged since Bretton Woods: equally far-reaching proposals on trade stil need to be discussed as permissible or impermissible derogations from GATT, whose fundamental concept of

By Peter Peckarsky

Speaking at Tufts University on September 26, 1971, Honorable Harold Wilson, former British Prime Minister and now the leader of Her Majesty's ever-loyal opposition, discussed on the history of post-war economic developments from the vantage point of an insider. The former PM, who has been abroad many times around the world on the past two years, was introduced in 1964, and was successful in the new Danish government and the Finance Minister of Denmark, commented on the initiative in appealing. He added that "We were trying to point out new directions for undergraduate education, to which most of us here are firmly committed." He seemed to think that some turmoil over the proper balance of undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate education, between scientists and humanities, for example, was visible. Others have speculated that this turmoil might be mistaken for indecision about all of undergraduate education.

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