Placement sees promising job outlook

By Jonathan Webor

Acting as a barometer of the American economy, the Alumni Placement Office showed a 28 percent decrease during the period from July 1, 1971 to June 30, 1972 in the number of MIT graduates using the office's services to find employment, as compared with fiscal year 1971.

Reflecting another aspect of the economy, the number of companies and government agencies interviewing graduating seniors through the Career Planning Office last year was 176 less than the previous year's total.

Nonetheless, the outlook of the office is still primarily a cautious one, a holdover from the fiscal '71 recession year. "People getting Ph.D.'s at MIT are still having trouble," according to Galley.

"People used to come in here with a secure job looking for a better one," she added. "Now they come in here unsure of their present one."

The 17 percent drop in recruiting companies and government agencies during the 1971-72 fiscal year demonstrates a continuation of the trend from the previous year, when 24% fewer recruitment officers visited MIT than did during fiscal year 1970.

The most noticeable drop occurred among chemical, computer, and defense firms, Weatherall indicated. However, there was a corresponding decrease in the number of MIT seniors seeking interviews with visiting representatives. There are no figures available to date of how many seniors interviewed last year, but Weatherall estimates the number to be in the vicinity of 1100.

According to the Career Planning and Placement Office report, this downsizing in job-seeking graduates is part of an overall change in attitude on the part of students resulting from the changes in the job situation that have occurred in recent years.

"One hesitates to fault the students for not pursuing more ardently the job company and government recruiters had to offer," the report states. "One is inclined to respect their realism. They looked elsewhere to market their aptitude and skills."

The number of MIT graduates going to medical schools was the highest ever, and a significant number are beginning law school. The total number of persons continuing their education in graduate schools remains virtually unchanged from previous years; however, the office acknowledges that there has always been a tendency for persons majoring in the sciences at MIT to go on for a Ph.D.

Those who did seek employment after finishing school at MIT last June were discriminating in their choices despite the depressed state of the market. Graduates generally took jobs with firms who had a reputation in research fields. "Students prefer companies that are advancing the state of the art," Weatherall commented.

Many other June graduates considered modifying the career direction they had previously chosen, or changing fields altogether. At any rate, unemployment among graduating students remains low. What disturbs the office is obscurity. The situation is somewhat worse in the sciences than in engineering.

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The career planning and placement office is that too many students simply are not aware of what can be done for them behind the doors of E19-455. Besides arranging job interviews with major employers and giving advice to prospective employers, the office contains an extensive library of graduate school catalogs for most fields in both the U.S. and abroad.

Weatherall also expressed an interest in simply talking to students whom the career planning and placement office cannot help otherwise. "The idea we want to get across is that this is a place where students can come to shoot the bull."

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