U Mass Press speaks on educational problems

By Mike McNamara

Thursday to the MIT Club of Boston, Dr. Robert C. Wood, president of the University of Massachusetts, outlined the educational problems of today. Wood claimed that "higher education faces a greater crisis today than ever before, even in the troubles of the late 1960's." With respect to approximately 40 MIT alumni, Wood reviewed the role of higher education in the past. "In the 1960's, people could have been led to believe that we were preparing for a boom." The number of college students in America went from two million to seven million, and higher education was responsible for the "boom in consumer goods and consumer-oriented production. We were on the verge of universal and free higher education."

This era was ended, according to Wood, by two problems that arose in the late 1960's: the problems of missing faculty and student recruitment. The academic world acquired a bad reputation because of all the other opportunities available to public service and industry; academic positions were not attractive enough to bring the best people into the fold. Student activism arose at this time, presenting a multitude of problems for the academic community. "Our task was to create a good university rather than a good faculty without being misled by industry; on the other hand, our students were demanding a change in the way the university was being made up," Wood said. "Higher education was getting it from both sides."

The present crisis

Although the problems of the late 60's have largely been solved, there is a larger (although less obvious) crisis facing institutions of education today. "What are our educational institutions producing?" is a very questions today, and right along with that is the question, "Who will buy what they are producing?" Wood said. "In the 1970's, examination of the how and why of the institutions will be of utmost importance." Wood cited various aspects of the crisis that affected Massachusetts especially: the division of duties between public and private colleges, changes in student bodies, and so forth. Committed during the "boom years," and the fiscal crisis has presented problems of unique nature.

"We in Massachusetts have always assumed that, with our colleges and universities, anyone could get an education in what we see as a public higher education," Wood said. "It was quite a shock to discover that the public puts problems only half as likely as a child born in Hawaii would put a college education in as the country as a whole. We're today, according to Wood, putting a challenge game ever since." Wood went on to describe the expansion of UMass from a mainly agriculture-oriented college with 6000 students in 1962 to a diverse university with 25,000 students on the Amherst, Worcester, and Columbia Point. "This state has made available a student can get an education who would not have found a college education where one feels that one should be," Wood said.

Dean's office seeks student thought, input

By Sandy Yaffe

"Is there a way for deans to meet a wider variety of students and students who feel that the students feel?" Dean Carola Eisenberg hopes so, and she has found at least one way of doing so. A series of afternoo "open houses" in her office in the coming months, in which she hopes to be reached at least one way of doing so. Eisenberg is going to invite specifi student groups that every dean feels what dean feels about students, not the only people that will come to the open houses, but she hopes that the meetings will be very informal. She hopes that the attendance will be good, and that students will not be intimidated by title and the people who she will come and freely speak their minds.

Eisenberg said that she is anxious to hear student reaction to the open houses, and that if they are not successful that she will try some other means of meeting students. She is open to suggestions as to what these means might be. Eisenberg feels that people will come up with some ideas, and that she will talk to them, and they will present them to her.

She said that her main concern is breaking down the walls which some of students feel surrounds the University. Eisenberg feels that she will attract more student input on how to make the office more responsive to students, and not merely a place one feels that one should go to only if one has a problem.

The regularly scheduled meet- ings, she feels, should supplement the meetings over dinner, and that the students who attend the meetings are not simply those whom she already knows, or those same students that everyone feels that what dean feels about students are not the only people that will come to the open houses. Eisenberg is going to invite specific student groups to the open houses, and she hopes that the meetings will be very informal. She hopes that the attendance will be good, and that students will not be intimidated by title and the people who she will come and freely speak their minds.

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