Secretaries roles questioned

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here tend to be at least partially college educated; they are therefore interested in obtaining more responsible positions.” The report for the large number of highly educated people seeking secretarial work, he explained, is a “bad job market situation.”

“ ‘There are two methods for secretaries who wish to take on more responsibility to advance themselves,’” Culliton continued, “the independent search using the Tech Task listings; and long term upgrading on the basis of seniority.”

The problem,” he concluded, “is that the amount of upward mobility is limited by a pyramid structure – there are fewer administrative jobs as you move further up. As a consequence, an attempt is being made to enrich secretarial jobs as they are.”

Secretary response

Secretaries have started to take some actions to point up their grievances and complaints. Two videotaped skits high-lighting some of these problems will be shown in the lobby of Building 7 in the coming weeks as part of an effort directed at the salary reviews. The skits, which were put together by the Women’s Forum, deal with lack of communication between secretaries and their employers, and the importance of rewarding secretaries on the basis of diligence and merit.

Most secretaries at MIT seem to agree that their wages are low. One secretary, Carol Grossman, commented that for this they are the lack of unionization and the attitudes of employers. Grossman said that, “employers sometimes consider secretarial work to be an extension of school, and don’t recognize the seriousness with which most secretaries approach their work.”

In the absence of unions secretaries generally either voice grievances directly to their employers or to one of eight personnel officers at the Institute. Wyne, speaking on the question of unions, observed that in the secretarial field, where the turnover rate is high, conditions for union formation don’t really exist. Unions are formed, he said, “where security and serenity are the overriding considerations – this is not the case for most secretaries.”

Nevertheless, the tendency to overlook the concerns of secretaries, to take them for granted, is a real and recurrent problem. Culliton: “MIT is trying to change this, and is trying to change with the times in realizing that women have suffered many inequities in this area.”

INTERACTIVE LECTURES

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