By Mike McNamee

The MIT administration will announce a $300 tuition increase tomorrow, setting the 1976-77 fee at $4000.

The 8.1 per cent increase is a result of inflationary pressures on the Institute budget, and is less than tuition rises expected at most of the Ivy League schools, MIT administrators said yesterday.

The rise is less than the record increase of $350 - 10.4 per cent - between tuition in 1974-75 and 1975-76, but still ranks among the greatest increases in MIT history (see chart). Tuition has risen $1500 since 1970, and has more than doubled since 1967's $1900 fee.

"There was an enormous amount of discussion about holding the line on tuition, and a lot of pressure to do more and raise it higher," President Jerome B. Wiesner told MIT reporters yesterday. "We wanted to try to keep it down relative to the guidelines we've used before - median family income and starting salary for graduates."

The increase should not hurt the Institute in competition for students to fill the Class of 1980, MIT officials said, since many schools have informed MIT that their tuitions will be going up by $320 to $350 next year. Director of Financial Aid Jack Frailey, while declining to associate with numbers, told The Tech that increases in the Ivy League ranged from $320 to $350 next year. Director of Admissions Kingman Brewster has predicted that Yale's tuition will rise 8 to 9 per cent over the current $4050, an increase of about $340. Harvard University is expected to continue its trend of $300 annual increases to make next year's bill $3700, while Dartmouth College has predicted a 9 to 10 percent rise over the current annual fee of $3580.

"On the face of it, $300 is the lowest increase in the bunch," Frailey said.

Stanford University, the only other major university which has set its 1976-77 tuition, will charge $4275, a 12.9 per cent increase over this year's $3810 fee. Stanford officials predict that the university's tuition increases will average 2 to 3 per cent more than the rate of inflation for the next five years.

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With the tuition increase, the estimated annual MIT student budget is expected to rise from $6800 to about $7350. Frailey said. The important component of that rise is not tuition. Frailey said, but that caused by the Massachusetts meals tax, which will add about $100 to room and board costs.

"That tax, which we never had to worry about before, makes Massachusetts colleges look $100 worse than schools in other states," Frailey said. "If there's a real competitive edge in all this, then I think the meals tax, which we can't do anything about, is going to hurt more than a tuition increase."

Effect on admissions

The Admissions Office had no official statement to make about the effect of the rise on attracting students to the Institute. In past years, Director of Admissions Peter Richardson '41 has stated that MIT tuition increases have little impact on prospective students' decisions because the schools which the Institute competes with also raise their fees.

"Students are always concerned about finances, and we always get a lot of questions," Associate Director of Admissions Sandy Cohen '72 said. "It's hard to talk about trends, but we'll find out in the cancellation studies if finances are more or less important."

Cohen said that Admissions was "encouraged" by the results of Early Action Admissions which came in during December. "We've already admitted 218 males and 68 females, which is good both in terms of the number of Early Actions and in terms of the high percentage of women - 24 per cent," she explained. "We're not about to make any predictions, but we think the number of women may be up this year over last."

Two other major decisions which will shape next year's admissions will be made within the next six weeks - establishing the size of the Class of 1980, and setting the financial aid equity level for next year.

Wiesner, while declining to predict a specific number for the class size - "whenever I do, I get in trouble," he said - said that the Class of 1980 would include fewer than the record 1140 students admitted last September, but would not drop to the low of 900 students admitted for the Class of 1977.

"Housing is still the major constraint in setting class size," Wiesner said. "We're also considering how to smooth out the broad fluctuations which have occurred from year to year recently."

The Student Financial Aid Office is "getting out its guns and building up its ammunition" for discussion of the equity level, Frailey said, but a decision isn't expected until the end of February. The equity level - the figure that determines how much scholarship and grant money a student can get as financial aid - rose from $1750 to $2100 last year, and, Frailey said, "we're going to make every effort to keep the level down."

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