(Continued from page 1)

In fact, Gray said the Institute’s budgetary situation “dictates that we either increase enrollment and make better use of our facilities, or cut faculty and staff.” The decision to increase enrollment grew out of that need, he said.

“If revenues were not a consideration, we clearly would not be talking about a class size in this range,” Gray said. “But revenues are a very large consideration.”

In addition, the decision to admit 1100 students is aimed at “smoothing out” fluctuations in first-year classes. “In the last three years, we’ve admitted 900 students (Class of 1977), 1000 students (1978), and 1150 (1979),” Gray said. “This produces a lot of anguish for the people who teach freshman subjects, especially the School of Science.” The 1100-student figure, he said, “can be taken as indicative of what we’ll be doing in the next couple years.”

Bumper year for applicants

Whatever problems MIT might have in housing the large class, it should have little trouble getting the students for it. Final applications for admission are “at the highest level since World War II,” Gray said, and applications from blacks, minorities and women are all more numerous than in recent years.

“You can only speculate at this stage in the game, but I’d have to say that something’s happening in the kids’ heads to make them more job-oriented, more interested in practical studies,” Director of Admissions Peter Richardson said. More than 4900 applications have been received “fee-paid,” Richardson said.

Applications from women are also up — 712 applications as of February 12, as compared to 623 last year and 585 in 1974, a year when everything — publicity, staff efforts, efforts from other groups — came together to increase interest in MIT.” Richardson predicted that the final sorting of applications would show at least 750 female applicants.

February 1 figures showed 319 applications from minorities, a significant increase over last year’s 188. The high number of minority applications “puts us up among the very best years we’ve ever had for minority applications,” Richardson said.

Richardson and Gray stressed that rising numbers of female and minority applicants does not necessarily imply larger numbers of women and minorities in next year’s freshman class. “We have no way of judging the admisibility of these students yet, so we don’t know if there will be an equal percentage admitted as in recent years,” Gray said. And Richardson said his office is “still doing homework” on the applications, and hasn’t started evaluating them yet. “We won’t really get a handle on that until March,” he explained.