Tuition jumps to $4,350 next year

By Mitchell Traubergen

Tuition for the 1977-78 academic year has been set at $4,350, an increase of $300 from the current level. The 7.5% per cent increase, the eighth rise in as many years, was officially announced in this week's Tech Talk. The increase is in the same range as expected at the League's annual meeting with schools with which MIT competes for students.

MIT has raised its tuition by $350 only twice before in recent history, after the 1969-70 and 1974-75 academic years. These increases brought the charge to $2500 and $3700, respectively. Director of Admissions Peter H. Richardson '48 cited inflation as the major reason for the tuition increase. Richardson asserted that "I'm appalled as what it costs me to buy dinner at a big restaurant and I'm appalled by what it costs to go to MIT... but the real [inflation adjusted] cost of MIT has not been changing a great deal."

Richardson went on to note that "there is nothing in any analysis that we have done that suggests that the tuition increase will make any difference to the degree that we are finding areas where we can make students not easy. [If I were a donor] I'd much rather have a boathouse built than give a scholarship."

The 1977-78 equity level, that amount of a student's need which must be provided for by loans and employment before the Institute will grant scholarship aid, will not be announced for about five weeks, according to Jack Frailey '44, Director of Student Financial Aid. Both Frailey and Richardson cited estimates of $200 to $400 as reasonable guesses of the range within which the equity level increase will fall. The current equity level, or self-help level, is $2,300. "This is a higher level of self-help than at any other schools with which we compete," said Frailey, adding that the current equity level here is $200 greater than the next highest, at Yale and Princeton.

Despite this high level, the fraction of students who accept MIT's offer of admission is entirely independent of their need for financial aid, according to Financial Aid Office studies. Frailey also estimates, however, that of those students leaving MIT voluntarily, roughly one fourth to one third cite financial reasons.

Student reaction to the tuition announcement has been, not surprisingly, unfavorable. Dor¬mitory Council Chairman Roger Powell fears "MIT may become a rich man-poor man school, with students from middle income families being squeezed out because they don't qualify for financial aid and because their parents can't meet the ever burgeoning costs of the Insti¬tute."

Interfraternity Conference (IFC) Chairman Richard Maebius is worried that the continual in¬crease in tuition will eventually take its toll on the freshmen. People are going to start wondering whether or not the tuition is justifiable, in view of what they can get elsewhere."

Richardson, on the other hand, is wor¬ried about the tuition rise af¬fecting the quality of future clos¬es. They are both convinced that the crucial criterion in recruiting first-rate students is the type of education that MIT offers, not the price which it charges.

Say Richardson: "The impor¬tant thing for Admissions is how people perceive the MIT educa¬tion. A few hundred dollars won't make it if people recognize that they will be getting a superior education here."

Concludes: "The magnetic allure is much more strong than it ever was. Students want to come to MIT for what it can give them and the price will not keep them away."

MIT
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