Problems of the 80's: a threat to MIT

As MIT approaches the 1980's, it prepares to enter an age of uncertainty and danger where its reputation could be tarnished. The threat is the possibility of a lower-quality student body, and the threatening factors are the anticipated student shortage of the 80's and the uncertain direction of the economy. A very definite shortage of college-aged people is coming; demographics have been talking about it for at least the last two decades. Many people are predicting that this shortage will wipe out many colleges. This shortage won't wipe out MIT, but it could affect the institution in subtle ways. The pool of bright and motivated applicants from which MIT can pick and choose will shrink; the Institute thus may not be able to go as far out on a limb as it did in the past to call its curricula.

What is MIT's current assessment of the situation? Well, President-elect Gray has hope is that a continued rise in the popularity of MIT will offset the decline in quality of students. He pointed out that during the time MIT had its highest number of applicants ever.

For every demand for engineers, MIT's largest group of graduates, continuing to grow, it would seem likely that MIT's pool of applicants would also continue to grow. However, this is not necessarily the case.

First, the demand for engineers could slow down. Here is one place where the economy comes in. If a prolonged recession occurs, companies may curtail their recruitment of engineers, and many potential students may look at the situation and decide it's not worth taking the time and effort to student engineering if there is no guarantee of having a job at the end of their studies. A similar situation occurred in the 60's when the demand for aeronautical and astronautical engineers suddenly dropped when aviation companies slammed because of losses from government contracts.

At the same time, only a limited amount of applicant pool growth can occur. Even if the engineer demand remains high, MIT cannot expect its applicant pool to continue to grow. There is only a limited number of people who arc interested in becoming engineers; since more people want rather than become engineers, MIT may be rapidly approaching the maximum number of applicants it can expect.

There are other factors which could affect the number of students willing or able to attend MIT. The most important of these factors is the economy, with its double-digit inflation. Inflation puts MIT and other private colleges at a competitive disadvantage when compared with public schools. When inflation causes prices in general to go up, the price of an MIT education goes up even more. According to Gray, inflation causes outside contributions to drop, and thus tuition must go up to offset the loss. Public schools aren't nearly so affected by inflation; the governments which fund them have much more trouble in increasing taxes, and the states are more unwilling to increase taxes.

With the cost of MIT several times the cost of public schools, it makes applicants think twice before they decide to go to MIT. Contrary to what some say, cost does make a difference in an applicant's decision. A friend of mine from high school did not come here widely because of MIT's cost. He isn't sure he's the only one. The 80's are thus a concern for MIT: What can be done to prepare for the situation? Well, not much. MIT can't really do much to affect the price of tuition, and it can't just suddenly create thousands of students.

However, MIT should at least realize the potential danger of the situation and begin thinking of ways to minimize the effect. Being Unprepared could be disastrous.

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Negotiating ID card maze

Life at MIT can be very hard without an ID card. It is for this reason that during R/O week, every freshman dutifully marches down to the Student Center for 'ID pictures. Anyone witnessing the migration is reminded of a troop of lemmings.

This being MIT, needless to say, something must, and always happens, once an auditorium, which cannot receive their permanent ID cards. As re result of this, these poor souls simply do not officially exist, and in rare instances, cannot receive ID cards, for if you don't exist, you obviously don't need an ID card. These are the sort of problems which will never be solved. Here then is the tale of one such freshman ID's. (Of 2187, Mr. Horatio L. Nebish.)

Nebish awaked on fateful September morning. Our hero was filled with apprehension, for September morning. Our hero was filled with apprehension, for September morning. Our hero was filled with apprehension, for September morning. Our hero was filled with apprehension, for September morning. Our hero was filled with apprehension, for September morning. Our hero was filled with apprehension, for September morning. Our hero was filled with apprehension, for September morning. Our hero was filled with apprehension, for September morning. Our hero was filled with apprehension, for September morning. Our hero was filled with apprehension, for September morning. Our hero was filled with apprehension, for September morning. Our hero was filled with apprehension, for September morning. Our hero was filled with apprehension, for September morning. Our hero was filled with apprehension, for September morning. Our hero was filled with apprehension, for September morning. Our hero was filled with apprehension, for September morning. Our hero was filled with apprehension, for September morning. Our hero was filled with apprehension, for September morning. Our hero was filled with apprehension, for September morning. Our hero was filled with apprehension, for September morning. Our hero was filled with apprehension, for September morning. Our hero was filled with apprehension, for September morning. Our hero was filled with apprehension, for September morning. Our hero was filled with apprehension, for September morning. Our hero was filled with apprehension, for September morning. Our hero was filled with apprehension, for September morning.

He knew Kenge Ova1, and fell in line with the 3143 other members of the Class of 2187. He tried to avoid tripping in the rubble of the crumbling heap of rams, which collapsed during R/O week 1997, killing most of the class of 2181 which was there for academic orientation.

In order to compensate for the loss of 93 percent of a freshman class, NEBISH had doubled the size of the next year's entering class. Class size was never reduced after this. Class size at MIT was destroyed after Cal-Tech was destroyed in proving the thesis of an experiential physics on the nature of anti-matter.

According to the Intra-Extra Campus Living Group Council, there was a slow rush this year, and so, dorm crowding was expected. Nebish reflected on his housing choices. Berkeley-

To the Editor:

What irony! On page four of the Tech's October 30 issue, your editorial proclaims "Human rights policy is producing results"; while on page 12 you allow the printing of a comic which contains one of the symbols of the oppression of an estimated 20 million people in the US.

Did you know that the word "gaggot" is as insulting to Gays as "nigger" is to Blacks and "Jew" is to Jews? Did you or Glen Ackerman know the origin of the word gaggot and the legacy of discrimination that gave it its meaning? Perhaps you mean a bundle of sticks. But since so many homosexuals were burned at the stake using gaggots for fuel, gaggot became interchangeable with homosexual.

You also mentioned in your editorial Jimmy Carter's successes with his human rights program. Did you know, however, that as one of his campaign pledges on May 21, 1976, Carter promised to "end the federal government's harassment of homosexuals." Three years of his human rights policy has yet to produce an effective order banning discrimination against gay people! It is a statement in support of the national gay rights bill now before Congress. This is a little ironic, since on October 14, 1979 over 10,000 gay people (including several MIT students) marched in Washington, DC in support of Gay Rights.

Finally in your editorial, you urge us to "act in support of rights of people instead of sitting in their "rooms all day doing politics." Perhaps you had better start at home with the problem of the incitement the Teah has shown both in publishing "The Beaver" comic strip and its silence on the several incidents of vandalism which have been perpetrated against the gay bulletin board this term.

Nate witheld by request