Steve Solnick

MIT'S several faces

You know, the wonderful complexity of a place like MIT has never
struck me so strongly as it does today. This feeling is brought on mostly
by seeing our "sacred" (e.g. those are occurring simultaneously
on campus: the end of 700 MIT careers, and the end of an MIT
Presidency.

As I walked the pond and hologram beside the faculty last week
to honor retiring President Jerome Wiesner, it became almost dif-
cult to remember there were students at MIT. Yet, as one watches
on Tuesday's Commencement Exercises, it will be difficult to realize that stu-
"students aren't everything there is." That change of gears, which I must admit leaves me a bit reeling, is
the sort of thing faculty and administrators are accustomed to. It
probably contributes much to the communication gaps which occa-
sionally arise with students. Equations that we are, just can't get used to cut having careers like the time.

I don't mean to imply that students went wholly unrepresented in the
proceedings to honor Dr. and Mrs. Wiesner. In fact there was a
tour racialization of students at last Tuesday's widely-advertised
reception. We all stood around as leaders and students mingled, the change-the chattering of the choral production of "He's been the very model of a modern college
president." (Heads of fun after we got over that sittingly juvenile feel-
ing, people chatted and generally made believe we were members
of the academic inner circle. The fact was, of course, that the star-
attraction was the retiring President himself and the main focus of atten-
tion in the remarks was research and administration, not education.

"demia" were discussions of LIC and of the high
seasonal collapse of citation impact, but now it's more prominent in
these were the intellectual merits, not the students. The faculty ban-
quet on the following night was even more along this trend, with an ac-
cent on Wiesner's role on the national scene, the intellectual scene, and
the administrative scene at MIT. No students were present and I
became very easy to view MIT wholly as a research institution which,
in a very abstract sense, dabbled in education.

This is not a criticism, but merely an observation. On this particular
tourney, when the academic heavyweights of MIT gathered to try
pajring to their house, the focus was on research and administration
more than on education in anything more than a remote sense.

Former president Howard Johnson made perhaps the most eloquent
proclamation of what MIT is all about during Tuesday's reception. He said
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