NASA budget cut 10 percent

By Tom Lorde

At the expense of many long-range scientific projects, NASA is keeping the budget for the Space Shuttle virtually intact despite a $604 million budget cut from the Reagan Administration.

The new NASA budget has cut 10 percent from Currie's Fiscal Year 1982 budget, expected expenditures of the NASA chief, Assistant Director of MIT's Center for Space Research. "The shuttle program has escaped unscathed ... [the budget reduction] should not do serious harm to the planetary science program."

According to Professor Herbert S. Bridge, Director of the MIT Center for Space Research, the Carter Administration's NASA budget for 1982 included a "healthy increase for science." The Reagan Administration, however, cut this budget by $604 million, directing NASA officials not to allow the cut to slow production of the shuttle. As a result, almost the entire cut has been absorbed by science programs, causing a 20 percent cut in NASA's 1982 science program.

The resulting concentration of budget cuts in science will affect research, notably at MIT. Bridge said, "We do not hit MIT's short range programs drastically but that 'building for the future is affected very seriously.' In particular, he said the cuts "affect the planetary program very seriously.

The new NASA budget has cut and delayed the development of the Venus probe drastically. MIT has a big stake in this program which was going to map the obscured surface of Venus using synthetic aperture radar.

NASA's attempts to maintain a $60 million reserve to support problems with the shuttle by taking money from other projects with congressional approval has increased the effects of the cuts. For example, NASA is trying to cancel the solar polar mission for this purpose. Congress has not yet acted on this cut, according to MIT Professor Stanislav Obert of the Physics Department, noting that cutting this project would be very disappointing to many solar scientists. The project was to make solar observations, including coronal and solar wind observations out of the ecliptic plane.

The cuts have also resulted in the cancellation of the Halley comet interception, a solar electric power project, and unspecified delays in the development of a gamma ray observatory.

Non-space missions supported by NASA will also be hurt severely by the cuts. Support of air-borne observatories will be cut substantially. It was with such observations that Professor Jim Head of the Earth and Planetary Sciences Department discovered rings of Uranus. In addition, ground-based programs in basic science will suffer from the cuts. The reductions have resulted in the planning of few new missions.

Professor Bridge noted that the direction of the cut was "a very complicated business" since many advanced long-range projects depend on the success of the shuttle.

Housing discussed

(Continued from page 2)

up." A study of this issue mentioned by Grey is not yet complete. "We haven't yet been able to digest the facts," said Smith.

Sherwood suggested "building on campus, building off campus, or encouraging private parties to build and rent to students" as possible solutions to the housing crunch.

Gray cited four factors in the approval of the recommendation by the CSA that the housing policy be implemented by 1984 by the Academic Council and the Office of the Dean for Student Affairs. "First, on-campus living is an important aspect of the undergraduate educational experience. Second, in recent years, more upperclass students have tended to stay in the dormitory system rather than move off-campus, in part because of a lighter, more costly apartment market. Third, support of a campus living situation is especially important to those students who are readmitted after having taken some time away because of academic difficulty. Fourth, we wish to provide on-campus housing to transfer students who are readmitted after having taken some time away because of academic difficulty."

Nomination
eight

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