Policy to affect int'l students

By Michael Shinaru

Government regulation of the international exchange of technical information "is obviously a very serious issue," said Eugene R. Chamberlain, international Students Advisor, Chamberlain, responsible for international Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) administered by the Defense Department and the Export Administration Regulations (EAR) administered by the Commerce Department.

If these regulations are strictly interpreted, "faculty could not conduct classroom lectures when foreign students were present, employ foreign nationals to work in their laboratories, or publish research findings in the open literature. Nor could universities, in effect, admit foreign nationals to graduate studies in these areas," according to a letter to the US Department of State, Defense and Commerce signed by five presidents of leading universities, including MIT President Paul E. Gray '54.

Chamberlain added that he is "not aware of persons who have been denied enrollment in courses at MIT as a result of the regulations."

The letter, also signed by Donald Kennedy of Stanford, Marvin Goldberger of the California Institute Technology, Frank Rhodes of Cornell, and David Saxon of the University of California, responded to a December 12, 1980 Defense Department memorandum which attempted "to restrict publication of unclassified university research results from [Defense Department] sponsored projects" and "to cancel participation of a visit by an Eastern European scientist to Cornell University which occurred as a result of the regulations."

"The new construction of these regulations," according to the letter, "appears to contemplate government restrictions of research publications and of course among scholars, as well as disbarment based on nationality in the employment of faculty and the admission of students and visiting scholars." "Such interpretations," the letter continues, "...could have a very real and unintended chilling effect on legitimate academic change."

"The ITAR, if enforced to the letter, would cover everything done in the United States. But people don't think that way. Undergraduate students, as well as graduate students, as well as faculty, understand they are writing new things, new ways of thinking, that are not about the United States," says Larry Sumney of the Defense Department, George H. Duntem, Director of the Office of Sponsored Programs at MIT, calls ITAR and EAR "the most bewildering set of regulations I've ever had to deal with."

"MIT has not yet received a reply to the letter, according to Walter Milne, Special Assistant to the President for Urban Relations. Stanford, however, received a reply which "amounts to a mere acknowledgement," Milne said. The reply indicated that the letter had been received, that the departmental staffs recognize the complexity of the issue, and that the staffs of the State, Defense and Commerce Departments will meet to coordinate a formal response.

SCEP conducts survey

By Tony Zamparttti

The Student Committee on Educational Policy (SCEP) has sent a questionnaire to all undergraduates in "try to find out what students are feeling about educational policy," according to Dave Lingebach '81, chairman of SCEP.

Results from the survey will be used to advise the faculty Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) of student views and opinions. The CEP is presently considering changes in the structure of the general Institute, science distribution, humanities, and institute lab requirements, and is reviewing the pace and direction of the MIT undergraduate programs.

The survey is "looking with some interest to the results of the survey," said Professor Sheila Widnall '68, chairman of the faculty and of the CEP. The two committees have not met together once this year, and "everybody on the CEP came away feeling that it was an extremely profitably meeting," said Widnall.

The SCEP survey contained fourteen yes or no questions on the pace of an MIT education, on whether there should be required courses in biology, writing, or computer science, and on the size of departmental program. There will also be space for students to add comments.

When the survey was presented to the SCEP, some faculty members worried that the questions might be biased. "We were able to explain the rationale behind the questions, said Lingebach. "Faculty members are natural critics," pointed out Widnall.

The survey is made up of only yes or no questions, because, said Lingebach, "The MIT student body is a difficult body to survey. Trying to do it as simply as possible may be best in the end."

"The officers of SCEP have been doing some very strong lobbying" among faculty and the members of the CEP on proposed changes in MIT's educational policy, said Lingebach. "We have been very supportive of the concept of having a writing requirement," he said.

"There are a lot of different opinions" among the students that the CEP is trying to uncover in its considerations of policy changes," said Wilbur B. Davenport Jr., '43, Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. "We feel that [SCEP] is a group that's important because it's trying to do it as simply as possible," he added. "We are still the question as to how one determines the student body's position," Davenport remarked.

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