1677 to receive degrees tomorrow

By Kenneth Snow
1677 undergraduate and graduate students are expected to receive degrees at MIT's 115th Commencement Exercises, announced in the registrar's office Friday.

The Institute has awarded over 90,000 degrees to date, of which 82,000 have been Bachelor of Science degrees. In the past ten years, the absolute number of degrees awarded has not changed significantly. 1592 degrees were presented in 1981, as compared to 1473 degrees which were awarded in 1971.

While the total number of degrees awarded has increased slightly, the number of degrees awarded within individual departments has changed significantly. The greatest change has occurred in the department of chemical engineering. 84 S.B. degrees were presented last year, as compared to 15, which were awarded in 1971. During the same period, the number of mechanical engineering degrees granted rose from 26 to 74. The number of degrees offered by some departments has declined drastically in the last ten years.

The physics department only awarded 56 undergraduate degrees in 1981, just about half of the 106 degrees they had granted in 1971. The School of Humanities and Social Science also cut in half the number of degrees it has awarded annually during the last ten years, from 86 to 43. The largest decrease was in granting the humanities and science degree, dropping from 49 to 14. The Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science presented 125 degrees last year. This is a decline from the number awarded in 1971, 199. However, tomorrow, Course VI will present 202 degrees, the most of any department.

New policy announced

By Jerri-Lynn Scordil
"It doesn't differ from the old policy very much," commented Kenneth Smith, Associate Provost, referring to the new Institute policy on conflicts of interest announced at the Meeting of the Faculty held on Wednesday, May 20.

While emphasizing that he had not been directly involved in formulating the new resolution, Smith explained how the new policy differed from the old policy. "There are two kinds of conflicts of interest," noted Smith. The old policy was designed to handle conflicts relating to commercial interests. In these cases, MIT faculty members might have interests in outside industrial firms while retaining connections to the Institute. The new policy still takes into account these types of conflicts, according to Smith and "recognizes in addition that conflicts of interest can arise from interpersonal relationships, such as those between men and women."

The policy states, "Potential conflicts of interest of a particularly sensitive kind may arise out of sexual relationships. This is especially important where a sexual relationship occurs in the context of educational or employment supervision and evaluation. Because the effects on other people at work or in the classroom are frequently not apparent to the persons involved in a sexual relationship, anyone with such an involvement should be attentive to the feelings of colleagues and sensitive to the potential conflicts of interest involved."

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