Alberty leaves dean's post

By Kenneth Snow

Dr. Robert Alberty, MIT’s dean of Science, announced his resignation as dean of the School of Science, a position he has held for the past 14 years. Alberty will continue in his present capacity as dean of Science until his replacement is found.

There have been many substantial changes in the School of Science during his tenure. Alberty noted that he expressed deep interest in the core mathematics, physics, and chemistry subjects, which he has demonstrated as chairman of the Core Group, a committee of approximately twenty faculty members in the School of Science that has reviewed these required courses. Alberty explained that during his years as dean many options have become available to freshmen in order to meet these requirements.

Alberty noted that there has been an improvement in the quality of faculty members in the past 14 years. “Recently, we have four Nobel Prize winners in the School of Science,” he said. These are 1968 winner Har Gobind Khorana, 1969 winner Salvador Luria, 1975 winner David Baltimore, and 1976 winner Samuel C.C. Ting.

When Alberty became dean there was only one woman faculty member in the School of Science, and she did not have tenure. Today, there are twenty women faculty members, three of whom have tenure. Alberty noted that he does not take credit for these improvements. Referring to the increased number of women faculty members, Alberty said, “It is part of our changing society.”

Alberty, involved in the MIT-Wellesley exchange, served as chairman of the faculty for the first five years of its existence.

Robert A. Alberty, Dean of the School of Science, recently resigned his post. (Photo by Kevin Osborn)

In the next few years, Alberty hopes that the number of undergraduates in the School of Science will increase. “A degree in science is a good preparation for a variety of fields. New scientific knowledge will help solve our problems. Maybe we are not selling the advantages of an undergraduate education.”

During his tenure as dean, twenty-four different persons have headed departments in the School of Science. “New people bring in new ideas and new talents,” noted Alberty. With respect to his position he said, “It’s time for a change.”

When he became dean, there was no optical observatory affiliated with MIT. This has changed, he noted, “I’ve had a hand in this, and presently, MIT is affiliated with two observatories.”

Being dean has offered Alberty the opportunity to “see what is going on in a wide range of scientific problems.” He added that he has enjoyed working with people in the administration and the faculty. “Being a professor is the best job at the Institute,” concluded Alberty.

He intends to resume responsibility as a professor of Physical Chemistry and says he is excited about continuing his research.

Science advisor speaks on future of US science

By Jerri-Lynn Scofield

The Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee held confirmation hearings last week on the nomination of George A. Keyworth, formerly of Los Alamos Scientific Research Laboratory, for the position of Science Advisor to the President and Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy.

In his first major policy speech, delivered June 25th before the confirmation hearings, to the American Association for the Advancement of Science’s Sixth Annual Research and Development Colloquium, Keyworth spoke about major issues he believes face the scientific and technological community today.

Calling basic research the “most unquestioned responsibility of the Federal government in the support of science,” Keyworth nevertheless asserted that “it is no longer feasible to seek to be preeminent in all fields.”

Ubiquitous upon his perception of the role of the Presidential Science Advisor, Keyworth indicated that he would be an advisor to the President, rather than as an advocate for the scientific community. Keyworth contended that “a science advisor’s credibility is his most precious asset.” He said that he had been assured of open and ready access to “top advisors and the President.” and expects his influence to increase “in a function of being right most of the time.”

According to Keyworth, research and development will have to compete with other national needs for funding. He noted that the scientific community will have to make “more of an effort in justify priorities.”

McBay ups UA budget; activities get $11,000

By Barry S. Serman

The Undergraduate Association (UA), the undergraduate student government at MIT, has received a budget increase for the 1981-82 academic year from Dean for Student Affairs Shirley M. McBay.

This increase, the first in nine years targeted to costs other than salaries, brings the total budget for student activities and government to $92,602.

According to Undergraduate Association President John DeRubeis ’83, the increase is essential to the continued viability of the extracurricular program at the Institute. In April, DeRubeis and Ken Dumas ’83, UA Vice President, met with UA Finance Board members after the Finance Board drafted a budget for 1981-82. “It didn’t make any sense at all,” said DeRubeis. “The Social Council went over budget last year by about $2000, and the Finance Board actually cut their budget by $2000. I think we have to compete with other national needs for funding. We need more money to sustain our extracurricular activities.”

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