Study of graduate student academics concluded

By Stephanie Pollack

A task force of women faculty members, graduate students, and staff has just released a study on the graduate student academic environment at MIT.

The report was designed to serve as "a guide to departments concerning how they can deal with graduate students," according to Emily Weidman, Coordinator for Women Students' Interests. The study is divided into four sections: orientation and financial support; academic advising and career counseling; and considerations of specific concern to women.

Despite the section on women's issues, the study "is really for all graduate students — it isn't only for women," according Associate Dean of the Graduate School Jeanne Richard. The report is more useful for continuing graduate students and "won't mean too much to entering graduate students," Richard added.

The report contains 26 recommendations for improving the graduate student academic environment. Most of the recommendations, according to the study, "are based on procedures that have been found effective in several departments at MIT." The recommendations range from "offers of financial support to institutional changes designed to improve the graduate student academic environment," according to the study.

Wages rise 6 per cent

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Dolin claimed that MIT students are among the highest paid in the country. "The capacity of colleges use federal minimum wage requirements for student jobs, and many can go as low as 85 percent of the federal minimum wage," she remarked.

Dolin said that she would not want MIT students to "work an outrageous number of hours in order to maintain a certain percentage of their budget."

Although there is a need for a student voice in helping to determine the minimum wage, she said that "for this summer it was decided that we would not have a representation of students." The Student Employment Office is set to set a formula to determine the minimum wage for the fall. "There is no way to make a formula that's as cut and dried as the word "formula" implies," Dolin explained.

New GSL standards unknown

By Jerri-Lynn Scofield

Despite recent publicity to the contrary, the Department of Education has not yet determined the precise guidelines which will govern student eligibility for Guaranteed Student Loans (GSL's) for the 1982-83 academic year.

For the most part, student loan eligibility for the 1982-83 academic year remains unaffected, with all full-time college students eligible for the program. There is one exception: any current first-year student who is not domiciled by the lender to the borrower before August 23 will be subject to an origination fee of five percent of the balance of the loan, to be paid to the Federal government, according to information supplied by Douglas Stormcroft of the Department of Education.

According to Skoe Smith, an information specialist with the Department of Education's Office of Public Affairs, the department referred draft GSL eligibility guidelines to Congress in accordance with a statutory provision. When asked if the department had received final approval of the guidelines, Smith replied: "No, we still don't have a response from the Hill." A representative for the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee indicated that a careful review of the Committee's Education Subcommittee, which will review the guidelines, are on vacation until September 8.

"Nobody has any idea of what the final guidelines will mean to students' contributions and their effect on eligibility for student loans," commented Leonard V. Gallagher '54, Director of Student Financial Aid. Gallagher predicted that the Department of Education "may be forced to change its guidelines. Gallagher indicated, however, that any student who is receiving aid from another Federal source will be continued by guidelines which apply to all Federal aid awards and will not be eligible for GSL's even under the GSL restrictions, which are expected to be liberal.

Gallagher stated that any concern over GSL eligibility is "probably one of those areas of needless worry," but also indicated "I don't want to be unnecessarily surprised on this one... I want to be careful that we do it right.

In accordance with this premise, Gallagher acknowledged that MIT may be forced to change the format in which it announces its aid awards, "to prevent almost all MIT students from being ineligible for GSL's." Under the revised Federal criteria for determining student need, expected earnings under the college work-study program may be considered as a part of a student's total accessible financial resources. In the past, MIT has designated a portion of a student's award as work-study eligibility, an amount which any student may elect to earn at a terminable job at MIT in the form of a student loan. Gallagher indicated, in reference to the possibility that the form of the aid announcement may affect GSL eligibility, "It's very clear that the intent is not to let that happen. I'm guessing that it's almost imperative that we abandon this work-study slogan."

Referring to the National Direct Student Loan (NSDL) program, whose eligibility restrictions have not yet been changed but whose repayment terms have been made slightly more stringent, Gallagher predicted that any loan signed before October 1 will be administered under the GSL's even under the GSL restrictions, which are expected to be liberal.

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