PolySci survey shows freshmen conservative

By Daniel Lerner

This year's freshmen are more politically conservative than their predecessors, according to Walter D. Burnham, Professor of Political Science, based on a survey of eighty freshmen at the Academic Midway.

Topics covered by the survey included inflation, defense spending, and the present administration's domestic policies. The freshmen were also asked about their party affiliation, Secretary of Interior James Watt, and the Moral Majority, among other topics.

"It is a pity that we do not have surveys like this going back very many years," Burnham noted in a ten-page memorandum summarizing the results of the survey. "My impression is that over the past several years, each entering group of freshmen who have taken the trouble to fill out the questionnaire has been slightly more conservative than its predecessor; and I would doubt very much that the overall responses would have been quite so strongly conservative a decade or so ago," noted Burnham.

Although there were only eighty freshmen participating in the survey, the report stated: "We will seriously 'overinterpret' the memorandum (in view of the small number of responses). For essentially, what we have here seems to be a microcosm of the country at large."

According to this overinterpretation, the memorandum added, there are "two areas of potential trouble for Reagan. The first is James Watt, who - in addition to being overwhelmingly unpopular among the Carter and Anderson supporters - gets more negative than positive mentions even among Reagan supporters. The other is the Moral Majority. It is surprising that among the population of incoming MIT students, the overwhelming majority of those I talked to would not be particularly popular. The intensity of dislike for this organization is nevertheless striking, including a number of volunteered comments among those who strongly disapproved."

The results of the survey also reveal the students' choices for president in 1980: 18 percent for Carter, 45 percent for Reagan, and 23 percent for Anderson. This contrasts somewhat with the national percentages: Carter, 41 percent; Reagan, 51 percent; and Anderson, 7 percent. Ten percent of the students questioned rated Watt as favorable, while 49 percent rated him as unfavorable. The reaction to the Moral Majority was quite pronounced, with 48 percent strongly disapproving and 1 percent strongly approving.

In addition, the breakdown of party affiliation among the eighty respondents was 22 percent Democratic, 36 percent independents, and 42 percent Republican.

Political views of Freshmen surveyed at Academic Midway, 1981

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>22%</td>
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</tbody>
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Off Campus

A Talk on European nuclear disarmament with Frank Brodhead, sponsored by the Anti-War Organizing League, will be held at the AWOL office, 595 Massachusetts Avenue, Central Square, Cambridge, on Thursday, September 17 at 7:30pm. For more information, call AWOL at 491-4694.

Dr. Helen Caldicott, president, Physicians for Social Responsibility, will give a public address on issues related to the current nuclear arms race in Saint Mary's Church on September 20 at 7:30pm. Tickets are $2 and may be purchased by writing to Future Generations Media Project, P.O. Box 53, Ballardvale Station, An- dover, MA 01810. For more informa-

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