Gray, Low speak on industrial ties

By Tony Zarmparutti
President Paul E. Gray '44 and four other representatives of MIT attended a conference at Pajaro Dunes, California, last week to discuss the growing commercialization of university research in biology and other fields.

Faculty and administration representatives joined the presidents of Harvard University, the University of California at Stanford, the California Institute of Technology, and MIT at the conference last Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

The conference participants did not have widely diverging views on the topics discussed, Gray said.

Most of the faculty members attending the conference are currently involved in biomedical research and have ties with genetic research corporations. "Most of the faculty had some such affiliation," said Gray. "It might have been better if we, MIT, those someone without such affiliation [join] in participating in the meetings."

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"I think it is important for all disciplines to recognize the serious nature of the student government," said Kenneth Segel '83, Undergraduate Association (UA) President, in his inaugural address to the UA General Assembly (GA) Thursday evening.

Segel warned that the meetings for discussion about the "growing commercialization of university research...might have to be able to talk privately."

The conference began Thursday, and five separate sessions of all participants, divided into four working groups, each chaired by a university administrator, were held. The conference statement was divided into two areas: relations between universities and industry, which concerned research and patent agreements, and relationships between universities and their faculties.

The statement declared agreements between universities and industry should be constructed in ways that do not promote a "commercial" interest, he explained.

"If anyone gets unruly, we do not fund political or religious activities," said Charles D. Rubin, VP for Student Life. The GA also passed a motion that the Student Committee on Educational Policy has "been doing a pretty good job. They have pretty much run themselves," he said.

The conference was closed to the public, but the preamble was written, he added.

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"The purpose was not to arrive at a public scrutiny," said Gray. "It might have been better if we, MIT, those someone without such affiliation [join] in participating in the meetings."

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