David Saxon '41 to chair MIT Corporation
Corporation elects Univ. of Calif. president

By Barry S. Surman

David S. Saxon '41, president of the University of California, will become chairman of the MIT Corporation July 1, succeeding retiring Chairman Howard W. Johnson.

The Corporation elected Saxon on Friday, following the recommendations made by the Corporation's executive committee and a search committee appointed by MIT President Paul E. Gray '54 in June.

"The problems facing higher education just now, for both public and private institutions, are unusually difficult and urgent."

Saxon said Friday. "I hope and believe that the perspective gained during my long tenure at the University of California will serve to advance the interests of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology."

"I am enthusiastic about this appointment," said Gray, "because David Saxon comes from the freshman class that has the same kind of preoccupation with quality in what it does that MIT has."

"The experience he has gained there will be very valuable to MIT," Gray said. Saxon and Gray participated together in the March 1982 conference on relations between universities and private corporations at Pajaro Dunes, California. "In a way," Saxon said, "my election as chairman of the MIT Corporation completes a circle for me, for I began my academic life there as a physics student."

Saxon earned his SB in physics at MIT in 1941. He worked as a research physicist at the MIT Radiation Laboratory from 1943 to 1946, receiving his PhD in physics from the Institute in 1944. After working for Phillips Laboratories in New York City for one year, Saxon became assistant professor of physics at the University of California at Los Angeles. He rose through the academic ranks at UCLA, holding the positions of professor of physics, department chairman, and dean. Saxon spent a year as provost of the University of California's nine campuses before the Board of Regents elected him president in 1975.

MIT's doctoral programs in electrical, mechanical engineering tops in US

By Laura Wiener

MIT's doctoral programs in electrical and mechanical engineering rank first in the nation, while the doctoral program in civil engineering ranks second, and that in chemical engineering places seventh, according to a recent national study sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences.

"We were very pleased," commented Joel Moses PhD '67, head of the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. "The electrical engineering department has ranked number one in all such studies over the past twenty years.

David N. Wermley '62, head of the mechanical engineering department, expressed little surprise at the rating, saying, "I'm not sure what you mean when you say evaluations. The faculty in the mechanical engineering department are committed to excellence in research and teaching and the rating is a good indication of this."

Civil engineering department head Joseph M. Sussman PhD '68 and chemical engineering department head James Wirt were unavailable for comment.

Although the NAS emphasized that the study was not intended to provide rankings of graduate programs, the results can easily be used to compare departments. Since the study would be used to rank schools, the Association of Graduate Schools (AGS) drafted a letter opposing the study. The AGS never sent the letter, due to the intervention of two board members who were connected with the study.

MIT considered not partipating in the study, according to a letter from Dean of the Graduate School Kenneth Wadleigh '43, designating the study's coordinator at MIT, to President Paul E. Gray '54. The NAS organizers declared schools that did not name evaluators for the study would be evaluated on the basis of data available outside the institution, according to Wadleigh's letter. Wadleigh termed the situation a "catch-22."

In a February 1981 personal letter to the study's initiators, AGS President Ernest Q. Campbell warned, "You will give the consuming public a small set of numbers, each of which is an unknowable composite of loyalties, rumor, casual compliance with your instructions, alliances, prejudices, perceptions and histrionics, professional judgement given grudgingly because the assigned task feels unnatural, and these results will be subject to misinterpretation, misuse and misapplication which you will powerless to avoid and which will create distorted images of American graduate education."

Wadleigh said, "This kind of study must be handled carefully to avoid misinformation, but the study is important as an indication of which schools are top notch and which schools are showing a large improvement so that prospective students know which are up and coming programs which would be good to associate themselves with."

The engineering school evaluation is part of a comprehensive

NAS graduate program ratings

Electrical Engineering

MIT 4.9

UC Berkeley 4.8

Stanford University 4.8

University of Illinois 4.6

UCB 4.1

Cornell University 4.1

Mechanical Engineering

MIT 4.8

UC Berkeley 4.6

Stanford University 4.6

Caltech 4.3

University of Minnesota 4.1

University of Michigan 4.0

Princeton University 4.0

Civil Engineering

UC Berkeley 4.6

MIT 4.7

Caltech 4.6

University of Illinois 4.5

University of Texas 4.3

Stanford University 4.1

Cornell University 4.1

Chemical Engineering

University of Minnesota 4.9

University of Wisconsin 4.9

Ohio State University 4.6

Caltech 4.7

University of Colorado 4.6

University of Delaware 4.5

Stanford University 4.3

MIT 4.3

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