Alumini give third most in US

By Jake Titio
MIT placed third behind Dartmouth and Princeton Universities in donations received last year from alumni, according to Joseph S. Collins, director of the Alumni Association's alumni fund.

The ranking is based on a comparison among MIT, Stanford Junior University, and the Harvard College. Data for Dartmouth and Princeton received gifts from 65 and 55 percent of their bachelor's graduates, respectively, he added, while 49 percent of MIT's S.B. graduates and 31 percent of its S.M. and Ph.D. graduates contributed to the alumni fund.

Both percentages are "very strong indications of broad-based alumni support," Collins remarked. "Alumni support of the Institute has been strong since before the campuses were more than 10 years ago. The alumni fund was started in 1942 and the fund has shown a consistent pattern of record-breaking both in the number of contributors and the gifts received."

The Institute last year received $47 million in total voluntary support, of which alumni contributed $14.8 million, for exceeding the fund's goal of $7.7 million, Collins said. A total of 20.4 percent of the alumni gave last year, representing a 42 percent overall participation rate, and the average gift was approximately $298.

Collins would not compare MIT's alumni fund with those of other universities because of differing rules by which alumni gifts are reported. The Alumni Association solicits donations from an alumnus at $50,000 in order to keep the fund's total from being influenced in an inflationary way by unusually large gifts," Collins said.

"Alumni support is typically two to three times that reported at MIT," Collins noted.

Collins is confident the alumni fund will meet this year's goal of $8.1 million and 26,400 alumni contributions, he said. The alumni funding year runs from July 1 to June 30, coinciding with the Institute's fiscal year. More than 20,000 alumni had contributed a total of $6.86 million by mid-April, Collins said, a pace which is $1.44 million and 2020 contributions ahead of last year at the same period.

Student participation in February's telethon was "extraordinary," Collins noted. Five hundred eighty-six students raised $115,000, setting student telethon records. The students contacted more than 9000 alumni, he added.

"It's my opinion that the significant increase in percent [of alumni] participation is directly attributable to the effectiveness of the student callers," Collins remarked.

The Alumni Association began seeking donations from a class as soon as it graduates from MIT, Collins said. It normally takes an average of 10 years for graduates to make at least one donation. Seventy percent of the Class of 1977 had contributed at least once to the alumni fund by last year, he noted, setting a record for participation.

MIT has earmarked $812,000 for student financial aid, $1.5 million for academic departments and professorships, $1.2 million for "a wide spectrum" of other uses, and $2.3 million for unrestricted use, according to Collins.

The Alumni Association also conducts five-year campaigns requesting alumni to make major donations. MIT's last five-year campaign began in 1975 and raised $230 million, Collins said.

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