Sophomores prefer science to Chem E

By Andrew Bein

Course enrollment by the Class of 1986 shows a decreased popularity for the Department of Chemical Engineering and an increase for the School of Science.

The Department of Chemical Engineering saw a drop in enrollment of 133 sophomores, compared to last year, according to a report released by the Registrar. The department gained 133 sophomores last year, although only 106 remain as juniors.

"This department had the highest ratio of student to faculty, and, with [the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science], still has the highest ratio," in the Institute, said Professor James Wei, head of the department.

"I believe this department doesn't have faculty for 133 sophomores," he said. "Seventy is a more comfortable level, for myself and the professors."

The department had but 35 sophomores in 1971, but the enrollment rose steadily due to increased "national production in pollution, oil, and synthetic fuels," he said.

Expansion in those areas has slowed recently, and jobs have become more scarce, causing much of the decrease in enrollment, he said.

"I hope the people we lose are not from the top of the quality list," he added.

Professor John M. Deutch '61, dean of the School of Science, said that increases in enrollment in that school "are usually due to changes in student interest and perception. . . . The job market is one factor but not the only one."

The Registrar's report also showed 379 sophomores enrolled in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, an increase of 42 over last year.

The number of sophomores declaring majors in the Schools of Architecture and Planning, Humanities and Social Science, Management, and Science, totaled only 305.

The Department of Biology, for example, saw an increase in enrollment of 17 sophomores. Gene M. Brown, head of the department, said it is an "easy transfer to make from chemical engineering to biology."

The National Academy of Science rated MIT's graduate program in biology best in the country in three major areas, which "didn't do us any harm," Brown said. Offering subjects in biotechnology may have also contributed to the increase, he said.

Harold J. Hasham, dean of the School of Humanities and Social Science, said students "tend to go to the market," although the school would "obviously like to have more majors."

"What it tells us about most of our students is that they are job oriented. That isn't such a stupid thing," he added.

Our Technical Recruiters would like you to join them for a morning jog. We'll begin at 77 Massachusetts Avenue at 6:30 a.m. each day, jog down Memorial Drive to the Boston U. Bridge, cross over to Storrow Drive and head down to the Longfellow Bridge, cross back over to Memorial Drive and finish up our 5.4 mile jog back at 77 Massachusetts Avenue. Some of our managers will turn back up Massachusetts Avenue at the Harvard Bridge for a 2.6 mile run.

If you're interested in meeting our people in a completely informal setting . . . put your track shoes on and join us. If for some reason you can't make it . . . you're still curled up in bed . . . or with a good textbook . . . just remember your interview with General Electric.