Student interest in activities declining

By Craig Jamieson

Some campus organizations have experienced a decrease in student participation this year, while student involvement in others has remained stable.

There has been a trend toward lower participation in student activities over the past few years. "It seems to me that students are spending less time actively pursuing activities," Pegg Richardson, executive officer of the Undergraduate Academic Support Office, commented in October, 1983.

Last year, several student activity leaders attributed the drop in student enrollment in increased academic and financial pressures. 

Undergraduate Association (UA) President Donald S. Libby '85 recently underscored the continued effect of peer and pressure, financial conditions and career considerations on students.

There has been "some change over approximately fifteen years in student participation," said Anderson Eisenmann '75, staff account for Residence and Campus Activities. The decrease in student participation was inevitable, Eisenmann said, "probably because of more pressures — academic, financial, and career-wise — which are national concerns reflected here at MIT."

Dick (Tassies) Anderson '83, president of the Association of Student Journalists, noted that there were "no means of directly comparing numbers of students in activities," but that "sunday [sic] in at least a dozen activities have failed to meet their existence requirements."

In recent years, MIT student governments have faced several problems getting its representatives to be more deeply involved. Last term, it made a move to correct this problem.

MIT undergraduates approved a binding referendum last March to transform the UA General Assembly into the UA Council, a body with fewer representatives.

"We'd like to see more people show up at meetings. That was one of the ideas of shrinking the size of the Undergraduate Association's legislative body," UA Vice President Stephanie L. Schulte '84 said last term. Participation in the UA this year has so far remained stable or decreased slightly, Libby said. One member of the UA Council has just resigned due to the rise in the self-help level, the amount a student must earn during the academic year, he noted.

Libby explained that the increased academic load on students is characterized "not necessarily by more problem sets, but [by] more material to comprehend."

"It's easy to get people on the Lecture Series Committee (LSC)," said Timothy Hacklebury '84, chairman of LSC, "but it's difficult to get people to devote hours to positions of responsibility." Hacklebury added, "It's always a problem. I don't see it improving."

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New Course III program attracts more students

By Matthew M. Christin

Second in a series examining all-inclusive programs in Course I.

The new electronic materials option offered by the Department of Materials Science and Engineering (Course III) is part of an effort to serve as an alternative to the overcrowded Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (EECS) problem area to Associate Professor Donald R. Sadoway, undergraduate chairman, the UA Council.

The department began offering the electronic materials option two years ago as part of a wholesale revision of the undergraduate curriculum. Under the new plan, students must concentrate in one of four options — ceramics, electronic materials, metallurgy, and polymers — after completing the required core subjects.

The materials science department began considering changes in its curriculum three years ago, Sadoway said. This period of revision followed a decade of no change in the curriculum. "We wanted to address the major changes that were taking place in material science, he commented.

Much discussion determined the "philosophy of the department," Sadoway said. The department decided to try to keep abreast of all the changes in the field while maintaining the breadth and depth of the curriculum.

The addition of the electronic materials option and a group of new undergraduate materials science courses were among the biggest changes to come out of the meetings, Sadoway said.

The impetus to add an electronic option in the curriculum came from within the department, and was initially unrelated to the EECS overcrowding problem. In recent years, electronics has become so important in material sciences that the department felt compelled to include it in the curriculum, he explained.

"Coincidentally, one year into planning the EECS problem area, Sadoway said. "We were well on our way before the enrollment problem."

The department does not favor any one option, he said. All of four options have three basic phases: a materials science component, a processing component, and a laboratory component.

Feature

All MIT students must serve jury duty if called

In Nancy L. Girffink

MIT students are required to serve jury duty if they are so notified, according to Charles Winston, an officer in the Jury Pool Office in Suffolk County Superior Court.

Since Jan. 1, 1984, MIT students living in Suffolk County (Brookline and Cambridge) more than six months may be called for jury duty. After receiving notification, a prospective juror may defer the responsibility for up to one year.

A similar law has been in effect in Middlesex County since last 1969. Cambridge is in Middlesex County, so every MIT living group is affected by one of the laws.

"We assume, by giving you a year, you would elect a time when you are not having midterms or finals or anything like that," Winston said. Two alternative federal duties must be given, he added.

MIT is required by law to re- turn names of residents of the dormitory system to the commis- sioner of Middlesex County, every year, Winston said. Prerequisites are also required to submit the names of everybody living within the building, he added.

"Associate Dean for Student Affairs Robert M. Raskin em- (Please turn to page 10)

Erratum

The Nov. 16 news story on Project Athena ("Project Athena seeks more in- formation from students") stated there was only one student on Project Athena staff. There are over four dozen students on Project Athena staff.