President Gray speaks about future of education

Compiled by Thomas T. Huang (The following is a summary of major points made by President Paul Dudley Gray in his address to the Faculty of MIT as an Educational and Research Institution, "Thursday")

Gray's commitment to the context of your educational experience at the Institute:

1. There is much more to MIT than your formal and term-by-term program. It's easier said than done — I know it is hard to focus on things when you are worried about problem sets and grades, but it is important to keep in mind objectives "satisfied only if you make your education much more than the sum of the parts: classes, exams, papers, and quizzes.

2. The student needs a balance in personal development — outside of the classroom, in living groups, activities, and on athletic fields. Strive for personal growth. Your success lies not just in the mastery of skills and knowledge, but in the manner in which you develop interpersonal relationships.

3. There is an inevitability of change in personal as well as professional programs.

4. Personal development must be effective over a working lifetime in a context which you cannot predict or anticipate. Strive as early as possible for educational self-sufficiency — an independence and personal capacity to learn without formal structures, such as lectures, quizzes, syllabi, course catalogs and revelation instructions. Define for yourself the important questions not asked before, work hard to discover the answers for yourself.

5. Think of science and engineering in the context of contemporary society. The support of science depends on a considerable degree on the support of the public, at large. Technological problems grow out of social needs. Their solutions most satisfy those needs and must be harmonious with human needs of society. This necessitates that science be self-motivated and committed to high achievement. Sustained hard work is the norm. The members of the faculty hold responsibilities to the humanity, to their professional commitments and to their personal families. This produces an all too often frenetic pace of life, self-rewarding, mutually reinforcing. But it is not without costs.

6. It will be foolishly argued against the virtue of hard work. But we should not consider the possible benefits of more time for contemplation, for pursuit of interests and activities outside the professional realm and for developing friendships and a sense of community.

7. In 1980, I said that the issues centered on the human condition at MIT should be on the top of our agenda. We are concerned that we work to develop a community of the best faculty and student body from whom a diverse population as possible.

8. A good deal of learning at MIT is based on daily interactions among people of different backgrounds, experiences and points of view. The intellectual character at MIT has enriched the institution over a period of many years. We believe that the social and intellectual endowment of MIT will be similarly enriched by growing numbers of women, of blacks, Hispanics and other minorities. It should be our goal to make this a welcome environment for them, to attract them in growing numbers . . . to benefit from their creativity.

Now in 1985, as I look back, I must report that it is a mixed record. With respect to women at MIT, we have for the most part done well — not well enough — but well enough to support a certain amount of justifiable pride.

The number of women on the faculty for the first time in history exceeds 100. Women make up 30 percent of the undergraduates.

The only thing we can be proud of is the number of engineering degrees awarded to black Americans in the areas of engineering, physical science and life sciences and remains one at a time. We must not take for granted that an institution is a guarantor of freedom.

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Meet the representatives from Hewlett Packard, October 24th at the MIT store from 10:00 - 4:00.

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