MechE limits degree time

By Takahima Rao

As of Feb. 4 meeting, the Department of Mechanical Engineering faculty passed a motion that effectively limits the length of time graduate students can take to complete a master's degree in mechanical engineering. It is the first department at MIT that has so far placed limits of this kind.

The mechanical engineering faculty overwhelmingly passed a motion which stated, "A typical measure of mechanical engineering efforts should not take longer than one and a half years."

The motion also stated that the faculty would strive to achieve that goal.

Activists fast in war protest

By Prabhut Mehta

Armed with only water, lemon juice, and fresh lemon and lime, antiwar activists began fasting at noon Wednesday in remembrance of the ten antiwar demonstrators killed at the Operation Desert Storm. The students are continuing much of their time in a special camp set up by the MIT Initiative for Peace in the lobby of the mechanical engineering department, next to the entrance to the Infinity Coordinator.

Dean of the Graduate School Frank E. Perkins '71 praised the move, hoping that other departments would set similar time limits.

Perkins said, "This is a small but a significant step in the right direction." He added, "We hope that the other departments will come up with similar statements regarding the duration of their graduate programs. Job owning, the responsibility of implementing certain goals is the best way that things can change at MIT."

Professor of mechanical engineering Ali A. Sonin, who is also graduate coordinator of the department, said, "There is a consensus opinion among the engineering faculty that this is a real and an achievable goal."

Sonin added, "The motion will motivate the faculty to structure the master's program and to provide close supervision. At MIT, if the faculty agrees to do something, it will be done."

Currently, only 38 percent of the master's degree candidates in the mechanical engineering department complete their degree within one and a half years.

The move comes as the office of the dean of the graduate school in 1987 revealed that the average time for MIT graduate students to complete doctoral (Please turn to page 2)

24-Hour Coffee House robbed over the winter

By Joyce Marquez

The Student Center Committee 24-hour Coffee House in the Julius A. Stratton '23 Student Center was robbed twice this winter. The crimes, which Campus Activities Complex program coordinator Ted E. Johnson said were probably committed by the same person, resulted in losses of $150.

The first robbery occurred Dec. 14 at approximately 4 am and approximately $80 was stolen. In the second robbery Jan. 8, the thief made off with $70.

The coffee house did not suffer significantly from the two robberies, Johnson said.

Both crimes were committed in the early hours of the morning when a small number of people were present, and both were "srouch and grab" crimes. The robber was able to easily open the money drawer, take the money, and run while the employee was busy.

In the police report, the coffee house employee described the unarmed robber as a black male, about 6 feet 2 inches tall and weighing approximately 172 pounds. The robber also had a distinctive thin mustache, the police said.

So far the Campus Police have no leads and no suspects.

By due to the sudden nature of the first crime, the Campus Police did not arrive soon enough after the "call in," giving the robber enough time to escape.

The employee was unable to run after the robber since he had sole responsibility for the coffee house, the police report said.

The second robbery, which occurred at 2:05 am, prompted the coffee house to take action to improve its security.

Campus Police Deputy Chief James F. Mahoney Jr. said he (Please turn to page 13)

Inside

Collage New Music provides bold, but confusing collaboration with the Media Lab and Symphony Hall. Page 9.

Boston attorney discusses draft

By Chris Schlechter

Boston attorney Louis Font spoke last Monday to educate students about current draft laws. Font, who spoke before the current cease-fire in the Persian Gulf war, expressed concern that students may be drafted after the conflict has ended, when a continued military presence will have to be maintained abroad.

He warned students that present draft legislation is far more expedient than legislation that had been in effect during the Vietnam War. "The Pentagon has learned how to handle dissent, the press — and how to win," Font said.

The discussion, sponsored by the counseling section of the Office of the Dean for Student Affairs and the MIT Episcopal Chaplaincy, took place in the West Lounge of the Julius A. Stratton '23 Student Center. A panel of Harvard Law School students and MIT administrators took questions after Font spoke.

Font, a graduate of West Point Military Academy and Harvard Law School, faced criminal charges during the Vietnam War for refusing to serve on active duty. He was the first West Point graduate to refuse to serve. Font now specializes in military law and conscientious objector cases.

Font said that due to a change in the requirements for volunteers of the armed services in 1982, the armed services has in less likely.

In addition to the usual number of years of required active service, an extra two years of inactive reserve status was added to all military contracts.

In 1980, draft legislation was changed to modify the induction (Please turn to page 2)