Dean Appointments Show Research, Education Are Priorities

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money on student needs. Perhaps the greatest change in the provost's role will be the increased responsibility for academic integrity, faculty relations, faculty retirement, promotion and tenure, and international education — will figure prominently in Institute affairs for the next few years, and it is safe to assume that much of Widnall's job will be to predict and contain any problems MIT might encounter in these areas. One currently relevant example is the controversy surrounding a number of Pentagon audits that claim MIT overcharged the government for a number of research contracts. While MIT can be expected to suffer less than Stanford University, which was audited and fined hundreds of millions of dollars last year, there is no doubt that research and billing procedures will have to change if the Institute wishes to compete for research contracts in the future. Indeed, Wrighton has already appointed a committee to look into MIT's system for billing indirect research costs, which is expected to present its recommendations within the next few months.

Widnall's work on academic integrity follows a unanimous declaration by the Committee on Discipline late last year that the Institute needs some sort of honor code for students, as well as a flurry of discussion about David Baltimore '61, former director of the Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research, who co-signed a paper containing data widely held to be falsified. Just as the motion picture industry would rather police itself than be subject to government censorship, many scientists believe that it would be better to police fraud within the scientific community than to let the government interfere. Widnall's job appears to be defined MIT's role in stopping fraud in research while giving faculty the freedom to work on individual projects.

In many ways, Widnall was the perfect person for the job of associate provost: A former chair of the faculty, an MIT alums, and a former member of a National Science Foundation panel on honesty and responsibility in science, Widnall combines a long background at the Institute with an understanding of Washington politics. It remains to be seen, however, whether her experience at the Institute and in the capital will help MIT in the long run.

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