The percentage of underrepresented minorities in the admitted class fell to 13 percent, down from 15 percent last year. The Institute admitted 125 African Americans (6 percent), 86 Mexican Americans (4 percent), and 35 Puerto Ricans (2 percent). In addition, 556 Asian Americans (27 percent) and 37 students of Hispanic origin (2 percent) were admitted. In addition, 128 international students.

"We've always tried to admit as many underrepresented minorities as we can," Johnson said. She added that the number "varies somewhat based on the applicant pool." If an underrepresented minority is initially rejected, other members of the admissions staff review the application to make sure that those people "won't fall through the cracks," Johnson said. It is a "much more considerate process," she added. "Minority numbers are slightly lower," said Joann L. Cummings, an associate director of admissions. "The minority pool was not as strong this year."

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More women in class
The newly admitted class includes 789 females (38 percent), which is the highest percentage within the past five years. The percentage has fluctuated between 35 and 38 percent in recent years. There is no affirmative action program for women, but MIT encourages admitted women to attend MIT by holding events like the Campus Preview weekend for women and minorities and a special teletown. Although a smaller proportion of admitted women than men choose to attend, data show that women do as well at MIT as men, Johnson said.

The admissions process Applications for freshman admission are read by the professional admissions staff and by outside readers such as faculty members and administrators. All applicants are assigned both a numerical and a non-numerical index. These range from one to five, with five being the highest rating. The numerical index is a composite-generated academic rating, a weighted average of applicants' academic records as compared to applicants from the previous three years. The non-numerical index is a combination of the applicant's academic style, personal style, and personal accomplishments, as compared to other students in the current applicant pool. But this is subject to a "variability in reader ratings," Johnson said.

Applicants with a 5-5 index are usually admitted, and applicants with a 1-1 index usually are not. For the middle-range scores, applicants are compared against others with the same scores; there is a target percentage of acceptances from each index pair.

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