ILP Encourages MIT–Industry Ties

By Nicole A. Shansky

Professors, graduate students, and business representatives are exchanging ideas on the purposes and programs of their research at a symposium held on campus yesterday and today. Participants in the symposium, called "Manufacturing Process Information and Sciences: 15 Years of Advanced Manufacturing Research at MIT," are calling it a success.

"I get feedback from the business representatives, which helps me to direct my research in a way that is useful to industry," said Pyongwon Yim, who attended yesterday.

The symposium is sponsored by the Industrial Liaison Program, created in 1948 to forge a link between MIT and industry. Each year, ILP offers approximately ten symposia on a range of topics covering new advances in fields such as manufacturing, materials, chemicals, biology, finance and information technology, telecommunications, and electronics.

"Almost any big-name company you can think of in a member - Xerox, IBM, Gillette, and most of the Fortune 500s," Shansky said. "My main purpose is to inform people in my company of new advances in their fields of interest and to get them in touch with people here," said a representative of Daimler-Benz, a German company. "I found the talks interesting."

MIT profits from ILP's activities, and business representatives are calling it a success. Though the main purpose of the symposium is to inform member companies of current research going on at MIT, students are also welcome to attend the lectures.

The symposia offered during the remainder of this term are "Strategic Management of Technology: Global Benchmarking" on October 27, "Fundamentals and Technologies of Smart Gels" on November 5, "Regulatory and Safety Considerations of the Biotechnology Industry" on November 17, and "Educa
tional Computing in the Twenty-First Century: Building from Project Athena" on December 7.

Currently 235 companies are members of the program — about 115 from the United States and the balance from Europe and East Asia. Most businesses involved are focused on research and development, but there are also companies in fields such as manufacturing, materials, chemicals, biology, finance and information technology, telecommunications, and electronics.

The program is supported by fees paid by member companies. These fees range from $10,000 to $100,000 a year, depending on the size of the company. This buys them "the MIT Report," a newsletter describing the latest advances at MIT, chances to visit MIT professors, and an invitation to the symposium series.

MIT does not contribute any money to the program — in fact, it profits from it. ILP "makes money to the program — in fact, it makes money for the Institute, and at least equally, if not more importantly, it builds relationships. A company may end up ending up in a company's career development, which helps the company in the long run," said Susan 1. Shansky, manager of Communication Services for ILP.