Underrepresented Minority Levels Remain Constant

however, "MIT is viewed generally as doing very well in this regard," Colbert said, with "quite a number of effective outreach programs."

Colbert observed that in the trend of constant representation in graduate enrollment, there has been a moderate increase in African American students in the past year. The study is due to be released in upcoming weeks, he added.

This change is mainly the result of a concerted effort by Colbert and Marquet D. Tyler, assistant dean of the graduate school for recruitment, an effort which "certainly has paid off," according to Colbert.

"It seems to me that MIT is making an effort to recruit more black students to get higher degrees," said Andrew C. Humphrey Jr., president of the Black Graduate Student Association.

Department participation needed

Colbert attributed part of this low representation to the academic departments. "If the faculty wanted these students here in greater numbers, they would be here," he said. When Tyler was on leave for a year, the number of minority applicants dropped dramatically, according to Colbert. This trend demonstrated that departments were not doing enough recruiting on their own, and were relying on the graduate office, he said.

"The problem lies in departments that make the decisions" about admitting graduate students, said Clarence G. Williams, special assistant to the president and assistant equal opportunity officer. When choosing students, the departments should recognize "all of the constituent elements" of the applicant pool, Williams said.

"We do have representation in departments where it is very difficult to get minority applicants," Colbert said. The division of technology division and the departments of physics, astronomical and aeronautical engineering, and mechanical engineering have led in improving minority representation recently, he added.

Emphasis at pre-college level

Both Williams and Colbert point to placing a greater emphasis on the pre-college level as a way to encourage minority participation in undergraduate and graduate science programs.

Along with encouraging capable minority applicants, MIT should "continue to see where we can help on the pre-college level," Williams said.

Primary and secondary schools

The King commemoration program has "been a very important event for the last 20 years," and for the 20th anniversary "it would be appropriate to have someone...[Corinna Scott King's] stature and standing in the community to come," Feld said.

"MIT deserves a lot of credit for making it an official holiday before it became a national holiday," said Clarence G. Williams, special assistant to the president and assistant equal opportunity officer, who developed and led the event for the first 14 years. Martin Luther King Jr. Day became a national holiday in 1989.

"I think that probably the thing that stands out in my mind" is that the MIT administration at the time of the program's inception "played a major role and moved to make it an official holiday before any other universities or colleges in the state of Massachusetts," Williams said.

"We have had over the last three years very, very good national speakers," Osgood said. "I think the Institute will continue to try to secure a person of national prominence in the future."

Past speakers at the annual program have spoken on "very provocative themes," Osgood said.

"Last year, Rev. William H. Gray III, president and CEO of the United Negro College Fund, delivered the lecture. In 1992, Benjamin Hooks, executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, spoke at the program."

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