Sloan School May Offer MBA Degree Program

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"reducing our distinctiveness com- pared to some of the other schools." Another consideration was the belief that a "formal thesis is an important part of an MIT educa-
tion," he said. By making the thesis optional, some believed the Sloan School might be distancing itself from the rest of MIT.

The Institute was unique among business schools because it offered an SM and not an MBA, Perkins said. It gave the Institute a "uniqueness among business schools," and some people viewed that uniqueness as necessary," he said. But the "net gain is positive" because the Sloan School is making a serious effort to strengthen the master's program, Perkins added.

"I think we were able to address the concerns satisfactorily," Healy said.

MBA is 'well-recognized'

Perkins said he is "reasonably certain" that the new degree would appeal to future Sloan School appli-
cants and increase their numbers. "The MBA is a well-recognized degree," he said. "Students were sometimes confused that MIT didn't seem to offer an MBA."

Because the SM degree is not as widely-known, most students and recruiters think of the degree as an MBA anyway, Healy said. The Sloan School was trying to make some changes in the curriculum, including an optional thesis, and it "made more sense to call it an MBA," he said.

"From the outside world standpoint, people probably think of the Master of Science as being more of a research degree," Healy said. MIT has a reputation as a "research-ori-
ted institution," and Sloan does not want to change that. The school hopes to "make students more profi-
cient at applying their research tools," he said.

Perkins said, "In reality, there is probably not a huge difference" between the MBA and the SM, but "there was a perception that there was a huge difference."

Changes under consideration

The Sloan School has been con-
sidering revamping the curriculum and making the thesis optional for some time. Healy formally intro-
duced his idea to the Perkins last spring. The Committee on Graduate Student Policy studied the proposal, and it was the major item of discus-
sion for five or six meetings, Perkins said.

The current SM program and the

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