Alumni Speak Out...III

*In the more than 5,000 Alumni Survey question-
naires that have been returned to the Institute to
date, responses to the back-page invitation for "com-
ments" have been gratifyingly numerous. Although
there is no such thing as a typical comment, these
are some representative ones.*

The Caltech Honor System was a good thing
while a student but left me unprepared for the
dishonesty rampant in industry. In the Caltech
atmosphere, I got the idea that all scientists and
technical people were honest and straightforward.
In industry, after some bad experiences, I have
learned that they are just ordinary people, though
more clever in their dishonesty.

-I have been most thankful I had the privilege of
graduation from CIT. Not only a marvelous edu-
cation but much personal contact with faculty
men such as Sorensen, MacArthur, Hinrichs,
Kramer, MacMinn, Judy, Watson, etc. A wonder-
ful group of men. Furthermore, it is a tremendous
advantage in post-college life to reply when asked
where graduated—"Caltech." One is immediately
considered to have had a top-notch education
and to be highly qualified.

I would like to recommend that new students
be screened for psychological maturity. In my
own case, my lack of maturity contributed sig-
nificantly to the waste of a good part of my edu-
cation.

I am of the sincere belief that the engineering
graduate curriculum offered by Caltech at the
time I attended (1956-1957) was much too theo-
retical. A more generalized approach for the aver-
age student would be much more beneficial. As
an engineering manager for the past 3 years, I
find my year of graduate work of relative little
value to me.

Why not give a course in business ethics in the
senior year in which to make it realistic — such
ethics would replace the usual Tech honor system;
i.e. cheating, collusion, etc., would not only be
allowed but encouraged. In this way the cut-
throats in the crowd would be identified among
their classmates for future reference, and the

honest student — the future victim — would get
a "vaccination" against the reality of the world
he is about to enter.

There is a feeling at Caltech that I. Q. is the
only significant factor in scientific work. I now
think interest and personal drive are more im-
portant, or at least as important. It is not easy
to have a proper combination of relaxed scholarly
effort and stimulation to excellence in the same
institution. It is not known what constitutes a
good education or what is the proper training
for a scientist, although there are many workable
programs in existence. In striving to have every
graduate as nearly "perfect" as possible, an insti-
tution like Caltech can reject and fail many who
do not fit the mold. Caltech is too introspective,
too ready to condemn to failure those who do not
exceed them.

Approximately 1/3 of my freshman class left
before graduation, which is a great waste and
failure on the Institute's part.

The Institute selects on native intelligence, ex-
amines on native intelligence and bases the whole
education on native intelligence. Unfortunately
the type of native intelligence is not the only
factor in successful work but is the easiest to
measure. I believe that Caltech could benefit by
not attacking the students so violently with the
curriculum, but rather by relaxing the standards
if necessary and let the students come to you.

There would be much to gain if the undergrad-
uates could have their education as less of a
grueling, bitter ordeal.

I feel that the students should be encouraged
to attend the church of their choice in a similar
way that they are encouraged to join a prof. so-
ciety or take an interest in politics.

When I first graduated, I felt deficient in the
so-called "practical" engineering-type course. Af-
ter a few years in industry, this was no longer
a problem. CIT should continue to emphasize
basic theory and leave to industry the job of
teaching the young engineer the practical and
economic aspects of engineering.

Questionnaire gives me a pain.