



September 23, 1966

To Members of the Faculty:

I am pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Victor F. Weisskopf as head of the Department of Physics, beginning February 1, 1967. Dr. Weisskopf succeeds Dr. William W. Buechner who has asked to be relieved of his administrative duties in order to participate more actively in the planning for the new accelerator facilities which we hope to obtain. The practice of rotation of chairman, particularly in the large departments in the School of Science which carry most of the teaching load for the first two years of the undergraduate curriculum and in which the administrative responsibilities constitute a full-time activity, is, in my view, extremely healthy.

Dr. Buechner has served with great distinction and devotion as head of the Department of Physics since 1961, a post to which he brought an extensive background of experience in teaching, research and administration at M.I.T. An alumnus of M.I.T., he has been continuously associated with the Department since receiving his doctorate in physics in 1939.

For many years, Dr. Buechner was associated with Dr. Robert J. Van de Graaff, both as a student and a colleague, and he played a leading role in the development of the Van de Graaff generator and its associated ion sources. He is author of over 80 important technical papers on various aspects of low energy nuclear physics and has been a leading contributor to this field. He also has had a continuing broad interest in the engineering applications of electrostatic generators.

Dr. Buechner's administrative experience has included service as associate director of the High Voltage Laboratory and later as director of the M.I.T.-O.N.R. generator when it was established in 1951. Under his direction this laboratory facility became one of the foremost of its kind in the world. In addition to his research and administrative responsibilities, he has made significant contributions to the teaching program of the Physics Department.

Dr. Weisskopf assumed his position as Institute Professor at M.I.T. upon his return last January from Geneva, Switzerland, where he served as Director-General of the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) for the past five years. Originally elected for a two-year term, he accepted extensions of his term in response to requests by the international council which serves as CERN's steering committee, but this year expressed a desire to return to his new post at M.I.T. At CERN, Dr. Weisskopf was able to give practical effect to his strong belief in international cooperation in science.

Dr. Weisskopf made unique contributions both on the scientific and administrative level at CERN. It was while he was Director-General that plans and proposals were advanced

for the now-pending 300 BeV accelerator. Also, a storage ring using the 28 BeV protons developed by CERN's proton synchrotron was authorized. This device will be located on land donated by France adjacent to CERN's present property along the Swiss-French border, making the establishment the first international organization to straddle a national boundary.

A native of Vienna and trained in Europe, Dr. Weisskopf worked with such distinguished leaders in physics as Schroedinger, Pauli and Bohr before coming to the U.S. in 1937 to join the faculty of the University of Rochester. During World War II, he worked on the Manhattan Project, and he came to M.I.T. as Professor of Physics in 1946.

Dr. Weisskopf is a past president of the American Physical Society and received the Max Planck Medal of the German Physical Society in 1956. Among his numerous awards, he has received honorary degrees from Oxford, Yale, Uppsala and Copenhagen, as well as the honorary Ph.D. degree from the University of Vienna on the 600th anniversary of that University. His book, Knowledge and Wonder; The Natural World as Man Knows It, published while he was at CERN, was selected by the Thomas Alva Edison Foundation as the best science book of the year for youth. With John Black, Dr. Weisskopf wrote the book, Theoretical Nuclear Physics, which has been the standard text in nuclear physics for the past 14 years.

JEROME B. WIESNER
Provost