Students Discuss Task Force Goals

Gathering Undergrad Feedback Purpose of Sunday Town Hall Meeting

By Valerie K. Brobhey

Students at Sunday's town hall meeting on the newly proposed General Institute Requirements voiced their dislike for limited choices in the Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences and debated which classes should be included in the Science, Engineering, and Mathematics portion of the GIFs. About 25 undergraduates attended the event, providing feedback for the final report of the Task Force on the Undergraduate Educational Com-

mers. The meeting's purpose was to fos-
ter discussion on the task force report, said Aron Walker ’07, a member of the Student Advisory Committee, which is evaluating the task force’s re-
port. The SAC, which called the meet-
ing, plans to launch an undergraduate survey soon and gather results by the end of November and write a report compiling student opinion over the In-
dependent Activities Period. Members of the Undergraduate Association Stu-
dent Committee on Educational Policy were also present at the meeting.

Regarding the proposed Science, Engineering, and Mathematics portion of the GIFs, initial discussion centered around whether the science requirement should focus on breadth across the sciences or specialization in one field of science. The proposal is meant to provide more flexibility in course selection for students. In addi-
tion to three foundational subjects that are required — 18.01 (Calculus I), 18.02 (Calculus II), and 8.01 (Physics I) — students would also have to take one subject from each of five out of six categories: math, physical sciences, chemistry, life sciences, computer science, and engineering, and project-based first-year experiences.

While some students favored the five out of six category idea proposed by the task force, others favored a five out of five category system and some preferred the current science core.

In a straw poll conducted during the meeting, the science core in the proposed “Freshman Experience.”

Gates Foundation: New Funding Force

By Robert Weisman

In the technology research ba-
zarre, ever alert to shifts in funding, there’s a new high roller bellying up to the bar.

The deep-pocketed Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, with a $31.9 billion endowment and a $30 billion commitment from Warren Buffett, last winter gave $2.5 million to the Massachusetts Bay.

MIT’s Undergraduate Educational Committee, which is evaluating the task force report, was held this past Sunday in the Bush Room (10-105). Many students expressed their dislike of the proposed “Freshman Experience.”

Students at Sunday’s town hall meeting on the newly proposed Gen-

eral Institute Requirements voiced their dislike for limited choices in the Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences and debated which classes should be included in the Science, Engineering, and Mathematics portion of the GIFs. About 25 undergraduates attended the event, providing feedback for the final report of the Task Force on the Undergraduate Educational Com-

mision to develop a sensor-based breath analyzer to test for tubercu-

osis. But when it comes to building a prototype and learning in a Th

ird World field trial, Draper will be

run a training program in Rwanda on HIV treatment and prevention. It previously had given $44.7 million to the Harvard-affiliated non-profit group, cofounded by medical anthropologist Paul Farmer, for a search on tuberculosis in Peru and Russia.

Even labs that have no Gates money and have done little work in the foundation’s core areas of intern-

ation, health and education, are being drawn to the magnetic new force in research underwriting.

Draper Laboratory engineers are working under a modified $112,000 grant from the World Health Orga-

ization.

Field hockey shuts out Clark 0-0, scores spot in NEWMAC Championships.

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News

By Benjamin P. Gleitzman

Following the veto of a bill to im-
prove the terms of use for the MIT Logarithms a cappella studio last week, a special informal meeting of the Undergraduate Association Sen-
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The bill, proposed to the UA by Next House Senator Hans E. Anderson ’08 and Fraud and Student Repre-
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ground work went into research [for the bill]” and many of the a cappella groups involved were not informed, according to Luckmann at last night’s meeting. While no legislation was passed during the meeting, statements were made by members of the Logs, the ASA, and Finboard concerning a course of action for the UA.

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UA Senate Discusses Student Group Funds Following Vetoes Bill

By Benjamin P. Gleitzman

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The vetoed bill states that “a considerable portion of UA Finboard Allocation and Appeals money pays for recording and studio time for a cappella student groups” and calls interrogation “a recurring waste of undergraduate money and resources given there is already a studio on campus.” The bill would “call for a meeting between the Logs and all the a cappella groups currently under contract regarding the use of the studio” and would allow the UA Senate to “freeze the Finboard account and future Finboard funding of any group that fails to attend this meeting.”

“Finboard ‘is wasting between $1,500 and $2,000 in recording fees per year,’ Anderson said. ‘We don’t like to fund student groups to pay other student groups.’

Interestingly, it is Finboard representative Navot and UA Senator Anderson, and not any specific a cappella group, presenting this case to the UA. Other than the Logs, no members from other a cappella groups were present. “I personally contacted all the a cappella groups that I have friends in, and it is kind of sad that their input is being heard after the fact, and not before the legislation was discussed,” Interfraternity Council Senator Repre-
sentative Dwight M. Chambers ’08 said.

The Logs came to the UA Sen-
ate in December 2003 to require a $10,000 loan to build a recording stu-
dio in the Walker Memorial Building, according to UA Student Speaker Steven M. Kelch ’08. The loan has been repaid in full, and in place in and around the recording studio was given up by other a cappella groups in exchange for studio use.

When the studio was first com-
pleted, an agreement approved by the ASA was signed by all but one of the a cappella groups, allowing 160 hours of studio use per year. President Michael Anderson, and not any specific a cappella group, was present, making sure the prospect of the studio was not wasted.

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Water Cannon, Rubber Bullets Rout Protestors in Budapest

By Craig S. Smith
THE NEW YORK TIMES
WASHINGTON

Violent clashes in Budapest on Monday between police and protest- ers marred the 50th anniversary of Hungary's uprising against Soviet dominance.

The police used rubber bullets, tear gas and a water cannon to dis- perse thousands of demonstrators who had gathered for a rally after a group of them took control of a sub- vice of an Internet cafe.

The protesters were demanding that their town be given the right to operate 4,000 feet above sea level.

Wilma's track, it achieved the lowest pressure in the recorded history of the United States.

It was the worst October storm to hit the United States since the Great Depression.

Although October is ranked third to last in terms of the number of hurricanes, it remains a dangerous month for the East Coast of the United States.

STAFF METEOROLOGIST
Compiled by MIT

The White House on Monday said that President Bush was no longer using the phrase "irregular war" when speaking about the Iraq war, in a new effort to emphasize the flexibility in the face of some of the bloodiest violence since 2003 invasion.

"We have stopped using it," said Tony Snow, the White House press secre- tary. "It left the wrong impression about what was going on and it al- lowed critics to make it seem like it was a defeat when it was not.

Bush used the slogan in a stump speech on Aug. 31, but has not re- peated it for some time. Still, Snow's pronouncement was a stark example of the complicated line the White House is walking this election year in trying to generate support for what it regards as "cut and run" from Iraq, without itself appearing wedded to unsuccessful tactics there.

Syrian Artifact Finds Hint at Ancient Burial Rituals of Elite

By John Noble Wilford
THE NEW YORK TIMES
WASHINGTON

Six years ago, archaeologists uncovered a solitary, undisturbed tomb in the ruins of an ancient city in northern Syria. Now, in a series of exca- vations, they have exposed seven more tombs at the site, making this the only known elite, possibly royal, cemetery in Syria in the Early Bronze Age, from about 2500 B.C. to 2200 B.C.

The discoveries said the tombs contain skeletons of adults and some infants and children, several of them embalmed with jewelry of gold, silver and lapis lazuli. Of special interest, they said, was the evidence of ritual animal sacrifices, including the bones of a goose and a decapitated donkey.

"Animal sacrifices were certainly a big part of this culture," said Glenn M. Schwartz of Johns Hopkins University, leader of the excavation.

Schwartz said in interviews last week that the signs of sacrifices, the wealth of grave goods and the cemetery's setting — at the highest place in the center of the community — indicated the importance of the tombs in the society of one of the most ancient cities in Syria.

This Day in Weather History

Scott Stranksy

Twenty-five years ago, this midwestern United States was hit by a severe storm. Although October is ranked third to last in terms of the number of tornadoes occurring in the Midwest, this storm spawned 20 tornadoes, killing at least 73 people and injuring nearly 1,000 more. It was the worst tornado season in 10 years. As the storm progressed northward, it encountered cold air and became a snow event. Parts of Minnesota received over 14 inches of snow.

One year ago today, Hurricane Wilma struck Southern Florida. During Wilma, it had reached Category 5 status — the highest category in the recorded history of the Atlantic Basin, 882 millibars (26.05 in.). Using the hypsometric equation (which can be derived from the ideal gas law and hydrostatic balance), we determine that this pressure is equivalent to being at the top of a 4,000 foot (1,200 m) mountain.

Today we can expect pleasant weather in the Boston area. The tempera- tures will remain in the 50°F to 60°F range during the day. The overall weather will remain quite nice and pleasant.

Extended Forecast

Tonight: Mostly clear and windy. Low 40°F (4°C).
Wednesday: Sunny with some clouds. High 52°F (11°C).
Wednesday night: clear. Low 40°F (4°C).
Thursday: Sunny High 51°F (11°C).
Thursday night: Clear. Low 40°F (4°C).

Situation for Noon Eastern Daylight Time, Tuesday, October 24, 2006

The United States is experiencing a high pressure system from the west, which is pushing temperatures up in the southern parts of the country. In the north, the weather is cooler with a low-pressure system moving in from the Pacific Northwest.

The high pressure system is expected to remain in place for the next few days, with little chance of precipitation. The forecast calls for mostly sunny conditions with a high of 55°F (13°C) in the afternoon.

There is a slight chance of rain in the evening, with a low of 40°F (4°C) expected. The weekend looks mostly clear with a high of 52°F (11°C) and a low of 40°F (4°C).

The National Weather Service is predicting mostly clear skies with a high of 51°F (11°C) on Tuesday night and a low of 40°F (4°C).

Global weather conditions are generally mild, with temperatures ranging from 50°F to 60°F. In Europe, the weather is cooler with a high of 40°F to 50°F.

Overall, the weather conditions are favorable for outdoor activities, with pleasant temperatures and mostly clear skies.

Israeli Premier Reaches Out to Far Right

By Greg Myre
THE NEW YORK TIMES
JERUSALEM

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert reached a deal Monday to broad- en his shaky coalition by adding a far-right party that seeks to annex parts of the West Bank and to eventually reduce Israel's Arab population.

Olmert's coalition has been struggling for months, and the latest move was seen as an attempt to stabilize the faltering government. But the new right-wing partner — Israel Benetun, or Israel Is Our Home — was strongly opposed to concessions.

The prime minister's decision signals that he is now more concerned with stabilizing Israel's politics than with initiatives to deal with the Palest- inians.

The prime minister has already indicated that the central theme of his government platform is the withdrawal from some Jewish settlements in the West Bank, has been put on indefinite hold. The latest development further reinforces that notion.

Also on Monday, Israeli forces killed six Palestinians, at least three of them militants, in clashes in the northern Gaza Strip, an area that has been the scene of repeated fighting in recent months.

White House Says Bush Ends Use Of Phrase, 'Stay the Course'

By Jim Rutenberg and David S. Cloud
THE NEW YORK TIMES
WASHINGTON

The White House on Monday said that President Bush was no longer using the phrase "irregular war" when speaking about the Iraq war, in a new effort to emphasize the flexibility in the face of some of the bloodiest violence since 2003 invasion.

"We have stopped using it," said Tony Snow, the White House press secre- tary. "It left the wrong impression about what was going on and it al- lowed critics to make it seem like it was a defeat when it was not.

"Instead we are speaking about "the American" war," Mr. Snow said.

White was the slogan in a stump speech on Aug. 31, but has not re- peated it for some time. Still, Snow's pronouncement was a stark example of the complicated line the White House is walking this election year in trying to generate support for what it regards as "cut and run" from Iraq, without itself appearing wedded to unsuccessful tactics there.

By David E. Sanger
THE NEW YORK TIMES
WASHINGTON

Testing of Uranium Enrichment Equipment Begun by Iran Gov't

The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency said on Monday that Iran has begun testing new uranium enrichment equipment that could double the capacity of its small research-and-development fa- cilities.

The action appears to be a signal to the U.N. Security Council that Iran would respond to sanctions by speeding forward with its nuclear program.

Since February, when Iran pub- lically celebrated its first production of enriched uranium, progress at its main nuclear complex at Na- tanz has reportedly been slow. Iran has sporadically operated a single "cascade" of 164 centrifuges, the devices that spin at high speed and turn ordinary uranium into a fuel us- able for nuclear power plants — or, at higher enrichment levels, nuclear weapons.

The reports had prompted speculation that Iranian engineers had run into considerable technical difficulties.

But in an interview on Monday, Mohammad ElBaradei, the direc- tor-general of the IAEA, said that “based on our most recent inspections, the second centrifuge cascade is in place and ready to go.” He said that no uranium had yet been entered into the new system, but could be as early as next week.

Even with two cascades running, it would take Iran years to enrich enough uranium to produce a single nuclear weapon.

The U.S. director of national intelligence, John D. Negroponte, has said repeatedly that he believes Tehran is four to 10 years away from developing a weapon, even though its technology base is far more ad- vanced than that of North Korea, which has conducted a nuclear test 15 days ago.

Unlike Pyongyang, Iran has in- sisted that it does not intend to build a weapon. Nonetheless, Iran ignored a Nov. 1 deadline set by the Secu- rity Council, to stop enriching uranium.

Since then, European nations, China, Russia, and the United States have been debating what sanctions, if any, should be imposed. China and Russia have resisted, and in a speech on Monday at Georgetown Univer- sity's school of foreign service, El- Baradei made clear that he believes sanctions are unlikely to work.

" Penalizing them is not a solu- tion," he said. "At the end of the day, we have to bite the bullet and talk to North Korea and Iran."
**Whole Foods to Offer ‘Animal Compassionate’ Meat**

By Andrew Martin

Whole Foods Market’s move to carry labels saying “animal compassionate,” indicating the animals were raised in humane fashion, led to a number of corporate and consumer debates.

**No Skating on the Moon, Apparently**

By Henry Fountain

The Ford Motor Co. reported its worst financial results in more than 14 years on Monday, and the unexpected decision to close one of its plants was likely to women in the United States, but that they could resume work.

**Italian’s Top Spy is Expected to be Indicted in Abduction Case**

By Ian Fisher and Elisabetta Povoledo

The Italian spy’s expected indictment came after two revolutions that the government urged families to have more children. U.N. data show the government was willing to reduce the hours women work on the basis of their number of children.

**Iranian Women Should Have More Children, Leader Says**

By Nazila Fathi

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, reversing a policy in almost two decades, is encouraging Iranian women to have more children to increase the country’s population.

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**An Attitude Change Needed For Reversal of Ford’s Finance Woes**

By Micheline Maynard

The Ford Motor Co. reported its worst financial results in more than 14 years on Monday, and the unexpected decision to close one of its plants was likely to women in the United States, but that they had been notified in writing to the International Republican Institute for International Affairs and the American Enterprise Institute.

**Russia’s Govt Allowing Some Groups To Register After Earlier Suspension**

By C.J. Chivers

The Russian government said Monday that it has begun registering private foreign organizations whose operations within the country had been suspended last week, and that it was reviewing to banish or curtail the activities of the Kremlin and those groups that promote social activism, as well as petitioning and though surging unemployment and a declining economy. The government urged families to have more children. U.N. data show that Iran’s population grew to 55 million in 1988, from 27 million in 1978, the government was willing to reduce the hours women work on the basis of their number of children.

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**Reversal of Ford’s Finance Woes**

The Ford Motor Co. reported its worst financial results in more than 14 years on Monday, and the unexpected decision to close one of its plants was likely to women in the United States, but that they had been notified in writing...
Institute Wisdom Watch

LaVerde's New Layout: We were told there wouldn’t be any major changes. But at least we aren’t getting anything at all. The crowded checkout counter is even worse.

November Rule: Grad students should not be hooking up with freshmen.

Safedire: Still never on time, insufficient capacity, and rude drivers (please don’t hit us on again).

Heat in Rooms: “Cuz poets are hard enough without a cold.

Opinion Policy

Editorials are the official opinion of The Tech. They are written by the editorial board, which consists of Chair Marie Y. Thibault, Editor in Chief Zachary Onzer, and Managing Editor Michael McGraw-Herdge ‘08. Dissents are the opinions of signed members of the editorial board choosing to publish their disagreement with the editorial. Letters to the editor, columns, and editorial cartoons are written by individuals and represent the opinion of the author, not necessarily that of the newspaper. Electronic submissions are encouraged and should be sent to letters@the-tech.mit.edu. Hard copy submissions should be addressed to The Tech, P.O. Box 379229, Cambridge, MA 02139-2290, or sent by interdepartmental mail to Room W20-483. All submissions are due by 4:30 p.m. two days before the date of publication. Letters, columns, and cartoons must bear the authors’ signatures, addresses, and phone numbers. Unsigned letters will not be accepted. The Tech reserves the right to edit or condense letters; shorter letters will be given higher priority. Once submitted, all letters become the property of The Tech, and will not be returned. The Tech makes no commitment to publish all the letters received. Guest columns are opinion articles submitted by members of the MIT or community and have the author’s name in italics. Columns without italics are written by Tech staff.

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Two singers were misidentified in the Friday, Oct. 20 review of the Greater Boston Invitational Songfest. Brooke A. Jarett ’10 (also a Tech photographer), not Valerie A. 8ogen ’08, sung “Behind these Hazel Eyes,” and Priscilla W. Army ’06, not Stephanie H. Cho ’06, sang “I’ll Be.”

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THE ADVENTURES OF MAN

The Adventures of Man Presents:
“Court-Ordered Community Service Message”

THE ONLY series I SEE ON THAT SCREEN IS THE LIST OF CHANNELS YOU KEEP CLICKING THROUGH, AND THAT SERIES LOOKS LIKE IT’S DIVERGING.

by Andrew Spann

October 24, 2006

COMICS FUN PAGES

PROOF OF FALSE

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

Clicking through channels trying to find something interesting on TV.

THAT'S A WASTE OF TIME.

TELEVISION IS WRITTEN BY NON-MATHEMATICIANS. THERE ARE DOZENS OF CHANNELS, BUT NONE OF IT IS INTERESTING. YOUR SEARCH IS FUTILE.

Don't you want a broader view of the world? I could be watching something important. See, right now I'm watching the World Series. Aren't you interested in the World Series?

by Scott Burdick

sburdick@mit.edu

FoxTrot by Bill Amend

Crossword Puzzle

Solution, page 10
Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column, row, and 3 by 3 grid contains exactly one of each of the digits 1 through 9.

Solution on page 11.
Media Lab to Work With Gates

Gates, from Page 1

seeking a larger grant from a source it has never tapped: the Seattle-based Gates Foundation.

A few blocks away from Draper, administrators at the MIT Media Lab are in talks with the Gates Foundation about funding for a variety of research projects in the healthcare and aging fields.

"With the resources they're putting out, their magnitude, and their scale, the Gates Foundation is attracting a lot of interest," said James D. Shields, who took over this month as chief executive of Draper, a nonprofit research and development lab that is expanding into biomedical and other fields from its traditional base in ballistic missile guidance and space systems.

The role of the Gates Foundation, whose stated mission is "to help reduce inequalities in the United States and around the world," has been growing steadily since it was formed in 2000 by Microsoft Corp. founder Bill Gates, the world's richest man, and his wife, Melinda French Gates. Bill Gates stunned the business world when he said he would step away from daily operations at Microsoft to focus on running the foundation.

Later that month, Buffett, the legend- ary investor who is a close friend of Gates, said he would give away the bulk of his $42 billion fortune to five philanthropic groups active in world health, with the Gates Foundation getting by far the largest chunk. Buffett's gift made the already richly endowed Gates Foundation a formidable force in the research world — especially in global health, where it is increasingly focused — at a time when traditional funding sources have become less reliable.

The foundation, which has made grants totaling $11 billion over the past six years, including $1.3 billion last year, declined to make a representative available for an interview. Roughly half of its grants have been in the health arena, with most of the rest focused on education, according to the foundation.

But people in the Boston area research community suggest the Gates Foundation is making its influence felt in two ways. It has shown a willingness to back long-term research at a time when many funding sources, like corporations and government agencies, have shifted their focus to shorter-term projects. And while agencies like the National Institutes of Health direct much of their funding to chronic diseases afflicting Americans, the Gates group has been bankrolling projects aimed at solving health problems in the developing world.

"This is letting people take on problems of previously neglected diseases for which it was impossible to get significant funding in the past," said Eric S. Lander, director of the Broad Institute, a biomedical research and development company. "If one looks at where they're putting their money, it's a predictor of what might happen."

While the Gates Foundation is preparing to boost its grant-making to about $3 billion a year by 2008, that remains a fraction of the $27 billion annually invested in medical research by the NIH.

But the foundation has hired some of the top health experts in their field. Gates probably has a deeper healthcare staff than anybody out there in the foundation space," said Momenta Pharmaceuticals Inc. chief executive Craig A. Wheeler, who has worked with the foundation on global health issues.

And it has reduced the risk for companies investing in research on diseases prevalent in the Third World by striking partnerships with governments to guarantee a market for new drugs and treatments.

What the Gates Foundation has done is to come into the research marketplace with a new approach," said Nils Daulaire, chief executive of the Global Health Council in White River Junction, Vt., a policy and advocacy group working in developing countries. "It's beginning to correct the market failure in research and development for the past 50 years. People must in need of product - drugs and technology for better health - have no purchasing power."

Perhaps the biggest impact of the gifts from Gates and fellow billionaire Buffett may be the message they send to other wealthy business leaders. "They'll be an enormous impetus," said Victor W. Zue Ph.D., founder and president of Tiax LLC, an organization dedicated to helping best practices spread.

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Man Dies After Falling From Harvard Bridge

A man allegedly fell from the Boston side of the Harvard Bridge yesterday afternoon and was later pronounced dead, according to Massachusetts State Police Trooper Thomas Ryan. The incident occurred between 5 and 6 p.m. After the State Police responded to the scene, the Marine Unit was dispatched and recovered the man's body. They attempted resuscitation before the Boston Emergency Medical Service transported the man to Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston. He was later pronounced dead. The case is still under investigation.

James D. Shields, Draper chief executive

"With the resources they're putting out, their magnitude, and their scale, the Gates Foundation is attracting a lot of interest."

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— Mario Y. Thibault
Proposal Debated at Town Hall Assembly

GIRs, from Page 1

ing, five out of 21 students favored the 5/6 idea, eight favored a 5/5 system, four favored the current system, and four abstained.

One of the criticisms of the new SME requirements raised at last week’s UA Senate meeting is that, as proposed, students could potentially miss out on an entire field of study, such as biology or chemistry.

Students also debated which subjects should be required of MIT undergraduates. Questions were raised as to why 18.02 is required instead of 18.03 (Differential Equations), which students at the meeting considered to be more useful. Interestingly, more people at the meeting believed that if only three foundational subjects are required, those subjects should be 18.01, 8.01, and 8.02 (Physics II), as opposed to 18.03.

One striking question posed by one of the students present is why 8.01 should take precedence over a class such as 17.40 (American Foreign Policy), bringing back into the spotlight the question of what the goals of an MIT education should be.

As for the proposed Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences changes, there was a general dislike of the first-year common experience class, taken from the “First-Year Experience Program.” Sixteen out of 20 students opposed the proposed first-year common experience class, no one favored it, and four students abstained. The proposed HASS requirement would have two major phases, a foundational phase that would be completed within the first two years and a concentration phase. The foundational phase would include one class from each of three categories — humanities, arts, and social sciences — one of which would be a freshman experience class that would tackle a “big idea” like poverty, globalization, or human nature.

The task force hopes that the first-year experience class will bring freshmen together to work on their HASS assignments and increase the significance freshmen place on HASS classes.

Students present during the town hall meeting felt that limiting the choice of HASS subjects would make things worse, saying that with a large variety of HASS subjects to choose from, students are more likely to care about those classes.

At the end of the meeting, there was also a short discussion on what emphasis should be placed on Outreach. The report states that there should be more of an intellectual focus, while students have said that orientation is one of the only opportunities for students to explore housing options. According to one student at the meeting, there has been strong reactions from housemasters on both sides of the issue.

“I thought it went well,” Walker said after the meeting. “Good ideas were expressed and many were very insightful.”

Walker said that the most important version is that “students should be excited and engaged” in discussing and giving feedback to the task force report. Students who are interested in joining SAC should e-mail edcommons-sac@mit.edu.

Besides recommending possible changes to the core curriculum, the task force report also identifies a set of goals for the education of MIT undergraduates and makes recommendations on how to improve the infrastructure of undergraduate education and how to improve study-abroad programs. The report is available at http://web.mit.edu/committees/edcommons/documents/task_force_report.html.
Novartis in Deal With Institute
Huntington's Disease to be Studied with Mass. General Hospital

By Carey Goldberg

When Todd Bliss was 19 and found out that he almost surely faced the devastating death sentence of Huntington's disease, there was no treatment, no cure — nothing even close. So many of his friends who were thinking only of the near future had died, and there is still no cure for the disease, which affects at least 30,000 people in the United States.

He stays resolutely positive and cardially sinks away pleasant memories for the dark future when he will be too disabled to do anything but lie in bed and recall them.

But he also takes part in clinical trials of promising treatments, follows the literature on new research, and dares to believe that, though it may not come soon enough for him, a cure will come in time for his children, if they inherit the disease.

If anything, scientists say, the problem now is not seeking a needle but choosing which of a plethora of needles is most worth pursuing.

So many clinical trials are under way that researchers sometimes have trouble finding enough Huntington's patients to study. More potential treatments are coming from machines that rapidly test thousands of chemical compounds, looking for the best drugs. And more are stemming from experimental treatments that have dramatically helped mice with the disease.

Now a major drug company is getting into the act: Novartis just signed a deal to collaborate with MIT and Massachusetts General Hospital, home to more Huntington's research than anywhere else.

"We've gone from nothing to now kind of having, in a way, too many things," said Dr. Steven Hersch, a Mass. General Huntington's disease researcher, who said potential treatments already number in the hundreds. With the emphasis is probably on weeding things out and figuring out which thing within a given category is most potent or has the fewest side effects.

The hard lesson learned by those with Huntington's disease and those who research it is: A gene is a great thing to identify, but it's a long way from a cure. That's a lesson that many others seeking to crack genetic diseases are learning, too.

"It was complete illusion on every- one's part that just uncovering the genome would give us the answers" to cure many genetic diseases, said Dr. Mark C. Fishman, president of the Novartis Institutes for Biomedical Research, the company's research arm, which is headquartered in Cambridge. "The genome gives us the words. We still do not have the grammar for drug discovery until the fundamental biology is understood."

Even now, Fishman said, "We do clearly believe that we have a shot at making the medicines, but it's very early, and I think that to pretend that we see a linear track here would be overstating the case."

In recent years, researchers have begun to unravel much about the mechanism of Huntington's. It appears that in patients with the disease, cells produce an abnormal protein that breaks into smaller, toxic pieces, which then clump up the cells.

"If, every time you took out the garbage, you left a Kliegen behind, your room would be filled with Kleenes," said Dr. Anne Young, who is chief of neurology at Mass. General, and the driving force behind much of the hospital's concentration on Huntington's.

The toxic fragments seem to impede the mitochondria, the energy factories of cells, and also go into the nucleus of the cell and cause the wrong genes to be put into action.

But major mysteries remain, scientists still do not even know the normal function of Huntington, the mutant protein.

As they sort out possible remedies, the researchers face a major problem: Huntington's causation degenerates at a glacial speed, which is good for patients but bad for researchers in a hurry to find a cure.

"The problem now is not seeking a needle but choosing which of a plethora of needles is most worth pursuing."

"If you have a rust inhibitor that stops rust right away, and you put it on your rusty car, and say, 'Did the rust stop?' You won't know for some time, because rusting is such a slow process," said Mass. General researcher Dr. Jang-Ho Cha. "Unwitting to wait years to see if potential treatments work, researchers are urgently trying to develop "biomarkers" of Huntington's disease — telltale biological signs that the disease has progressed, or been stopped in its tracks. Some are signals of disease activity that show up in the blood. If Huntington's patients, others are brain imaging techniques that promise to pick up deterioration quickly.

For now, the treatments farthest along in humans are anything but high-tech. They are powders called Creatine and Co-enzyme Q-10 that are available in any health food store and seem able to help patients feel better, longer.

But almost every month brings more reports in top scientific journals of significant new findings on the root causes of the disease.

"For the first time, we're no longer in the dark — it's filled with light, we know what we have to do," said Michael Hayden of the University of British Columbia, a leading Huntington's researcher.

But for all the enthusiasm of researchers like Hayden, Bliss is reserving judgment on his own fate. Bliss, whose constructive attitude won him the standard of New England branch of the Huntington's Disease Society of America puts his faith in his own ability to cope, whatever the future brings.

If a cure is found, "It'll be the happiest one in the world and the first one in line, but I'm not going to wait for something like that to happen," Bliss said. "A lot of people just wait for things to make them happy."

But even with the enthusiasm of researchers, people with Huntington's are learning, too.

"If a cure is found, 'I'll be the happiest one in the world and the first one in line,' but I'm not going to wait for something like that to happen," Bliss said. "A lot of people just wait for things to make them happy."
85% of all MIT undergrads report that they would most likely call EMTs if someone passed out at a party.

MIT encourages students to help each other. If your friend needs medical attention,

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*Sponsored by the DEAN’S OFFICE,
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES, ARTS, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES*
Studio Space Sparks UA Finboard Debate

UA Senate, from Page 1

“competitive fee,” Fitzgerald added.

“It didn’t seem like there was anything formally written to say the studio would in the future not belong solely to the Logs,” Lukmann said.

The agreement was “more of a social agreement,” Kelch added.

Some a cappella groups instead use an external party for studio recording, also using funds allocated by Finboard. It was unclear to those at the meeting how many groups use an external studio and also if allocated funds are used to pay the Logs for use of their studio.

“If this kind of issue occurs in the future, we need a fundamental way [the UA] can make the ASA do things without delay,” Anderson said. “The UA is going to force the ASA to arbitrate.”

“If the ASA cannot find a resolution, then Finboard and the UA should step in,” Lukmann added.

As of yet, no one has formally brought this case before the ASA.

Student Group Property

Property rights of ASA recognized student groups were also discussed, specifically, what to do when a student group either ceases to exist or is deemed to be using their property inefficiently.

“Really, the question is how to handle this case when an a cappella group either ceases to exist due to reasonably valid circumstances or due to poor management,” said Fitzgerald. “We need to establish a process for handling these kinds of situations.”

As of yet, no one has formally brought this case before the ASA.

Student Group Property

Student Group Property

Property rights of ASA recognized student groups were also discussed, specifically, what to do when a student group either ceases to exist or is deemed to be using their property inefficiently.

“The are a lot of groups that don’t get any money and survive perfectly fine,” said ASA Treasurer James R. Peacock ’08. “This only applies to a very small percentage of cases … so we can look at it on a case by case basis.”

Many senators discussed requiring a list of previous purchases made by student groups using both Finboard and student-raised money when applying for Finboard funding.

“Reallocating currently owned property is probably a bad thing, but denying funding due to previous purchases is a reasonable issue,” said Fitzgerald.

“The ASA would handle disagreement over space usage as we would handle any other disagreement, and it is not in our guidelines to reallocate space between cycles. The guidelines are easy to change, but I don’t think that happens much,” said ASA Graduate Member-at-Large Philip A. Rolfe G.

Both issues will be discussed at the next meeting of the UA Senate on Monday, Oct. 30 at 8 p.m. in W20-400.

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Alexander J. Werbos ’07, Senior House senator for the Undergraduate Association, brings up a contrasting point in the discussion about club fund allocations during Monday’s UA Senate meeting.
Sheffler’s 3 Goals Not Enough Against Springfield

By Caroline Huang

The MIT men’s soccer team fell to Springfield College 4-3 on Saturday despite a hat trick by Ryan T. Sheffler ’07 on Senior Recognition Day.

With the loss, Tech stayed in sole possession of last place in the New England Women’s and Men’s Athletic Conference competition with a record of 0-5-0, 5-9-2 overall.

Springfield (2-4-0 NEWMAC, 5-10-2 overall) opened the scoring when it recorded what proved to be the game-winner — and Springfield’s third goal on the night — with 10 minutes left in the first half.

However, Sheffler broke the second tie of the game when he capitalized on a Pride defensive breakdown. Nitin Perumbeti ’09 passed the ball to Sheffler, who took advantage of Springfield’s miscommunication to give MIT a 2-2 lead.

Unfortunately for Sheffler and the Engineers, Springfield refused to cooperate with the Disney-movie ending — Senior Recognition Day won by a senior’s hat trick — and added two more goals within the last 10 minutes.

The first came after goalie Thomas S. Caldwell ’09 was exposed and Adrian Schippers sent the ball knuckling into the back of the net off a Jeremy Scheer assist.

The second came in the 83rd minute, when Schippers struck again with the game-winner after Caldwell made a great save off a strong free kick, but was unable to control the ball and allowed the rebound that set up Schippers.

Over the course of the game, play grew increasingly physical. Yellow cards were almost as plentiful as goals, as the referees awarded three cards to Tech players and two to members of the Pride.

The game also marked the end of three players’ home careers — attacking midfielder Sheffler, defensive midfielder Dylan S. Wright ’07, and forward Alex R. Morgan ’07. Together, the trio totaled 155 games, 34 goals, and 25 assists through Saturday. They were instrumental in helping MIT reach the second round of the NCAA tournament in 2003 for the first time.

MIT will compete on the road against the University of Massachusetts-Boston today at 3:30 p.m.