IAP to become permanent

By Mike McNamara

The Committee on IAP held its 4-1-4 calendar plan which MIT is currently using will probably become the Institute's permanent calendar, according to Professor of Nuclear Engineering Kent E. Henson, head of the faculty group studying IAP. The issue will be considered in the February faculty meeting.

The plan, which provides for the January Independent Activities period, will get up to the faculty as a three-year experiment in 1970. Results of the first two IAP's have been studied, and will be combined with the preliminary findings of this winter's IAP. All indications at present are that the faculty committee will recommend that the 4-1-4 plan be made permanent, and the faculty will do so.

"I don't see a problem that we see at present," said Hansen, "will be if the results of this year's IAP studies are significantly different from those of the past two years. The issue must be decided in February, so that the academic calendar can be made up, as a result, we will have very little time to study the questionnaire we get back about IAP '73. If they show major groups, it may be a 1971 or 1972, then we'll recommend that the 4-1-4 be extended one year and studied again. Otherwise, we're recommending that it be made permanent."

Feedback about IAP comes from questionnaires sent out to all students and faculty, asking them how they spent their time during IAP and how they felt about it. The IAP study group also held meetings and interviews with various groups and organizations to determine their response, except the IAP IAP, the Deans for Student Affairs, the Faculty Senate, the Electrical Department, the Medical Department, and several other groups to see what Kent E. Henson had been doing during IAP." Hansen said. "Almost nobody reported no special problem."

Figure from the past two IAP's shows that roughly 65% of the faculty feel that IAP is good, and 35% feel that it is bad. 12% feel it is not a good plan. "The opposition splits mainly into two groups," Hansen explained. "There are those who feel that we should try other calendars that we shouldn't consider ourselves stuck with 4-1-4 just because we've tried it out. There are also some that feel that we aren't getting our money's worth out of IAP. Hansen said that he felt that those critics could be answered: "We can't experiment with every calendar idea that comes along, at three years to an experiment, it would take quite a while. As for the other criticism - I can only say that students think that they got their money's worth, according to their replies to our questionnaires. I personally feel that a student has as much opportunity to learn during IAP as he does when he is home - if not more."

Professor Robert Fano, who served on the first IAP evaluation committee, gave The Tech a differing view of IAP's usefulness: "It has been my experience that most students want a rest period after the first term - but why not give them one? The resources the Institute and the faculty puts into IAP just aren't paying off in educational value. I'm not against giving students a rest, but I feel that it should be added on to the Christmas vacation rather than devoting all this energy to setting up an Independent Activities period that no one seems to profit by." Fano felt that possibility could be found for IAP-type activity during the term, and longer holidays and earlier dismissal in the spring could provide rest.

"The grade of I indicates that the instructor favors a rest and therefore IAP is a Professor James Mar HR produced statistics showing that the biggest activities in January were, (Please turn to page 2)

UA starts grievance service

By Walter T. Middlebrook

A student haggles over the price of a candy cane in the annual Candy Cane Day sale on Wednesday. Photo by Roger Goldenstein

UAP Curtis Reeves has announced plans for a service to act upon student complaints about the Institute and help them obtain red tape in dealing with MIT.

According to Reeves, the CAP spots grade trends

The Tech acquired a copy of the following memo to the members of the faculty from Professor of Electrical Engineering Arthur C. Smith, Chairman of the Committee on Academic Performance, on the subject of grading practices. --Editor

Each term the Committee on Academic Performance reports to the Faculty on grading practices in the past term. The distribution of grades for the Second Term, 1971/72 (excluding grade of D):

Grades Year Grad Grads
A 50% 48 48
B 27% 23
C 8% 5
D 10% 2
F 2% 1 (10%)
X 3% 1
N 9% 6

The committee sees some problems in its end of term report. Some of the students' performance:

Grades: Missed grades - if grades are not submitted to the Registrar in time for inclusion on the Term Summary, the Committee on Academic Performance:

Grades: (A) are grades that are not used as a de facto grade from the final examination.