Course 23-24 merger likely

By Mike McNamee

A proposal to merge the Department of Philosophy with the Department of Foreign Literatures and Linguistics is under study by members of both departments for implementation this fall.

The combined department of philosophy and linguistics will continue existing degree programs in both fields and will develop joint programs in the fields of semantics and philosophy of language to create a "program unlike that offered by any other department in the country," according to faculty members.

Under the plan, which will be reported to the full faculty in February, the foreign languages and literatures section of the Humanities Department (Course 23) would make a section of the Humanities Department (Course 21). The new department would have both philosophy and linguistics sections under a single administration.

The proposal is in the "working form" of a committee of philosophy and linguistics faculty, and plans for the merger have been "near-zero," but "the chances are overwhelming that the merger will go through," according to Course 23 head James Harris.

Sophomore found dead

A memorial service was held Dec. 16 for Carolyn J. Wells '78, a 19-year-old philosophy major who was found unconscious in her room by emergency resuscitation failed, and she was ruled dead on the scene.

The Middlesex County coroner's report found that her death was caused by ingestion of cyanide, apparently by suicide.

Funeral services were held in Chamblee, Ga., where Wells had attended Peachtree High School.

IAP offerings feature local history series

By Mike McNamee

Local history -- of the Boston and the MIT varieties -- was the theme for three of the bigger Independent Activities Period offerings as MIT's fifth IAP got underway this week.

The departments of Political Science and Urban Studies and Planning have combined forces to present a series of seminars and discussions on "The City in the Age of Machine Politics: James Michael Curley, Boston."

The series will trace the history of Boston from 1915 to 1940, examining the effect of the city's most famous political figure on Boston and its citizens.

The MIT-Historical Collections are focusing on history of a more local sort in two offerings: "They Were There," a series of talks by alumni and Institute officials on the history and development of MIT, focusing on the move from Boston to Cambridge in 1916, and "Pictures of the Past," a series of films depicting life at the Institute through the years.

Of course, history isn't about to overshadow traditional MIT interests during IAP. A glance at the more than 400 seminars and courses listed in "The Final Guide," 1974-75 shows the usual number of short courses and seminars like "Computer-Aided Circuit Design," "Field Logic Organization" (208a), "Probability and Statistics for Physical Measurements" (290), "Modular Operating Systems Design" (332a), and "Vectors in Quantum Theory" (296).

And the use of IAP as a time for hacking, extracurricular activities, organizing, consciousness-raising, and other activities isn't on the decline, either, as shown by offerings like "Workshop for Lost Souls" (58), "Dolphins Workshop" (112), "Adventures in Mind Control" (553), "Art of Macroud - Cooking" (357), "Being a Minority Employee and Student at MIT" (360a), and -- and some people think the Center as providing just this service, which it definitely is not," Morrissey said.

Information Center drops directory service

By Glenn Brownstein

Effective immediately, the MIT Information Center will no longer provide ancient telephone numbers or addresses to telephone callers.

In deciding whether to drop the project, the student directory, dial the main MIT switchboard number, 253-1000, or come personally to the Information Office and check the card file.

An increasing number of phone requests caused the Center to spend too much time supplying directory information, and forced the change, according to Mary Morrissey, Information Center director. "We think people think of the Center as providing just this service, which it definitely is not," Morrissey said.

For us to continue the service, "very healthy" and turns away a fantastic number of applicants each year," according to Harris. Research support for linguistics, however, is concentrated into two "old and somewhat shaky" grants from the National Institute of Mental Health, according to a department source.

Cartwright and Harris agree that there was "no resistance" and that "both departments are very happy" to the proposed merger. Harris pointed out that all existing programs would be continued. "We won't be pulling the rug out from under any of our present students or faculty," he said. And Cartwright said there would be no substantial alteration in our undergraduate offerings -- we intend to keep teaching the same courses under the new department.

Although the proposal will be discussed by the faculty and b. Corporation Visiting Committees for both departments next month, establishing and merging departments is apparently an administrative responsibility that does not require faculty or Corporation approval. "The legalities are very murky, because to the best of my knowledge there has been done anything like this before," Harris said. "The faculty will have an opportunity to approve any new degree programs that might arise, but we're not proposing degree programs yet."