Writing Program future uncertain

By Thomas J. Spink

The year-long dispute within the Humanities Department over writing at MIT erupted again this week amid an atmosphere of firings, boycotts, meetngs, and charges of backstabbing.

Wednesday, five Writing Program instructors received notices that their contracts were not renewed for the next academic year.

Members of the Writing Program declined to comment on the dismissals but Professor Bruce Mazlish, head of the Humanities Department, assured the notices were routine.

"Since we have an obligation to protect people, the Institute gives notices when appointments are terminated," said part-time instructors (four of the termilated personnel are part-time instructors) there is an almost automatic assumption the job will end with the academic year," Mazlish explained. "But because the situation has become near-a legal, we've sent notices to the part-time people to be on the safe side."

Mazlish asserted that the notices did not preclude the recipients being hired again.

Friday, the Humanities Department met to discuss the recommendations of the Committee to Evaluate the Pilot Writing Program, chaired by Professor Nathan Sidin, and an organisation plan to administer writing instruction proposed by Dean of the School of Humanities Harold Hanham.

No members of the Writing Program attended Friday's meeting, citing day-long meetings with colleagues from Harvard and Cornell for their absence.

Sources within the Humanities Department called the Hanham proposal "complexly opposite the Sivin Committee's recommendations and evaluatios.

The Evaluation Committee suggested that the Writing Program be removed from the Humanities Department and be administered by the School of Humanities directly because of past conflicts with certain seniors members of the Department and the Program's emphasis on Institute-wide activities.

Sources within the Writing Program attacked Hanham's proposal as "locking us into a program that doesn't let us teach the way we want to teach, the way we have been shown to be most successful in filling the widest range of student needs and abilities."

"Hanham's proposal is designed to meet the needs of a small number of talented people who pass through MIT. We have been trying to meet the needs of the average student," both Hanham and Sidin denied that there was any substantive difference between their recommendations.

"There is no basic conflict between Hanham's proposal and ours, if you understand the different nature of the papers," Sidin explained. "Our report was an evaluation, his is a draft of an organization. The functionalities are quite different."

"Dean Sidin wrote a 'talk' (Please turn to page 6)

Death of women also explored

Dormitory overcrowding attacked

By Mark James

MIT's fundraising and spending priorities and their effects on student housing were challenged by students at an Undergraduate Association (OA) Housing Forum held last Thursday.

The forum was held to discuss issues relating to four motions on student housing that had been brought before the Undergraduate Association General Assembly (GA) and specifically to allow student input to the class size decision to be made by the Academic Council soon.

Participating in the forum were representatives from the Academic Council, the Dean for Student Affairs, and the GA's Committee on Student Housing.

If fifty students also were at the meeting.

Class Size

Vice President Kenneth Wadleigh '87, a member of the Academic Council, said that the class of 1981 would be "sufficiently large and a class that had been planned for all future classes, but added the Council had not yet reached a final decision.

One of the GA motions calls for future classes to be set at 1010 students and recommends that next year's class be limited to 1000 in order to reduce overcrowding.

Associate Dean for Student Affairs Ken Browning '66 estimated that a class of 1000 would result in 130 students more than the capacity of the system with no overcrowding.

Alfred Geller '79 asked Wadleigh, "How can we be deliberately overcrowding the dormitories?" Wadleigh responded that he thought that MIT was doing a good job of providing housing considering its lack of "haze of capital" to fund new dormitories.

Wadleigh said that MIT does not have the authority to set the class size for undergraduate residence as an important part of the educational experience as older by League schools such as Harvard have had, and that this has made fundraising for housing more difficult.

"We thought that "we are busting our guts" to get more gift income.

Several students questioned whether MIT was sufficiently creatiwg a constituency for its fundraising efforts.

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Heine joins DSA staff

By David B. Koretz

Efforts to improve the status of women "can not be purely aired and debated," asserted Mary C. Heine '67, the recently appointed Assistant Dean for Student Affairs with special responsibilities for women students.

"The point is a general human liberation. We want input from both men and women," explained the former Wellesley student who transferred to MIT to receive a degree in biology.

For the near future, Heine feels that her job will entail mainly "talking to people, and doing a lot of listening. I've got to go out there and meet people, renew old acquaintances, and be ready to talk to someone who is not a student, or a member of the academic community," Heine added that "having been a student, a graduate student, an instructor, and by having lived in the dorm (as a Senior Tutor in McCormick Hall while a doctoral candidate), I can be particularly sympathetic, and be able to see potential problems."

Heine noted that one of the major problems involving women at MIT is the attitude toward women in a number of classes.

There are still some professors who will make sexist comments, and imply that these women do not do particular work," Heine explained this in part, by a "shame

Women tend to stand out more." Heine explained that she pointed out is the "lack of focus. Everybody's so busy — and they don't have help with organizational aspects.

Heine added that "the number of women seems to have hit a kind of plateau, this twenty per cent women. It will take quite some time to increase the applicant pool, to increase the number (Please turn to page 3)