Faculty decides by two votes
Drop date shift defeated

By Jordana Holland

The change in the current Drop Date policy proposed by the Committee on Academic Performance (CAP) was defeated by a 49-72 vote at yesterday's faculty meeting.

The CAP proposal, which had been endorsed by the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), would have moved the Drop Date to the end of the fifth week of the semester, allowing each student one additional drop before the end of the eleventh week of the term.

The major statement on behalf of the CAP proposal was made by CEP Chairman Thomas Greytak, Associate Professor of Physics. This was followed by a statement against the change by Dean for Student Affairs Carol Eisenberg, whose remarks were met with prolonged applause from the students present. Other professors who spoke out against the change drew strong student applause as well.

Due to the controversial nature of the topic for discussion, some students were in attendance, in addition to nearly 150 members of the faculty.

The student members of the CEP and the CAP were allowed to speak because those groups had presented the proposal to the faculty. They pointed out that the majority of their fellow students were against the change.

The final vote was greeted by cheers and applause from the students, which prompted President Jerome Wiesner to comment that the proposal be amended to allow students to change the date to the end of the eleventh week of the term.

The motion included a prohibition against changing the date to the end of the eleventh week of the term, as a result of the snow emergency.

No tests or assignments

By Mark James

Classes will be scheduled for next Monday and Tuesday, but not for the Patriots' Day four-day weekend, under a special motion approved by the faculty Wednesday.

The motion includes a prohibition on the two added class days, and states that no "reports, problem sets, or other written assignments or exercises may fall due on those days. It is recognized that individual departmental assignments may need to be made, and additional special arrangements to cover completely the full term's work. It is also recognized that some faculty and students may find themselves in February 20 and 21 to make up work lost.

The vote showed that "we recognize you even when we think you're wrong." Greytak began by presenting figures backing up his statement that "there is a strong relationship between those students who drop several courses and those who are in academic difficulty." According to the CAP proposal, students who dropped two or more classes, 35 percent had their records reviewed by the CAP, and 29 percent were either placed on probation or dropped from the system.

The suggestion to use past academic performance and drop record to determine drop privileges was rejected by Greytak, who pointed out the administrative difficulties such a plan might cause. He also said that the proposal was not preventative nor discouraging of misuse of the system. Greytak said that he felt that putting advisors in charge of controlling drop
date changes would result in "too diffuse a control" and would "have the advisors act as policemen."

Greytak concluded that students can experiment in their studies by taking advantage of pass/fail, UROP, IAP, and the one allowed drop.

Eisenberg then made her statement on the Drop Date change, stressing that it represented only her opinion, not that of the Office of the Deans for Student Affairs. She said that despite the small number of students directly affected by a fifth week drop, the student body was adamantly against the change. She also said that even students who did not utilize the drop date were reassured that they had a way out if they do have a work overload. She added that "knowing you have a choice provides a safety valve."