New assoc. dean to head XXI

By Gordon Hunter

The post of Associate Dean for Humanities Programs has been created at MIT to support the present position of Humanities Department Head. Also, the six sections within the department will be able to act with more autonomy than in the past.

"This is sort of a new ad

vising capacity," said Dean of Humanities and Social Science Harold J. Harsham. "It is the result of a study on the organization of the Department of Humanities that began a year ago. The study also determined that the structuring of the department should not be different.

Professor of Philosophy Richard L. Cartwright, current department head, cited two reasons for the decision. "First, there is a great deal of diversity in the department. Being head of this department is comparable to being a dean at another college. Second, it is difficult to predict the future of the various sections." He added that this plan would allow a great deal of flexibility for whatever might happen in the future.

"It was a rediscovery that all programs in the department have a distinctive mission," said Harsham. "No specific plans for five years from now have been made. Who knows what will happen in the future."

"A search has just begun for a permanent head of the department. I'm simply here in a temporary capacity as department head."

The search is being conducted by an advisory committee appointed by Harsham. The committee is composed of the six section heads, Cartwright, Associate Dean of Humanities and Social Science Donald Blackmer, and Professor of Linguistics Samuel Jay Keyser. Keyser was the chairman of the Committee on the Humanities that was appointed by the Provost to make recommendations concerning the organization of the department.

Deadline for letters of application is February 1, and the official start if the job is July 1. Harsham said that the decision of who would take the post would probably be made early during the spring term.

The Associate Dean post is a unique job that has in fact existed," said Harsham who explained that the head of the Humanities Department is already serving the functions of an Associate Dean. He said that the post is intended to be permanent no matter what may happen to the department. Harsham described the new post as a coordinator rather than an administrator. He said that the Associate Dean would help the strongest sections become autonomous, while aiding the administration of the less-developed sections.

The job description for the positions says, "Candidates should have a record of distinguished scholarship in some area of the Humanities, though not necessarily one represented by one of the existing sections of the Department. In view of the size and scope of the Department, candidates also should have substantial administrative experience."

He explained that the position will have to be filled by a special type of person. "It is not easy to find people who are interested in this sort of job because the person is required to grow in the job as the six sections grow independently."

Harsham added that the Associate Dean must have "a general interest in education in the humanities, but that most people like this "find it difficult to take an interest in administrative affairs."

Because of the new post, Harsham said that Humanities "won't be a department like any other department, but then it never was."