Faculty debates writing policy

By Tony Zamparelli

The Committee on Curriculum met Wednesday to endorse the establishment of a Writing Requirement, but then postponed consideration of three proposals to implement the requirement until its next meeting on April 21.

Debate on the three motions was postponed to allow clarification of the role of the Standing Committee on the Writing Requirement called for in the proposals. Several faculty members, including Professor of Practice Robert J. Holzemer Ph.D., contended the new committee's role would conflict with that of the Committee on Curriculum.

About 80 faculty members attended Wednesday's meeting.

Felix M. Villars, Chairman of the Faculty, opened Wednesday's debate by declaring, "A large fraction of our students—typically 30 percent—have a writing problem of some kind." About 10 percent of MIT undergraduates have a writing problem that "is a handicap to their professional prospects," said Villars.

The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) proposed to the faculty a two-stage requirement proposal for the 1982-83 academic year, beginning September 1983. The first stage is "concerned with basic expository writing competence" and the second stage is designed "to engage undergraduates in the more specialized forms of writing that are necessary within their professional disciplines," according to the CEP report.

"There have been valid expressions of concern that this requirement is too weak... There is ample room for strengthening this proposal. We look to the faculty and the Institute to provide us with additional suggestions," said Villars.

Professor Judah L. Schwartz noted the writing requirement would not be as rigorous as other Institute requirements. He characterized the CEP plan as a "test of sufficiency." The writing requirement "is a little bit like the swimming test: Can you cross the pool without drowning?" said Schwartz.

Villars replied, "A requirement is something you can flunk. No professors questioned the need for an undergraduate writing requirement, but several questioned its proposed implementation and the role of the committee proposed to oversee the requirement.

Record number admitted to Class of '86

By Laura Farhi

A record number of high school seniors was admitted to the MIT Class of '86, according to Marilee Jones, Assistant Director of Admissions. About 5 percent of the applicants were women, and 7 percent of the admitted students are from minority groups, the same percentage as last year.

Director of Admissions Peter H. Richardson '64 defined minority groups as Black American, Mexican American, Puerto Rican, and American Indian.

"We are shooting for a slightly larger class [than last year]," said Richardson. The planned size of next year's freshman class is 1075-1100 students. Last year's projected class size was 1050.

The Class of '86 will be larger partly because "we want to maintain the same percentage of students admitted as not choose them, they are coming to us," said Richardson. "We want to make sure the student body is representative of our applicant pool," said Richardson.

"We are a little more flexible academically in order to take students that are exciting, interesting, and motivated," noted Richardson.

MIT administrators and Congressmen have noted an increase in academic flexibility is small, however, the "difference is not that great.

Recent admitted classes have been more representative than in the past, according to Richardson. Hamilton stressed MIT does not give preference to conservative students: "We do not choose them, they are coming to us that way.

The Admissions Office, along with women's groups on campus, is "reaching out to yield an increase in women students," reported Humbleton. The Admissions Office is sending large T-shirts to admitted women. The Association of Women Students included a T-shirt as one of the "sales pitch" for MIT acceptance letters.

MIT will hold its First Minority Weekend April 2nd to 4th, to which admitted minority students are invited. Fronee E. Reddix '82, Assistant to the Director of Admissions, said, "our hope is to give minority students a chance to see MIT as it really is." The letter notifying students of their acceptance were mailed Wednesday at midnight. Three hundred students were placed on a waiting list. The Admissions Office will admit transfer students in May or June and readmitted students in August.

NIH proposal would cut research funding

by Burton Kalaski

MIT may lose $1 million in research funds if Congress approves a proposal by the National Institute of Health (NIH) to reduce reimbursement for indirect costs. NIH's research expenses to ninety percent of costs, according to Vice President of Financial Operations, Stuart H. Cowen.

"The money will have to come from somewhere, and we already have an operating deficit," remarked Cowen. He said although tuition is set for this year and next year, "eventually there will be an effect on higher education," from the decreased funding.

President Paul E. Gray '54 was in Washington to speak to both NIH and Congressmen, noted Special Assistant to the President for Urban Relations Walter L. Milne, who accompanied Gray. "We were hoping the NIH would not rejet this proposal," Milne added, "because if NIH can cut funding, others will follow and MIT will lose its prestige."

Milne reported there is "a vigorous protest underway" against the proposed cuts by

(The proposal is due to page 2)