Faculty approves freshman hidden grade plan

By Tony Zamparini

The faculty adopted Wednesday — by a unanimous voice vote — a new Educational Policy's (CEP) plan to change freshman grading, which will give freshmen formal hidden grades this spring term.

About 50 faculty members attended the debate on the CEP proposal.

The CEP proposal took effect immediately upon passage. The committee's plan will replace freshman evaluation forms at the end of the spring term with hidden grades.

Chairman of the Faculty Felix M. H. Villars opened the faculty discussion, noting the issue of freshman pass/fail "has been on the agenda for two years and it is time we came to a conclusion."

The system of freshman evaluation forms "works very poorly... at the end of the spring term freshman grades, Villars said. Since many of the evaluation forms which instructors complete contain only a hidden grade, Villars claimed, "at best, students get either a letter grade or nothing for evaluation at the end of spring term."

There is "no intent by the CEP to back off from the pass/fail system," Villars said. He noted "many colleagues have criticisms of freshman pass/fail."

"The whole issue of grades," Villars noted, "is one to which students are hypersensitive."

The immediate change in grading systems would not be a breach of contractual agreement for this year's freshman class, Villars said. A contract with students is that MIT has a pass/fail system in the freshman year; he contended: there is "no statement about the internal handling of information."

The use of hidden grades will mean "losing an inducement for the faculty to know the students in more depth," said Michael Lippsky, Professor of Political Science. "I wondered if your committee considered that."

"The whole issue of grades," Villars replied, "is one cannot legislate instructors know their students better... They don't have the time."

The situation for MIT graduates is actually not as bad as it is nationwide, according to Weatherall. For the first time in a number of years, they hired any employee in an incumbent unfilled position. A situation could arise when an employee's student supervisor and his ODSA Office supervisor (Please turn to page 3)

Brown disputes ODSA hiring policies

By Thomas Huang

"1983 will probably be the worst [year] in engineering employment since the early '70s," according to Robert K. Weatherall, Director of the Office of Career Planning and Placement.

"A report by the College Placement Council indicates that companies will be making less job offers," Weatherall said. Companies plan to hire 12 percent fewer engineering students than last year.

Many companies will freeze their salaries, according to Weatherall.

"The companies recruiting now are hoping that there will be more job openings by June," Weatherall said. "They hope the economy will come out of the recession by then."

The prospect of economic recovery by June is "best uncertain," he added.

About 400 corporations will hold interviews at MIT this academic year, compared to the 450 last year, Weatherall predicted. "That's not a bad number," he continued. "The thing is that they will not be looking for as many students... they don't want many people.

"They are looking for people who have a strong reputation," Weatherall said.

"In other business, the Finance Committee (Please turn to page 3)