Middle East program formed

By Marcia Smith

MIT is offering a new interdisciplinary graduate program focusing on the Middle East. The program is designed to be integrated with political science, urban studies and planning, architecture, history, and the Alfred P. Sloan School of Management, according to the program brochure.

Like the programs at other universities, which concentrate on languages, history, culture, or religion, MIT's program does not concentrate on the geographical development of the countries in the Middle East, said Dr. Nasli Choucri, director of the committee that directs the program.

"This is the only program in the United States that concentrates on the scientific aspect of the Middle East.

Graduate students can enroll in this program to learn about the socio-economic change, history, political issues, institutional developments, capital flows, technological development, business, and investment possibilities, according to the brochure.

"The Middle East is very important to the States," said Choucri. "It's a major center for trade, it's an important strategic area, and no other region has had the rapid economic change in the past 10 years. Students can develop projects and see them through to completion.

The program is a result of four years of research, Choucri said. First, there was an Institute-wide survey of how many people were interested in the Middle East. Choucri said, "There was a very strong interest, both among people interested in some aspect of the Middle East, but there was nothing tying us together," she said.

Next, the committee surveyed universities to find out what the Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, and found that there were many offered, a technically based program, Choucri said. "We thought that since MIT is so good at science and technology that it would be natural for us to lead the way in such a program," she explained.

The committee made two major decisions after deciding to start the program, Choucri said. First, they made the program "as an addition, not an instead" of a program, she said. Students are only required to take two courses, attend a workshop seminar, and write a thesis related to the Middle East, she noted. The program themes and areas of opportunity are decided by the student's major thesis if both departments approve ahead of time.

Despite the small number of courses, they designed the program to make the students experts on the Middle East, Choucri said. "We aren't trying to compete with the programs at Harvard or Yale," she explained. "Our program is very different, so if someone wants to hire an economic who has a strong analytical background about the Middle East, they have to come here.

The program doesn't require that the student learn a language, but a student is encouraged to do so, Choucri said.

Students are also encouraged to go to any of three seminar series: the MIT/Hebrew seminars which concentrate on the political issues, the Emile Bustani series which invites officials, consultants, and distinguished scholars to discuss the relevant issues; and the development and change seminars which focus on economic and political changes, Choucri said. The committee doesn't foresee an undergraduate program in the near future. "The undergraduates have enough requirements as it is," Choucri commented. "We don't want to pile on more, although students are certainly encouraged to come to the seminars.

Group advises broad courses

(Continued from page 1) however, did not support the use of both Principles of Chemical Science, and Introduction to Solid-State Chemistry (3.091) to satisfy the chemistry core requirement.

The committee said that 5.11 provides a broad introduction to chemistry, while 3.091 "in a narrower view of chemical science dealing mainly with solids and defects in solids," according to the report.

Boston. 3.091 "may be an extremely useful course for engineers to have, but it is not equivalent to 5.11 in content," Con- tinued the report, "and to satisfy the chemistry requirement is an issue that will have to be ad- dressed by the Academic Council and the Science Education Committee," it added.

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