Students criticize HASS distribution plan

By Katie Schwartz

Several dozen students, who all described themselves as humanities majors, voiced doubts and fears about the proposed humanities distribution requirement at an open forum Friday afternoon.

About 100 students and 30 to 40 faculty attended the forum, which was hastily arranged last week by Dean for Undergraduate Education Margaret L. MacVicar '65 in response to a student petition asking the faculty to delay decision on the proposal. Over a thousand students had signed the petition.

The proposal would require all undergraduates to take distribution subjects in three of five categories: Culture and Society; Historical Studies; Literary and Textual Studies; Mind, Thought and Value; and the Arts. About ten distribution subjects would be offered per category each term. The faculty is scheduled to vote on the proposal at its regular meeting tomorrow.

Virtually all the students who spoke felt the proposed requirement would alienate students from the humanities by restricting their freedom to choose subjects they were interested in. Many thought that the new distribution subjects would be large, impersonal survey courses that would breed only resentment among students.

Chosen vs. core

Much of the friction focused on the limited number of distribution subjects mandated by the proposal. This year's list of 156 HLM-D's has already been cut to 108 next year, and the proposed system would allow only 55.

Given so few to choose from, the apathy would be less likely than ever to ensure a class that excited them. Katherine Wil- liams '90 said. Joseph Vandervort '89 claimed his MIT schedule left him with too few options available, and Tat- iana Burton '90 said she had lit- tle time to take humanities beyond the required distribu- tion, and even then, she cared about those classes.

The current proposal is in fact more moderate than many facul- ty want, responded Professor of History Pauline Maier. Maier chaired the committee that rec- ommended the subject distribu- tion requirement in four areas last year.

There are "strong voices" call- ing for a return to mandatory humanities core areas, as in the 1950s. Maier said. "Fifty is still a very generous number of alternate- lives," she added.

Other students attacked the proposal. (Please turn to page 2)

Psychoogy program revised

By Darrel Tarnawies

A new interdisciplinary pro- gram in psychology has been cre- ated to fill the void created when Course IX was reorganized as the department of psychology and chair of the steering committee for the program. The department had been formally known as the department of psychology.

"Killing Fields" victim speaks on genocide

By Glenn J. Lee

Dith Pran, the Cambodian photographer whose story was told in the Academy-award win- ning movie "The Killing Fields," discussed the problem of negative genocide last Friday night at Boston University.

Pran, now a reporter and photo- grapher for The New York Times and a United Nations ap- pointed goodwill ambassador, spoke of himself as "not a hero, not a politician, but a survivor of the Cambodian holocaust," an eyewitness.

Pran said Cambodians were "a peaceful people" dragged into the war by the actions of the Soviet- backed North Vietnamese, the United States, and the People's Republic of China-supported Khmer Rouge.

Under the Khmer Rouge, Cam- bodian government officials were "prisoners of the Khmer Rouge."

"They drove my family, my relatives, my family members, my extended family and my friends to the fields," Pran said.

Agricultural work was torture to the Khmer Rouge."

"With so many people, I had to do very difficult work," Pran said. "My back was too weak."

"My mother was pregnant with my brother, and my father was in the fields," Pran said.

"The Khmer Rouge killed children to them would not grow up," Pran added. "We have to repent."

(Weiner to head CIS)

By Akbar Merchant

Professor of Political Science Akbar Merchant will be the new director of the MIT Center for International Studies, according to the MIT News Office. He replaced Eugene B. Skolnikoff '49, director since 1972, who signs to return to full-time teaching, research and writing in the Department of Political Science.

Due to the New School for Social Sciences Ann F. Friedlaender PhD '64 announced Weiner's appointment, effective July 1.

Weiner's appointment comes as a further indication of the growing centrality of international relations to the MIT curriculum.

Weiner received his bachelor's degree at The City College of New York and an MA and a PhD from Princeton University in 1953 and 1955, respectively.

"The CIS was established in 1951 and supports research on the effect of science and technology on science and technology, and international politics and conflict.

Students doubt plan will improve situation

By Katie Schwartz

The Committee on the Undergraduate Program held an unprecedented open meeting yesterday to hear students' concerns about the proposed humanities distribution requirement.

Many of the approximately 30 students who at- tended did not think the new proposal would be any less susceptible to abuse than the current system. They felt it might not achieve its goal of assuring breadth in students' education, and suggested modi- fications.

Members of the CUP and other administrators present indicated they still endorsed the proposal, despite a surge of student criticism in the past week and a half. CUP Chairman Margaret L. MacVicar '65 said she had not yet decided whether to ask that tomorrow's faculty vote be postponed to allow more discussion.

S. Jay Keyser, associate provost for educational programs and policy, believed the proposal was nec- essary because given freedom of choice, students often take a large number of science courses. He warned.

"It's awful hard to get breadth from cate- gories," said Joseph H. G., a student from computer science.

"If from what it is now, said Andrew Bontsevich '77. A frequent visitor of the HUM-D system has been the belief that the proliferation of distribution fields makes it pos- sible to satisfy the requirement with the same familiar courses. CUP member Pauline Maier emphasized that it will be easier to maintain high academic stan- dards in 30 distribution subjects than in 108.

(Photos turn to page 2)