Change in requirement will eliminate courses

The restructuring of the HASS requirement will most likely remove the present HASS-D status from all third and fourth level language subjects, making it even more difficult for students to learn a new language and acquire fluency necessary for study abroad.

A student who wants to take level one through level four of a foreign language by the beginning of a junior-year abroad would receive 8 credits for HUM-D. While this is desirable, the current HASS-D plan has lost its HUM-D status. Despite having learned about a different culture, discussed history and social issues in a foreign language, and written many short papers in the language, and having taken an examination, one student commented that it would be more difficult fulfilling a HUM-D course in another language.

Clearly we as Americans are becoming more less self-centered and too uninterested in learning about other cultures. I fail to see why MIT, an internationally-known university whose graduates are likely to interact professionally with foreigners, should encourage the closed-minded view of "Let them learn English if they want to speak to me."

Although I assume those who drafted the HASS proposals did not intend to send this message, the reforms offer only subtle forms of discrimination against students interested in foreign languages and culture.

I urge all undergraduates to consider how different their experiences with the humanities and social sciences would have been if their choice of distribution subjects had been limited to one of the five categories outlined in the new HASS-D proposals. If you have learned a foreign language during your years at MIT, consider especially how much more difficult fulfilling your distribution requirement would have been without HUM-D status for upper-level courses. The time to make your voice heard is now, not next fall when you are forced to take a course you planned to take but has lost its HUM-D status.

Carolyn Ruppel

Faculty should consider alternatives to HASS-D plan

(Continued from page 5)

The number of HASS-D classes will be reduced from 62 to 32. The total number of required distribution credits will remain the same, and so will the number of humanities courses required as part of the core curriculum. As an undergraduate, I was an independent work student and faculty should not be surprised. There should be a structure to the 18-credit requirement any student undertake during the winter.

Course descriptions should accompany the curriculum of the individual HASS courses. The total number of distribution credits and faculty should not be reduced. There should be a structure to the independent work student under a faculty member.

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