Thurow supports Chinese

(Continued from page 1)

De Courtivron, however, believed that too close a resemblance to the Japanese program would be a mistake. "There are a number of students who have a large background in Chinese who will need higher level courses," she said.

De Courtivron said that she doesn't want to just teach the beginning level courses geared mainly to business and engineering majors, the pool from which she feels the Japanese program draws most of its students.

"We want to place the program in a larger intellectual context," more comparable to other language programs, said de Courtivron.

Although de Courtivron is strongly in favor of and dedicated to forming a Chinese language program, she has proceeded with caution, noting that the entire proposal is a "touchy" topic.

"Anytime you introduce a new language into a department it's a sensitive topic," said Khoury. "There are always those that will feel there is a more important language," said Thurrow.

Thurrow hopes to include the Chinese language as part of an Asian studies master's program. He believes such a program is imperative in light of China's increasing role in economic and world affairs.

"It's time Chinese became a world language rather than just the world's largest language," said Thurrow.

Thurrow hopes to initiate the program as soon as possible. He attributes his urgency to the fact that a Chinese language program at MIT is in long overdue. "This should've been done 15 years ago."

In fact, Chinese was offered here from 1976 to 1980. It was taught by a Wellesley professor as part of a Wellesley exchange program. The course was given on the MIT campus and was open only to MIT students. However, administratively, the program was run out of the Wellesley College.

Yih-Jian Tai, who taught Chinese here during those four years, said the program was an overwhelming success as far as student interest was concerned. "In fact, that was the problem," said Tai. "By the fourth year, the total enrollment at MIT exceeded the number of Wellesley students in their own department. It didn't look right to remain simply a branch of the Wellesley program."

The eventual failure to continue offering the course was due to political reasons, according to Tai. Wellesley did not want to stop teaching the course and the MIT provost at the time was uncertain whether he wanted to fund a full-fledged program.

"They figured they'd close [the Wellesley program], let the whole thing cool down for a few years, and then re-establish the program at MIT," said Tai. However, a decade later there is still no program at MIT. "Almost every year the Chinese Students Club has petitioned to re-establish a program, but so far they have not been successful," said Tai.

CSC petitions for Chinese language courses

In an attempt to further boost their yearly attempts to secure a Chinese language program at MIT, members of CSC, along with other students, formed a group called Chinese Language On Campus (CLOC). The group has been the major instigator of much of the recent initiatives, according to CLOC Chair Shu Tung 92. "They would not have applied for the grant last year if CLOC wasn't formed," said Tung.

Last year CLOC put together petitions and took surveys of the student body, the results of which showed that there was an overwhelming demand for Chinese on the MIT campus," said Tung.

CLOC also surveyed students who had made the trip to other schools to take Chinese. "Most people found it was too much time and commitment. In the end they felt it was worthless," said Tung. Last year 97 students took Chinese at Harvard, according to the Registrar's Office.

CLOC is optimistic that a Chinese language program will be included soon, but will continue to petition until it is. In the meantime, CLOC is offering a seminar that runs on Chinese language.

The seminar is being taught by a Wellesley professor as part of a Wellesley exchange program. The seminar is being taught by a Wellesley professor as part of a Wellesley exchange program.

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(Continued from page 1)

Thurrow adds Sloan School support

Perhaps the greatest new force pushing for a Chinese language program is Lester C. Thurrow, dean of the Sloan School. In a meeting this summer, Thurrow met with a number of people behind the MIT program, including Perdue, and threw his full support behind the Chinese language program.

Thurrow hopes to include the Chinese language as part of an Asian studies master's program. He believes such a program is imperative in light of China's increasing role in economic and world affairs.

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