Students See HASS-D As an Improvement

HASS-D, from Page 1

of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Some HUM-D graduates dis-

agreed with Khoury. "I think I got a

good, diverse background in the

humanities with HUM-D. I didn't

'cluster' my classes around a partic-

ular field — I've taken classes in

anthropology, music, philosophy,

and science fiction literature," said

Andrew A. Bennett '85. Bennett

graduated with a concentration in

film studies.

Deborah A. Levinson '91 said

she felt the HUM-D system afford-

ed her "a great deal of breadth in the

courses I took. I took classes in lan-
guages, writing, literature, women's

studies — MIT has a lot to offer in

the humanities." She said it was

easy to fulfill the HUM-D require-

ment because "in any department,

there would be at least one HUM-D.

It doesn't seem that there are many

choices with HASS-Ds... With

HUM-Ds at least you had the illu-

sion of free will."

Stacey Au '92, a 1991 Burchard

Scholar, endorsed the HASS-D sys-

tem because "it requires students to
take classes in different fields. "It's

good because there are many classes

that you wouldn't seriously consider
taking except for the fact that they

are required," said Au, who took six

of her eight HASS classes from the

music and arts section.

As also recognized some flaws

in the HASS-D program, including

the requirements that all classes have

a midterm, a final, and at least 25

pages of writing. She said these

requirements are often not taken

seriously by professors.

Sergin Tofamel '93 said, "I've

 gotten a good humanities back-
ground, but not necessarily because

of HASS-Ds." However, Tofamel

said he still has a "choice in picking

classes rather than being bound by

restricted HASS-D requirements."

Since this year's seniors are the

first to complete four years under

the HASS-D program, a proposal to

chart the "HASS-D profile" of the

class of 1992 is under consideration.

The study will include a statistical

analysis of concentrations, majors,
majors, and popular classes in the

HASS departments, Davis said.

HASS-Ds improve on old system

According to last October's Inter-

tem Report on the HASS-

Distribution Requirement, presented

by the HASS-D Overview Committee,

the change from HUM-

Ds to HASS-Ds "was designed to

promote breadth in a manner that

complements the concentration

component and to provide a more

structured and intellectually coher-

ent overall HASS requirement."

"HASS-Ds represent a tighter,

smaller, and more monitored ver-

sion of the distribution requirement

than the previous HUM-Ds," Davis

said. The HASS-D system affords

closer oversight of the distribution

system because monitoring is done

by five HASS-13 subcommittees and

the HASS-D Overview Committee,

Davis said.

"HASS-D courses are mandated to

 allot at least a third of class time to

small section discussions; there was no

such requirement for HUM-

D classes," Khoury explained. "The

overhaul of the (HUM-D) system to

HASS-Ds allowed a refinement of
categories and the classes offered.

Professors were allowed more free-

dom to design their classes, and as a

consequence almost half of the 74

HASS-D classes are new or

improved versions of older HUM-

D classes."

Humanities classes are now split

to fewer categories and subjects

than they were under the previous

distribution system. The 74 HASS-

D courses are divided into five cate-

gories, in comparison to the 160

HUM-D classes which were divided

into 15 fields. Courses which lost

the "distribution"classification are

now listed as regular HASS classes

in course catalogues.

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