No Required Classes During IAP

By Venkatesh Satish

Though the calendar changes made in spring 1993 allow departments to offer one requirement exclusively during Independent Activities Period starting with this academic year, departments have made few efforts to do so for IAP 1995.

"We’ve had some inquiries, but nothing is in place this year," said Professor of Media Arts and Sciences Stephen A. Benton ’63, who heads the IAP Policy Committee.

There are a number of reasons for the slow progress. One of which is the time it takes to adapt current required courses to the IAP format, according to Benton.

"The best use of IAP for courses in subsequent years, Bradt said. The project lab will “feature students closer to real life experiences.”

Benton said, "It’s very difficult to think of a required course that doesn’t have to happen at a precise moment in a student’s career.”

Also, "There’s still the issue that the class should be a course for IAP, not just a compressed lecture course.” These factors make it challenging to create required classes for IAP, Benton said.

Currently, the physics department is the only one that has concrete plans to offer mandatory courses exclusively during IAP, Benton said.

Physics will offer IAP lab

During IAP 1995, the physics department will offer Advanced Project Laboratory (8.122), a course that emphasizes computational experimenta- tion, at Professor of Physics Hua V.D. Buih P36.1.

The laboratory course is one part of an entire curriculum revision in the Department of Physics, which will involve the addition of several courses in subsequent years, Bradt said. The project lab will “feature computerized data-taking and analysis capabilities in an effort to bring students closer to real life experimentation.”

The rationale behind the change was to provide more theoretical background and adding exciting topics, such as special relativity, to the physics program. Bradt said.

Physics majors in the Class of 1998 and future classes will have to take either 8.122 or Advanced Classical Mechanics (8.21), both six-unit courses, as part of their IAP’s, Benton said. The rationale behind the change was to give students closer to real life experiences.

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