To: Members of the Faculty
From: Committee on the Undergraduate Program
Date: April 7, 1987
Subject: Proposal to Permit a Minor in HASS

Introduction

The Minor in HASS proposed in this Resolution is intended to respond to needs expressed on the one hand by persons within the School of Engineering, for an experience in humanities, arts or social science which is more structured and more serious than that which most engineering undergraduates now have, and on the other hand by some faculty of the School of Humanities and Social Science for a larger constituency within the undergraduate engineering student body; a constituency of students with a serious commitment to education in humanities, arts or social science. A Minor in one of these areas appears to be a useful vehicle toward these ends. Moreover it may be attractive to students from other schools than Engineering.

In addition to its responsiveness to the above needs, which have been clearly articulated in the Report of the Committee on the HASS Requirements, in the Report of the Committee to Design an Integrative Curriculum in the Liberal Arts, and in the Progress Report of the Commission on Engineering Undergraduate Education, the proposed Minor in Humanities, Arts or Social Science will have the very important feature that it can be constructed on the base of the present HASS requirements with a relatively modest added commitment of the student's time to HASS, and with no increase in credits required for graduation. This proposal deliberately does not deal with the general proposition of minors across schools for MIT undergraduates, but its adoption would not in any way preclude consideration of minors which may be proposed by other schools.
Proposal

It is proposed that the requirements for designation of the degree with a Minor in Humanities, Arts or Social Science be stated as follows:

"A student may elect to minor in a designated area of HASS by completing a program of six subjects approved by the Committee on the HASS Minor. Of the six subjects required for the minor, at most five shall count toward satisfaction of the Institute HASS requirement, and of these five, at most one shall count toward the HASS distribution requirement" 

Discussion

The present HASS requirement comprises eight subjects, of which three are in the concentration, three in the distribution, and two are elective. To complete a Minor in HASS a student would most likely add three additional subjects to a three-subject concentration, for a total of six. One of these would have to be specified from the student's unrestricted electives. One could be drawn from the distribution, and the final one from the two HASS electives; or two could be specified from the unrestricted electives.

The proposed Minor in HASS would differ from existing programs in important ways. In contrast to the double major, which requires 450 units of credit for degrees in two distinct departments, and thus presents the temptation to the student to attempt its completion in the normal four years with an enormous overload, the Minor could be completed in four years without overload. (We accept the premise that the workload of the individual subjects would not be increased by their inclusion in a Minor.) Thus the Minor in Humanities, Arts or Social Science should not result in an increase in "pace and pressure".

The proposed program would entail few new costs or administrative structures. Departments, sections or programs which wish to offer a Minor in Humanities, Arts or Social Science would propose a structured program in a designated area of concentration. It is expected that the areas of concentration designated as suitable for a HASS Minor would normally be selected from those areas in which a student may elect to major. These proposals would be reviewed by the Committee on the HASS Minor (to be established by the Deans of the Schools of Humanities and Social Science, and of Architecture and Planning), and submitted to the Committee on Curricula.
Resolution

Resolved: That the Faculty agrees that actions should be taken by the Schools of Humanities and Social Science and Architecture and Planning, such that a student may elect to minor in HASS, by completing a program of six subjects approved by a Committee on the HASS Minor, to be formed by these schools, and by the Committee on Curricula; further the Faculty requests that the Registrar take the actions necessary to enable designation of the degree with a Minor in an area of Humanities, Arts or Social Science.