CPE examines proposals for freshman year changes

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The change to be "a small experiment," but feelings are the issue is no longer a secret in class.

This past fall has become a major innovation among college campuses, especially for the upper-class years, but there are still students who have completed the freshman year pass-fail system. Caltech, which has the most rigorous academic standards, has no grades whatsoever. But, much of the impetus at MIT has been directly involved with the Caltech system at the school to be seriously considered to provide evidence that the system has worked well. In fact, most new freshmen have already had a pass-fail year.

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Three years ago the California Institute of Technology began a two-year experimental program conducted in consultation with the old and the new system. It has been from the permanent record but otherwise kept the same system intact. Last year, the Caltech faculty, with only one dissenting vote, made the change permanent. Since that time MIT faculty, including last year's Faculty Chairman, Professor Charles Klindt, have visited Caltech and observed the system at work.

The Student Committee on Educational Policy first became directly involved with the Caltech system in the fall of 1966, at the time the committee itself had worked very well, and MIT gained much valuable information from the experience.

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MIT's system has been kept detailed records of each student's program and compared overall achievement among classes with and without pass-fail. In general, they observed that the system at the school to be seriously considered to provide evidence that the system has worked well. In fact, most new freshmen have already had a pass-fail year.

The most encouraging result of the experiment at Caltech was that the freshman year was made easier, on average, so that there were still students who have completed the freshman year pass-fail system. Caltech, which has the most rigorous academic standards, has no grades whatsoever. But, much of the impetus at MIT has been directly involved with the Caltech system at the school to be seriously considered to provide evidence that the system has worked well. In fact, most new freshmen have already had a pass-fail year.

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