Respect pass/fail

In a report issued in February 1972, the Committee on Evaluation of Freshman Performance stated, “One of the major purposes [of Freshman Pass/Fail] was to relieve the anxiety and sense of pressure felt by incoming MIT students . . . It was also hoped to develop in each student a more mature motivation for his studies and to make him feel that he is in more active, expressive involvement in his studiess and to give him a sense of freedom . . .” The recent decision of the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science to examine freshman year grades clearly violates these aims.

The Committee on Educational Policy is mistaken in its assessment. Freshman pass/fail did not take departmental requirements, grades in these subjects are somehow outside the protection of pass/no credit

Whether a class is or is not freshman-level, the student new to the Institute is subject to the same pressures, the same anxieties, and the same difficulties in protection of pass/no credit. Whether a class is or is not freshmen-level, the student new to the Institute is subject to the same pressures, the same anxieties, and the same difficulties in protection of pass/no credit. Whether a class is or is not freshmen-level, the student new to the Institute is subject to the same pressures, the same anxieties, and the same difficulties in protection of pass/no credit.

While EECs and other departments do indeed face difficulties in attracting faculty members and obtaining laboratory equipment and facilities, using freshman grades to prevent entry to freshman-level subjects eliminates the “sense of freedom to make a wider choice of subjects.”

A student who receives a “D” his freshman year may be automatically prevented from majoring in a department solely on the basis of his performance on a single subject. Freshman pass/no credit may be abused by some, but the EECs policy harms more than it helps.

New ODSA policy deserves praise

Institute and living houses governing policies traditionally have neglected readmitted and transfer students. Last September, Associate Dean for Student Affairs Robert Sherwood acknowledged that these students were being treated as “second-class citizens.”

Current policy allows transfer and readmitted students one year in the dormitories upon initial acceptance into the system. Temporary frye may be given readmitted and transfer students admitted into the housing system this year to stay until they graduate. Last week, Sherwood expressed hope that this new policy will become permanent.

The Dean’s Office deserves praise for recognizing these students.

The MIT campus is comprised of people from many different cultures and economic backgrounds. This diversity is reflected in the wide range of person’s names, ranging from very common names to names that no one can spell. Because of this fact, many people have their names misspelled, mispronounced, and forgotten.

I never seem to have these problems with my name. Everyone I run into can pronounce it acceptably, and everyone knows how to spell it. Also, persons remember my name long after I have forgotten theirs. The reason for this is simple: my name is Charlie Brown, a name people have associated with a secure, bold headed, wishy-washy boy for the past twenty-two years. Possessing this name inevitably leads to being the butt of many jokes; often people query if it bothers me to be teased about my name. I usually reply that you get used to it.

The name of Charlie Brown can be a definite asset. As stated before, very few people forget my name. It is not unusual for someone to greet me by name, chat with me for a while, and then when he leaves I wonder who he was. My name also makes for a great line at parties that gives me the opportunity to talk to a pretty girl, and when she asks what your name is, you reply, “I’m Charlie Brown.” Of course, sometimes the reaction is that she laughs in your face. I guess you get used to it.

My name has often led to many funny incidents. In my high school, substitute teachers would pass around an attendance sheet for everyone to sign. After it went around the teacher, the sheet would cross out the John Hancock, Mickey Mouse, Sir Loin of Beef, then count the names left to make sure that everyone had signed the sheet and inevitably would come up one name short. Some student would look at the sheet, and inform the substitute that she had crossed Charlie Brown’s name. The class would then spend the next ten minutes convincing her that my name really was Charlie Brown.

Even in college, people get a kick out of my name. During one week I drove some fraternity people up the wall. A common incident was that harassed fraternity men, who had been signing in freshmen all day long, would see me coming along. When they asked my name I answered “Charlie Brown.” They were not amused. My living group gave me a t-shirt that says Blockhead on the back. In honor of my name, they elected me manager of our IM softball team, and called it Peanuts. In the Charlie Brown tradition, we went on to an 0-5 season.

Even the MIT Administration runs in on this. A common incident is that I’m named you?” and “Do you have a sister named Sally?” “Where’s Snoopy?” and “Tell me who is this little red-haired girl?” Also, about once a week someone discovers the line “What’s up Chuck?” and once in a blue moon someone asks “Do you get a strange sensation when you bite into a Peppermint Patty?” By far the most common types of questions are ones like “Why did your parents name you Charlie Brown?” “Didn’t they know about Peanuts when they named you?” and “Don’t you hate them for naming you Charlie Brown?” I guess you get used to these comments after a while.

At a dormitory party last year, one of the men introduced me to a girl, saying “I’d like you to meet my good friend, Charlie Brown.” The girl stared at me for a few seconds, and then said “You must be very shameless!” She named Charlie Brown.” Maybe I am, but I don’t think so. Maybe all the wisecrackers, who consider their comments to be insightful, truly deserve that title.

He’s a good man . . .

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