Paul Gray's new MIT Federalism

President Gray wants to restructure MIT so it can offer a better undergraduate education. The administration, under the leadership of President Gray, has developed a two-part New Federalism proposal. The first part addresses the role of undergraduates on campus. Gray would like all undergraduate college students to meet a certain number of hours a year. These hours would be broken down into three categories: learning about the world, learning about their living situation, and making all decisions on research funding, educational requirements, and town matters. Undergraduates would be able to distribute this work equally, according to the mind of the Institute's budget. Disbursements of the budget, which will be spent on undergraduate activities such as housing, student activities, and food services, will be determined by the Academic Council. Imagine the following scenes, which might occur after the implementation of New Federalism at MIT...

Speaking before a meeting of the New House Executive Committee, the head of the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science—Cortright—again pleaded for funds for his department. The professor had had a tough week; he had visited at least seven other dormitories and thirty fraternities as well and he still had not managed to raise next year's budget request.

"Why are you requesting funds for Course 6?" asked the New House president.

"Well," the professor replied, "Course 6 is the largest department at MIT. Industries clamor for our graduates. We can't seem to teach fast enough, and we're about the last subjects out." "Is it true," the student interrupted, "that Course 6 has recently started to uncover some of its brilliance?" "Uh, there's a reason for that..." helped the professor.

"And," the student continued, "is it true Course 6 will not let a student enroll in its courses if the student does not finish his 'DP?'" "Well, am I correct," asked the professor attempting to change the subject, "is it true that some courses are taught in a language other than English?"

"Well, am I correct, see uh..." the professor faltered.

"And are courses severely overcrowded?" asked the student.

"Well, we have problems getting people to teach at MIT because we can offer new Ph.D. salaries that are competitive with private industry. And then, once instructors get here, they usually think that it is more important for us to perform brilliant research than it is for them to teach. But we really need the money, you know. We still have students to teach, research to perform, discoveries to make, professors to support..."

Speaking before a meeting of the Academic Council, Gray's budget drives commenced, causing some mandatory courses would once again increase while funding for student activities would decrease.

"We can not allow ourselves to be outspent by our adversaries," declared the budget director.

"And who might they be?" asked a member of the Academic Council.

"Well, who are they?" the professor said, "the last subject cut!"

"That some folks from Harvard, for instance. Their undergraduates compress three years into two years, and we just can't do that, you know."

We can not afford to let Harvard spend more on feeding its students than we do on staffing ours. We must match these Harvard dollars for dollars, potato for potato, pea for pea, or liberal arts ideology will conquer and subjugate the entire intellectual world. We must not let the Harvard dollars flow back again against soup for control, of control. MIT must not be outdone by the Harvard threat. We must make the world safe for technology..."

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**Column/Ivan Fong**

Is MIT a pressure cooker?

Just before coming to MIT, I remember my father telling me not to worry about taking a term off or transferring to another school because he was going well for me here. He hasn't changed that in his life. In general, my family and friends have been very supportive throughout my college years. Yet, after spending a particularly devastating three weeks by two successive quizzes this week, I began to think seriously about the pressures and tensions that are characteristic of an MIT education.

College-aged adults are beset by emotional and psychological changes that are compounded by the academic and intellectual challenges of MIT's workload. Most college students experience some form of depression during their four years, whether it seems from their social lives, family pressures, extracurricular commitments, or financial exigencies. These problems, however, need to be tackled as part of a complete institutional process. My concern is that MIT's academic workload guarantees an already tumultuous period for many students, instead of providing a meaningful opportunity for the student to discover and discover his or her identity. MIT's attitude and its response that ensures a healthy, positive working and living attitude among its students.

"Hating MIT is MIT's form of school spirit," scrawled someone on a Lobby 7 pillar poster this week in response to the question, "What makes MIT unique?" Admittedly, those future leaders of today and the world who wear "Hate MIT" similarly proclaiming their disinclination for the Institute may only be half-true, but the common perception is that MIT can be cold and heartless when it wants to be.

There are two related causes for this feeling of helplessness and isolation. The first is the ease with which one can fall into a rut—going to classes every day and coming home to study every night can be stifling. Professors seem to assume that all their students are capable of doing all the work..."