Opinion

GA has special responsibility

At this Thursday's Undergraduate Association General Assembly (GA) meeting, the newly-elected body will have the opportunity to assert leadership sorely lacking in other sectors of MIT student government. The GA has been asked to consider the revisions to freshman year pass/fail proposed by the faculty Committee on Educational Policy (CEP). The GA must articulate student priorities on this issue, a job other student leaders have failed to perform. They should direct the Undergraduate Association President to use his speaking privileges at the October 20 faculty meeting to express student opinions on this issue.

The student proponents of the CEP plan offer mostly lazy and poorly-considered paraphrases of the CEP report. The CEP's consideration of revisions to the pass/fail system has been marked by heavy reliance on anecdotal evidence and lack of attention to the needs of MIT's undergraduates. No one has attempted any serious, thorough study of the effect the proposal will have on the MIT community, especially during the freshman year, when every effort should be made to reduce the amount of pressure to which students are subjected.

The CEP seems to have ignored the educational implications of these changes, mistakenly believing that returning freshmen to a more formal grading procedure during the spring term provides the only effective means of student evaluation and the sole guarantee that students learn core course material. Rather than focusing attention on MIT's badly lacking freshman advising system, the CEP is glibly making the charge that the proposal will undermine the GA's activism among all members of the MIT community. The CEP should be directed to reconsider its recent efforts, and at the very least, produce more solid evidence that support the contention it now makes so glibly. The GA must assume the mantle shunned by the CEP's reassurances ring suspiciously hollow.

The CEP guarantees the new, more formal hidden grades will never be released by MIT, but it has made no provisions to insure these informal grades will not be abused. No one has said what will happen if a student school insinuates a student release his grades. Students may feel pressure to do so. With some departments already using "hidden grades" in prerequisite subjects to restrict enrollment in subsequent courses, the CEP's reassurances ring suspiciously hollow.

Another issue the CEP has ignored is one of integrity. It is totally inaccurate to change the pass/fail system to affect this year's freshman class, as has been proposed. MIT has a commitment to these students to retain the pass/fail evaluation system it has used for 30 years to give their first year in Cambridge, rather than changing the rules in the middle of the game. The CEP's full issue deserves extended, in-depth discussion among all members of the MIT community. The CEP should be directed to reconsider its recent efforts, and at the very least, produce more solid evidence that support the contention it now makes so glibly. The GA must assume the mantle shunned by the other student leaders and insure the faculty does not make a decision all of MIT will regret.

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Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, his Minister of Defense Sharon and the future of Israel all stand accused of a crime that they did not commit: the murder of at least 300 Palestinian residents of the Shatila and Sabra refugee camps in South Beirut. Beyond Minister Sharot's largesse attacks charge that the massacre at the hands of Lebanese Christian militias is being used by professional Israel-busters to force the Begin government to normalize, there are certain observations that can be properly made by foreign commentators. First, the military occupation by Israel of the southern half of Lebanon does not imply as Israeli responsibility for civil order; to achieve each in the case of the Lebanese Republic would be similar to making firemen accountable for all the fires that they could not prevent. The intentions of the Begin government with regard to the invasion were clear: to create the conditions for some sort of peaceful coexistence between Israel and her neighbors. They did not expect that their actions would be pretty ones, and perhaps suspected that the chaos and the disorder that such actions are likely to cause could be used as a cover for Israeli political purposes.

Massacre reaction hypocritical

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Column/David C. Lingelbach

The Tech, Tuesday, October 5, 1982

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Oruç Çakmakli

By Oruç Çakmakli

Reader complains of media coverage

To the Editor:

In a recent article, The Tech, describing a forum on Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the word "brutal" in regard to the Israeli actions. By writing in this fashion, the Tech has failed to present the rest of the nation's news media and diplomatic reaction to the devastation wreaked in Lebanon. What was neglected to be mentioned was that much of the devastation wreaked in Lebanon and shown in the media occurred for before the Israeli invasion, during the Lebanese civil war in which one hundred thousand people died. Professor Chomsky, the keynote speaker at the forum, normally laudably skeptical about the media's representa-