Student disagrees with professor

To the Editor:
The article that appeared on page one of the November 9 issue of The Tech can be summarized in one word: bullshit! Attributed to Professor Elias are several statements that are questionable at best. First: “Overcrowding has not affected the grade distribution of the subject, he claimed, which are generally B-centered.” I ask if anyone currently enrolled at MIT can remember when 6.002 or 6.003 or any of a number of other obsessively crowded courses required by the department vagely had a B average.

Second: “Elias took exception, however, to the relatively low grading distribution of 6.002 last spring term. He felt the distribution was due more to subnormal student performance than to difficult exams.” What are the chances that a class this size will have significantly less prepared students? Why do the Admissions Office tests show that last year’s MIT students are no less prepared? What percentage of the class in 6.002 has failed each term in the last three years? What percentage of students pass 6.002 the first time they try it? And if all this is working why did course six have to create the infamous (or should I say infamous) D=F for majors policy? Is it approximately accurate to say the average grade in 6.002 courses over the past five semesters was a C-/D?

Third: “It has not been our intent to make the courses harder,” Elias said. “How much extra material is there in 6.032 or 6.170 this term compared to last term? How many more drop cards are being submitted with course six core (including the common core) courses on them this term than in recent terms? Perhaps these questions have reasonable answers. If they do, I am sure many people would love to hear them.”

Russell L. Brand ‘84

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