An invitation to MIT students: Come and share your views at an unusual event. Place: 10-250. Time: 3:15 p.m., December 13, 1983. Event: an emergency faculty meeting to discuss and vote on a proposal to limit enrollment in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (EECS) to affect the Class of 1988, as well as other purposes, including applying to MIT now.

After several months of deliberations, the powers that be have decided on a proposal to bring forth to the faculty. The main point of the new policy is a selection process which would reduce the number of students entering the department, occurring sometime during the freshman year. Alternatives discarded in favor of this one include separate admissions to EECS and doing nothing to affect the Class of 1988 while spending more time developing a process to affect the Class of 1989.

Goethe wrote, "There is a strong shadow where there is much light." The best problem solvers in the world are concentrated at MIT — an intellectual light of world reknown — yet, when faced with a difficult and challenging area of problem, they have demonstrated where the shadow lies at the instant. A plan has been formulated which is offensive and unattractive to students, in an attempt to ease the pressure on EECS.

MIT is considering this action too late; students currently applying should be denied. They were told that MIT is special because once you are admitted, you are free to study what you wish. If the faculty passes the proposal to limit EECS enrollment, the applicants will receive a letter in late December or January saying, in fact, "No more." It is too late into the year for such a face-down by the Institute. It will appear to the outside world exactly as it is: a hurried, emergency effort rather than a carefully considered and thoughtfully presented decision.

Limiting enrollments in EECS after students arrive at MIT ignores student prerogatives. We are paying money to the Institute for our education. Every year the bias gets larger. Now there is a proposal on the table whereby the Institute would first take $1,000 from each freshman and then tell him or her what he or she could and could not study. For some, the freshman year would become an immense gamble with the stakes equally high on both sides: an EECS degree or $15,000 down the drain.

MIT must remember that it does not operate in a vacuum. It is too important, it exists under continuous public attention, and it cannot afford to implement a bad proposal that makes it appear unable to deal with serious problems. The key question for faculty members is whether or not EECS is worth entrapping the entire Institute in the net of reality and public opinion. Students must speak out on this issue before it is too late. Present President E. Gray '54 said at his Nov. 5 forum on this subject that although student opinions would be heard and considered, the fact remained that student input in the final decision would be delayed because none of the proposals would affect any current students. This is the same argument used by the administration when it implemented mandatory commons. It is flawed because many of us are going to have to exist in a new and even more oppressive environment. We are going to suffer from the social effects of this decision.

Students can have an effect through two different means: They can lobby with faculty who will strike the validity of student concerns to go to this meeting, question the proposal, and vote against it, and students can attend the meeting themselves.

Although most students do not have speaking privileges, their presence might remind some other faculty members of the future students who will have to suffer under the outcome of their votes.

Because the proposal to limit enrollment in EECS after students get here is controversial, it is guaranteed to divide the faculty and make consensus difficult. EECS and the administration want some measure passed at the Dec. 13 meeting which will actually limit enrollment in the short term. That meeting is going to be a splendid example of oligarchical power politics as the minority attempts to pass a flawed and dangerous proposal. Please attend and watch the show. The future is on the line.

Editor's note: Erik A. Devereux is a student representative to the Faculty Committee on Educational Policy.