Keep popular IAP language courses

Budget problems in the Foreign Languages and Literatures section of the Department of Humanities may lead to the elimination of one of the most popular IAP activities: the intensive foreign language subjects. These classes are both valuable and popular, and their cancellation would be a great loss.

The best way to learn a foreign language is by immersion: speaking, reading, hearing and breathing the language. The only time, of course, is the time in a country where the language is spoken. The closest one can come to this ideal at MIT is to take one of the intensive language classes and spend almost 12 hours a day for three-and-a-half weeks studying the language.

Students recognize this opportunity: the IAP subjects have been growing steadily in popularity for the last ten years. The suicide must not become a school for the rich only. An MIT education must not be excluded from applying to those with a variety of academic backgrounds and interests. The current requirement places too much emphasis on the physical sciences and does not allow for instruction in the humanities. It is not coincidence when a large percentage of students with high school exposure to physical sciences become interested in electrical engineering.

The glee of the proposal is that the high school science requirement from both chemistry and physics to two years of laboratory sciences chosen from biology, chemistry, and physics. The committee intends the measure to broaden the pool of prospective applicants, and to increase diversity at MIT.

This measure is the first evidence of a substantive attempt by the administration to deal with the overcrowding in various departments. It is a step in the right direction.

Broadening the science requirement will have immediate and positive results on the admissions process:

- Talented students will not be excluded from applying to MIT because they are lacking one high school science subject.
- It will provide a dialogue to the message to applicants that is intended to attract students with a variety of scientific backgrounds and interests. The current requirement places too much emphasis on the physical sciences and does not allow for instruction in the humanities. It is not coincidence when a large percentage of students with high school exposure to physical sciences become interested in electrical engineering.

The new requirements will enable MIT to admit classes in a way more roughly proportional to the range of intellectual offerings at the Institute. There is no reason that the highly-ranked political science, civil engineering, mathematics, and ocean engineering departments should not have good sized undergraduate classes to match their capacities for teaching. MIT has changed significantly since the current application requirements were put in place, and it is time to alter them to echo reality.

This proposal will not pass the faculty easily. It represents a serious change and as such will undoubtedly generate dissonance. Many MIT professors are afraid of sending a shock throughout the public education system with the admission policy. MIT does not care about the possibility of MIT’s drop in the World of Physics? Considering MIT is one of the best institutions in the country, it should have a program leading to quire high school physics, that message could hardly be any more crippling than when the majority of the other universities removed their requirement.

Another issue is whether admissions at MIT will not damage the physics curriculum. I believe, based on my own experience, that they would have been better off without my high school physics preparation. At least, I would not have had a physics requirement. I am thinking “why work? I had it in high school.”

I urge the faculty to approve this proposal despite the various reservations. I see the long discussions last term over limiting the enrollment in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science to two years very appr. that education is too complex for simple deductive logic even to start to predict the outcome of any change. All that can be done is to weigh the possible outcomes and make decisions based on probabilities. In this case the results of changing the application requirements are clearly beneficial to MIT and to the student body. MIT is a student member of the High School Exposure to Physical Sciences, and I urge the faculty to approve this proposal.

BROADENING APPLICANT POPULATION

Buchanan has been an extremely patient with you over the last year, quietly ignoring your spiteful attacks on me and others. I have been annoyed and off- fended by your insinuations about my past. Perhaps you are the only student representative to object to the addition of a variety of political science, economics, and liberal arts offerings at the Institute. The best way to learn a foreign language is by immersion: speaking, reading, hearing and breathing the language. The only time, of course, is the time in a country where the language is spoken. The closest one can come to this ideal at MIT is to take one of the intensive language classes and spend almost 12 hours a day for three-and-a-half weeks studying the language.

To the Editor:

Malench, I have been ex-

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