To the Editor:
The Graduate Student Council recently advertised in The Tech for graduate students to serve on faculty standing committees and ad hoc committees appointed by the president, but there was no mention of the mandates of these committees. We would like to let graduate students know what is involved and why we should be interested in Institute policy. The GSC will be interviewing interested students this Thursday, Oct. 31.

Faculty standing and ad hoc committees are concerned with policy formation and review of all aspects of MIT from the quality of life for students to laboratory safety to the academic programs offered at MIT. As students, we can make a significant impact by offering our perspectives to the administration and ensuring that the decisions made will be in our best interests. Without student input, the administration would be making critical decisions without consulting the student body.

For instance, MIT decided that graduate student housing would be a low priority item and did not include it in the current capital funds campaign. The administration perceived — without any real proof — that graduate students were interested in living in Boston. Unless we let the administration know our concerns, this situation will not change.

This is but one example of issues that need to be addressed and are being addressed in standing committees. If we care about the quality of life at MIT, about how our library acquisitions systems work (or don't!), about policy concerning our academic programs and a myriad of other concerns vital to graduate students’ life at MIT, we should all consider serving on a faculty standing committee.

The current faculty standing committees which accept graduate student members are listed below together with a brief description of their mandate. Some of these committees have already had their graduate student positions filled in this year. You should check with the GSC if a particular committee interests you.

The Faculty Policy Committee (accepts one graduate student) This newly formed committee, in conjunction with the new Committees on the Undergraduate Program (described below) has inherited the duties of the now dissolved Committee on Educational Policy. The Faculty Policy Committee:

a. formulates policy on matters of concern to the faculty, for approval by the Faculty; interprets and implements policy as approved by the Faculty;

b. coordinates the work of the other Committees of the Faculty, establishing liaisons with them, providing guidance and direction, and referring issues to particular committees or establishing ad hoc committees as appropriate;

c. maintains a broad overview of the Institute’s academic programs and for the dis continuation of existing programs, and referring educational policies and procedures to the appropriate standing committees for consideration, and makes recommendations to the Senate Policy Committee or by the chairman of the faculty.

The Committee on Graduate Student Council Policy (accepts 2 graduate students)
The committee exercises general oversight of graduate programs and of students working for advanced degrees.

The Committee:

a. provides guidelines with respect to graduate admissions in research and teaching programs of the Institute; and

b. recommends to the Senate Policy Committee any changes of such policies which it deems to be advisable, and (4) performing such other duties as may be delegated to it by the Faculty Policy Committee or by the chairman of the faculty.

The Committee on Graduate Students and Faculty (accepts 2 graduate students)

The committee exercises general oversight of graduate programs and of students working for advanced degrees.

The Committee:

a. provides guidelines with respect to graduate admissions in research and teaching programs of the Institute; and

b. recommends to the Senate Policy Committee any changes of such policies which it deems to be advisable, and (4) performing such other duties as may be delegated to it by the Faculty Policy Committee or by the chairman of the faculty.