Students discuss engineering goals

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unaccredited degrees, such as Course II-A, could fill the need of students like Blundin whose interests are too broad for a fully specified major program. Haus said that even the unaccredited II-A option is too focused in one area—mechanical engineering—according Free O'Neill '85. This notion also requires too much motivation from the ordi-
nary student because it is self-
paced, he added.

The main requirements in all engineering departments limit students to a specific subject in areas they are curious about. O'Neill said. Haus warned that degree programs could lose their accreditation if requirements were arbitrarily reduced. But accret-

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The many requirements in all engineering curricula.

Saylor noted that modern technology concerns, he said, so that MIT turns incoming students with a wide range of in-
terests into "one-track automatons." Saylor also felt the current sys-

O'Neill said he had expected to
get the best possible education simply by doing assigned work, but found he had to "fight to be
teaching," charged M.

O'Neill said.

System ignores teaching ability; poor teaching widespread

O'Neill said that had expected to
get the best possible education simply by doing assigned work, but found he had to "fight to be
teaching." Many professors are poor teachers and most give teaching a low priority, he ex-
plained, so that he needed to "hunt" professors' offices to be
able to learn as much as possible. There was a lot of truth to some aspects of O'Neill's accura-
cies. Bauj acknowledged, but he felt professors did work hard at teaching. MIT considers under-
graduate teaching to be very im-
portant in choosing the "best and brightest" for its faculty, said Jack L. Kerrebrock, associate dean of engineering and head of the commission.

Teaching ability has an impact on a professor's chances of pro-
tection, the professors claimed, but the students felt there were no safeguards against poor teach-
ers. Teaching is periodically re-
viewed, and very unfavorable opinions can jeopardize a profes-
sor's career at MIT, Kerrebrock said. Students asked whether bad reviews had any effect on tenure.

O'Neill then addressed the In-
stitute's tenure criteria, saying that an overemphasis on research allowed poor teachers to get ten-
ure. But "maternal" teachers are rare; Bauj countered, so profes-
sors must be given time to learn to teach, rather than being pun-
ished for infirmities. Wendy M. Power '87 doubted that teaching necessarily improves with time, citing a professor who taught a subject for several years and grew worse each year. Perhaps, then, professors should be systematically taught how to teach, suggested Kerre-
bruck, meeting with enthusiastic agreement by both students and faculty. It might be difficult to identify which professors needed to improve their teaching, and which ones should train their col-
leagues. Kerrebrock cautioned.

Kerrebrock and Saylor dis-
agreed over whether research should be a priority at all in re-
sulting the teachers of undergrad-
uates. Saylor felt teachers should not even be involved in research, but Kerrebrock insisted that re-
search is an integral part of excel-
ence in science and technology, and that the institutes must have good researchers.

Lack of contact with professors

The students felt they did not have as much contact with faculty as they wanted, seeing them as inaccessible. freshmen and sopho-

nates said they knew hardly any professors personally. upper-

clauses said they knew a few professors well, but they had had to "hunt them down" to get to know them.

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