Students need to take initiative to facilitate the reform process

To the Editor:

The entire MIT community has become increasingly aware of the problems inherent to the current system of undergraduate education. The heightened concern has resulted in ongoing discussions at all levels — the Undergraduate Association as well as the Committee on the Undergraduate Program and The Tech.

This is the reason that the UA Forums have been established: to facilitate communication and stimulate further discussion at the student level. The Student Committee on Educational Policy was a good idea.

The key point that emerged from the forum was that students need to learn to stand on their own. Many students seem to be abusing the system to the extent that the material is not learned; they fail.

Further debate on this topic concluded that freshmen year is the time in which a student learns his/her limits: pass/fail allows this to be done with fewer pressures. The majority felt that pass/fail should not be restricted to required courses and that to allow this with the option to take the course over is a good idea. The majority felt that a credit limit while on pass/fail was a good idea.

The key point that emerged from the forum was that students need to learn to stand on their own. Many students seem to be under the impression that MIT should cater to them. Complaints arise that "no one cares" despite the support network and programs abound on campus.

Students need to take some initiative themselves. This might alleviate some of the burden of teaching and advising while fostering a better relationship with the faculty.

We students are in a good position to uncover problems in the curriculum. We are the only ones who can tell the faculty why we behave in a certain way or what our opinions are of a given topic. It behooves us to do so in a constructive manner. The opportunity is there; several mechanisms are in place (letters to The Tech, forums, UA, advisors), and more will be set up. Lack of participation can only hurt us in the long run.

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