Course VI Picks 60 Students

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EECS 60 students — essentially since students were specifically told that the department would offer no financial support for the fifth year.

"This can be taken as nothing other than a very strong endorsement by the students that we are doing something that they feel is worthwhile," said Searle.

Acceptances based on GPA

Searle said that admission decisions were based almost entirely on cumulative grade point average. Students whose GPAs fell below a set cut-off were rejected. Searle said the department wished to avoid a complicated admissions process.

"I know this sounds terribly grade-oriented," Searle said, "but I guess that is how it will wind up. If students wish to submit extra letters, we can come to solutions." He also admits that there are long-term problems which have yet to be addressed. Searle expressed the hope that some people, including the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, would like to see the program expanded to deal with more real-world difficulties.

"One criticism of the program is that we do not require the students to take subjects in accounting, finance, oral communications, or others," Searle said.

Searle admitted that there are valid arguments, but said, "We have worked for five years to come up with the present proposal. We simply have not come up with a solution that we feel is good. Hopefully, we can take this jump first, and through continuing conversations we can come to solutions."

Pressure to excel is inherent in any institution that strives to be the best of its kind. For many of us, MIT is our first experience in an environment where the problems we are solving are so challenging and where our fellow students are so capable.

The challenge to our confidence and self-esteem is enormous and leads to pressure to "measure up." There is a temptation to suggest changes to reduce this pressure: a lighter course load, easier grading, easier courses, less homework, etc.

Experience teaches us that in the long run, self-esteem and confidence cannot come from reducing the challenges we face. Confidence and self-esteem, rather, are inward manifestations of a very special experience.

This experience comes the same way scientific knowledge is obtained: by testing in a real situation. When we face the challenges of solving real and difficult problems, we also admit that there are long-term problems which have yet to be addressed. Searle expressed the hope that some people, including the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, would like to see the program expanded to deal with more real-world difficulties.

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