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MIT Faculty Newsletter

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in this issue we offer a variety of faculty contributions regarding the continuing discussion and upcoming vote on the Task Force on the Undergraduate Program (TFUAP) draft proposal, beginning on page 6 with a look back at a similar issue from two decades past; we also include our usual Faculty Travelogue feature (below); an article by the Graduate Student Union (page 24); and MIT Numbers on Faculty and Lecturers over the past 45 years (page 28). *[Deadline for submissions for the May/June FNL is April 27.]*

Preparing for Commencement

Faculty Travelogue

A Riddle Revisited

Alan Jasanoff

ABOUT FIVE MILES NORTH of the Moscow Kremlin is an immense monument to Soviet Russia's idealized image of itself. The Exhibition of Achievements of National Economy – known colloquially by its Russian acronym *VDNKh* – is a cross between Disney's Epcot Center and the Smithsonian. Inaugurated in 1939, it is a patriotic theme park that now covers an area 30 times bigger than Red Square and contains over 80 pavilions devoted to the manifold cultures of the Soviet Union and the scientific and industrial accomplishments of its people. A glittering main drag features expositions from each of the once-united republics, from Armenia to Uzbekistan. The Museum of Cosmonautics is nearby, housing Soyuz rockets, replicas of the Sputnik satellites, and Yuri Gagarin's space capsule. Hovering over it is one of the most

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Editorial

When Critique Becomes Accusation: Principles for Editorial Responsibility

ÉMILE ZOLA'S J'ACCUSE…! – published in 1898 at the height of the Dreyfus Affair – remains one of the most consequential pieces of journalistic writing in modern history. It did more than express outrage; it documented injustice. Zola named individuals, identified institutional failures, and advanced claims grounded in evidence assembled over sustained investigation. His intervention came as a last resort, when existing systems had failed and injustice had hardened into public fact. The force of *J'Accuse* rests on its discipline: accusation tied to intellectual accuracy.

In recent issues, the *Faculty Newsletter* has published several articles that operate in this accusatory register, but that could be faulted for failing to reach Zola's standard of argumentation. Without revisiting those pieces individually, their

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Editorial

Curriculum in a Time of Change

Editorial Board of the MIT Faculty Newsletter

THE TASK FORCE ON THE Undergraduate Academic Program (TFUAP) has proposed a set of changes to the undergraduate curriculum. In Chapter 6 of *The Prince*, Niccolò Machiavelli offers a warning to those proposing to change established ways of doing things:

"*It ought to be remembered that there is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things . . .*"

Previous attempts to update the General Institute Requirements provide little reason to ignore this warning.

MIT is not alone in this regard. Universities have long struggled to adapt their structures of teaching and their curriculum to changing conditions of

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knowledge. Prior to the printing press, the role of the university was largely to store and transmit knowledge. Professors read from scarce manuscripts, often dictating or commenting as students copied by hand. More than five centuries later, even as knowledge has become broadly accessible, elements of that model persist, even as the media and scale have changed.

The time-tested benefits of this process for knowledge acquisition notwithstanding, the question we face today extends beyond what knowledge should be offered. Addressing it requires a shared understanding of how learning occurs, what it means to be educated, and what role the university should play, particularly as the conditions under which knowledge is created, accessed, and used continue to evolve.

Generations of faculty have grappled with these questions, often in response to shifts in intellectual and societal conditions. We include the thoughts of others in this issue of the FNL not as prescriptions, but as reminders that the balance between content, method, and purpose has long been subject to reconsideration.

Charles Eliot, writing in the late nineteenth century, sought to adapt the American university to the needs of an industrializing society, first at MIT and then over his long presidency at Harvard. He asserted that

"*The student in a polytechnic school has a practical end constantly in view [. . .] This practical end should never be lost sight of by student or teacher in a polytechnic school, and should seldom be thought of or lauded to in a college.*"

Andrew Abbott, in his welcoming address to the incoming class at the University of Chicago in 2002, offered a different perspective:

"*Given who you are and where you are, there is no particular necessity for you to study anything for the next few years. [. . .] Education is not about content. [. . .] It is not something you have. It is something you are.*"

At MIT, the number of units each department is authorized to control falls between the norms for liberal arts programs and for professional degree programs elsewhere. Differences in perspective within the Institute can be traced in part to a structure that accommodates both orientations within a common academic framework. Julius Stratton, MIT's president from 1959 to 1966, in his 1963 address *Liberal Education and the Usefulness of Knowledge*, offered a defense of this approach. His perspective can be read as mediating between these positions, placing emphasis on teaching students how to learn and think critically while grounding that effort in specific fields of knowledge and practice.

Taken together, these perspectives reflect a common premise: each responds to a shift in the conditions under which knowledge is created, accessed, and used. The resulting tension –between content and method, between transmission and formation – remains with us and is visible throughout the Task Force's report. We are now entering another such moment, shaped in part by the rapid emergence of artificial intelligence and broader changes in the epistemological infrastructure of knowledge.

We are grateful to the Task Force for taking on this challenging assignment and for the dedication and thoughtfulness with which they have pursued their work to date. We take no position here on specific recommendations. Rather, we have sought for this issue the opinions and perspectives of colleagues across the Institute and will continue to encourage such contributions from students, alumni, lecturers, and faculty. Our aim is to highlight issues that should remain central as the Institute considers its path forward.

Our students arrive with a wide range of backgrounds, interests, and aspirations. A meaningful measure of success lies in the difference between who each student becomes and who they would have become had they spent those years elsewhere. What is taught is one input into a broader system that shapes that outcome. Pedagogy, expectations, support structures, and the broader campus environment all play essential roles, as does the sharing of responsibility for learning between faculty and students.

Benson Snyder, in *The Hidden Curriculum*, describes the set of implicit rules that students believe govern success at MIT. Central to this view is the role of grades as signals of learning. If grades are widely perceived as indicators of mastery, their informational content matters. When that signal weakens, whether through compression or inflation, it diminishes the quality of communication between educator and student.

This raises a more fundamental question: what, precisely, are we measuring? Unease with grading may reflect a deeper uncertainty about the alignment between our pedagogical aims, our expectations, and the outcomes we seek to assess. Greater transparency in grading patterns could support a more informed and collective reconsideration of how expectations are communicated and how learning is assessed, including whether traditional grading remains the most effective instrument for that purpose.

As we begin what will inevitably be a complex and multifaceted process, we should approach it as we do other difficult problems: by first seeking a shared, actionable statement of objectives and then examining alternatives with rigor and openness. The pedagogies employed in our classrooms and labs, the expectations we set, the support we provide, and the environment we create all warrant careful consideration.

In this context, defining the curriculum – what is to be taught – may prove to be the most tractable part of the problem. The more difficult challenge lies in understanding how learning occurs, how it is measured, and how the Institute can best support it in a time of profound change.

The Editorial Board
of the MIT Faculty Newsletter

When Critique Becomes Accusation: Principles for Editorial Responsibility
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appearance in close succession points to a structural issue rather than an isolated editorial decision. The *Newsletter* has long approached accusatory writing with caution, given the potential for reputational harm and the broader impact on trust and collegial relations within our academic community. The fact that apparently problematic articles have nonetheless appeared reflects the *Newsletter's* historical practice of accepting all submissions, but conversely suggests a gap in our procedures that now requires attention.

We aim to address this gap while preserving the possibility of a contemporary on-campus *J'Accuse*. There are moments when faculty may feel compelled to speak in this mode – when silence becomes untenable and critique extends to conduct, responsibility, or institutional failure. In such cases, the standards governing publication must be especially clear and scrupulously applied.

From our recent review, five principles emerge as essential:

• **Claim validity:** If an article leads readers toward a negative judgment about identifiable individuals or groups on campus, that claim should be supported with evidence or reasoning explicitly presented to the reader; allegations that are undisclosed, insufficiently supported, or presented as established fact without clear qualification are not suitable for publication.

• **Proportionality:** The strength and certainty of any accusation should reflect the strength, relevance, and reliability of the supporting argument. Rhetoric should remain polite and professional at all times.

• **Clarity:** Authors must clearly identify the subject and basis of their criticism and distinguish between critique of ideas and claims about conduct; they are responsible for eliminating ambiguity that could reasonably be read as a personal accusation.

• **Fairness to both sides:** When reputational claims are made, those affected should be given a timely and meaningful opportunity to respond, ideally in the same issue in which the article appears.

• **Consistency:** The same evidentiary and editorial standards should be applied to all submissions, regardless of author or viewpoint.

These principles are familiar within scholarly practice. What has been missing is a transparent mechanism for applying them in editorial decisions within the *Faculty Newsletter*.

To give these principles more practical force in the future, the Editorial Board is developing a new review process that will provide broader oversight of potentially controversial content, closer scrutiny of the relationships between claims and evidence, clearer communication with authors where concerns arise, and a consistent effort to ensure procedural fairness both to authors and to those who face criticism. Publication in the *Faculty Newsletter* does not constitute endorsement by the Editorial Board; yet the Board remains responsible, as custodian of the publication, for how such material appears. Where concerns remain unresolved, the Board will apply decision mechanisms that include the possibility of forgoing publication altogether. No single framework can anticipate every case; judgment, exercised with care and consistency, remains essential.

The *Faculty Newsletter* serves as a platform from faculty for faculty. It reflects the norms of an academic community grounded in argument, evidence, and critical exchange. Accusation does not define those relationships and should remain an infrequent mode of engagement.

There may, however, be moments when a faculty member concludes that a *J'Accuse* is warranted. If such a moment arises, we ask authors to engage these shared standards. The goal is to sustain trust in the publication and fairness among colleagues while allowing serious claims to be articulated with rigor.

The responsibility is shared. Authors bring forward arguments and evidence; the Editorial Board ensures that those contributions meet the standards required for publication. Within that shared framework, discourse can remain candid and just.

Members of the Editorial Board of the MIT Faculty Newsletter

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Catherine D'Ignazio
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Tanalís Padilla
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Franz-Josef Ulm

Editor's Note: Prof. Roger Levy's usual From The Faculty Chair contribution will be available in the March/April issue on the *Newsletter* website.

Statement on Academic Freedom and Student Discipline

MIT Chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP)

April 13, 2026

RECENT DISCIPLINARY CASES AT MIT have raised issues of academic freedom and freedom of expression. We note in particular the expulsion of Prahlad Iyengar, whose previous (interim) suspension prompted statements of concern about academic freedom from groups both on- and off-campus (see also: faculty and FIRE statements on the *Written Revolution* zine). The details of such cases are (appropriately) confidential, but the upshot is substantial uncertainty among students about the limits of and protections for academic freedom and free expression at MIT.

The boundaries of academic freedom and freedom of expression at MIT are controversial, but how to draw the boundaries should be a matter of faculty governance. Cases that bear on, and potentially set precedent for, academic freedom of students and faculty should be informed by discussion among MIT faculty. The current procedures prevent both input and review. Faculty oversight does not require that the details of a disciplinary case, or a decision letter, should be made public. It does mean, however, that there should be a process by which faculty can set policy on academic freedom and free expression and guide its application in the disciplinary process and elsewhere.

We call upon the faculty officers to:

1) Implement Recommendation 5 of the 2022 CAFCE report:

> The chair of the MIT faculty should explore how to develop a faculty-governed resource for the MIT community when contested matters of speech arise. (p. 21)

In particular, we recommend that the faculty institute a standing committee on academic freedom and freedom of expression that will (i) promote the protection of speech on campus, (ii) take steps to educate all members of the community on their speech rights (see Recommendations 3, 4, and 10), and (iii) provide a set of clear guidelines that inform the community about the boundaries of academic freedom and freedom of expression.

2) Require that any disciplinary case where freedom of speech or academic freedom is at issue involve consultation with the standing committee (or an ad hoc subset of it) when undertaking an investigation or hearing, or in making a decision.

The MIT Chapter of AAUP can be reached at aaup-ec@mit.edu.

Words That Have Not Lost Their Force: The MIT Curriculum Debate Revisited

Thomas Heldt

IN 2006–2007, the *MIT Faculty Newsletter* became a forum for unusually candid and sustained debate about the future of undergraduate education. Prompted by the Silbey Task Force on the Undergraduate Educational Commons (2006), Faculty deliberations culminated in 2009 with a divided outcome: reforms to the HASS component of the GIRs were approved, while changes to the SME (Science–Math–Engineering) core were not. That unresolved tension continues to shape the mandate of today's Task Force on the Undergraduate Academic Program (TFUAP).

The discussion revealed a clash of convictions – over rigor and relevance, knowledge and skills, tradition and transformation. These are words that have not lost their force – and worth recalling here.

The question they posed remains ours.

Preserve the Canon (rigor, shared core, disciplinary depth)

"Core requirements . . . should impart skills and knowledge that all graduates of the Institute should have."
— (James L. Kirtley Jr.), More Science, Not Less!

"The science requirement… no longer provides MIT students with the type of preparation in the fundamentals that they need."
— (James L. Kirtley Jr.), More Science, Not Less!

"It allows students to graduate from MIT without any chemistry, or without any biology, surely an undesirable outcome."
— (Caroline Ross), The Case for a Shared Freshman Knowledge Base

"Disciplines enable humans to address problems in an orderly way . . . the undisciplined life cannot be lived effectively."
— (Rosalind Williams), The Challenge of Multidisciplinary Education for Undergraduates

"An MIT education should give students a deep understanding of this range."
— (Rosalind Williams), The Challenge of Multidisciplinary Education for Undergraduates

"We are the premier technical university in the world."
— (Robert Silbey), A Twenty-First-Century Undergraduate Education for MIT Students

"We must educate our students with a breadth of social vision as well as a depth of technical knowledge."
— (Robert Silbey), A Twenty-First-Century Undergraduate Education for MIT Students

"A monolingual education is an incomplete education."
— (Shigeru Miyagawa & Edward Turk), A Serious Equivocation: The Issue of Foreign Language Study

"MIT's technical education must be regularly reevaluated to remain relevant and peerless in terms of rigor."
— (Charles Stewart III), Overview of the Report of the Task Force on the Undergraduate Educational Commons

"Scientific literacy and technological innovation are universally recognized as essential preconditions for robust economic development."
— (Charles Stewart III), Overview of the Report of the Task Force on the Undergraduate Educational Commons

Evolve the System (flexibility, skills, modernization within structure)

"An MIT education must kindle and sustain a passion for lifelong learning."
— (Steven Lerman), Introduction to this Special Issue

"The education we provide our students isn't about filling their minds with a fixed body of knowledge."
— (Steven Lerman), Introduction to this Special Issue

"The student of 2007 is not the student of 1957."
— (Charles Stewart III), Overview of the Report of the Task Force on the Undergraduate Educational Commons

"The explosive growth of scientific and technical knowledge . . . overwhelms our ability to instruct every student in all areas."
— (Eric Grimson), Diversity in Foundational Skills and Knowledge

"Foundational courses should provide transferable skills."
— (Eric Grimson), Diversity in Foundational Skills and Knowledge

"The skills students acquire are substantially more important to them than the knowledge from our Core."
— (Warren Seering), The Knowledge Debate

"Students need exposure to multidisciplinary approaches . . . combining disciplines and experiences."
— (Diana E. Henderson), The Journey, Not the Arrival

"What really matters is what the student takes in and from a class, and how it relates to the whole."
— (Diana E. Henderson), The Journey, Not the Arrival

"A student lacking in such education will be at a significant disadvantage in the future."
— (Linn W. Hobbs & Hazel L. Sive), A Global Education for MIT Students

"Roughly half of engineering graduates pursue employment outside of engineering."
— (Daniel Frey), The Importance of Freshman-Year Projects

"Engineering… was not sufficiently visible . . . in the first three years."
— (Daniel Frey), The Importance of Freshman-Year Projects

Reimagine the System (experiential learning, student-centered redesign, critique of structure)

"Hands-on learning is a cornerstone of an MIT education."
— (Adèle N. Santos & Diane E. Davis), Educating Leaders for a Complex World

"Our students are 'doers' and problem-solvers who relish the pragmatic challenge of tackling large, complex problems."
— (Adèle N. Santos & Diane E. Davis), Educating Leaders for a Complex World

"Project-based subjects can attract and excite students."
— (Edward F. Crawley & Diane H. Soderholm), Stakeholder Expectations of Learning in First-year Project-based Subjects

"Creativity . . . learning that there is not only one answer."
— (Edward F. Crawley & Diane H. Soderholm), Stakeholder Expectations of Learning in First-year Project-based Subjects

"A 'C' student in a lecture course can be an 'A' student in one of these courses."
— (Edward F. Crawley & Diane H. Soderholm), Stakeholder Expectations of Learning in First-year Project-based Subjects

"Students come in different sizes, students grow to different sizes."
— (Shankar Raman), Welcome to the Machine

"The first year . . . rests firmly on a one-size-fits-all model aimed . . . at producing homogeneity."
— (Shankar Raman), Welcome to the Machine

"We need to free them… to 'learn by doing' the consequences of their own decisions."
— (Shankar Raman), Welcome to the Machine

"The proposal . . . puts the cart before the horse."
— (Sally Haslanger & David Pesetsky), "Big Ideas" and the High School Asymmetry

"Mediocre instruction is perhaps the leading cause of disengagement."
— (Hughes et al.), Kindling the Fire: Student Perspectives on the Task Force Recommendations

"Students need alternatives: more . . . collaborative and creative projects."
— (Hughes et al.), Kindling the Fire: Student Perspectives on the Task Force Recommendations

"Education is not the filling of a bucket, but the lighting of a fire."
— (Hughes et al.), Kindling the Fire: Student Perspectives on the Task Force Recommendations

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TFUAP: Core Principles

The Task Force on the Undergraduate Program

GIVEN THAT THE TASK FORCE on the Undergraduate Program's (TFUAP's) proposal is being discussed around the Institute and in this *Faculty Newsletter*, we, TFUAP, will describe the core principles that have guided our decisions with regards to the proposal. These principles continue to guide us as we incorporate feedback and revise the final proposal.

Principle 1: MIT's leadership in higher education is at stake. Leadership requires that we adapt our curriculum, policies, and governance structures to change with the world. While there is value to having a longstanding canon of knowledge and ways of thinking, we heard widespread feedback and concern that MIT is not staying ahead of the curve. Maintaining our leadership status requires nimble structures that enable MIT faculty and instructors to collaboratively and creatively innovate within the framework of our curriculum. TFUAP heard from the community that: (1) there are clear gaps in our GIRs, and (2) what the students need to know to thrive in today's world has evolved over time.

Principle 2: It is time to shift MIT's academic culture. We want to foster an academic culture that increases engagement, instills wonder, prioritizes time for curiosity-driven exploration, and teaches consideration of different perspectives and communities. We are reminded of a quote used in the 2006 Silbey report[1] – "Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire." The integrated classes in 'flexible foundations' and the moral and civic perspectives classes provide opportunities for students to tackle complex, real world problems and are a means of lighting that fire. In addition, we designed curricular and governance structures to foster collaboration among instructors and departments in order to foster deeper and richer connections across the Institute.

Principle 3: The general institute requirements serve a variety of roles for different students. Our current set of GIRs serves as both a technical foundation for many majors and as a general education for all students, and in trying to achieve both of these aims, it serves some students better than others. At the same time, the bodies of knowledge required for a solid foundation in many disciplines at MIT and those needed to be generally educated in the modern world have both expanded. There is a fundamental tension between preparing students to pursue any major at MIT and to be a generally educated person when they graduate; this tension has been central to TFUAP's discussions for the past two years. TFUAP's design aims to provide flexibility and adaptability to suit the needs of students seeing a subject once and the needs of students taking GIRs as a prerequisite for later coursework.

Principle 4: The number of requirements should not increase. We heard concern among faculty and staff about the lack of time that students have to fully engage in the academic pursuits that most motivate them. There is a sense that our students today are in a constant state of triage with few opportunities to take discretionary classes. Students generally want more flexibility, while some faculty and instructors feel that there should be more requirements to make sure students don't have critical knowledge gaps. TFUAP's decisions represented a carefully considered balance between these differing views.

Principle 5: Lean into residential education. We often discussed the value of MIT's residential education. Why are we here, together, in a learning community? We believe that there are aspects of learning that cannot be replicated online or remotely, and that these are the features we should emphasize. We want MIT to be a place where students can engage deeply in their coursework, guided by faculty and instructors who create meaningful in-person educational experiences. We want an MIT where students and instructors bring their best to class and are fully present together. This is what TFUAP sees as the true promise of an MIT education – deep engagement with topics through conversations and collaboration throughout our community.

We are sincerely grateful to the community for all the feedback shared following the release of our draft proposal. We discussed every piece of input submitted (even if we could not individually respond to all the volume), and we continue to consider different solutions to respond to your suggestions. In an interconnected system of such complexity, every piece

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1 https://facultygovernance.mit.edu/sites/default/files/reports/2006-10_Task_Force_Undergraduate_Educational_Commons.pdf

TFUAP: Core Principles
Martin and Voldman, from preceding page

impacts something or someone else. Over the two years that we have been working, we have accumulated a deep understanding of the many tradeoffs that we need to evaluate for each discrete change. Because these are often too numerous to write about in detail, we wanted to take the opportunity here to articulate the core values and principles the MIT community has identified for our undergraduate academic program so that you can have a sense of what guides our systematic consideration of each suggestion.

Thank you again for your engagement and dedication to this process and for sharing with us your ideas for what we all hope will be an academic program and environment that is best for our students and MIT.

The TFUAP committee can be reached at *tfuap@mit.edu.*

Adam Martin, Co-Chair; Salvador E. Luria Professor, Department of Biology

Joel Voldman, Co-Chair; William R. Brody (1965) Professor, Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science

Esther Duflo, Abdul Latif Jameel Professor of Poverty Alleviation and Development Economics

Jeffrey Grossman, Morton and Claire Goulder and Family Professor in Environmental Systems, Department of Materials Science

Isaac Lock '25, Course 20 and Course 24-1

Robert Miller, Distinguished Professor in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science

William Minicozzi, Singer Professor, Department of Mathematics; Chair, Committee on the Undergraduate Program

Caitlin Ogoe '25, Course 6-9

Janet Rankin, Director, Teaching and Learning Lab

Skylar Tibbits, Morningside Academy for Design Professor, Department of Architecture

Lily Tsai, Ford Professor, Department of Political Science

Maria Yang, Vice Provost for Faculty, William E. Leonhard (1940) Professor of Mechanical Engineering

Karen Zheng, George M. Bunker Professor of Management

Kate Weishaar, Staff, Division of Graduate and Undergraduate Education

Before we vote, please review . . .

Steven B. Leeb

. . . THE DRAFT PROPOSAL FROM the Task Force on the Undergraduate Academic Program. A copy is available here: https://gue.mit.edu/tfuap/ (under the link "Draft Proposal"). I am grateful for the opportunity to offer these observations on the Draft Proposal below:

We have already invested substantially in the College of Computing: The computation GIR effectively exists now as a REST subject taken by most freshmen. If more is necessary, a feasible compromise might be eliminating the general REST subject requirement with a computation GIR or, ideally, a "REST menu of computation subjects" offered by many departments. Are two new computing GIRs (page 6 of the Draft Proposal) necessary at the expense of the entire Science Core?

Your right to vote: We have reserved a vote of the faculty to approve changes to the GIRs because the GIRs define our community. The faculty vote stands sentinel over the quality of our single most important program. Page 6 of the Draft Proposal proposes an "emboldened" CUP and CoC with a new governance structure for many of the MIT undergraduate requirements. This is clarified on page 62, where the Draft Proposal states: "Standing subcommittees would act with power to approve and monitor the success of content and pedagogy changes in the associated requirements." "Significant" changes "would be approved by the subcommittee as well as CoC." **The proposal is asking the faculty to vote away their right to vote.**

Whose "Moral Perspectives?": It is unclear how our current HASS offerings, virtually in entirety, fail to provide "Moral and Civic perspectives" as described on pages 39 and 40 of the Draft Proposal. It is unclear how our existing HASS offerings fail to explore "values, ethics, and responsibility." SHASS was established, stemming from the Lewis Committee

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Before we vote, please review . . . .
Leeb, from preceding page

work, precisely to provide our community with these perspectives. Therefore, it is concerning that the Subcommittee on the HASS Requirement (SHR) will vet and certify a subset of classes (page 40 of the Draft) for this new, loosely-specified requirement. Our current "field of flowers" approach in SHASS has left open the possibility for different voices to speak. Are we reducing or restricting this freedom?

Hands-on Education: The Institute Laboratory (I teach two) and the REST subjects were and remain without clear organization and direction in our curriculum. However, the intent of the Institute Laboratory, in particular, was not without purpose. The requirement was created to ensure a hands-on physical experience with data collection in a hardware environment leading to analysis, problem solving, and design. The proposal eliminates the Institute Laboratory with the expectation (page 35) "that most departments would preserve lab classes as part of their majors, recognizing the value of hands-on learning and working on projects that approximate the work of a professional in that field." Particularly in times of constrained resources, this expectation may not be reasonable or likely. Having to recover hands-on experiences in our curriculum will be an expensive mistake.

Menu plans: On page 22, the Draft Proposal eschews a "take X of Y" curriculum plan on the grounds that these plans dispense with "foundational and essential" exposures for the students and go against "the stated goals of the GIRs." I agree. The proposal is concerning because these arguments are a red herring. The proposal is in fact offering a thinly-veiled "take X of Y" plan in its "Flexible Foundations" tier (page 6 of the Draft) where two-of-four classes are satisfied as six-unit exposures. Time and again we have conducted expensive experiments that consistently show the folly of attempting to teach any serious technical education in six units. The sprinkling of two-out-of-four classes as "half-class" exposures **is** a "take X of Y" plan that flies in the face of the chemistry exposure required since our first course catalog and the wise decision of the faculty to include a full biology class in the GIRs in the 1990s. Of course, we do not have alumni vote on curriculum decisions. However, I expect that there will be a strong and sustained backlash from our alumni at the proposed reductions in the required science core, including the reduction in the physics requirement to a single class and also the effective reductions in chemistry and biology with the six-unit exposure plan.

President Paul Gray wrote that:

> *The present articulation between the science core and the possible upperclass departmental majors permits the student a full range of choices among possible majors at the end of the freshmen year. The student is not forced to make this choice at the time of entering MIT.*

The Draft Proposal is concerning because its effective "take X of Y" structure dispenses with this fundamental compact – a promise that we have offered freshmen since our founding.

Gutting the GIRs: The proposal is concerning because it appears to compound the worrisome changes with a plan to go further. On page 66 the proposal observes that:

> We believe it may be feasible and even beneficial to go further, and we note that many other schools have more flexible requirements than MIT's without compromising on educational quality.

The proposal goes on to call for an experiment (page 66 of the Draft) from CUP that would allow up to 100 students per year to opt out of a "small number of requirements," with the stated goal of learning "what would happen if the GIRs were cut roughly in half." I would have hoped that these remarkable statements in the Draft Proposal speak for themselves. We are **not** "many other schools."

Physics is the beating heart of MIT: Our community's mastery of physics has defined us, given us MIT in its modern form, and remains and will remain the foundation of our Institution. A functional exposure to and mastery of basic physics underpins our undergraduate education. This underpinning cannot be fashioned in a single class. The proposal is concerning because it devalues an educational foundation that cannot be replaced by trendy training.

Thank you for your attention. When the time comes: PLEASE VOTE!

Steven B. Leeb is a Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science and Mechanical Engineering *(sbleeb@mit.edu).*

TFUAP Statistics

Daniel Frey

I BELIEVE THERE IS GREAT upside potential in the TFUAP proposal overall and one feature strikes me as particularly exciting. The proposal to establish "Probability, Statistics, and Machine Learning" as a required area of study in the Science, Math, and Computing (SMC) core could have profound benefits if implemented successfully.

In Mechanical Engineering, empirical evidence informs nearly everything we do – from early-stage design decisions to the analytical work that ultimately brings projects to fruition. My own work is in design, where the role of evidence is especially central. As Herbert Simon famously wrote, "Everyone designs who devises courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones." But how does an engineer characterize the "existing situation"? I would advise any student asking that question to seek and analyze evidence to inform their judgment. How does an engineer evaluate competing courses of action? Again, empirical evidence helps us make decisions that are informed by data and respectful of the uncertainties inherent in real-world situations. And how do we persuade others that a proposal can truly change an existing situation into a preferred one? In many cases, that argument rests on evidence as well. It appears to me that probability and statistics are essential throughout the engineering design process.

The current situation for MIT Mechanical Engineering students presents a challenge. It is possible to earn an undergraduate degree through Course 2, 2A, or 2-OE without taking a subject that establishes foundations for reasoning with data – how it is gathered, how it is analyzed, and how uncertainty should shape our conclusions. Because of this, I have personally observed many situations in which students struggle. A discussion between the student and faculty member begins with a dataset and patterns they both see in a visualization. The student has applied a statistical method they encountered in a lecture in a course without prerequisites in probability or statistics. As the student and faculty member begin to examine the assumptions underlying the proposed analysis, it becomes apparent that the analysis is unlikely to be valid. It's late in the term and it will be difficult to do all the rework necessary. It's understandable for students to feel frustrated; they were never taught the conceptual foundations for reasoning under uncertainty. Interactions like these would be far more productive if we shared a common vocabulary and conceptual framework.

Looking forward, the stakes are only increasing. Large datasets and unprecedented computational resources create enormous opportunities for productivity and insight. But without foundations in probability and statistics, these same tools may simply accelerate misleading reasoning and poor decisions.

I strongly support the proposal to establish "Probability, Statistics, and Machine Learning" as an integrated element of the GIRs. I am particularly excited about the prospect of building upon that foundation within our Mechanical Engineering degree programs. Preparing students to reason carefully with data – and to understand the uncertainty that accompanies it – may be one of the most important steps we can take to prepare them for the future.

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IT GOD We Trust: GIRs D-FINE'd

Alexander Slocum

Dear Colleagues:

WE FACE MANY CHALLENGES/ opportunities for unity :-), and herein is how I have attempted to combine some thoughts of mine and others into a poem to reflect on some recent committee reports on how we might reshape the GIRs for example. The poem title itself is reflective of the riddles, for it is a wink to 69 Stat. 290 and the future of all wealth and finance being totally dependent on information technology (and always has been?). The poem ideally is presented in full art form of a circle with a special fun code: and there is a linear form representing a rocket ship and a circular form representing on the wheels on the bus go round and round . . . . But these are hard to fit in the formatting constraints of the FNL without the font being too small for many to read. A link to download these versions is here: https://sites.mit.edu/slocum/2026/04/07/girs-d-fined/; and here: https://sites.mit.edu/ slocum/2026/04/07/in-line-girs-d-fined/. It is also presented below one stanza at a time with short discussions for each.

"Reshape" the GIRs is an indication to why the poem is in the format it is (download and see :-)). Indeed, I am a product of several very fine HASS classes from my UG days. Beyond that riddle, many more remain, and like much of good art, the one who experiences it will "see" new things according to their personal experiences and feelings: Good art inspires others to create. In fact, one might say that the art (and riddles) created in response to the TFUAP report were motivated by the report, because "FUAP" is "A comb over hairstyle that looks extra crispy. It's either slick back or a brush-over that can look like a wave."? Was this their fun riddle? :-).

And this is why I take the time and thought to compose my thoughts not in essay form, which is too traditional and easy to set up debates and arguments about, especially since when confronted with normal formal, reaction is often formal and normal (as in perpendicular to the hypothesis!) . . . . ART, on the other hand, gives us pause to think deeper and roll ideas around in our minds as we ask what does it mean to us . . . . This is what the true humanists taught me when I was an undergrad at MIT :-). Thank you!

So let's start with the binary code to be deciphered and the words themselves have coded meaning . . . but a fun first key that enables then many other keys ties in with the poem title: "IT God we trust" (ooooh some deeper riddles right there). The sum of the "1"s is 252 = 6*42, and in Genesis 1:1-31. . . So hitch your wagon to this poem and have some fun, as it rolls on and on . . . (AHA! Another fun hint :-)). Onward one stanza at a time:

Stanza 1
Ducky
or lucky
To the rest
are WE best

Are we #1 (accordioning to *US News*) and will stay there because we are so much better than others? Or are we lucky because a few in the past (Killian, MacVicar) set the tone and now that others have caught up, and we just think we are best? And what does "best" mean anyway?

Stanza 2
Finest in land
mens et manus
Create opportunity
and build community

We are a land grant college. The TFUAP might have done well to have an appendix that explains what that is and also review MIT's charter and how it is relevant today. It could reveal how can we create new opportunity for mens et manus to not just survive, but thrive? Just like Purdue! (TFUAP page 78). Or . . . hmmm what does the acronym FUAP also mean? (hint all acronyms check urban dictionary). Oops, Are we doing it again? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CduA0TULnow. Maybe it's time to cast aside our prejudices and listen to Prof. James Williams who proposed our motto become mens et manus et cor! (FNL Vol. XVI No. 4 February / March 2004)

Stanza 3
So Greatest Of Degree
What should change be?
Future control & predict?
By gathering docs edict?

Can a committee of a few that claims to be representative but selected by those in power, actually predict the future so well? Will they play dice with our future? (pun alert!: **G**reatest **O**f **D**egree).

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IT GOD We Trust: GIRs D-FINE'd
Slocum, from preceding page

Stanza 4
Or with all the huffling,
And deck chairs shuffling,
& making sure to benchmark,
Just another squirrel in the park?

Huffling: 7 dozen page report with a two-page executive summary that does not actually explicitly say what is being done, so one really does not have to read the rest of the report (maybe the authors should take some of the communication subjects espoused?). How is Figure 2 really that different than Figure 1? All too often since the realm of Paul Gray brought in a new era of the Corporation thinking we are too insular and should be more like others (in particular with bigger endowments) and benchmarking has become the norm, and indeed MIT has become more normal, more like the others, each benchmarking against the other . . . . If only we could be more like Purdue (TFUAP page 78)?

Stanza 5
Repeat, another squirrel in park?
Chasing after nutty benchmark
While deck chairs shuffled
and dissenters muffled

Self-explanatory (but hey, that's what tenure is for, to help us actually all be able to work as a team!)

Stanza 6
Do we want change
and expand our range?
MASS Institute of Technology
To General Institute of Panology?

The TFUAP does have some very good points, like the math for LLMs is critical, as well as the ethics, else https://www.youtube.com/shorts/1FtKsa29FT4? But what if they get there first?! Ponder this riddle: does MIT become a GIP? Do we become fat and lazy as in Glucose-dependent Insulinotropic Polypeptide (GIP) secreted from the small intestine in response to food intake, now used in combination with GLP-1 for weight loss ORRR in other words, will the world wake up to our slow dissolution into mediocrity driven by AI is much better than we are so in the world of slang, "gip" (or "gyp") means to cheat, swindle, or defraud someone, but in construction it refers to drywall or gypsum board, which is cheap and easy to punch through.

Stanza 7
What two change to compete?
and rather than just delete,
beware what is spoken
too fix truly broken

The spelling of "2" is critical here, and I will let the reader ponder in the context of previous stanzas and noting the TFUAP does NOT anywhere address that in addition to looking at the GIRs, we need to look at admissions which are symbiotically coupled. We can seek to teach what we think must be taught, but will there be students who actually want to learn IT? Or are we just imagining we the new knowledge drink in town? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jt8uNG02ixA

Stanza 8
1/2 learning shallow
in an ear then fallow
Plant knowledge deep
Grow memories to keep

Is our current trend a student body with an ever more diverse set of interests that are less interested in earning an MIT degree than getting one? In the case of the latter, whatever we set for the GIRs is irrelevant. Fast intro courses are no better/different than on-line learning by using AI to answer the simple question of the moment (GOTO Stanzas 7 and 8).

Stanza 9
Students focus with zeal
problem sets then real
Maybe turn 2 CATE
4 GIRs some hate

To teach, we must know: Deep learning means engaging with teachers who not only really know the topic, but practice it as experts in their profession. Do our hiring practices reflect the need/desire/passion to teach the core for what it is, true foundation for all that is to come? IHTFP has many meanings that need to be explored, but we come back to do we admit those who truly want to train hard for the marathon that awaits them, or do we tend towards electric scooter learning?

Stanza 10
LLMs upset carts
be not torn to parts
Communicate d'fine
Language => divine!

Contemplate this: "D-FINE" (Fine-grained Distribution Refinement) is a high-performance, real-time object detection model designed to improve upon existing Transformer-based detectors (DETRs). It is known for its ability to balance speed and accuracy in computer vision tasks. AND "d'fine" (or "D is fine") is slang used to describe someone as extremely attractive, beautiful, or physically appealing. How we teach students to use (and create) LLMs will be critical to the future of us all: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Wlsd9mljiU 2:36/4:21

Stanza 11
∴ change not just GIRs
Reach high & remove bars
Raise up language requirement
Minor to invest half of what is spent

Ask any set of students seeking to learn and master a new "foreign" language at MIT and you will find they find it is very difficult. Ask the teachers what they think. Are language classes considered more of a service than a "true" class that teaches breadth and depth of thinking? This is true in SHASS as well as well as SoE. Ponder learning a new language exposes one to new cultures and ways of thinking like no other experience.

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Stanza 12
4 of 8 SHASS for new language learn
6 of 12 major's math of LLM's turn
Build the true core of mind
MIghTy one of a kind!

Mathematics is the language . . . in all tongues. Language of all types is the key to success, especially for mit to realize true GHY (note the reversal of text case, what does GHY mean to you!?)

Stanza 13
| 1st + 2nd law|
+> awe!
XelaleX
3.14

Only a few absolute laws are needed for core understanding that then leads to the others to create true awe, including the baker's dozen law :-): I wrote this poem on pi day, while thinking about this and admissions: we do NOT admit legacy people, but I happen to know of one extraordinarily brilliant talented applicant, head and shoulders above many who I see admitted every year. This person was not admitted. I am sure many of us can point to such an anecdote, and hence perhaps understand the full meaning and intent of the above shared with true admiration and love of/for our wonderful community. Forwards or backwards, around and around we go, all paths lead to a future. QED.

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Gutenberg, or How the Curriculum Broke (and Reassembled Itself)

Franz-Josef Ulm

What follows is a historical inquiry, offered in the spirit of our current discussions, into how curricula reorganize themselves when the conditions of knowledge shift. The question is how institutions built to stabilize knowledge respond when the material they are meant to order exceeds the forms that contain it.

HE DID NOT AT FIRST understand what he had made.

That is usually how these things go. A man sets a machine in motion, sees that it works, and assumes the story is over. Gutenberg, looking at his press in Mainz, could reasonably have believed he had solved a practical problem: how to produce the Bible more quickly, more cleanly, and in sufficient quantity to satisfy a pious Europe that had, for centuries, been making do with scarcity – an era later described, with some enthusiasm, as darker than it was.

At first glance, this was excellent news. Scripture would be available. Literacy might spread. God's word would no longer depend entirely on the patience, eyesight, and scribal variability of monks. A service, it seemed, had been done.

Then the books began to multiply.

Not only the Bible. Other books. Grammars, law books, devotional texts, sermons, commentaries, pamphlets, disputations, calendars, manuals – some careful, some careless, all equally reproducible. A new ecology appeared. It was full of promise. It was also full of paper.

This was not Europe's first disturbance. It had already been living through a long earlier shock: the influx of Islamic science, philosophy, medicine, mathematics, and commentary through al-Andalus, Toledo, Sicily, Salerno, and Antioch. Aristotle returned with a full apparatus of interpretation. The names did not always travel with the arguments. What entered the curriculum as Aristotle often arrived already corrected, extended, and contested by Ibn Rushd (Averroes) or Ibn

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Sina (Avicenna). Their work persisted in the arguments, even as their names gradually disappeared from view – the curriculum retaining results, not the record of their formation. Algebra, optics, astronomy, and medicine arrived in the same way – along with, more unsettlingly, a habit of thought that expanded knowledge outward rather than enclosing it.

The universities absorbed that first shock, the influx.

They did what they always do: they added without replacing. Aristotle entered the curriculum. Commentary accumulated. Disputation multiplied. The structure held. The student still listened; the professor still spoke; the book still arrived through controlled channels.

Learning expanded, and its form remained intact.

Printing was the second shock.

This altered the conditions under which knowledge could be handled. What had been scarce became common. What had been singular became comparable. What had been received became inspectable.

And then the two shocks merged.

The knowledge already stretching the curriculum now existed in texts that could be multiplied, aligned, and set against one another. The effect was immediate and practical. Students encountered texts repeatedly, in multiple copies, with variation.

This is where the curriculum began to crack.

Because the medieval university had been built on transmission.

The lecture stood at the center because the book was scarce. The professor dictated; the student copied. Authority rested in the controlled flow of knowledge from one voice to many. To learn was to receive and retain.

Printing made that structure increasingly implausible.

Students arrived with texts already in hand. They read before the lecture. They compared what they heard with what they saw. They noticed discrepancies – between professor and text, between one printed edition and another. The text itself ceased to be singular.

And once the text fractured into versions, the lecture lost its finality.

In practice, this meant learning how to handle multiple texts at once – how to compare, correct, evaluate, and decide. A world of scarcity did not require these habits. A world of abundance made them unavoidable.

The professors responded predictably. They reinforced the curriculum. They insisted on order. They warned against undisciplined reading, which is always what one calls reading that no longer passes through one's own authority.

The professors responded predictably. They reinforced the curriculum. They insisted on order. They warned against undisciplined reading, which is always what one calls reading that no longer passes through one's own authority. *(They also refined their disciplinary machinery – statutes against unauthorized texts, formal censures, public recantations, the threat and the practice of expulsions, in earlier cases even corporal punishment or confinement – measures aimed less at advancing learning than at ensuring that no one strayed beyond doctrine precisely at the moment when doctrine itself was beginning to lose its boundaries.)*

For a time, they maintained the appearance of continuity.

Yet something fundamental had shifted.

Listening and learning began to come apart. Reading no longer offered the comfort of certainty.

Outside the formal curriculum, new habits took shape – practices that would, over time, be absorbed into it. Students annotated. They cross-referenced. They compared versions. They asked which text was better, which reading more accurate, which translation more faithful. Small questions, repeated often, altered the structure of study.

From them emerged a discipline already long practiced, but now unavoidable.

Philology.

The curriculum, slowly and without announcement, reorganized itself around this necessity.

Greek entered alongside Latin as a working tool. Textual criticism gained a central place. Commentary, oriented toward the interpretation of a single authoritative text, continued, though it no longer governed the structure of study, now organized around comparison and evaluation. It became one practice among others.

The student's role changed.

No longer confined to reception, the student assumed a share of judgment.

This did not follow from institutional decree. It followed from material conditions. When there is one book, one learns to receive it. When there are many, one learns to distinguish among them.

Erasmus recognized this with unusual clarity.

He accepted the new conditions and sought to impose discipline within them. His editions of the New Testament relied on comparison – manuscript against manuscript, version against version, correction against error. Authority, in his work, rested on demonstration.

In doing so, he offered a model of study.

Read across versions. Identify discrepancies. Establish what can be justified.

It takes curricular form, quietly, even before it appears in statutes *(and with it,*

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Ulm, from preceding page

the emergence of the scholar in a form that begins to look familiar: a custodian no longer of a single text, but a practitioner of comparison, judgment, and method).

Meanwhile, beyond the universities, the same conditions produced different forms. Printers, scholars, and correspondents formed networks that operated independently of any single institution. Texts circulated. Corrections circulated. Authority began to attach itself to method – the ability to distinguish, to verify, to weigh – rather than to possession.

That shift did not begin in consensus. It began in suspicion. Plurality itself appeared dangerous: too many voices, too many versions, too much reading that no longer passed through the old gatekeepers. The first response was censorship. In Spain and elsewhere, inquisitorial authority expanded its reach through licensing, scrutiny, and prohibition; the Spanish Inquisition, established in 1478, was designed to consolidate religious and political control, and by the 1520s its theologians were examining Erasmus's works at Valladolid under inquisitorial supervision.

The *compact* that followed was practical, not generous. The Church and allied authorities could not stop print, so they tried to govern it: censored books, approved editions, licensing, and eventually the Index of Prohibited Books, first formalized in the mid-sixteenth century as a means of preventing doctrinal contamination through reading.

And, inevitably, into power.

Because the printed word did more than change learning. It scaled everything. Law, doctrine, taxation, administration, military instruction, drill, fortification, and logistics all became repeatable, uniform, transportable. Fiefdoms hardened into states. States learned to speak in identical texts across distance. Print entered the organization of war – its administration, its technical knowledge, its discipline – as gunpowder warfare made military power more expensive,

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Among Colleagues.
(Left to right) Aristotle (384 BCE, Stagira – 322 BCE, Chalcis); Ibn Rushd (Averroes) (1126, Córdoba – 1198, Marrakesh); Ibn Sina (Avicenna) (c. 980, Afshana – 1037, Hamadan); Johannes Gutenberg (c. 1400, Mainz – 1468, Mainz); Desiderius Erasmus (c. 1466, Rotterdam – 1536, Basel).
(Top to bottom) Conventional historical representation; anachronistic contemporaneity; and, finally, what remains. (Image created with ChatGPT.)

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more specialized, and more centralizing. Universities, increasingly aligned with these conditions, participated in the training and formalization of the knowledge on which such systems depended, while drawing support and standing from the same structures they helped to sustain.

In Bologna, a major center for canon and civil law, closely entangled with papal authority, the shift appeared early. By 1515, with the Fifth Lateran Council formalizing pre-publication licensing, the question shifted from whether texts would circulate to which versions would be allowed to count.

And alongside knowledge came something else. Information spread. Truth and falsehood. Both multiplied. Both circulated. Both demanded interpretation. The same mechanism carried correction and confusion with equal efficiency. The need for discrimination, evaluation, and judgment became unavoidable in a world where the text itself no longer guaranteed its own authority.

The universities did not collapse. They adjusted.

They recovered source languages, formalized textual criticism, and reoriented the curriculum toward comparison. They retained their forms while altering their function.

Looking back, the pattern is clear.

The first shock expanded what could be known.

The second changed how it could be encountered.

Together, they altered what it meant to learn.

A single, authorized text gave way to many.

What followed was resistance, censorship, adaptation – and, eventually, a curriculum that trained students to live inside abundance.

It is tempting to give this transformation a grander name – to call it a revolution, a rupture, the birth of something entirely new.

Better to remain modest. Such arrangements have a way of changing – and of ending *(often under pressure: political, financial, or institutional)*.

At the level of the university, it resolved itself, in the end, into curriculum reform.

Gutenberg thought he was making books.

What he helped make, without quite intending to, was a curriculum that could no longer assume there was only one.

What, then, are we making?

And as for the rest – the struggles over authority, the burnings, the consolidations of power, the uneasy coexistence of truth and falsehood – we might resist the urge to conclude with too much confidence. History has a habit of returning to familiar problems with renewed enthusiasm.

The first time, it carries the weight of tragedy.

The second time, it tends to arrive with less ceremony.

Now, perhaps, under conditions where texts multiply beyond easy supervision, and where authority must be reassembled rather than assumed.

Perhaps even with committees, revisions, and the language of reform carefully maintained.

It is, after all, only a curriculum reform.

Or so it appears.

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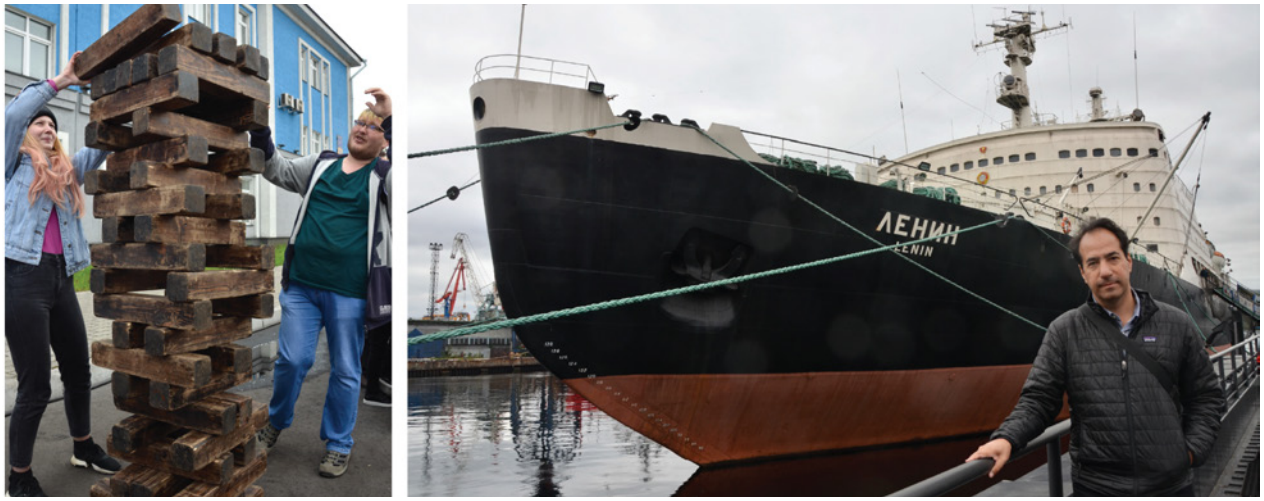
Clockwise from top left: the central area of *VDNKh,* **a Sputnik model, Mukhina's** *Worker and Kolkhoz Woman*, **Cheburashka cosplayer.**

famous works of Soviet art, Vera Mukhina's *Worker and Kolkhoz Woman*, a colossal steel sculpture of a young couple striding forward to forge a socialist future that is now solidly in the past.

For my family, a visit to VDNKh in the summer of 2019 was also a reconnection with our own past. My wife grew up in Moscow, but she had rarely returned since her family emigrated, decades ago, to escape the systemic antisemitism that stunted opportunities for them in the Soviet Union. My daughter was raised among Russian-speaking relatives, with Russian songs and stories woven throughout her upbringing in Boston; but until our trip that year, she had yet to experience her motherland in person. For my wife and daughter, the park offered material realizations of mundane childhood memories: a frolicking cosplayer enacting the beloved cartoon character Cheburashka, the cuddly stuffed space dogs Belka and Strelka (successors to Sputnik's Laika), and an endless supply of fried donuts, called *ponchiki*, that were once only special treats. For me, however, the most fascinating aspect of this place was its Soviet-accented glorification of values that I think of as quintessentially American, and indeed exemplified by our community at MIT: an optimistic worldview, strength through diversity, and technological leadership.

Our trip that summer later took us up the great sweep of European Russia to Murmansk, the world's largest city above the Arctic Circle. Murmansk has an entirely different feel from modern Moscow. It lacks the fresh paint and post-communist commercialism of the capital. The center is filled with the blocky and impersonal postwar buildings called *Khrushchevkas*, many in states of decay. Posters at the bus stops urge citizens to be in a good mood, and the most prominent monument here is a grim 116-foot soldier who stands eternal guard over a battlefield where 7,000 Soviet troops died fighting off the Nazi invasion. But even this gray city finds colorful ways to celebrate its achievements. Pride of place in Murmansk harbor goes to the icebreaker Lenin, the world's first nuclear-powered surface vessel and now a museum ship. From 1959 to 1989, this 16-kiloton leviathan cut cargo lanes through the frozen waters north of Russia. She was a revolutionary feat of engineering, honored by her revolutionary name. On the day we toured the *Lenin*, there was a lively science fair being held on the dock nearby. We paused longest at a jenga tower where some of the locals were enjoying principles of Newtonian mechanics.

Although Murmansk was fascinating, we had come there not for its own sake, but as the starting point for a journey back down south. We boarded an overnight train to Kem, a dilapidated provincial town on the coast of the White Sea, from which we caught a ferry out to the Solovetsky islands. They are the site of a storied 15th-century monastery that served as the first Soviet state prison camp – the "mother of the Gulag," as the writer Aleksander Sozhenitsyn dubbed it. After the Russian Civil War, the monks were cleared out and their cells packed instead with inmates. In its early years, the facility served as a base for excavat-



Left to right: jenga in Murmask, the author with *Lenin*.

A Riddle Revisited
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Left to right: Solovetsky Monastery, a memorial to victims of Stalin's Terror, a monk with bread.

ing the nearby White Sea Canal, a vast engineering effort estimated to have cost the lives of 25,000 forced laborers. Later, at the height of Stalin's purges in the 30s, the islands and surrounding areas were used for mass executions of ethnic minorities and dissidents, including scientists and other intellectuals. When we visited, killing sites were marked by shadowy wooden crosses set amongst the pines. The monastery itself was nothing short of majestic, however. Its stone turrets and tiled onion domes, brightly lit by fickle bursts of sunlight, were reflected lucidly in the surrounding littoral pools. In the time since the fall of communism, a tide of spirituality had washed back in. Both pilgrims and priests were there, breaking bread in the canteen and burning incense in the chapels.

It seems beyond contradictory that the slaughter at Solovetsky peaked just as the breadth of Soviet ingenuity and culture were being valorized by construction of the *VDNKh* exposition. In Moscow, as in Murmansk, the USSR publicly exalted innovation, industry, and popular unity, while behind the scenes, the regime undercut these very values by persecuting the intelligentsia and marginalized groups who shared their country. The cognitive dissonance between the state's rhetoric and actions seems in keeping with Winston Churchill's famous characterization of Russia as "a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma." And as an American in 2026, it is hard to recall these experiences without the sense that the historic riddle of contradictions is now being retold, at least softly, here at home.

On the last day of our 2019 trip, we found ourselves in the St. Petersburg home of Anna Akhmatova, the acclaimed poet whose work bears haunting witness to the tribulations of the twentieth century. Seeing Russia for myself had helped me appreciate the significance of her words to ex-Soviets like my wife, who carry the intergenerational legacy of those times inside them. Akhmatova lived through the First World War, the Revolution, the Great Terror, and the Siege of Leningrad. Her first husband was shot by the Soviet secret police in 1921 and her son was interned for almost 20 years in the gulags, an agony that evoked some of her most moving writing. Despite these punishments, however, Akhmatova remained in her spare apartment on the Fontanka Embankment, determined to stand her ground through the bleakest moments. "No foreign sky protected me," she wrote, "no stranger's wing shielded my face." Akhmatova's fortitude can inspire us, too, to stand our ground in the face of challenges we face at present – and in defense of ideals we truly believe in. There would be no riddle in that.

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Left to right: Natan Altman's *Portrait of Anna Akhmatova* **(1914), the entrance to Akhmatova's St. Petersburg apartment.**

The Temptations and Risks Posed to Multilingual Communicators by Generative AI

Eric Grunwald

"Writing and thinking and learning are the same process." —William Zinsser

IN THE MAY/JUNE 2024 edition of the FNL, I reported on two pieces of 2023 research showing the communicative disadvantages still faced by non-native-English-speaking (NNES) graduate students. First, Amano, et al., had found that it still took early-career NNES scholars on average 50% longer to read an academic journal article and 50% longer to write one, and that uptake to journals was tangibly lower for NNESs due to language issues. Their difficulties in speaking in academic contexts were just as concerning.

The other piece of research – the 2023 MIT Graduate Communication Survey, conducted by my colleague Dr. Elena Kallestinova, director of MIT's Writing and Communication Center, and myself – showed almost exactly the same disadvantages. Almost across the board, NNES students at MIT reported difficulties in communicative task at a rate about 50% greater than those of native-English-speaking (NES) students.

I thus called for departments and advisors to support NNES graduate students by affording them the encouragement, time, and curricular space to take the English Language Studies (ELS) classes recommended to them based on their results on the English Evaluation Test (EET) so that these students could perform at MIT to the best of their abilities and compete on a level playing field. This call was made in response to ELS enrollments, particularly in writing, not bouncing back following the Covid-19 Pandemic. And the following semester, fall 2024, ELS classes were all but full again (and while the evidence for causation is circumstantial, no other factors explain it).

Now, though, two years later, writing enrollments have dropped again, and even further. This despite continued high subject evaluations (averaging above 6.7/7.0), and despite steady numbers of recommendations based on the EET. For example, for 21W.219, "Foundations of Academic and Professional Writing," the high-intermediate foundational class designed for first-year students who show significant gaps in the writing skills they need upon arrival at MIT:

While taking this course was recommended to over 40 students last August, only five of those have taken one of the four sections we have offered. (The other six students who have taken it are either from other years or from Harvard.)

Again, the evidence is circumstantial, but the only factor that seems to have changed since 2023 is the advent and spread of generative AI. That is, because they have less confidence in their English grammar, vocabulary, and academic style than native speakers, the temptation is greater for NNESs to have AI write or "fix" their texts for them. Thus, it seems these students are either choosing not to take

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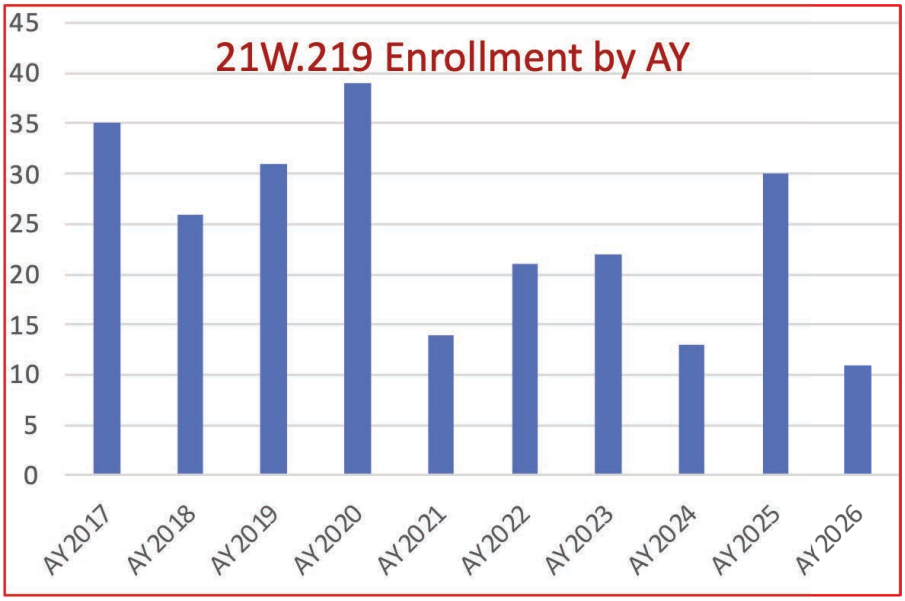

Temptations and Risks Posed to Multilingual Communicators by Generative AI
Grunwald, from preceding page

their recommended classes or are not being encouraged to or required to by their departments or advisors.

Unfortunately, the costs for NNESs are also greater than for NESs: they do not learn many of the basics that would make them less dependent on AI and would let them express their own ideas clearly and accurately in their own voices.

Recent research bears this out: Wang (2024) discovered "two dilemmas encountered by [L2] students in their generative AI-assisted writing: (1) the challenging balance between incorporating AI to enhance writing and maintaining their authentic voice, and (2) the dilemma of weighing the potential loss of learning experiences against the emergence of new learning opportunities accompanying AI integration."

More recently, a 2025 study by Hwang, et al., employed four datasets and three kinds of analysis to corroborate such previous studies as Wang's and ultimately points to "the potential of generative AI to support [L2] writing processes while also providing a tailored learning environment that caters to individualized learning experiences" (12).

However, Hwang, et al., "also exposes several concerns," such as L2 writers' own worries about "unhealthy reliance on generative AI, which can hinder their development…." As one interviewee in the study said, "[B]ecause of the technology, I become lazy and do not want to use my brain" (9-10). Ultimately, the study "underscores the need to educate the students about digital literacy and the ethical implications of using AI" and "empower[ing] L2 learners to make use of AI in a way that is both effective and ethical" (12).

Thus, the choice is not between using AI and taking ELS classes. The choice, as we're all finding, is whether to help students use AI to effectively learn and empower themselves, i.e., intentionally and strategically, rather than just letting or pushing students to use it as a replacement for thinking and learning. Thus, we in ELS are working hard to develop and incorporate AI-aware pedagogy into our classes.

The stakes of such choices are higher now, though, especially for NNESs. Before AI, if a student did not take a class, they could still learn *something* through immersion and by hammering through the processes of reading and writing documents themselves (and maybe getting extensive corrections from their advisors or colleagues). They were still at least cognitively engaged in "Writing an extended text at an advanced level," which "involves not just the language system [but rather] poses significant challenges to our cognitive systems for memory and thinking as well," as Kellogg wrote in 2008 ("Training Writing Skills: A Cognitive Developmental Perspective").

But while struggling with those tasks, combined with their constant listening and reading, would improve their skills somewhat, they would remain unaware of persistent patterns of problems in their speech and written texts and, perhaps worse, would continually doubt whether they were expressing complex ideas clearly and accurately.

Kellogg went on, "Indeed, writers can put to use virtually everything they have learned and stored away in long-term memory. But they can only do so if their knowledge is accessible, either by rapidly retrieving it from long-term memory or by actively maintaining it in short-term working memory. Thinking is so closely linked to writing, at least in mature adults, that the two are practically twins. Individuals who write well are seen as substantive thinkers. . . . Learning how to compose an effective extended text, therefore, should be conceived as a task similar to acquiring expertise in related culturally acquired domains."

Offloading to AI the work of generating text, though, or even revising and proofreading, provides little to none of the "developmental struggle" that all learning requires. So now if a student doesn't take a class, they're not going to develop their own language skills much regardless. As a student in a different study (Wang & Luo, 2026) reports, "If I always rely on AI, I cannot really get to grips with [learning vocabulary]!"

One response to our 2023 graduate survey that I neglected to mention in my 2024 piece was that from students who had been recommended for an ELS course but hadn't taken one yet: What would make it more likely that they would?, we asked. Over 80% of NNESs taking the survey responded, "If my department would promote ELS classes more."

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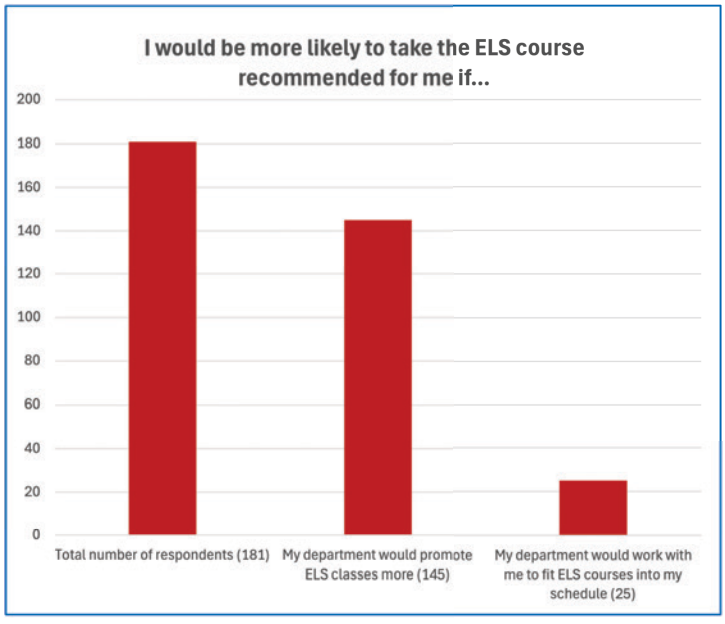

Temptations and Risks Posed to Multilingual Communicators by Generative AI
Grunwald, from preceding page

Thus, I again ask departments and faculty to ensure that international graduate students have the time and motivation to avail themselves of the support and training we offer. Now, most institutions that give graduate students an English placement exam after admissions do in fact *require* the recommended courses to be taken, and that would be one way to ensure that MIT students develop the skills they need. Obviously there are problems with that approach: It reduces student autonomy and departmental autonomy, raises issues of fairness in terms of course load, and so on. On the other hand, elective credit might be given for ELS courses, and perhaps other compensations exist.

Perhaps, though, there is a sustainable middle ground, and I raise these issues in the hope of further exploration of that ground.

In that vein, ELS is also undertaking initiatives to keep information and dialogue flowing. I have begun forming, for one, an ELS Advisory Council composed of faculty from across the Institute to meet semi-regularly so that I hear faculty's perspectives and even advice regularly. I have four professors on board already, but if you're interested in being a part of it, please email me.

Finally, I encourage all of us to think about how we *listen to* and interact individually with NNES students in discussing their communication tasks and their use of AI and to engage them dialogically about it, such as asking how *they* think it helps or harms them but also helping them see the profound benefits to them of their possessing their own robust communication skills in English.

Ultimately, if you've ever lived in a country or even visited one where you don't know the language well enough to converse at normal speed but must navigate situations ranging from ordering food and finding housing to registering administratively for something, understanding lectures, or even dealing with legalities, then you know the somewhat liminal spaces that immigrants operate in and the difficulty native speakers can have in quite understanding the challenges you face.

Ultimately, at this "inflection point" in which now we find ourselves, including the urgent financial and political challenges and the loud debates we now face, it is important that *we* not "cognitively offload" the needs and concerns of our less voluble students.

Eric Grunwald is Director, English Studies Language Program *(egrunwal@mit.edu).*

Thus, I again ask departments and faculty to ensure that international graduate students have the time and motivation to avail themselves of the support and training we offer.

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There Should Be More Engineers in Congress

R. M. Latanision

I AM SHARING THE following reflections to open a discussion among our MIT community on the role of engineers, scientists, and medical practitioners in public policy. In a world increasingly shaped by complex technologies and data-driven realities, I believe it is worth considering whether our professions are sufficiently represented in the policymaking process. My intent is not to prescribe conclusions, but to encourage thoughtful consideration and dialogue on how technical expertise and evidence-based reasoning might better inform decisions that affect our society. I welcome your perspectives.

I am an engineer. I make decisions on engineering design, assembly, operation, inspection, and maintenance of engineering systems of all kinds based on data-driven facts. The same dependence on factual truth is typical of scientist and medical practitioners. Who would feel comfortable with a surgeon's advice if it were not supported by dependable diagnostics. Not on opinions or the personal agendas of others. We live in a technologically intense world and that intensity is evolving literally by the day with the evolution of artificial intelligence into our lives and livelihood.

I have been elected a delegate to the Massachusetts Democratic Party Convention in May. I went to a town caucus in Winchester recently, became a nominee to serve as a delegate to the state convention and like other nominees had to make a one-minute speech: I said, essentially, that in our technologically intense world more scientists, engineers, and medical practitioners need to become involved with public policy, either as elected or appointed officials. That drew applause and I got elected. There are candidates and lawmakers in Massachusetts who have both a science-related undergraduate degree and graduate training in public policy. That combination is really in short supply in Congress today, and we should be giving such candidates a closer look. In an age where technology is so prominent in our lives Congress and the administration should include more scientists, engineers, and medics who are educated to work with factual truth. Decisions during the past year in Washington on food and nutrition, vaccinations, and medical care, renewables, land management, Artificial Intelligence and many other issues of importance to the public and to our nation are testimony to the absence of this guidance. I urge scientists, engineers, and medical practitioners to consider public policy careers as either elected or appointed officials.

I considered running for Congress in the 1980s, when I was in my 40s! I spent a year-long sabbatical in Washington as an advisor to the U.S House of Representatives Committee on Science and Technology. There were many good people on this committee . . . . Ron Paul who was a physician, Al Gore, Dan Glickman to name a few. But as I met more members, I was struck by how many had no credentials in technology. This was a heady experience for a kid from the anthracite coal fields of Northeast Pennsylvania. So, I considered running for Congress myself after meeting with members from both sides of the aisle, including Tip O'Neil. I assembled a small group of friends and began planning. Ultimately it became clear that understanding how to navigate MIT and help raise two kids took precedence. But if today's world were transposed back to that time, I would not have hesitated. I was brought up in a small town near Scranton of about 100 people, largely Polish or Ukrainian families. My mother taught me to be civil and respectful and that is how I have conducted my life. For all the above reasons, I just cannot sit back today and watch all the nonsense coming from Washington.

I think it would be interesting if the people now leading the DoD understood the national imperative they are charged with leading. None of those I knew or had heard of as having such credentials are still there, have no voice or are reluctant to speak out. When the Peter Thiel's of the world exert their influence as he did with JD Vance there is little room for serious, knowledgeable people. What remains is a more chaotic game of national jeopardy. This is just an ugly time in the US when civility, respect, and meaningful credentials are no longer attributes in the eyes of our president. Walking away from renewables as the Trump administration has done is irresponsible from many perspectives and a demonstration of the lack of science knowledge in his space. His science advisor is a businessman . . . Peter Thiel's former chief of staff. Michael Kratsios is the first director of OSTP without a science or engineering degree, but instead a degree in politics from Princeton. Many of the President's appointees are categorically unqualified to make decisions on vaccines (medicine), AI (science and engineering), military judgments, etc.

Though scientists, engineers, and medical researchers have a huge influence on society, they are extremely poorly represented as policymakers in Congress. At present it appears that only 10 members of the House and one in the Senate claim engineering degrees. When considering scientists and medical practitioners that number grows to 40 or about 7.5% of the Congress. I believe that it would be of value to the nation if that number were increased. I am not suggesting that they should dominate Congress. But at their best they operate in a technically intense world with data driven facts not alternative facts, not personal opinions, and not personal agendas. If that culture could be extended to the lawyers, business professionals and others who represent the largest fractions of the Congress, that might refresh our approach to sustaining our presence on this planet by encouraging evidence-based policy decisions in a civil, respectful, and technically meaningful way.

R. M. Latinision is Professor Emeritus, MIT and Neil Armstrong Distinguished Visiting Professor, Purdue University *(ronlatinision@gmail.com).*

The above is modified from the author's *Winchester News* Opinion article, "There should be more engineers in Congress"; April 1, 2026. https://winchesternews.org/20260403_there-should-be-more-engineers-in-congress/

Why Graduate Students are Calling for a "Fair and Secure Workplace for All"

Ani Adavi
Baltasar Dinis
on behalf of the
Graduate Student Union's
Executive Board

AS THE CURRENT collective bargaining agreement approaches its expiration at the end of May 2026, we, the Graduate Student Union, write to inform you – our PIs, mentors, and advisors – that negotiations with the MIT administration are about to begin. Many of you expressed, during the last round of bargaining, that you wished to be present at the table. We offer here a clear account of the priorities we are advancing – what we believe is necessary to sustain our work and to continue contributing as a central part of MIT's research enterprise. These priorities emerge not from abstraction, but from the lived conditions under which graduate workers carry out research and teaching across the Institute and a survey in which almost 2000 graduate workers participated.

MIT Must Recognize That Graduate Workers' Conditions Are Central to Its Research and Teaching Mission

The first contract established essential protections – harassment safeguards, health and safety standards, timely pay, and guaranteed raises – that have already improved the ability of graduate workers to focus on their research and teaching. Yet the broader landscape of higher education has shifted rapidly, and graduate workers continue to face increasing uncertainty. These conditions are not peripheral to MIT's mission; they define the environment in which its research is produced. Strengthening them is therefore a necessary step in sustaining the Institute's academic excellence.

MIT Must Align Graduate Stipends with the Cost of Living to Sustain Its Research Mission

Current stipend levels remain significantly below the cost of living in the Cambridge area, even as inflation and housing costs continue to rise. MIT's own research[1] estimates the living wage for the area to be $67,513, vastly exceeding our current pre-tax compensation of $52,429 ($46,793 for Master's students), creating a persistent gap between income and basic expenses. For reference, in annual expenditures, average rent for one bed at Graduate Junction is $25,800, groceries are $7,300, and internet and mobile plans are estimated around $2,199. This disparity places graduate workers under continuous financial strain, limiting our ability to focus fully on research and teaching and pushing us further and further away from Cambridge in search of more affordable housing. A leading research institution cannot rely on a workforce that is structurally overextended. Aligning stipends with the real cost of living is essential for maintaining both academic productivity and institutional competitiveness, especially since many peer institutions like UPenn, Princeton, and Brown offer wages more in line with the living standards in their area.

MIT Must Guarantee Stable Funding to Protect Research Continuity in a Time of Federal Retrenchment

The recent termination and freezing of thousands of research grants, alongside large-scale federal funding cuts, has introduced unprecedented uncertainty into graduate education. Graduate workers now face the possibility that their ability to complete their programs depends on factors entirely outside their control. Some graduate workers have reported needing to find full-time work or summer internships outside of MIT due to a lack of funding for an appointment, with others simply going without pay for the summer months. These disruptions extend beyond individual trajectories; they interrupt laboratory work, delay collaborative projects, and weaken long-term research programs. MIT must provide stronger and more consistent funding guarantees, similar to those in place at peer universities like Stanford, UPenn and Boston University, to ensure that research can proceed without avoidable interruption and that graduate workers can complete the work to which they and their advisors have committed years.

MIT Must Remove Structural and Political Barriers Facing International Graduate Workers

International graduate workers, who comprise a significant portion of MIT's research community, face both institutional barriers and broader political risks that materially affect their work. Administrative inconsistencies around CPT and OPT access limit essential training opportunities, while visa uncertainties and travel restrictions create ongoing instability. In addition, international workers now confront the real possibility of visa revocation, targeting for political expression, or being unable to return to the United States after travel. MIT must respond to these conditions with clear,

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Why Graduate Students are Calling for a "Fair and Secure Workplace for All"
Adavi and Dinis, from preceding page

consistent policies: ensuring full access to federally permitted training pathways, providing protections in the event of immigration enforcement actions, and enabling flexible work arrangements when international workers are temporarily unable to return. These are necessary measures to preserve both the well-being of graduate workers and the continuity of the Institute's global research enterprise.

MIT Must Ensure Due Process in Decisions That Determine Both Academic Standing and Employment

Graduate workers do not occupy separable academic and employment roles in practice; the two are structurally intertwined. When a student is removed from a program, they lose their employment, and when they lose employment, they often lose the ability to continue their studies. Current institutional practices that treat these domains as distinct limit access to fair process, create uncertainty at precisely the moments when clarity is most needed, and have been confusing in practice to graduate workers, faculty, and administrators. MIT must establish due process protections that reflect the integrated nature of graduate work, ensuring fairness, transparency, and stability for both graduate workers and the faculty who supervise them.

MIT Must Extend Equal Protections to Fellows Performing Equivalent Work

As the Institute increasingly relies on fellowships, disparities have emerged between fellows and other graduate workers performing similar roles. Fellows often lack access to basic protections guaranteed by our contract, including safeguards against harassment, clear compensation standards, and reasonable working conditions, despite contributing equally to research and teaching. This inequity creates inconsistency across departments and places graduate workers in the position of choosing between a prestigious fellowship opportunity and basic protections. MIT must ensure that all graduate workers, regardless of funding mechanism, receive the protections necessary to carry out their work effectively.

MIT Must Act Together with Faculty to Defend the Conditions of Academic Work

The challenges described here unfold within a broader context of political and financial pressure on higher education, including funding cuts, constraints on academic freedom, and shifting federal policies. Addressing these issues requires collective engagement. Graduate workers and faculty share a common stake in improving the conditions under which research and teaching can proceed with integrity and continuity.

We therefore ask for your active support. Support your graduate students within your labs and departments as these negotiations unfold. If collective action becomes necessary, we ask for your understanding when you see graduate workers on the picket line; this is part of a shared effort to secure conditions that sustain our common work. If negotiations escalate, we encourage you to raise these issues within faculty governance spaces, including Institute faculty meetings, where your voice carries weight. We are all engaged in the same enterprise, and its future depends on our ability to act together.

We move forward in this process with the conviction that MIT's strength lies in that shared commitment – and that the conditions under which graduate workers labor are inseparable from the success of the Institute as a whole.

Ani Adavi and Baltasar Dinis can be reached at *(contact@mitgsu.org)*.

References

[1]: https://livingwage.mit.edu/metros/14460

Letters to the Editor

Editorial Note

Dear FNL Readers:

WE'RE WRITING THIS LETTER to encourage you to write us letters. We'd love to hear from you! Over the past 36+ years we've received on the average of fewer than five letters per academic year. Sometimes we receive not even one letter in an entire semester! Except for printing invoices – those we do get five to six times each academic year!

Letters don't have to be long; just a short email letting us know what you liked in a previous issue – or what you didn't like! Perhaps tell us a subject you'd like to see covered. Or you could write a 200- or 300-word exposition on something that you've been wanting to say for a while and finally found the time and motivation to say it! (A few hundred words more and you could submit it as an article and see where that leads.)

The point is you can write on any topic you choose related to the Institute, and you can make it most any length. Just be sure it isn't libelous in any way and that it doesn't call out a faculty or other colleague in a defamatory manner. All letters we receive have the potential for being published in a future Faculty Newsletter (unless we're asked by the author not to do so), and we will notify the writer of all letters we intend to publish.

Please send all letters, commentary, poems, articles, and any words of wisdom to: *fnl@mit.edu*, or MIT Faculty Newsletter, Building 10-335, Cambridge, MA 02139

letters

Problem with DeGraff Article

To The Faculty Newsletter:

I FOUND THE DEGRAFF ARTICLE very troubling. DeGraff's effort to dehumanize Sheffi reflects a lack of understanding of the history of the conflict and a willingness to ignore the other side's experience. I suspect that he is not an Arabic speaker notwithstanding that he is a professor of Linguistics. I say that because he condemns all Jewish Israelis to a classification of colonial usurpers and the source of all Palestinian pain. He is apparently unaware that the majority of Israelis today are the progeny of Jews who have lived in Palestine for centuries and the 900,000 Arabic speaking Jewish residents of Arab countries who were forced to leave their homes and properties and assets without compensation and who never received a penny of UNWRA support.

My own family is an example. For generations Simhas lived in Palestine, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and other parts of the Ottoman Empire. They were summarily evicted from their homes. My family in Jerusalem, who had warm relations with our Arab neighbors for years, woke up the day the State was established to find our house being shelled by the British-led Arab Legion. The same day, my kind and gentle uncle was waiting for a bus in Tel Aviv, when the Egyptian air force bombed the bus station and he became the first victim of their attempt to end the UN's decision.

I think that none of my family's experience would register with DeGraff. But I am troubled by the FNL's willingness to have such a long personal attack on a fellow faculty member without some editorial control and balanced view of the events. I hope you can do something to improve civility in the FNL in the future. As I complete my 71st year as a member of the MIT community, I recall a time when debate on important issues was more congenial, though no less passionate. I hope we can rediscover that quality which made MIT so special.

O. R. Simha, MIT Affiliate
Former MIT Planning Director

FNL Editorial Board Election – Call for Nominations

AS PART OF THE FNL'S regular election cycle, a second election will be held in May 2026 to fill two (2) open seats on the Editorial Board.

Faculty are invited to submit self-nominations to be considered for service on the Board. Faculty expressions of interest by way of self-nominations are due no later than April 30, 2026, by email to fnl@mit.edu. Those faculty indicating interest will be asked to provide a brief candidate statement, along with a photograph and relevant website information.

The election is scheduled to begin on May 14, 2026, with results to be communicated approximately one week thereafter. Additional details regarding the election process and voting procedures will be circulated to the faculty in due course.

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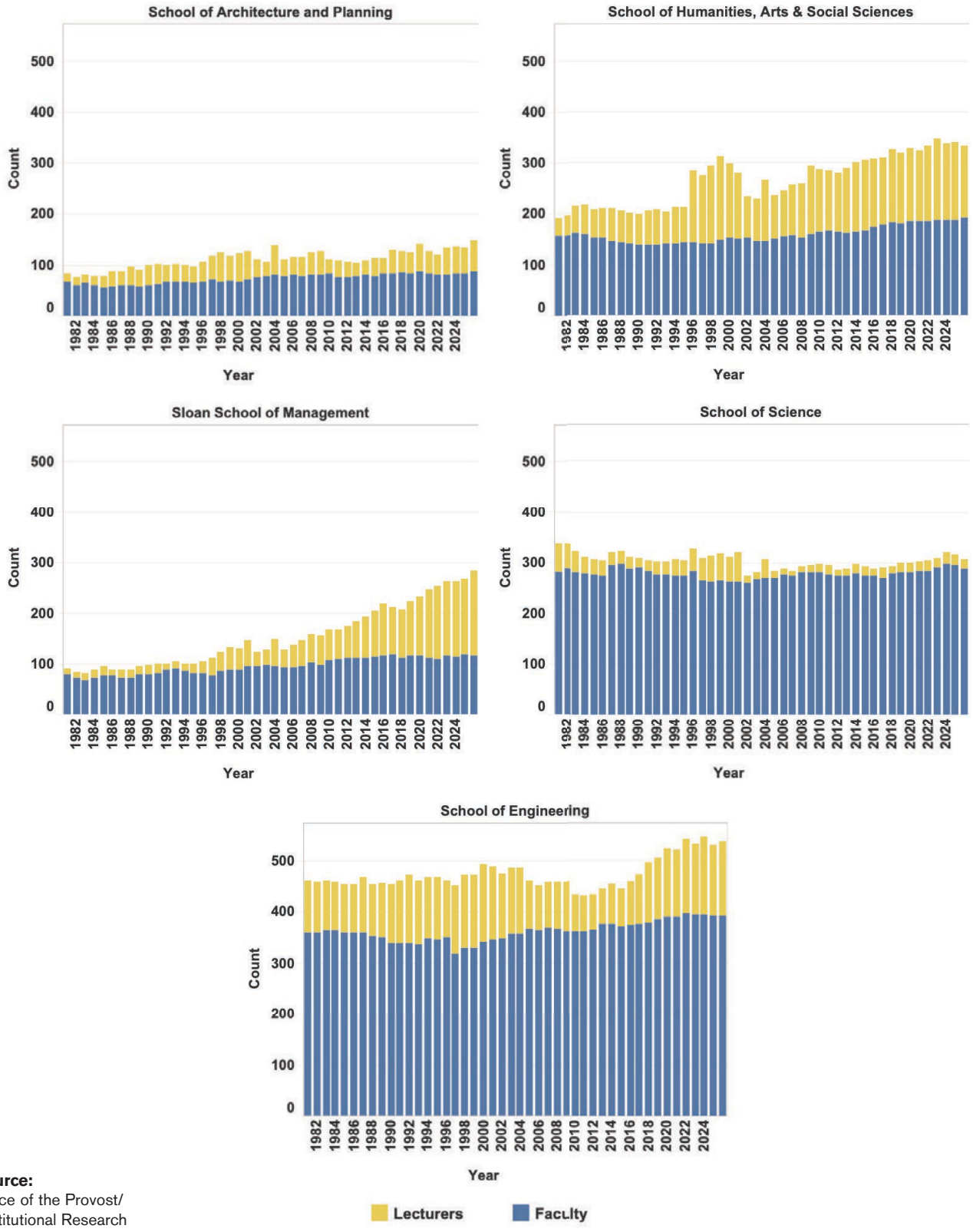
The Next Issue

OUR NEXT ISSUE (MAY/JUNE) will be a special graduation edition honoring the Class of 2026. We invite submissions that celebrate, reflect, and send off this remarkable cohort in style – essays, tributes, moments of insight or humor are all welcome. Help us mark the occasion with the spirit it deserves. Please email all submissions to: fnl@mit.edu.

MIT Numbers

MIT Faculty and Lecturers 1981–2026



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