Help wanted: Undergraduate response to a survey

The Dean for Undergraduate Education invites all MIT undergraduates to participate in a web-based Consortium on Financing Higher Education (COFHE) survey about their experiences at MIT. Answers will be accepted through Monday, March 24.

The survey takes about 25 minutes to complete. The data will be confidential and participation is voluntary. Results are expected to be released mid-April and will be posted on http://web.mit.edu/ir/.

The survey covers a wide range of topics, including time spent doing various activities in and out of the classroom, whether students believe their skills and abilities have changed since enrolling at MIT, and the sources of advice about academic, career, and personal choices.

MIT’s goal is to have 40 percent of the 4,066 undergraduates participate. By March 17, 32 percent had responded to the survey.

Ten percent of the MIT respondents will receive a $25 gift certificate from the Office of Provost Robert A. Brown. Students may choose an MIT COOP or Amazon.com gift certificate or a deposit to their Tech Cash account. In addition to the gift certificates, five students will win a tour of construction site of the Stata Center for Computer Information and Intelligence Sciences with Senior Project Manager for Construction Nancy Joyce. Other students will win a lunch with Chancellor Phillip L. Clay or Dean for Undergraduate Education Robert P. Redwine.

In the past, similar surveys have provided the impetus for changes at MIT, including modifications to the writing requirement and the dining program. MIT also learned that its students rate their experiences differently from many of its peers, including Harvard, Princeton, Stanford, and Yale.

Twenty-eight of the 31 COFHE schools are participating in the survey. COFHE members include the eight Ivy League schools, Stanford, Duke, the University of Chicago, and Johns Hopkins.

The accompanying charts from a 2002 COFHE survey compare MIT seniors with seniors at peer institutions in overall satisfaction with their undergraduate education, and time spent each week on course work inside and outside the classroom or laboratory. The same questions are being asked on the current survey.
Work on scheduled courses outside of class or labs during a typical week

- MIT:
  - 0-5 hours: 20%
  - 6-20 hours: 40%
  - 21+ hours: 40%

- Peers:
  - 0-5 hours: 20%
  - 6-20 hours: 60%
  - 21+ hours: 20%

Legend:
- 0-5 hours
- 6-20 hours
- 21+ hours