Committee on Student Life (CSL)
Friday, May 4, 2012
Room 12-196 12pm – 2pm
Minutes taken by Lisa Stagnone

Present: Alex Slocum, Tali Feliciano, Lizhong Zheng, Katie Vogel, Phuree (Will) Smittinet, Karen Anne Sittig, Oz Agar, Hamed Alemohammad

Topic: Future Classrooms 2030

Infosys, http://www.infosys.com/pages/index.aspx, a computer company in India, has the future defined. Infosys Limited was started in 1981 by seven people with US$ 250. Today, they are a global leader in the "next generation" of IT and consulting. They have the best classrooms/campus of everyone. To study, you plug in to a board, discuss the data, and submit work wirelessly.

How do we get there?

- We need to update the MIT campus to reflect new technology in regards to the MIT2030 plan.
- Let’s start with a paperless community.
- We need electronic text books for everyone like they have at Sloan.
- We need to replace outdated projectors with state of the art high resolution systems that are wireless.

How will class interests by in MITx? MITx is online courseware initiate NextGen. http://www.mitx.mit.edu/. The question is how do you apply this teaching to MIT students? There are many reasons supporting the need to take the class online instead of sitting in the class. For example, you’re traveling and can’t attend or if you get sick and miss it. Some instructors may say that one professor has a lecture that he wants everyone to see and may schedule that as his lecture that week. You could view the lecture at your leisure before the next class with that professor. MITx courses have assignments, notes and grading are online. Prep work is hardly ever taken seriously from students. Maybe 10 -15% of students will review the pre-assigned work before attending the class but most won’t.

You need to keep in mind the different ways that students learn. Some need to read the information themselves and then once the professor reviews it in class, it makes sense. Everyone grasps things at a different rate. You need to figure out what best suits your learning style. You will be exposed to different approaches. It’s up to you to decide. Some prefer small
classrooms. Others prefer large lecture halls. Some folks want more labs, more hands on. Some feel that labs are something to just get through.

MIT has TEAL, Technology-enabled active learning which is a teaching format that merges lectures, simulations, and hands-on desktop experiments to create a rich collaborative learning experience. By the fall of 2005, TEAL will be used for almost all MIT introductory physics instruction. TEAL classes feature: Collaborative learning, Desktop experiments, Media-rich, and Personal response systems.

The feedback we’ve gotten is that some students are bored with it. There’s nothing to focus on. It was said that “TEAL is like communism for learning”. The group learning experience isn’t for everyone. Some students didn’t like the fact that in their groups, they’ve been the ones to carry the team. If the work is driven by group work, it should be graded by group work and not individual as it is now graded.

Teal isn’t perfect. Whatever the mode, we need better online expert advising. Teal is worth a try. If you don’t like it, drop it. We need to figure out via assessment, what is the best return on the investment with these programs. The good things from these programs can be expanded into really interesting classes. We need to find out what works best and make it the most efficient way for the future.

We’ve seen that the students who think alike are likely to work together on these teams. So the A students tend to work with A students. B students work with B students and everyone else just works together. If you pick your own teams you’ll be happier than if the teams are picked out for you. When they are picked in advance, there’s more of a mix and you’d probably be working with someone you haven’t worked with before. This could cause issues where you don’t know their work style and what they’re capable of. It could cause you to carry the team.

What is the feedback from Piazza.com? Piazza.com is a place where students can come together to ask, answer, and explore under the guidance of their instructor. Some students feel that it makes others lazy in where they don’t have to figure out the answers, they can just post it and get the answers. The idea is to get more students to ask more questions that need to be discussed.

What would you like to see in classrooms?

- Overhead projectors with high res and the ability to write on the screens while demonstrating information being discussed, like transparencies.
- We need full a/v in every room.
- Wiring on boards is old school but you work through problems together and it keeps the interest of everyone especially if you correct errors on the way.
- We need lots of experimentation as to what works best. Pilot studies.