

Reflection: Excellence vs Diversity

The topic of excellence in diversity and the conversation that ensued seemed to be revolving mainly around diversity in the context of an individual's race, gender and background and how that has allowed growth in that individual's own excellence. While all of the points surrounding that were valid and the conversation was very interesting, I felt like they ignored a key part of diversity. That is, I was thinking more about how diversity within a group – say MIT as a whole – fosters excellence for every individual, even if they haven't faced diversity in their own lives. In fact, diversity in my life is definitely responsible for my train of thought regarding this.

I grew up in Oceanside, a city on the coast with an unreal amount of diversity when compared to those neighboring it. My family chose to put me through my closest school, even though its academics were below others, knowing that I could grow in different ways besides academics. I grew up playing club soccer on a Hispanic team, pickup basketball with African-Americans, and football with Samoans. You encounter all kinds of personalities, priorities, and beliefs, and learn how to deal with people whose opinions differ from yours. In a sense, it is similar to the way this class works. Different people with different backgrounds share their thoughts in an effort to expand each others mind. Maybe that's not what some have in mind but that's what I did when I joined.

The article mentioned that diversity limits the meritocracy system, and dilutes the overall quality of each MIT experience. Even ignoring the argument for diversity vs excellence in accepting students, diversity should be thought of as a tool that enhances our understanding of people in this world. And for those who are career-minded, this applies directly to many jobs in our workforce today. If MIT's goal is to prepare us in the best way for what lies beyond graduation I say bring on diversity.

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