Dear Class of 1960,

I am pleased to share with you an update on the Class of 1960 Endowment Fund for Innovation in Education (EFIE). Provost Martin Schmidt announced earlier this fall that Professors David Jerison and Gigliola Staffilani are the recipients of this year’s EFIE award, in support of the math department bringing 18.01 and 18.03 (Calculus and Differential Equations, respectively) to the MiTx platform.

These professors, in conjunction with other faculty and staff members, are working to complete development of online curriculum for 18.01r and 18.03r for internal MIT use, and then convert the MIT-exclusive program to the global MiTx platform. These online programs will be used in combination with traditional classroom lectures, recitations, and problem sets at MIT. Each lecture is paired with online content, which outlines the learning objectives and has multiple-choice concept checks to verify that students understand the theory behind the math.

The online programs also include math problems relevant to each week’s lecture material for students to complete. 18.01r and 18.03r provide what problem sets cannot: immediate feedback. Students are notified whether their answer was correct within a few milliseconds of submitting an answer and are provided with a detailed explanation of the solution. 18.01r and 18.03r are being co-opted by the MiTx system so students around the world can access and benefit from MIT course materials. Professors Jerison and Staffilani hope to have 18.01x completed and ready to release to MiTx in the autumn of 2016.
I am also happy to report that 2012-2014 EFIE Fellow Professor Jesús del Alamo has successfully implemented the iLabs project. iLabs enriches science and engineering education by vastly increasing the scope of experiments that students have access to in the course of their academic careers. Harnessing the Internet, it enables students to use real instruments via remote online laboratories. Unlike conventional laboratories, iLabs can be shared across a university or across the world. You may watch a video of Professor Jesús del Alamo’s explanation of iLabs, as well as a thank you message, on this page: http://youtu.be/vNEUlynsEmw.

The projects led by Professors del Alamo, Jerison, and Staffilani provide MIT students a technologically enhanced experience in their coursework, and enable faculty to monitor students’ understanding of the presented material in real time. By using web-based applications, many students can perform experiments being carried out on lab equipment without needing to visit a physical lab, or they can proceed through math courses at their own pace and reference previously learned concepts at any time.

At the same time, innovations like iLabs and MITx allow scholars around the world to access MIT’s resources via the most advanced technical platforms. The Class of 1960 Endowment Fund for Innovation in Education has made these incredible feats possible.

I trust you will share in the sense of pride with which MIT continues to be forward thinking and innovate in this new realm of online learning. The Class of 1960 Endowment Fund for Innovation in Education has made possible countless experiments, avenues of research and creative solutions for radical concepts. Online learning is clearly today’s great challenge for higher education, and the Institute is grateful for the support of such progressive alumni who would effectively bet on the success of MIT to lead the way in this new arena.

Thank you for your continued generosity and enthusiasm for helping sustain the next big thing at MIT!

All the best,

Beth McGonagle
Director, Donor Relations & Stewardship–MIT Annual Fund