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Dear MIT collaborators,

I am writing to share my thoughts about the proposed unionization of our graduate students. I have read and considered carefully the issues and vision advocated by those supporting graduate student unionization. I respect the viewpoints being offered here. There are valid concerns expressed, and things we can work together to fix. However, I remain sincerely opposed to having a graduate student union and am writing to express my perspective in this letter.

The most basic reason I am opposed to unionization of our graduate students is simple: in all our best work we are *collaborators* working together to expand the limits of knowledge into new territory, and to contribute to solving many important problems. This creation of new understanding is very challenging, but is something that MIT already does incredibly well. I assert that on the whole, MIT is one of the best places for this on the planet. Let's expand the circle to identify things that need fixing and find innovative ways to make MIT work better for all of us. Let's engage in this together.

My reason for sincere concern is that I see a graduate student union as a mechanism for *opposition* between students and MIT. If we are opponents, then how do we continue to be full-on collaborators? Who can regulate or require, specify or delimit the energetic engagement and passion we bring to this community? I am certain that a union organization such as the UE cannot possibly understand how we really work together, nor contribute to our pursuit of excellence in so many areas. Blunt tools such as one-way demands or threats of strikes will not enable our mutual progress.

We have the privilege to work together in an incredible and exciting learning community, enabled by the flow of insights and efforts among all the team members. Our creativity and excellence flow from these collaborative resonances. I am very concerned that adding layers of rules and requirements and prohibitions associated with a union will attenuate these resonances and threaten our mutual engagement with excellence, leading to a diminished MIT for all of us.

A bit of perspective so you understand where I'm coming from: I have all three of my degrees from MIT in Course 6, so I know this place well from the perspectives of undergraduate life (alas, too long ago!), and from the perspective of life as a graduate student. I care deeply about our students and want to have MIT be an excellent experience that challenges and stretches abilities for all of us. I am writing to make my contribution to this upcoming important decision.

I urge all graduate students to carefully read about and understand the issues and viewpoints being presented on unionization, and to think carefully about how a graduate student union might contribute to or detract from our learning community. Then be sure to vote in the upcoming April 4—5 election so that your view is counted.

Sincerely,

David L. Trumper
Professor of Mechanical Engineering