Dear Ray,

I don't know what to make of this data. First of all, the "Enrollment by Term" numbers don't tell whether the students listed had taken other RA courses. It appears to be raw enrollments, and the issue of whether the course served as the only RA course is missing. The data is certainly wrong for MA/CS 15. In Fall 08, I had 15 students in this (cross-listed) class. Nearly all had taken some other RA course previously.

So we certainly can't infer from this data that 169 students used MA-005 for RA last academic year, or that 147 used it for RA in 07-08. I suspect the numbers are much lower, but we don't have that information.

We also don't have information on available seats in RA classes. This semester there are about 30 seats in CS 5, 25 seats in MA 4, and 15 seats in MA 9. These three classes alone would absorb most or all of the need for a semester's worth of RA seats, and this does not even account for seats in CS 10, MA 15, MA 160, or any PHI courses. So my best read on the data is that there is capacity in other courses to serve the needs for RA.

I'd also like to make the point that the main issue to me is whether the course teaches abstract reasoning. I'd like to think that this is the main issue to the GE committee as well. These numbers are irrelevant to that judgment. If the committee agrees with the Math/CS department's conclusion that MA 5 does not teach RA well, then it is very alarming that a large group of graduates are taking this course as their only exposure to RA. I would have a hard time accepting a decision (based on expedience) to retain a policy that we agree is educationally ineffective.

Regards,
-d