

REX drastically shortened *Frosh may need to learn about dorms during CPW*

By Pearle Lipinski
FEATURES EDITOR

Dozens of undergraduates comprised a passionate audience at yesterday evening's emergency UA meeting, called in response to the proposed shortening of Orientation by the Office of Undergraduate Advising and Academic Programming. Elizabeth C. Young and Julie B. Norman, associate dean and director, respectively, of the UAAP, discussed the planned changes to Orientation, including the re-scheduling of Advanced Standing Exams (ASEs) and the extension of Freshman Pre-Orientation Programs (FPOPs), but most discussion centered around the proposed reduction of Residence Exploration (REX) from three days to one.

Almost all questions fielded by the audience came from residents of East Campus and Senior House, with few other living groups asking questions or making their presence known.

Currently, the time for Orientation and REX spans seven days, from when freshmen are required to be on campus Saturday evening to the start of the Greek Griller (which kicks off FSILG rush) the following Saturday. The biggest proposed change to Orientation



SAM RANGE—THE TECH

Julie B. Norman, director of the Office of Undergraduate Advising and Academic Programming and Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, speaks at an emergency meeting of the Undergraduate Association yesterday night. The UA meeting was called to field questions about the planned shortening of REX from three days to one.

delays the official start of events by two days, not requiring freshmen to arrive until Monday afternoon. Freshmen would still have to submit their housing re-adjustment lottery choices by Tuesday evening; thus, REX would be approximately 24-30 hours long instead of the traditional three days. Convocation would kick off the official start of Orientation on Tuesday morning.

Freshman pre-orientation

programs and ASEs are also subject to proposed changes. FPOPs, which currently run from 2-5 days before Orientation begins, would run 4 or 5 days under the proposed plan, with the longer FPOPs concluding on Monday morning, instead of before the weekend. According to Norman, this change would simplify many of the logistical issues stemming

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Bad Ideas weekend *Eating contests, frosh dog sledding draw students from across campus*

By Robert McQueen
NEWS EDITOR

Frosting eating contest; human dogsledding; 10⁴ cookies; the Green Building Challenge; the 7-11 Challenge. At East Campus this weekend, it was all about bad ideas.

Students from all dorms flocked to East Campus to compete and participate in over 20 events for the Bad Ideas Competition, held every IAP. Champions were crowned for feats that seem ridiculous — to the normal world.

Running up the Green Building is a bad idea. Cameron S. McAlpine '13

INSIDE
Bad Ideas photos and competition winners, p.10

did it anyway — 40 times, that is. And he still had varsity lightweight crew practice the following morning. Spelling out python programs in your head is also a bad idea, but not to Benjamin E. Barenblat '13. Barenblat outspelled his competitors when he enunciated a program to verify parenthesis matching, winning the Nth Annual Python Bee — and taking home a new Kindle.

Taco Bell is unhealthy. A Taco Bell

eating contest is even more unhealthy. Elliot Avila '14 thought differently, consuming 10 tacos and a KFC Double Down to take 1st place. He later ran in the Human Dogsledding Race.

Baking 10 batches of cookies might be a bad idea. But thinking exponentially and baking 10⁴ cookies is an even worse idea. Nevertheless, students defied all odds and baked 10⁴ snickerdoodles in under 12 hours — that's about 0.23 cookie per second. There were still leftovers as of 8 p.m. Tuesday.

Putting frosting on cakes is a good idea. Eating frosting as a meal is a bad idea. Victoria M. Enjamio '14 did the latter, snagging a victory at the Frosting Eating Contest.

When it snows outside, you go sledding on a hill. At Bad Ideas, you build a 20-foot-high ramp, pack it with snow, and call it a "homemade sledding hill."

Other schemes featured at Bad Ideas included a live-action first-person shooter, an over-9000 watt halogen array, a solar furnace, and a TurBacon Epic — five kinds of poultry stuffed in a pig, wrapped in bacon, and served with a Dr. Pepper butter glaze, garnished with Wendy's Baconators.

Railroad may see commuter traffic by 2012

Simmons residents may need to get used to a lot more train whistles come 2012. Last year, Massachusetts purchased the railroad tracks between Albany and Vassar Streets and has proposed to the Cambridge City Council that it be used as part

of a commuter rail linking Boston's North Station and Worcester. That may mean as many as twenty trains will run along the north edge of MIT's campus every day, potentially as early as next year.

The tracks, known as the Grand Junction Rail line, pass under the Boston University Bridge, run directly adjacent to Simmons Hall, cross over Massachusetts Avenue, and pass under Building 46 (Brain and Cognitive Sciences), after which they cross

Main Street. The Commonwealth is looking to spend a few million dollars upgrading the Grand Junction tracks to support a commuter rail line that would provide service between North Station and Worcester. That service would send between five and twenty trains through Cambridge every day, according to an October 2010 article in the *Cambridge Chronicle*.

In response, Cambridge City Council passed a resolution on September 13 condemning the

state's decision-making process: "At no point has the Patrick-Murray Administration included the City of Cambridge in the conversation of expanding rail service through the city," said the Council. The Council further expressed that it would oppose "additional rail traffic through Cambridge that could have a negative impact on our residents and community."

About the impact of com-

Railroad, Page 13

IS&T begins ID card-based printing plan

MIT IDs required to print in several Athena clusters

By Robert McQueen
NEWS EDITOR

Printing out a pset? Make sure you have your MIT ID on hand. On Friday, IS&T changed over several pilot printers to the Pharos "hold-and-release" system, which requires students to swipe their card to complete the print job. Pharos will be the future of printing at MIT.

Last Friday, CopyTech installed Pharos in printers python (W20-575), savion and bias (12-182), and nysa (56-129). According to Oliver Thomas '94, a manager at IS&T and sponsor of the Pharos project, IS&T is planning for this summer to be the big transition to Pharos for all public Athena printers.

"The pilot locations have been chosen to both be convenient, but to also have traditional Athena printers close by," Thomas said.

In addition to transitioning to Pharos, IS&T also plans to equip Athena clusters with public scanners. Thomas said that they plan to deploy the first public pilot scanner in W20-575 by early February.

Pharos will be rolled out in phases in order to allow time to debug any issues that might arise. "There are bound to be quirks in Phar-

Printing, Page 14

IN SHORT

The Koch Cafe opened in Building 76 on Monday. It will be open from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays. It replaces the Bio Cafe in Building 68.

PE Registration opens today at 8 a.m. Go to <http://mitpe.com> to register for PE classes.

Borrow Direct, a service that allows students to borrow from all Ivy League libraries, will soon be available at MIT. Borrow Direct is a delivery system that sends books between participating libraries within several business days.

Registration Day is Monday the 31st. Don't forget to meet with your advisor!

Battlecode's final tournament is this Saturday, 7-9 p.m. in Kresge.

Send news information and tips to news@tech.mit.edu.

Phoenix rises from Ashdown at Maseeh Hall



GREG STEINBRECHER—THE TECH

Hackers installed a red backlight and the shadow of a phoenix behind the clock adorning Maseeh Hall's west tower. This fall, the Phoenix Group will help populate Maseeh Hall. Barely visible in daylight, the hack was obvious after sunset on Sunday evening.

OUR GOVERNMENT NEEDS WORK

A broken education system exemplifies the pervasive inefficiencies in the U.S. government. **OPINION, p. 4**

EFFECTIVENESS ≠ EXPERIENCE

The teacher tenure process needs serious revamping. **OPINION, p. 5**

INDEXING GONE WRONG

Why MATLAB might have some problems at the bar. **FUN, p. 6**



CREEPY YET ENTICING

Natalie Portman faces her inner demons in Darren Aronofsky's latest mind bender. Did she deserve a Golden Globe for *Black Swan*? **ARTS, p. 8**

ECONOMY HARDWARE?

The hardware store has closed for renovations, but it will be back, along with a new neighbor. **NEWS, p. 11**

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Linking attack to Caucasus, Russia faces old problem

MOSCOW — A day after an airport suicide bombing that investigators suspect was organized by Islamic militants, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin on Tuesday vowed retribution. President Dmitry A. Medvedev lashed out at low-ranking subordinates at the airport for failing to stop the attack, and a number of initiatives were announced to prevent future terrorist acts.

Even so, the government seemed to be facing a bleak calculus.

None of its strategies for stamping out the long-running insurgency in southern Russia — neither the harsh measures favored by some in the security services nor the social programs and infrastructure projects supported by many policy experts — have yielded much success.

—Clifford J. Levy and Ellen Barry, *The New York Times*

1998 U.S. Embassy bomber receives a life sentence

NEW YORK — Ahmed Khalifan Ghailani, the first former detainee at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to be tried in the civilian court system, was sentenced to life in prison Tuesday for his role in the 1998 bombings of two U.S. embassies in East Africa.

The nearly simultaneous attacks in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, killed 224 people and wounded thousands.

The defense had asked the judge for a lesser sentence, citing the extraordinary circumstances of Ghailani's case, like the years he spent in detention in a so-called black site run by the CIA, where his lawyers say he was tortured.

But the judge, Lewis Kaplan of U.S. District Court in Manhattan, said that no matter how Ghailani was treated while in detention, "the impact on him pales in comparison to the suffering and the horror that he and his confederates caused.

"It was a cold-blooded killing and maiming of innocent people on an enormous scale," Kaplan said. "The very purpose of the crime was to create terror by causing death and destruction."

—Benjamin Weiser, *The New York Times*

Across Egypt, protests direct fury at President Mubarak

CAIRO — Thousands of people demanding an end to the 30-year rule of President Hosni Mubarak filled the streets of several Egyptian cities Tuesday, in an unusually large and sometimes violent burst of civil unrest that appeared to threaten the stability of a crucial Arab ally of the United States.

The protests, at least partly inspired by the toppling of the authoritarian government in Tunisia, began small but grew all day, with protesters occupying one of Cairo's central squares. Security forces, which normally prevent major public displays of dissent, initially struggled to suppress the demonstrations, allowing them to swell.

But early Wednesday morning, firing rubber bullets, tear gas and concussion grenades, the police finally drove groups of demonstrators from the square, as the sit-in was transformed into a spreading battle involving thousands of people and little restraint. Plainclothes officers beat several demonstrators, and protesters flipped over a police car and set it on fire.

Protests also flared in Alexandria, Suez, Mansura and Beni Suef. There were reports of three deaths and many injuries.

Photographers in Alexandria caught people tearing up a large portrait of Mubarak. A video posted on the Internet of demonstrations in Mahalla el-Kubra showed the same, while a crowd snapped cell phone photos and cheered. The acts — rare, and bold here — underscored the anger coursing through the protests and the challenge they might pose to the aging and ailing Egyptian leader.

—Kareem Fahim and Mona el-Naggar, *The New York Times*

Obama proposes national effort to 'win the future'

By Sheryl Gay Stolberg
THE NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama called Tuesday night for Americans to unleash their creative spirits, set aside their partisan differences and come together around a common goal of out-competing other nations in a rapidly shifting global economy.

In a State of the Union address to a newly divided Congress, Obama outlined what his advisers called his "plan to win the future" — a blueprint for spending in key areas like education, high-speed rail, clean energy technology and high-speed Internet. At the same time, he proposed deficit-cutting measures, including a five-year freeze in spending on some domestic programs.

His message seemed intended to elevate his presidency above the legislative gamesmanship that defined the first two years of his term. With one eye toward his 2012 re-election campaign, he made the case that the nation has at long last emerged from economic darkness, and he sought to reposition him-

self as the post-partisan, pragmatic leader who strode to victory in 2008. The White House released the text of the speech before its delivery.

"At stake right now is not who wins the next election — after all, we just had an election," Obama said in the advance copy of the text. "At stake is whether new jobs and industries take root in this country or somewhere else. It's whether the hard work and industry of our people is rewarded. It's whether we sustain the leadership that has made America not just a place on a map, but a light to the world."

He did not address gun control, a hotly debated topic in the wake of the recent shooting in Tucson, Ariz., that left six people dead and 19 injured, including Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, D-Ariz., who suffered a grave gunshot wound to the head. Giffords' colleagues planned to hold a seat open for her in the House chamber; many are expected to wear black and white ribbons in her honor.

He did not lay out a specific plan for addressing the long-term costs of Social Security and Medicare,

the biggest fiscal challenges facing the government. He addressed immigration only in general terms. And he talked only briefly about the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Instead, Obama used his address to sketch out the philosophical framework that will govern the remaining two years of his first term in office, as well as his re-election campaign — and to draw a contrast between himself and Republicans, who are advocating deep and immediate cuts in federal spending.

Obama made the case for a leaner but still active government that can play a vital role in creating the conditions for Americans to succeed in an increasingly competitive economy. With nations like China and India on the rise, he argued, America has no choice but to "out-innovate, out-educate and out-build the rest of the world."

"We have to make America the best place on Earth to do business," Obama said. "We need to take responsibility for our deficit, and reform our government. That's how our people will prosper. That's how we'll win the future."

Financial meltdown was 'avoidable,' inquiry concludes

By Sewell Chan
THE NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON — The 2008 financial crisis was an "avoidable" disaster caused by widespread failures in government regulation, corporate mismanagement and heedless risk-taking by Wall Street, according to the conclusions of a federal inquiry.

The government commission that investigated the financial crisis casts a wide net of blame, faulting two administrations, the Federal Reserve and other regulators for permitting a calamitous concoction: shoddy mortgage lending, the excessive packaging and sale of loans to investors, and risky bets on securities backed by the loans.

"The greatest tragedy would be to accept the refrain that no one could have seen this coming and thus nothing could have been done," the panel wrote in the report's conclusions, which were examined by *The*

New York Times. "If we accept this notion, it will happen again."

While the panel, the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission, accuses several financial institutions of greed, ineptitude or both, some of its gravest conclusions concern government failings, with embarrassing implications for both political parties. But the panel was itself divided along partisan lines, which could blunt its impact.

Many of the conclusions have been widely described, but its synthesis of interviews, documents and testimony, along with its government imprimatur, give the report — to be released as a 576-page book on Thursday — a conclusive sweep and authority.

When the bipartisan commission was set up in May of 2009, the intent of Congress and President Barack Obama was to produce a comprehensive examination of the crisis's causes.

The commission conducted 19 days of hearings and interviews with more than 700 witnesses; it has pledged to release a trove of transcripts and other raw material.

Of the 10 commission members, only the six appointed by Democrats endorsed the final report. Three Republican members have prepared a dissent focusing on a narrower set of causes; a fourth Republican, Peter Wallison, a former Treasury official and White House counsel to President Ronald Reagan, has written a dissent, calling government policies to promote homeownership the primary culprit. The panel was hobbled repeatedly by internal divisions.

The majority report finds fault with two Fed chairmen: Alan Greenspan, a skeptic of regulation who led the central bank as the housing bubble expanded, and Ben S. Bernanke PhD '79, who did not foresee the crisis but then played a crucial role in the response.

WEATHER

More snow on the way

By Vince Agard
STAFF METEOROLOGIST

Another nor'easter is headed toward the Boston area, and it will bring more snowfall to the region tonight and tomorrow morning. However, as of Tuesday there was still a considerable amount of uncertainty as to the severity of the storm's impact. The storm, which was centered over the Gulf of Mexico yesterday, will be tracking northeastward along the Atlantic coast of the United States throughout the day today. The exact track that the storm takes will dictate the amount of snow that we re-

ceive, since sharp precipitation gradients mean that a slight deviation in track direction can translate into a large difference in snowfall totals.

Currently, the most likely outcome of tonight's storm will be a total accumulation of 3-6 inches of snow. However, there is a potential for significantly higher accumulations of up to a foot (12 inches) if the storm track is closer to the coastline. In either case, snow could be heavy at times, so take extra care if you are planning to travel tonight or tomorrow. A Winter Storm Warning goes into effect at 4 p.m. today and will continue until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Extended Forecast

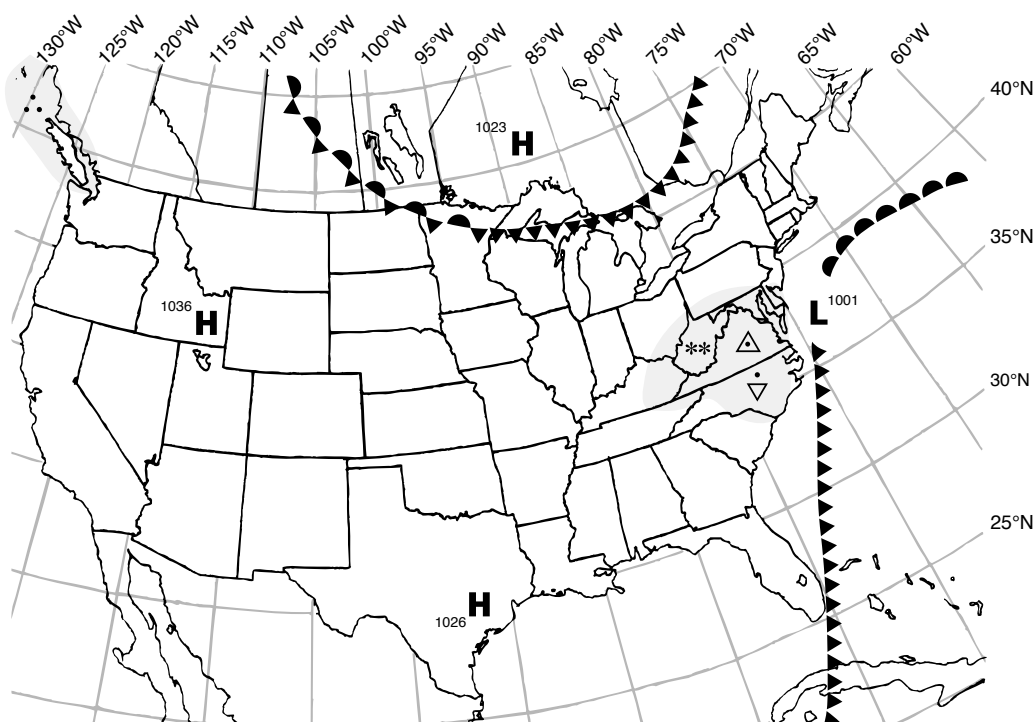
Today: Cloudy, high 33°F (1°C). Winds NW at 5-7 mph, becoming NE.

Tonight: Snow, becoming heavy at times. Low 26°F (-3°C). Winds N at 14-18 mph, possibly gusting 20 mph.

Tomorrow: Snow tapering off in the morning, then partly sunny. High 33°F (1°C). Winds NW at 13-17 mph.

Friday: Mostly sunny, highs in the high 20s °F (-3°C).

Saturday: More snow possible, highs in mid 30s°F (1°C).



Situation for Noon Eastern Time, Wednesday, January 26, 2011

Weather Systems		Weather Fronts		Precipitation Symbols		Other Symbols	
H	High Pressure	- - -	Trough	Snow	Rain	~	Freezing Rain
L	Low Pressure	—●—●—●—	Warm Front	Shows	▽	△	Sleet
§	Hurricane	—▲—▲—▲—	Cold Front	Light	*	∞	Haze
		—▲—▲—▲—	Stationary Front	Moderate	**		
		—▲—▲—▲—		Heavy	**		

Compiled by MIT Meteorology Staff and *The Tech*

King's Speech leads Oscar pack

By Michael Cieply
and Brooks Barnes

THE NEW YORK TIMES

LOS ANGELES — The Oscar race turned into a wild scramble Tuesday morning as *The King's Speech* moved out front when nominations for the 83rd Academy Awards were announced. *True Grit* surged into second position, and *The Social Network*, which had seemed a front-runner, was matched by *Inception*, followed closely by *The Fighter*.

The King's Speech, about friendship and speech therapy, got 12 nods, including ones for best picture, best director (Tom Hooper) and best actor (Colin Firth as a stammering King George VI). It won top honors from

the Producers Guild over the weekend and emerged as the leader in an unusually competitive pack of contenders for the best picture Oscar.

In the morning's biggest surprise, *True Grit*, a western remake from the filmmakers Joel and Ethan Coen, was second, with 10 nominations, including ones for best picture and best director (the Coens), and a best actor nod for Jeff Bridges, who won the award last year for *Crazy Heart*.

"Ten seems like an awful lot," the Coens said in a statement. "We don't want to take anyone else's."

True Grit has been an audience favorite since its release in late December but had barely registered in the panoply of pre-Oscar awards and received no nominations for the

Golden Globes.

By contrast, *The Social Network*, an unauthorized look at Mark Zuckerberg, a founder of Facebook, dominated the early awards, but received fewer Oscar nominations than its rivals, partly because it was not a contender in categories like costume and supporting actress. (T-shirts are featured but not women.) In total, *The Social Network* got eight nominations, including one for best picture; David Fincher was nominated for his directing, Aaron Sorkin for the script and Jesse Eisenberg (best actor) for his role as Zuckerberg.

Inception, a twisted tale of layered dreams, also received eight nominations, including one for best picture, but not one for best director.

FDA and dairy industry spar over testing of milk

Each year, federal inspectors find illegal levels of antibiotics in hundreds of older dairy cows bound for the slaughterhouse. Concerned that those antibiotics might also be contaminating the milk Americans drink, the Food and Drug Administration intended to begin tests this month on the milk from farms that had repeatedly sold cows tainted by drug residue.

But the testing plan met with fierce protest from the dairy industry, which said that it could force farmers to needlessly dump millions of gallons of milk while they waited for test results. Industry officials and state regulators said the testing program was poorly conceived and could lead to costly recalls.

In response, the FDA postponed the testing, and now the two sides are sparring over how much danger the antibiotics pose and the best way to ensure that the drugs do not end up in the nation's milk supply.

"What has been served up, up to this point, by Food and Drug has been potentially very damaging to innocent dairy farmers," said John J. Wilson, a senior vice president for Dairy Farmers of America, the nation's largest dairy cooperative. He said that that the nation's milk was safe and that there was little reason to think that the slaughterhouse findings would be replicated in tests of the milk supply.

—William Neuman, *The New York Times*

NRA clout hurts firearms research

By Michael Luo

THE NEW YORK TIMES

In the wake of the shootings in Tucson, Ariz., the familiar questions inevitably resurfaced: Are communities where more people carry guns safer or less safe? Does the availability of high-capacity magazines increase deaths? Do more rigorous background checks make a difference?

The reality is that even these and other basic questions cannot be fully answered, because not enough research has been done. And there is a reason for that: Scientists in the field and former officials with the government agency that used to finance the great bulk of this research agree in saying that the influence of the National Rifle Association has all but choked off money for such work.

"We've been stopped from answering the basic questions," said

Mark Rosenberg, former director of the National Center for Injury Control and Prevention, part of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which was for about a decade the leading source of financing for firearms research.

Chris Cox, the NRA's chief lobbyist, said his group had not tried to squelch genuine scientific inquiries, just politically slanted ones.

"Our concern is not with legitimate medical science," Cox said. "Our concern is they were promoting the idea that gun ownership was a disease that needed to be eradicated."

The amount of money available today for studying the impact of firearms is a fraction of what it was in the mid-1990s, and the number of scientists toiling in the field has dwindled to a handful as a result, according to researchers.

The dearth of money can be

traced in large measure to a clash between public health scientists and the NRA in the mid-1990s. At the time, Rosenberg and others at the CDC were becoming increasingly assertive about the importance of studying gun-related injuries and deaths as a public health phenomenon, financing studies that found, for example, having a gun in the house, rather than conferring protection, significantly increased the risk of homicide by a family member or intimate acquaintance.

Alarmed, the NRA and its allies on Capitol Hill fought back. The injury center was guilty of "putting out papers that were really political opinion masquerading as medical science," said Cox, who also worked on this issue for the NRA more than a decade ago.

In 1996, Rep. Jay Dickey, R-Ark., stripped \$2.6 million from the disease control centers' budget.

High court orders Emanuel's name back on ballot — for now

CHICAGO — The Illinois Supreme Court puffed life back into Rahm Emanuel's mayoral campaign Tuesday when it restored his name to the city's ballots, at least for now, and agreed to decide whether he should be allowed to run for mayor.

The decisions arrived at a dizzying pace, only a day after a panel of the Illinois Appellate Court had ordered Emanuel's name stricken from the ballot, saying his time in Washington as White House chief of staff meant he failed to meet a requirement of residing in Chicago for a year before the Feb. 22 election.

The Supreme Court's orders were seen as a positive sign for Emanuel (the court could have chosen to skip the case altogether), but the justices still have to consider the merits of the case itself.

The Supreme Court will study briefs already submitted to the lower court, rather than wait for new ones, and will entertain no oral arguments. It is uncertain how quickly a decision will emerge, but deadlines are looming; early voting, for instance, begins Monday. City elections officials, too, found themselves trapped in the tangle of the legal fight. With absentee ballots due to be mailed out as early as Friday, officials had begun printing ballots — without Emanuel's name, per the appellate court's Monday ruling — at 7 a.m. Tuesday.

—Monica Davey and John Schwartz, *The New York Times*

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Community should respond to Yost

To watch Mr. Yost's columns go from cheerleading the GOP abasement to its Tea Party and Constitution Party factions (October 12, 2010), naively hoping that the party would follow through on some — or any — of the tough and often painful actions demanded by the new popular hardline ideology (take your pick, but let's use November 19, 2010), then bemoaning the predicament in which the party finds itself (January 12, 2011) mere days after the new House has been sworn in warms the

cockles of my heart. It has been a far more enjoyable read than the columnists in the Wall Street Journal.

In brief, Yost grumbles that of the party's three rising stars, the Tea Party has declared two not socially conservative enough (as is Mitt Romney) and the other is so wrapped in reactionary rhetoric that he wouldn't appeal to anyone but his own base (as would Mike Huckabee). Palin is begrudgingly mentioned in passing. Left unsaid is that the Tea Party has kept her star burning brightly at the forefront of national politics, and now both star and rabble are more interested in the sound of their own voices than electioneering,

much less governing.

Universities usually serve for the most unbridled of ideologies to be heard and debated by peers. I applaud Mr. Yost and The Tech for providing the former, and regret that the MIT community can't provide the latter. It may have made him think he's right.

Therefore I suggest that Mr. Yost apply the other great lesson we get from college: The morning after a bender, tea-fueled or otherwise, grab your pants, offer it breakfast, and change your number.

Brian Loux '04

Editor's Note: Brian Loux is a former Editor in Chief of The Tech.

Can we make government more efficient?

The U.S. government is unique in its inefficiency in providing services

By Keith Yost
STAFF COLUMNIST

As the U.S. Congress (belatedly) hammers out this year's federal budget, our politicians and pundits have focused their attention on three questions. First, how important are the activities that government performs relative to the private enterprise that it supplants? Second, how redistributionary should our system of taxes and spending be, both in terms of how much we take from the rich to give to the poor, as well as how much we take from future generations to give to the present? And finally, which presents the greater risk: a failure to provide Keynesian stimulus today, or a potential debt crisis tomorrow?

These are crucial questions, and I don't mean to take away from their importance, but there is a sort of futility to them. At their heart, these questions frame the debate as one of making a choice among a frontier of possibilities, as one of making trade-offs between risks, costs, and benefits in which each new cut or tax produces winners and losers, but seemingly no reform could make us all better off.

For some programs, such as Social Security, this zero-sum framing may well ring true (and it is for that reason why fixing our entitlements programs has been so notoriously difficult). But applying this paradigm to discretionary spending seems premature. Before we retreat to our partisan parapets and pretend (as the left does) that all government spending is sacrosanct or imagine (as the right does) that huge pools of unadulterated waste exist in our system, it is worth investigating: can we expand the frontier of possibilities? Are so-called "Pareto" improvements possible? And why is our government so inefficient at supplying the services that we as a society want?

Nowhere is the government's dysfunction more apparent than in public education. Per pupil, adjusted for purchasing

power parity, Poland has spent less than a third of what the U.S. has in secondary education, and yet has outperformed the U.S. in nearly every secondary education test in the past decade. They're not alone; almost every Eastern European country can make the same claim. Can this really be the result of cultural differences or some twisted sort of American exceptionalism? Are Slovak students really smarter, Polish children more diligent, or Hungarians better at parenting than we are? Surely not.

The more likely explanation is that contrary to other educational systems, we fail to fire bad teachers or use merit pay to attract and retain good ones. A mounting body of evidence (Gordon, Kane, and Staiger 2006; Hanushek 2009; Goldhaber and Hansen 2010) indicates that if public

failure is not limited to unionized work forces. Across all of our governmental programs, the personnel management is the same: government workers get their jobs by earning the diplomas or certificates that we pretend separate the productive workers from the unproductive, and then are promoted almost solely on the basis of how many years they fill a chair, not how well they do their jobs. It doesn't matter if the workers belong to a public service employees union or not: our military has been bleeding away its finest officers for years. If you ask the departing officers why they're leaving, they consistently blame the sclerotic military bureaucracy that mints generals on the basis of seniority, assigns personnel in a manner that is blind to skill sets and preferences, and encourages conformity over entrepreneurship.

The free market often does no better: as most who have worked in corporate bureaucracy can attest to, the private sector has the potential to be just as inefficient as any public administration. Today's Great Recession ended the jobs of roughly one in ten workers in the private sector while output hardly budged at all. The implication is that before the crisis, one in ten workers sat in their cubicles watching YouTube all day, and it was only the threat of collapse that pushed companies to release their deadweight. Still, unlike government offices, if businesses persistently fail to fire their worst and reward their best, they'll go bankrupt and be replaced by those with better workforce management. There is no invisible hand to hold the Department of Education's feet to the fire: we must rely on our representatives to do that task for us.

Unfortunately, our leaders have long been delinquent in their duties. Rather than tackling the hard problem of squeezing more out of its workers, government has simply raised the compensation of its employees across the board in a crude ef-

Govt. reform, Page 5

CORRECTIONS

An article published on Jan. 19 about a 37 percent increase in Finboard allocations incorrectly attributed the increase solely to a higher over-allocation percentage. Between the Summer/Fall 2010 Finboard cycle and the IAP/Spring 2011 Finboard cycle, available funds increased by 20 percent from \$100,628 to

\$121,170. The remainder of the total allocation increase is due to the over-allocation percentage, which was raised from 10 percent to 30 percent.

An In Short item published last week incorrectly claimed that Wednesday, Jan. 19 was National Penguin Awareness Day. It was National Popcorn Day. National Penguin Awareness Day was Thursday, Jan. 20.

OPINION POLICY

Editorials are the official opinion of *The Tech*. They are written by the editorial board, which consists of Chairman Steve Howland, Editor in Chief Jeff Guo, Managing Editor David M. Templeton, Executive Editor Natasha Plotkin, Opinion Editors Joseph Maurer and Ethan Solomon, Advisory Board member Andrew T. Lukmann, and Opinion Staff members Nina Sinatra and Ryan Normandin.

Dissents are the signed opinions of editorial board members choosing to publish their disagreement with the editorial.

Letters to the editor, columns, and editorial cartoons are written by individuals and represent the opinion of the author, not necessarily that of the newspaper. Electronic submissions are encouraged and should be sent to letters@tech.mit.edu. Hard copy submissions should be addressed to The Tech, P.O. Box 397029, Cambridge, Mass. 02139-7029, or sent by interdepartmental mail to Room W20-483. All submissions are due by 4:30 p.m. two days before the date of publication.

Letters, columns, and cartoons must bear the authors' signatures, addresses, and phone numbers. Unsigned letters will

not be accepted. *The Tech* reserves the right to edit or condense letters; shorter letters will be given higher priority. Once submitted, all letters become property of *The Tech*, and will not be returned. Letters, columns, and cartoons may also be posted on *The Tech's* Web site and/or printed or published in any other format or medium now known or later that becomes known. *The Tech* makes no commitment to publish all the letters received.

Guest columns are opinion articles submitted by members of the MIT or local community.

TO REACH US

The Tech's telephone number is (617) 253-1541. E-mail is the easiest way to reach any member of our staff. If you are unsure whom to contact, send mail to general@tech.mit.edu, and it will be directed to the appropriate person. You can reach the editor in chief by e-mailing eic@tech.mit.edu. Please send press releases, requests for coverage, and information about errors that call for correction to news@tech.mit.edu. Letters to the editor should be sent to letters@tech.mit.edu. The Tech can be found on the World Wide Web at <http://tech.mit.edu>.



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Bad Ideas draws students to competitions, food

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Green Building Challenge	Team: Varsity Lightweight Men's Crew Individual: Cameron S. McAlpine '13
Taco Bell Eating Contest	Eliot Avila '14
Human Dogsledding	1st place: Team Teach for Spark from ESP 2nd place: Team Beef Erection from 2nd East



GREG STEINBRECHER—THE TECH

A banner announcing Bad Ideas appeared in Lobby 7 Saturday morning. The annual IAP competition celebrates unwise and misguided plans and contraptions.



PHOTO BY ROBIN DEITS

Team Krotus competes in the annual East Campus Freshmen Dogsled Race.



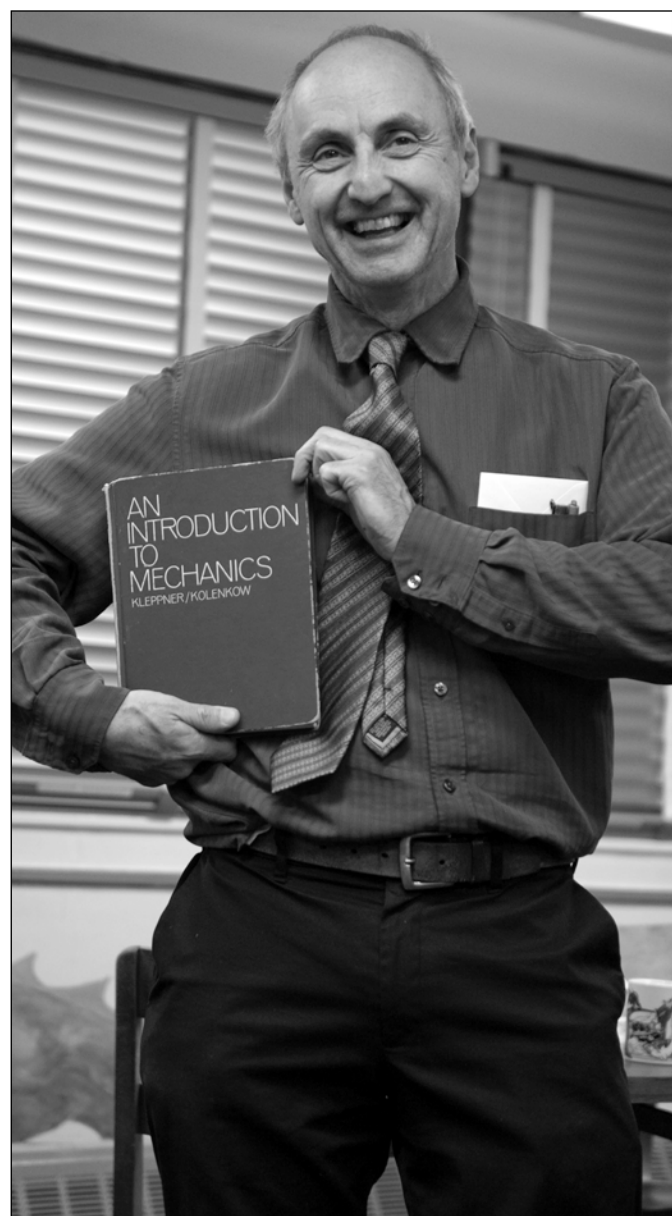
ARTHUR PETRON—THE TECH

As part of Bad Ideas weekend, students in East Campus baked 10,000 cookies.



JOHN A. HAWKINSON—THE TECH

The Security and Emergency Management Office conducted a drill Thursday on the 4th floor of W20 with members of MIT's Campus Community Emergency Response Team. In the simulated drill, an explosion took place in the Educational Studies Program office, and two student actors were injured.



OMARI STEPHENS—THE TECH

Peter Dourmashkin, outgoing lecturer and an associate director of the Experimental Study Group, poses with the textbook he used while teaching 8.012 at ESG. After a 28-year tenure with ESG, Dourmashkin, who was also one of the principal investigators of the TEAL program, will continue to work in Physics Department. The ESG community held an appreciation party for Dourmashkin on Tuesday, Jan. 11.

Economy Hardware will remodel, CCTV moves in

CCTV will take over some space in Central's True Value Economy Hardware this summer

By Stan Gill
STAFF REPORTER

Economy Hardware, a store frequented by members of the MIT community, closed its doors earlier this winter to undergo renovations. Economy Hardware owner Larry Friedman confirmed that the store will reopen sometime in mid-spring at a reduced capacity, sharing the space with Cambridge Community Television. CCTV has also signed a lease with the MIT Investment Management Company on the space formerly occupied by Economy at 438 Massachusetts Ave.

According to Friedman, the decision to reduce their space was not a result of Economy filing for bankruptcy protection earlier this year.

"The space was bigger than we needed, expensive, and just didn't flow very well," Friedman said. "We're going to use this as a chance to retool ourselves, to provide a similar product at a little less than what we had. We're going to keep a focus on unfinished furniture with some hardware."

He says the act of filing allowed them to take a step back from the

business and look at what they could do to streamline it.

"My family has been in this business in Cambridge for the last 100 years, and we intend to stay."

According to Patrick D. Rowe '07, MITIMCo senior investment officer in real estate, the renovations are mainly to bring the building up to date and meet CCTV's needs. CCTV was outgrowing their current space on Prospect Street and was facing a 60 percent rent increase when MIT approached them about the space a year and a half ago, said CCTV Executive Director Susan Fleischmann. They plan on building a new 21st-century multimedia center for the Cambridge community, complete with a computer lab, studio space, and a dedicated space for their teen programs.

"We're extremely excited to come closer to the MIT community and look forward to interacting with the students, faculty, staff, and other community members in the area by moving into our new space," Fleischmann said.

CCTV is set to complete these renovations and move into the new space this summer.

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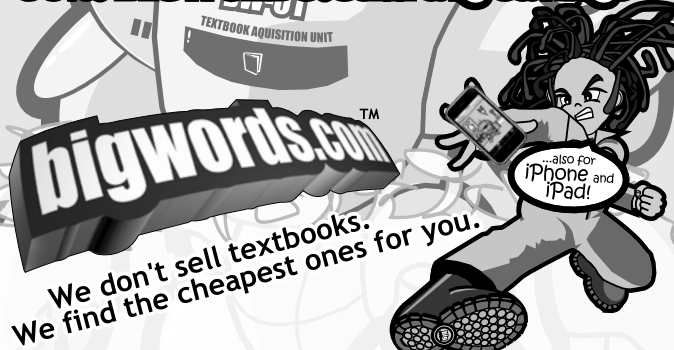
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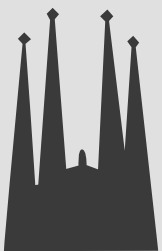
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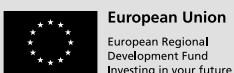
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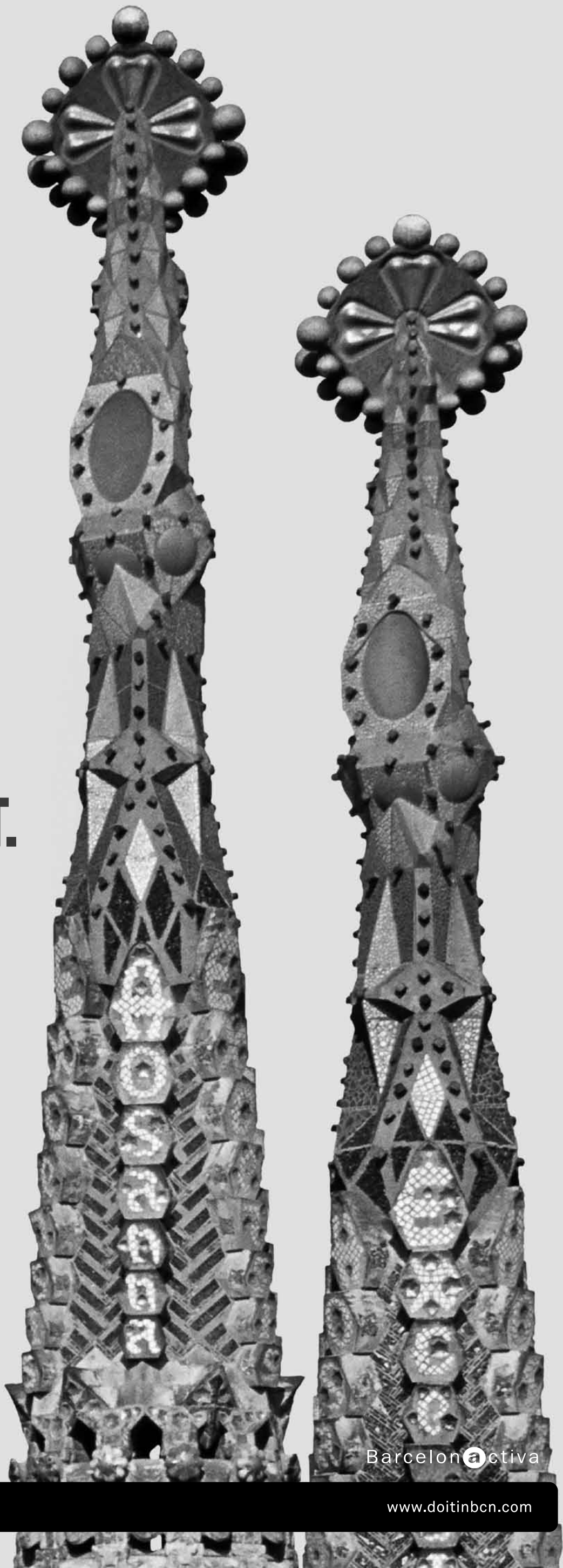


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Emergency UA meeting sees East Campus anger

REX shortened, from Page 1

from FPOPs starting on different days of the week before Orientation.

Students wishing to take an ASE and participate in an FPOP would have to choose a four-day FPOP, as ASEs would now be administered on Monday, the last day of five-day FPOPs.

City Days, normally on the last Friday of Orientation, is under consideration to be pushed back further in the fall term. Norman suggested that if City Days were to be moved, it could possibly coincide with service days held by other Boston-area universities, such as Harvard.

Norman said that these changes are not motivated by resource or financial considerations, but out of concern for the freshmen. "We have the longest orientation in the country. It's a problem in that as we

go through the schedule, students lose energy and participation. Faculty are worried they're worn out by the time classes begin," she said, citing academic readiness as a central goal of Orientation.

To many students in the audience, however, these changes constituted less of an effort to care for freshmen than an attack on REX. REX, which normally begins on Saturday and concludes on Tuesday with the re-adjustment lottery, would now officially begin on Monday when freshmen must be on campus.

Norman said that historically, only 20 or so freshmen arrive on the final designated arrival day, and approximately 75 percent of the freshmen class arrives on campus one full week ahead of Orientation to participate in FPOPs or other on-campus activities. Norman suggested that dormitories could reach out to these students during

the evening by holding some early REX-type events before REX officially begins. Furthermore, she cited that most of the freshmen class attends Campus Preview Weekend (CPW), and that the dormitories have an opportunity to get to know many members of the incoming class while they are prospective students. The Housing Office also sends several housing documents to freshmen before they arrive on campus, including the i3 videos.

Several students in the audience countered that CPW is not meant to replace REX and is aimed at helping students decide if MIT as an academic institution is a good fit. Norman said that although the main goal of CPW is for prospective students to decide if MIT is where they wish to learn for four years, one component of a good learning environment is a good living environment, so some aspects of CPW will share similarities with REX.

Other attendees questioned whether freshmen would be "too tired" from other activities to participate in these early REX events, and suggested that REX should be longer, not shorter. Several students said that they felt REX was more important than official Orientation programming, and as freshmen they had often slept through or skipped Orientation events after being involved in REX events; these comments were met with many snaps of audience agreement.

Norman and Young emphasized that they wish to work with students as these tentative changes to Orientation are smoothed out, and they encouraged students to contact their representatives to address concerns.

"I think we all share the same values — we want to welcome students, and have them be ready to find the right residence or community for them," Norman said.

"I'm committed to work with you to help our students find that niche."

Commuter rail may send 20 trains a day past MIT



BRIAN HEMOND—THE TECH

Rush hour traffic and pedestrians cross the railroad tracks that border MIT's campus where they intersect Massachusetts Avenue. The Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority is considering upgrading these rails for commuter rail use, which would lead to increased train traffic at busy intersections like this one.

Railroad, from Page 1

muter rail, Council member Leland Cheung MBA '10 told the *Chronicle*, "Twenty trains per a [sic] day racing through east Cambridge would be devastating to that part of the city."

Councilor Tim Toomey has made opposing the new commuter rail link a priority. Increased use of Grand Junction, he says, would "further snarl traffic on already congested Cambridge streets, increase the amount of car exhaust being released into the atmosphere, and increase the noise pollution throughout the eastern part of the city," according to his website. In an October interview with the *Chronicle*, Toomey expressed the need for Cambridge residents to voice their concerns. "I want to know what we can do as a city to start mobilizing these neighborhoods and these universities," said Toomey.

The *Tech* reported last August that development

of commuter rail would not affect plans to build a new pedestrian tracks crossing near Building W59.

The Grand Junction corridor has been previously considered for a number of transportation projects. Cambridge, in consultation with MIT, has had plans to develop the corridor into a Rail-with-Trail bicycle and pedestrian path between Boston, MIT, and several Cambridge neighborhoods. Cambridge has asked the Community Development Department to determine how upgrading Grand Junction to commuter rail would interfere with a Rail-with-Trail project.

As it stands now, the Rail-with-Trail project is intended to be compatible with existing Urban Ring transportation proposals involving the corridor. The Urban Ring is an MBTA project designed to build a new public transportation route connecting various transit lines already in place.

Ethan A. Solomon



JOHN A. HAWKINSON—THE TECH

About 50 potential bidders attended a Q&A meeting Monday about the City's urban planning study on the future of Kendall and Central squares. The city has budgeted about \$200,000 for the study.

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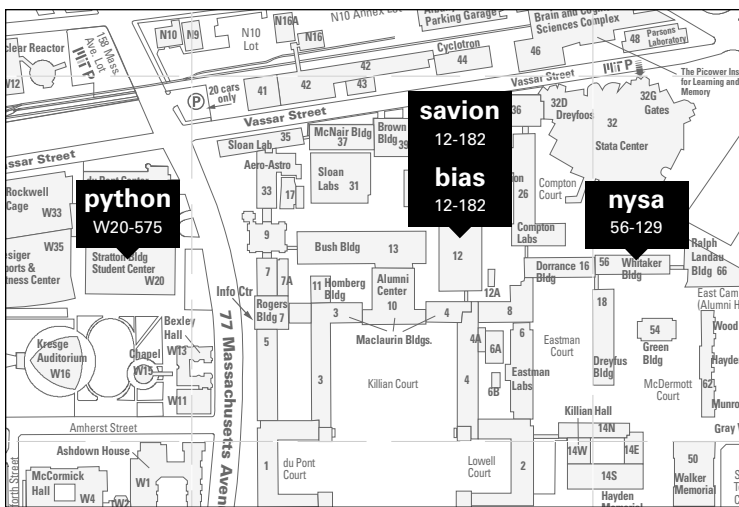
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New plan requires MIT ID swipe at four printers

Printing, from Page 1

os that need to be ironed out in the field, and we'd rather not have Pharos be the only game in town," Thomas said. Some older student ID cards still do not work with the Pharos system.

The Pharos hold-and-release system is the product of a recommendation made by the Institute-wide Planning Task Force intended to make Athena Printing greener and more efficient. According to the Athena Working Group, MIT currently spends around \$270,000 on printing annually.



INFOGRAPHIC BY CONNOR KIRSCHBAUM

Four printers around campus will be a part of a pilot hold-and-release system, requiring students to swipe their ID cards to complete a print job.



ROBERT MCQUEEN—THE TECH

Printer "python" (W20-575) now requires students to swipe their IDs in order to complete print jobs. Python is one of the four Athena printers that changed over this past Friday to the new Pharos "hold-and-release" program.

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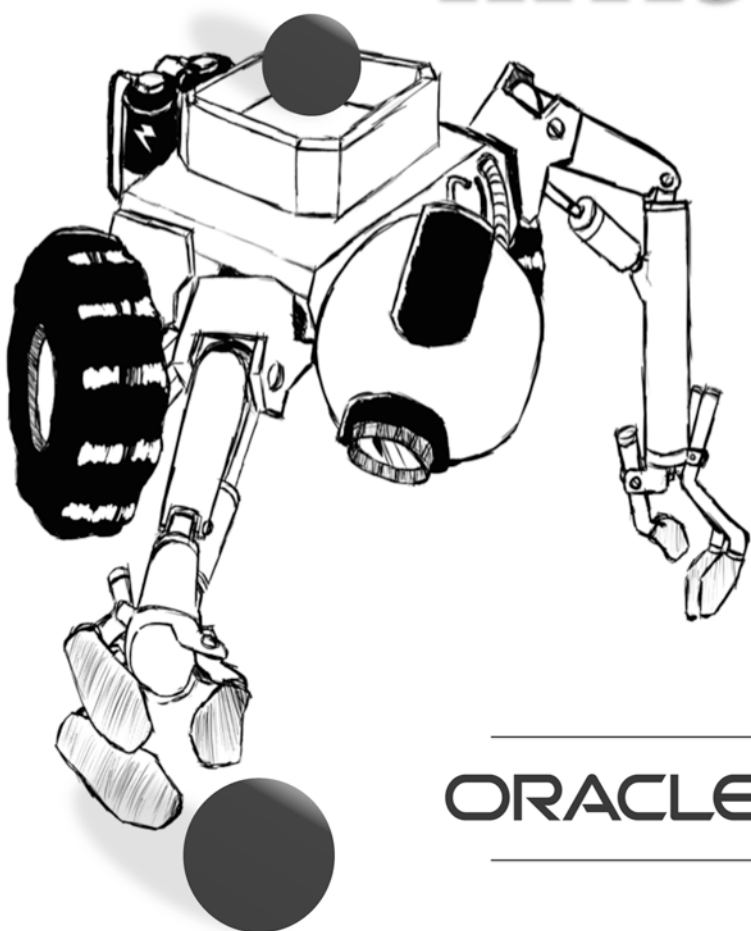
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Solution to Crossword

from page 6

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L	O	A	M	S	A	L	O	O	F	H	E	X				
P	U	T	U	P	A	G	O	O	D	F	R	O	N	T		
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H	E	R			P	H	I	L	O		N	E	W	E	R	
E	L	S			T	E	N	D	S		S	A	L	T	Y	

Solution to Hard Sudoku

from page 7

2	9	4	5	7	3	6	8	1
7	6	8	9	1	4	3	5	2
3	5	1	6	2	8	4	7	9
6	3	9	7	4	5	1	2	8
5	4	7	1	8	2	9	3	6
8	1	2	3	9	6	5	4	7
9	8	6	4	3	7	2	1	5
1	7	3	2	5	9	8	6	4
4	2	5	8	6	1	7	9	3

Solution to Easy Sudoku

from page 7

1	9	2	4	3	6	5	8	7
3	7	5	9	8	1	4	6	2
4	8	6	2	7	5	9	1	3
2	3	4	6	5	7	8	9	1
7	5	1	8	2	9	3	4	6
8	6	9	1	4	3	7	2	5
9	2	7	5	6	4	1	3	8
6	1	3	7	9	8	2	5	4
5	4	8	3	1	2	6	7	9

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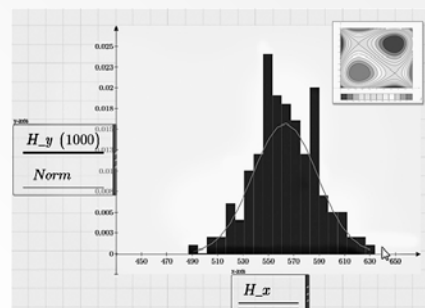
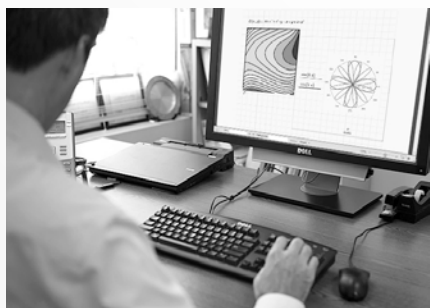
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And, since many of the world's top companies use Mathcad today, you owe it to yourself to experience the newest edition before the interviewing process begins.

Special Mathcad Prime 1.0 Launch Event – Meet MIT Alum Jakov Kucan

Stop by the Stratton Center on Wednesday and Thursday, January 26 & 27, from 9am to 5pm, and explore Mathcad Prime 1.0 for yourself. Plus, on January 27 from 1-3 pm, meet MIT alum and Mathcad lead developer Jakov Kucan, who will present the all-new Mathcad Prime 1.0. Don't miss it!

UPCOMING HOME EVENTS

Wednesday, January 26

Women's Basketball vs. Coast Guard 6 p.m., Rockwell Cage
Men's Basketball vs. Coast Guard 8 p.m., Rockwell Cage

Thursday, January 27

Men's Volleyball vs. Emerson College 7 p.m., Rockwell Cage

Friday, January 28

Rifle — Bean Pot 5 p.m., DuPont Range

Saturday, January 29

Rifle — Bean Pot 9 a.m., DuPont Range
Men's and Women's Track and Field Coed Invitational 12 p.m., Johnson Track
Women's Basketball vs. Springfield College 1 p.m., Rockwell Cage
Men's Ice Hockey — MIT/Boston Bruins Alumni Game 2 p.m., Johnson Rink
Men's Basketball vs. WPI 3 p.m., Rockwell Cage



Andrew L. Dorne '14 swims the 200m butterfly in this Saturday's dual meet against Tufts University. Dorne placed sixth and the Engineers went on to win the meet 200 to 98, maintaining their undefeated status.

JESSICA L. WASS—THE TECH

SPORTS SHORTS

MIT Ski Team Races at Waterville

MIT skiers raced with their largest team yet in slalom and giant slalom events at Waterville Valley on Saturday and Sunday this weekend. On the women's side, top-placing Chyleigh J. Harmon '14 earned her best finish Saturday at 41st. Captain Jillian R. Reddy '11 strongly led the rest of the team, finishing 56th. Rounding out scoring were Sarah J. Laderman '12 in 63rd and Jennifer L. Hawkin in 64th. Newcomer Alix M. de Monts '13 was disqualified. Sunday, however, all of the MIT women finished in a pack and

recorded their best team result yet. Hawkin came in 60th, Harmon 61st, Reddy 63rd, de Monts 65th, and Laderman 66th. It was a personal best USSA points race for Hawkin.

The men had mixed results this weekend. Saturday saw an addition to their list of vital top-25 finishes with Michael J. Yurkerwich '11 finishing 13th and Jason D. Pier '13 in 23rd. Depending on team results from the University of Massachusetts, Yurkerwich stands to qualify individually for Regionals. Jonathan D. Allen '14 was 58th Saturday, and Joshua Walker did not finish. On Sunday, the men had a less eventful day, with Pier finishing 26th, Yurkerwich 29th, Allen 59th, and Walker 64th.

The women's and men's teams still stand at 10th of ten and 9th of nine, respectively. Next weekend MIT Skiing will have giant slalom at Gunstock on Friday followed by slalom at Blackwater on Saturday.

—Alexis Dale, Team Representative

Volleyball scores Newbury victory

Win at NECVA contest brings Engineers to 4-0 for the year

By Paul Dill
HEAD COACH

In its first home match of the 2011 campaign, the nationally-ranked No. 8 MIT men's volleyball posted a 25-21, 25-19, 25-13, victory over Newbury College in a North East Collegiate Volleyball Association (NECVA) New England Division contest on Jan. 18. With the win, the Engineers improved to 4-0 on the year and in conference action while the Nighthawks saw their ledger dip to 1-2 overall and 0-1 in the league.

After MIT established a 4-1 lead, both sides traded points until three straight brought Newbury within one (11-10). The Cardinal and Gray picked up the next point courtesy of a service error, but Danny Kim and Dan Davison collaborated for a block to keep the one-point deficit. A 4-1 spurt, featuring back-to-back kills from Matt Hohenberger '13, gave the Engineers some breathing room and moved the score to 16-12. A James Beck kill paired with an MIT hitting miscue narrowed the Nighthawks' gap to two (18-16), which was maintained by both squads trading serves as late as 21-19. MIT went on to score four of the last six points to close out the set.

With the score knotted at three in the second stanza, the hosts mounted a 9-3 run to secure the lead. Newbury countered with five straights points, cutting its deficit to one (12-11). Following a timeout by MIT, the Engineers posted a 4-1 spurt, which was replicated by the Nighthawks to preserve the one-point margin (17-16). MIT responded by tallying six of the next seven points to seize control of the set. Beck pounded a pair of kills in an attempt to generate a late rally, but the Engineers' Mal-

colm Bean '11 sealed the game with two strikes of his own.

The early stages of the final set were closely played as a kill from Newbury's Chris DeMarco evened the score at five. Sparked by a Hohenberger hit, MIT went on a 12-4 run to break open the game. After trading points, the Engineers rattled off five in a row as an ace by Tim Lee '11 resulted in match point. A blast by Matt Talamantes extended the frame, however a blocking error clinched the victory for the Engineers.

Hohenberger finished with 13 kills and an ace as Bean posted seven kills and three blocks. Patrick Vatterott '13 registered five blocks, five kills, and two aces while Ken Siebert '14 notched seven kills and four blocks. Garrett Winther '11 bolstered the blocking corps with four stops as Caine Jette '11 recorded five digs, and an ace. Lee tallied 28 assists, 12 digs, and an ace for MIT.

The team then extended its winning streak to five following a 25-13, 25-11, 25-11 decision at NECVA New England Division foe Regis College on Thursday night. Jeremy Velazquez '12 had a solid outing for the Engineers (5-0, 5-0 NECVA), as he tallied seven kills, five digs, three aces, and three blocks.

Over the weekend, MIT competed in the SUNY New Paltz Invitational Tournament and won the tournament with a 3-1 record over the two days. On Saturday, the Engineers swept No. 7 ranked Baruch College 3-0 and Elms College 3-0. On Sunday after a very tight loss 2-3 to hosts SUNY New Paltz, MIT bounced back with a huge 3-1 win over No. 14 Emmanuel College. The Engineers are currently 8-1.

The Engineers return home on Thursday, Jan. 27 to put their 8-1 record on the line when they face Emerson College at 7 p.m. in Rockwell Cage.

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**Economics and Finance:
From Theory to Practice to Policy**

January 27 and 28, 2011
Kresge Auditorium
Program begins at 8:45 AM both days

Economics and Finance: From Theory to Practice to Policy
This symposium will celebrate the role of MIT's faculty and students in advancing the fields of economics and finance, in putting the latest developments into practice, and in contributing to the design of public policy.

A series of six panels, which will include Nobel laureates, policymakers, and academic and industry experts, will address three broad questions:

- What are the key recent scientific developments and the major unresolved issues of economics and finance?
- What are the central challenges in economic policy?
- How can one assess the contributions of, and limitations of, recent advances in financial economics?

More information

- A complete program and registration information are available online. mit150.mit.edu
- Organized by MIT's Department of Economics and the MIT Alfred P. Sloan School of Management.

Registration required; free for MIT faculty, staff, and students.

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