

MELISSA RENÉE SCHUMACHER—THE TECH

# Pressure

## Life, lectures, and the pursuit of hardcoreness

See page 5 for *The Tech's* special look at pressure at the Institute.

## MIT Medical's 24/7 emergency hotline

### A look into the after-hours system

By Kath Xu  
STAFF REPORTER

What do you do when you have an urgent problem and MIT Medical is closed? Since MIT Medical's Urgent Care closed to walk-ins from midnight to 7 a.m. two years ago, a 24-hour helpline service was put into place in December 2010. People with urgent medical or emotional problems can reach the helpline at 617-253-4481. However, the type of response differs based on the time that the person calls.

When someone calls the helpline during Urgent Care's open hours (7 a.m. to 11 p.m.), the helpline connects the caller to the Urgent Care front desk. From there, a physician or nurse practitioner will answer the call and try to determine the immediacy of the concern. In contrast, when someone calls between midnight and 7 a.m., the caller will hear a recorded message asking them to press a number to transfer the

Helpline, Page 4

### IN SHORT

**IAP PE Registration for graduate students opens Monday at 10 a.m.** Registration for both undergraduate and graduate students closes Wednesday at 1 p.m.

**The MIT Glass Lab Holiday sale** is Monday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in Lobby 10.

**MITSO's December concert is this Saturday at 8 p.m.** Admission is \$5 at the door or free in advance from [eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com)

**MIT Police recently received three anonymous reports of separately occurring alleged sexual assaults** in November 2012 at 99 Bay State Road (Lambda Chi Alpha). The reports identified neither the victims nor the offenders. According to a bulletin released by the MIT Police on Wednesday, there is no ongoing criminal investigation by the MIT Police. MIT Police urge students feeling unsafe on campus or in off-campus living groups to call 617-253-1212.

Send news information and tips to [news@tech.mit.edu](mailto:news@tech.mit.edu).

## Wireless access points damaged, students advised to use Ethernet

As a result of the Cambridge-wide power outage on Thursday, Nov. 29, several wireless access points around campus were damaged, according to an email from MIT Information Services & Technology. IS&T is working to replace the devices, but they

do not have enough replacement devices in stock to replace all of them at the present time. Most of the access points will not be repaired until new units arrive, though the message did not say when the new units would arrive or when the repairs would

be complete. Until then, IS&T recommends connecting to the MIT network via Ethernet connections whenever possible. Students may visit the IS&T office in E17-110 to pick up an Ethernet cable.

—Janelle Mansfield

## Kendall proposal incorporates K2C2 Board meets to discuss changes

By John A. Hawkinson  
STAFF REPORTER

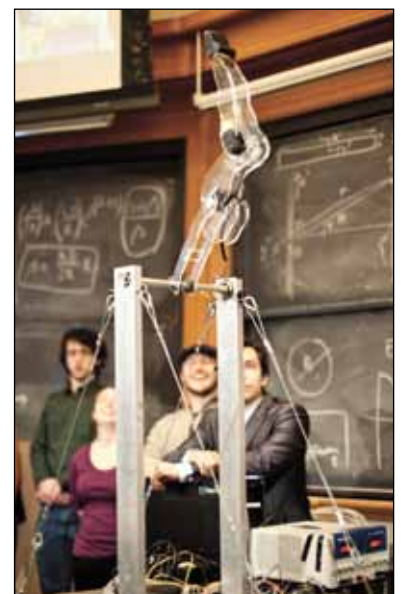
Executives of MIT and the MIT Investment Management Company executives presented a revised version of MIT's vision for the future of the east campus to the Cambridge Planning Board on Tuesday night. Their recommendations incorporated many of the zoning changes proposed by the City's Kendall-to-Central planning study (K2C2) earlier this year.

At the same meeting, the Planning Board also got its first look at the K2C2 recommendations for Central Square; see related article, p. 2.

MIT presented one major change from its April 2011 proposal, which has now expired: maximizing the residential density at its One Broadway extension to build 300 units of housing, up from 120 units. Whether that housing would be market-rate housing or graduate student housing was unspecified, but MIT says it would include a middle-income component consistent with the K2C2 Kendall recommendations. MIT will give a one-time \$4.3 million contribution to the City's Affordable Housing Trust.

MIT's proposal continues

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MANOHAR SRIKANTH—THE TECH

**On Monday 2.12 (Introduction to Robotics)** held a gymnastic robot competition. This is one of the robots that made up the competition: a high-bar robot.

### PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Key takeaways from the final meeting of the K2C2 committee.

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### MIT, DERELICTE

See our photo spread of highlights from this year's Trashion Show.

PHOTO, p. 3



### FOOTBALL FRENZY WEEK FOURTEEN

Our predictions of next week's contested NFL matchups.

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# K2C2 moves forward to zoning stage

## Local group opposes proposed denser Kendall & Central squares

By John A. Hawkinson  
STAFF REPORTER

The Central Square Advisory Committee to the Kendall-to-Central Square Planning Process (K2C2) held its final meeting last week on Wednesday, Nov. 28, and presented its work to the Cambridge Planning Board on Tuesday, Dec. 4. Near-final drafts of its work are available at <http://cambridgema.gov/k2c2>.

**300 Mass. Ave petition**

Yesterday, Forest City Enterprises, the developers of University Park, refiled its zoning petition for a life sciences building at 300 Mass. Ave, the block containing All Asia and MIT's Random Hall dormitory. The petition was previously allowed to lapse after community residents protested that Forest City should wait for the K2C2 process to conclude before making zoning changes.

**K2C2 Central process**

The city's Community Development Department staff, in conjunction with Goody Clancy & Associates, consultants to the city, will work with the Cambridge Planning Board to convert the K2C2 committee's work into zoning language.

In addition to 23 public meetings, the committee also met privately at least four times in the past weeks to produce an eight-page memo summarizing the vision and principles that all members of the committee could agree on. The memo was signed by all 20 active members of the committee.

The ability of the committee to agree on contentious issues like housing (asking for additional height and density for residential buildings) is significant, especially given that the committee includes both residents and landowners, groups who often have opposing interests.

The committee's formal work product is managed by the city's staff, and represents compromises and adjustments. Those formal

work products don't necessarily have full agreement from every single committee member on every single item, so the committee-drafted memo is notable.

The planning board presentation was long on vision and short on specifics, but members of the planning board had read over the written recommendations, and expressed strong praise for the committee's work.

**Major recommendations**

The committee's Plan and Recommendations document offers four major goals:

**1. Public places to build community:** Enrich the Square's public realm to invite community interaction at many levels from meeting a friend to citywide festivals.

**2. Retail, cultural and non-profit diversity:** Celebrate the mix of old and new, verable [sic] and funky, culture and business and other sources of diverse activities that make the Square a great Main Street and Cultural District.

**3. Residential diversity:** Support a diverse community through more and varied housing choices.

### The Cambridge Residents Alliance has strongly objected to the additional density, fearing more shadows and higher rents.

**4. Connecting people to the Square:** Enrich neighborhood walkability and livability with safe, green streets and improved access choices.

**Zoning recommendations**

The most significant change the K2C2 process offers is increasing the allowable residential density from a 3.0 floor area ratio (FAR) to a 4.0 FAR, along with changing maximum residential building heights from 80 feet to 140 feet. (Within the MIT-owned region southeast of Lafayette Square, called "The Osborn Triangle" by the committee, resi-

dential buildings may rise to 160 feet.)

The committee also recommended bonus increases to FAR in exchange for construction of middle-income housing.

The committee additionally recommended allowing developers to transfer development rights from the edges of neighborhoods into the heart of Central Square. This mechanism is intended to increase density along Massachusetts Avenue without negatively impacting the residential neighborhoods that surround it.

**Opposition to proposal**

Despite the unanimous agreement of the committee on the merits of the density and height changes to permit additional housing, there has been significant community opposition.

The Cambridge Residents Alliance, led by local resident Nancy Ryan, has strongly objected to the additional density, fearing more shadows and higher rents. The CRA is organizing a petition to the City Council asking them to institute a one-year moratorium on "upzoning" or zoning changes that increase density.

Ryan said that the petition had 500 signatures so far. She did not speak in the public comment section at last week's K2C2 meetings. Ryan had expressed herself and the CRA's position at the Nov. 15 K2C2 meeting.

Ryan said she felt the K2C2 committee's mind was made up and offering further public comment on the process would be fruitless.

Charles Teague, also of the CRA, circulated an email summary last Monday describing the K2C2 committee's work as he saw it. Teague wrote that "massive 'up zoning' will lead to the demolition

and replacement of most every building, business, and resident in Central Square ... this is 'Urban Renewal' disguised as providing housing to folks who already live here."

Longtime Cambridge resident and political commentator Robert Winters (currently a math lecturer in the Concourse program at MIT) spoke up at last Tuesday's meeting and described Teague's email as a "screed" that mischaracterized the committee's work product. Winters implored the Committee not to cede ground and not to let others mis-describe their work product.

This battle will surely play out in the next stages of this process, as the K2C2 recommendations go before the Planning Board and the City Council.

**Parking lot issues**

One issue that the K2C2 committee left unresolved was how to manage a significant resource that the committee has talked a lot about: the five open-air parking lots owned by the city that surround Central Square.

David Dixon from Goody Clancy has made clear to the committee that those parking lots represent an unprecedented bargaining chip to achieve change. Buildings can be built on them by the city; they can be sold in exchange for desirable developments; the can be repurposed for public spaces or farmers' markets; etc.

But while the committee agrees in broad strokes, they have not been able to articulate a process for how to make those decisions, or present a clear path going forward.

Dixon has said that the window of opportunity to harness those lots may be limited.

It's not clear how the city will proceed with those spaces. The committee's eight-page memo calls for the city to "explore these possibilities and aggressively consider the public-private partnerships required to bring development of the selected alternatives to fruition."

# Kendall square may see retail, housing

## Faculty letter protests lack of student, faculty input in proposal

Kendall, from Page 1

to include commercial buildings on the parking lots south of E38, E39, and E48. A concern of the faculty 2030 committee has been that those buildings should be reserved for academic uses. "We know that's academic space" said Thomas A. Kochan, chair of the task force. Kochan said that it was fine for MITIMCo to use that space commercially on a temporary basis, as long as it was eventually available for academic purposes.

MIT will include not only substantial ground-floor retail along Main Street, as previously proposed, but also along Broad Canal behind One Broadway.

MIT incorporated many changes from the K2C2 recommendations into its proposal. Those changes would end up applying to MIT without being incorporated into the proposal, assuming they pass the planning board and the City Council, though MIT's zoning changes might be approved before the more general changes from the K2C2 recommendations.

The K2C2 zoning changes MIT incorporated are: restricting building size at higher heights, requiring buildings to meet LEED Gold community standards, contributing \$10 per square foot to a community fund, including mid-

dle-income housing, and providing five percent of office space for startups.

MIT proposed dividing its area east of Ames Street into three zones, with three different height limits. On Main street, 250'; near Memorial Drive, 150'; and in-between 250'. Currently all of those areas are restricted to 120'. MIT said that there was little chance of substantial change in many of those areas, because buildings like Gray House, the MIT President's residence, were unlikely to change.

### MIT proposed dividing its area east of Ames Street into 3 zones, with three different height limits.

MIT's presentation barely touched on the idea of a "grand gateway" to campus from the Kendall Square area. MITIMCo's Steven C. Marsh did say that MIT had begun conversations with the MBTA on "reinvigorating" the T's headhouse on the MIT side of Kendall Square.

Previous presentations had shown architectural renderings and concept drawings of such an

entrance, but this time MIT did not show such images. MIT continues to try to determine how to produce an eastern entrance to campus without removing the historically significant buildings in the area: E38 and E39 (the MIT Press and Rebecca's Cafe buildings).

All six members of the planning board in attendance appeared to look favorably upon MIT's presentation, especially because of its inclusion of the K2C2 recommendations.

**FNL controversy**

On Monday, eight members of the fifteen-member Faculty Newsletter Editorial Board, led by Professor Gordon A. Kaufman (Management) submitted a letter to MIT President L. Rafael Reif and Provost Chris A. Kaiser PhD '87, copied to the planning board, protesting the MIT presentation: "further refinement of our collective thinking about MIT's medium and longer term real estate development strategy should come before action... We interpret [this proposal] as an attempt to 'end run' student and faculty input and implement MITIMCo's current version of how MIT's Cambridge real estate should be developed." (see sidebar at <http://tech.mit.edu/V132/N59/kendall/> for full text).

But the Kaufman group's con-

cern was moderated the next day. On Tuesday mid-day, after meeting with members of the faculty 2030 task force, Kaufman wrote again to the President, Provost, and planning board, saying that it was "sensible to have MIT move forward with the proposal for up-zoning at tonight's Planning Board meeting." Kaufman declined to comment to *The Tech*, but directed attention to the forthcoming issue of the *Faculty Newsletter*.

**Attendance**

At the planning board meeting, which was standing room only, MIT was represented not just by MITIMCo personnel, as has been the case previously, but by members of the senior administration. Associate Provost Martin A. Schmidt PhD '88 presented a summary of the faculty task force on 2030 issues. Executive Vice President and Treasurer Israel Ruiz SM '01 was in the audience.

Current and former faculty chairs Samuel M. Allen PhD '75 and Thomas A. Kochan were also present. Both were on the faculty 2030 task force. Parts of MIT's presentation were given by David P. Manfredi of Elkus Manfredi Architects.

A dozen Department of Urban Studies and Planning students were also present for a class assignment: attending a planning board meeting.



*TAMI FORRESTER—THE TECH*  
**Claire S. Treyz '14 models a dress** designed by Sara D. Goheen '14.



*TAMI FORRESTER—THE TECH*  
**Sasha Targ '12 and Daesun Yim '14 model pieces** designed by professional designer Shubhra Chandara.

# TRASH FASHION SHOW

The MITTrashion Show, hosted by the UA Sustainability Committee last Saturday in Lobdell, was an event where student designers from across campus showcased their recyclable, sustainable, and fashionable designs. The outfits were worn by student models. Pieces designed by professional designer Shubhra Chandra were also modeled by students, and auctioned off to members of the audience. All proceeds from the event went to HEET, an environmental non-profit organization.



*TAMI FORRESTER—THE TECH*  
**Julianna M. Mello '14 models a dress** she designed with Angela J. Chu '14



*TAMI FORRESTER—THE TECH*  
**Samantha Q. Fomon '15 models a dress** designed by David Huang '14.



*TAMI FORRESTER—THE TECH*  
**Nancy B. Lu '16 models a dress** made by designer Berj K. Chilingirian '16 as they walk down the runway together.



*TAMI FORRESTER—THE TECH*  
**Carissa F. Jansen '14 models a dress** designed by Carolyn Zhang '14.

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# Automated system for after-hours care

*Comic strip series in The Tech publicizes new emergency hotline*

**Helpline**, from Page 1

call to another line based on their situation.

"If someone presses 3 (the mental health line) during the time Urgent Care is closed, the caller actually gets a call back from someone from MIT Mental Health," explained Brian Ash, M.D., an internist at MIT Medical and Medical Coordinator of the Urgent Care service. "The reason for the initial voice prompts is because rather than have a general answering service, we have specific types of providers being the first person with whom you speak."

There are a total of six lines that the helpline can refer a caller to. If the issue concerns a sick or injured child, the caller is asked to press 1, and if the issue concerns an adult with an urgent medical problem, the caller is asked to press 2. Similarly, the helpline directs the caller to dial campus police at 100 (from any on campus phone) if the issue is an emergency, 911 if the person is off-campus, and 617-253-1315 if an OB/GYN (Obstetrics and Gynecology) provider is requested.

If the caller dials for campus police, MIT EMS (Emergency Medical Service) is also dispatched. When Urgent Care is open, EMS can call a physician for support if needed. During the hours that Urgent Care is closed, however, EMS will transport the caller to a local emergency room.

**There are a total of six lines that the helpline can refer a caller to.**

"MIT EMS often deals with emergency mental health issues and can transport these patients to whichever area health care facility that best fits their needs," said Annie Dunham '13, Chief Emergency Medical Technician. "I've found that our EMTs are especially well-equipped to handle these type of emergencies both because they understand the pressures of living and working within the MIT community and because they genuinely care about the well-being of their fellow community members. As with any of our calls, mental health emergencies are treated with the utmost professionalism, sensitivity, compassion, and discretion."

Brian Ash, MD, added that the help line is "largely a way to make sure that the medical department is available 24 hours a day, and that during those few hours that things are closed, people can still get advice and some guidance about whether it's worth their seeking care outside of MIT."

Recently, there has been a renewed push in publicizing the use of the help line during the night hours.

"We did a lot of poster in the dorms starting at the end of 2010 when the Urgent Care hours changed and we've continued this effort periodically since then, including this fall," said Kim Schive, Marketing and Communications Specialist at MIT Medical. "These poster efforts seem to have had mixed results. ... A few students told me they knew they'd seen a poster about this topic, but they didn't know what, exactly, it said."

In addition to poster, MIT

**Recently, there has been a renewed push in publicizing the helpline during the night hours.**

Medical has started running paid advertisements this semester in *The Tech* in the form of a series of comic strips. The strip features two recurring characters, Alvara Baker and Fred Campus, who run into situations late at night which then require the use of the help line. Schive came up with the idea to run an MIT-specific comic strip after some "clinicians and administrators at MIT Medical were concerned that a number of students still hadn't gotten the message."

The strips are drawn by Solar Olugebefola '99, who drew a strip for *The Tech* titled "Bartholomew Squeak" while he was an undergrad here. Olugebola often references MIT culture in his strips. For instance, the comic which ran on Oct. 30 referenced the annual pumpkin drop off of the Green Building.

David Tytell, Director of Marketing and Communications at MIT Medical, said that they "haven't measured the results of the campaign yet since it is a semester-long effort." According to the MIT Medical website, Urgent Care originally switched over due to the lack of overnight visits. In 2009, there was an average of 45.4 visits from 7 a.m. to midnight per day, but only 1.2 visits from midnight to 7 a.m. Overall, only 2.6 percent of the 17,027 Urgent Care visits that year were made overnight.

"There were often fewer students than staff upstairs," said Brian Ash, MD "It was a question of 'Where do we put our resources to best treat people?'"

Statistics on the number of people who actually use the 24-hour helpline were not available.

"My experience is that the help line has been pretty accurate with patients. I'm always glad when patients come in and they tell me that they called the help line," said Jan Puibello, a nurse practitioner and Urgent Care Coordinator at MIT Medical. "I think that patients in general get a lot of reassurance from having that service available."

THE MIT MUSES PROUDLY PRESENT...

# HERCUMUSE

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8:00 PM

RM. 6-120



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### Solution to Crossword

from page 30

G	A	M	E	S	T	E	D	G	E	P	O	D		
A	R	A	B	L	E	T	I	E	R	O	N	E		
S	C	R	E	E	N	S	A	V	E	R	M	A	S	
	R	E	S	A	L	E		G	O	B	I			
M	I	N	T	T	E	A		G	A	I	N	E	R	
A	C	E			B	L	I	N	D	D	A	T	E	
Y	E	A	R	S		E	L	U	D	E				
A	D	R	E	P		C	A	L		L	O	O	S	E
		A	R	I	A	S		E	N	D	U	P		
S	H	A	D	E	T	R	E	E		E	V	E		
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R	O	L	E		T	A	B	L	E	S				
I	R	E		C	U	R	T	A	I	N	C	A	L	L
N	A	G		P	R	O	M		V	O	O	D	O	O
E	Y	E		A	N	T	S		E	A	T	O	U	T

### Solution to Techdoku

from page 29

4	6	5	1	3	2
6	2	1	3	5	4
5	1	6	2	4	3
1	3	2	4	6	5
2	4	3	5	1	6
3	5	4	6	2	1

### Solution to Sudoku

from page 29

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



## EDITORIAL

## Under Pressure

*Remember your strengths as you navigate the Institute*

The Institute is a tough place. The classes are hard, the homework is hard, and the tests are hard. It's difficult to step back and get any perspective, and when things are going bad, competition between peers makes things worse. If you dare lament the amount of work you have, chances are that your neighbor will challenge you and say that he has even more.

### The perception that most MIT students have of each other is false.

Does this competition sound familiar? It should. The "I'm so hosed" game has become a cultural phenomenon at MIT, one that perpetuates the "hardcore" attitude — the attitude that to truly succeed at MIT you must take six classes, do a UROP, lead a club, play a sport, get six hours of sleep a night, and excel academically at the same time. Doing less than this is a quick way to make yourself feel inadequate, and potentially even worthless, at MIT.

But these expectations are unrealistic.

The perception that most MIT students have of each other is false. Our survey results show that a typical student thinks an average MIT student spends 28.9 hours a week on homework, while the reality is that most students spend about 26.2 hours per week. Students report that they believe others take an average of 55 units, while the actual number is 50. We found a variety of similar examples while compiling our survey data.

After putting together this special, *The Tech* has a few things we wish to remind MIT students as they continue their studies here.

#### Believe in yourself

We are all incredibly hard-working, intelligent people who have been thrust into a trying environment. Too often, a simple story from a peer is enough to make us feel as if we do nothing. But our survey data shows that MIT students don't have a realistic perception of one another. Students say that on a scale of 1 to 7 they believe other students work at around a 5.3, but the typical student

reports their own work at 4.8.

The "I'm so hosed" game perpetuates this stereotype. The next time it comes up, don't play. We are all in this together. Everyone is busy — trying to one-up your classmates constantly is unhealthy and drives people to maintain unrealistic goals.

We all work hard — your work is just as meaningful as everyone else's. Whether you take three classes or seven, you deserve to be at MIT.

### Whether you take three classes or seven, you still deserve to be at MIT.

#### Work and life balance

One of the most concerning attitudes around MIT is that students often ignore their health in favor of their work. 43 percent of students will choose friends and work over sleep, and 50 percent of students say they don't get enough sleep at all. While some degree of sleep-deprivation is normal for an MIT student — try to get those eight hours once

in a while. Staying healthy is a critical part of academic success.

It isn't just physical well-being either: mental health is just as important. It is tempting to bury an emotional problem and instead become invested in work, but this is a dangerous habit. While some degree of emotional compartmentalization is completely understandable during crunch time, it is not a sustainable practice.

Mental health necessarily affects academics. Struggling with an emotional/personal issue can and will affect your academic work. Feeling down about something that has happened to you is normal — and having that affect your schoolwork is also normal. Come to terms with whatever is bothering you. Expecting yourself to perform at a high level academically while you are struggling emotionally is unrealistic.

*The Tech* urges students to reconcile their personal issues so they can better balance their emotional and academic well-being. Ignoring personal problems is sure to take a toll on academic work and mental health. It's OK to be troubled, and it's OK to need a break once in a

while. Ignoring these issues will affect both your academics and your overall welfare. Your health is important — take care of it.

To that end:

#### Support one another

### Struggling with an emotional/personal issue can and will affect your academic work.

It's cliché. You've heard it from your orientation pamphlets, from your housemasters, and from the administration.

But truly, the most important thing you can do to make MIT a more bearable place for everyone is to reach out.

If you're having a hard time, seek one of the many resources available at MIT. If you see a friend having trouble, be there for them. Lend an ear. Just a few minutes spent listening can make a world of difference and is a small step in making the Institute a better place for everyone.



#### PRESSURE SPECIAL

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# Any lingering questions about the survey data?

# Have any opinions, stories, or thoughts about our findings?

# Write to us at [surveys@tech.mit.edu](mailto:surveys@tech.mit.edu).

















## Most Stressful Classes

Freshmen	
8.01	16.7%
7.012	14.7%
3.091	10.5%
5.112	6.8%
8.012	6.4%

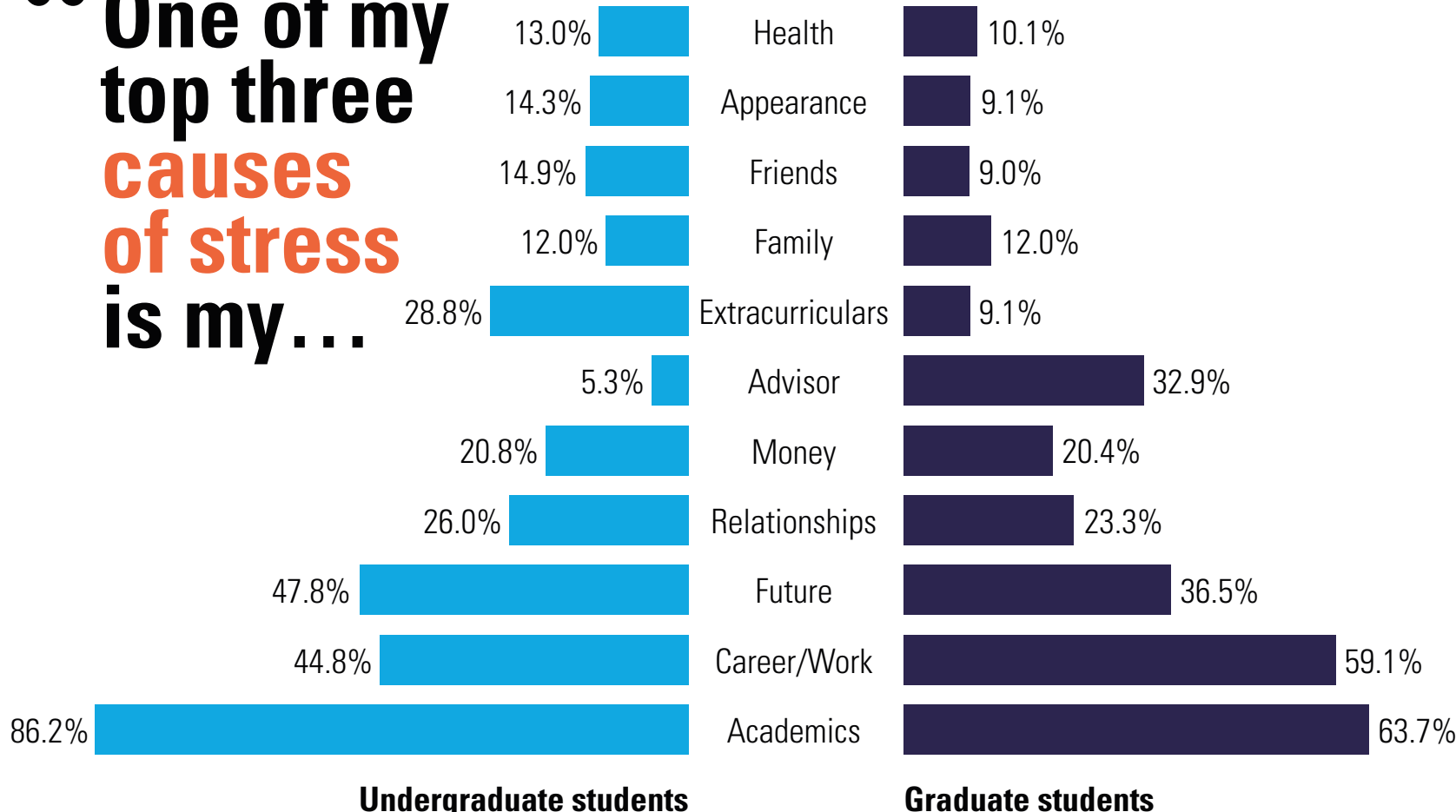
16.7% of Freshmen say **8.01**  
 8.5% of Sophomores say **6.01**  
 5.5% of Juniors say **6.005**  
 5.4% of Seniors say **8.13**  
 2.9% of Graduates say **15.01**

Sophomores	
6.01	8.5%
18.03	8.0%
5.12	6.2%
10.10	4.4%
6.004	3.6%

Juniors	
6.005	5.5%
5.12	4.9%
8.13	4.3%
6.006	3.7%
18.03	3.4%

Seniors	
8.13	5.4%
5.13	4.3%
6.005	3.6%
5.12	3.2%
10.49	3.2%

“One of my top three causes of stress is my...”



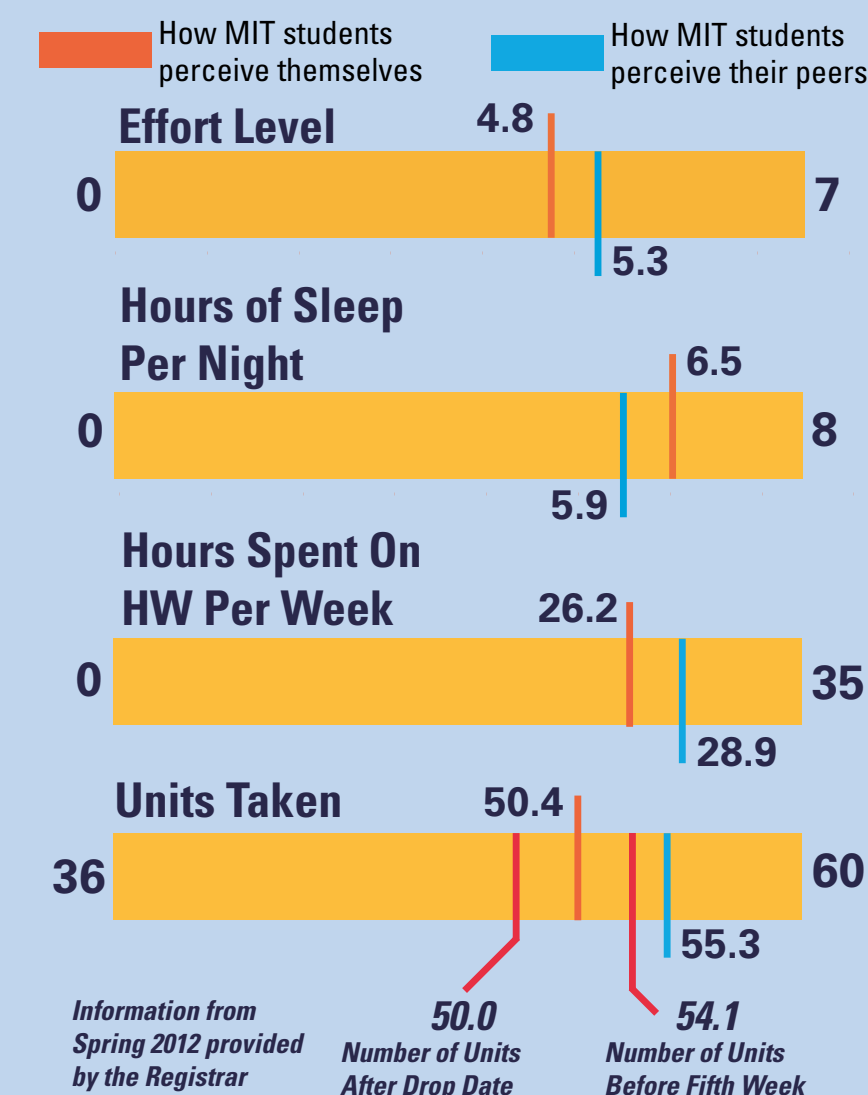
# Pressure at MIT

The Tech surveyed 3,191 undergraduate and graduate students at MIT to understand the high-pressure atmosphere at the Institute, potential causes for this culture, and the effects that it has on students' lives. The key insights we extracted from the data are presented here.

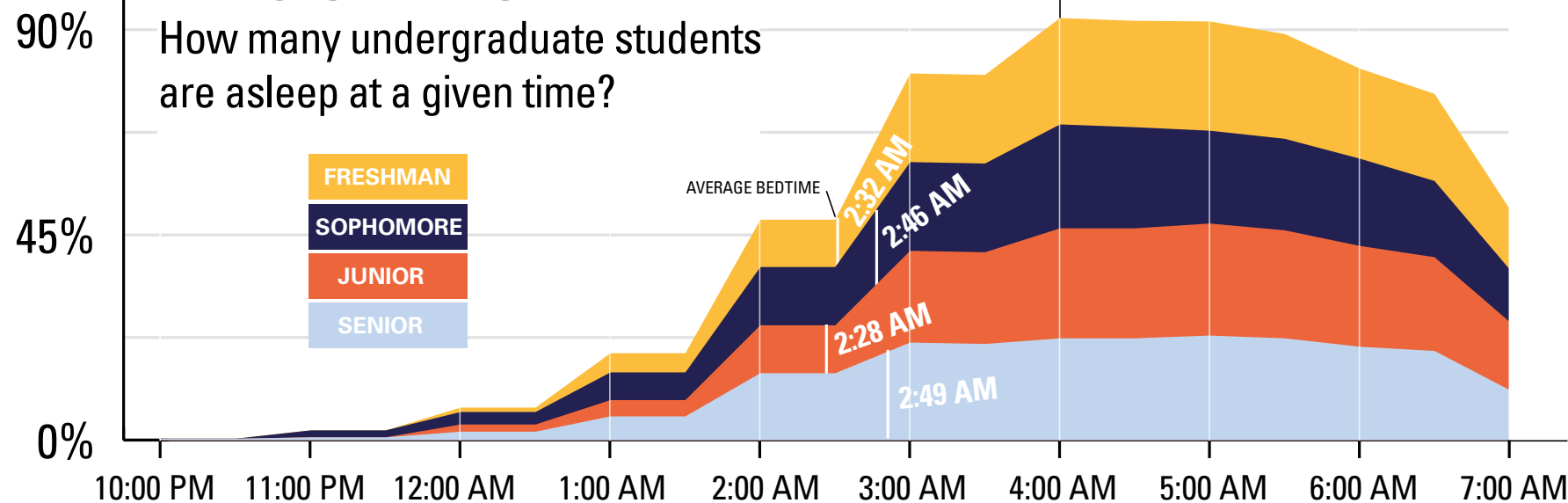
## Perception vs Reality

“I wanna be hardcore...”

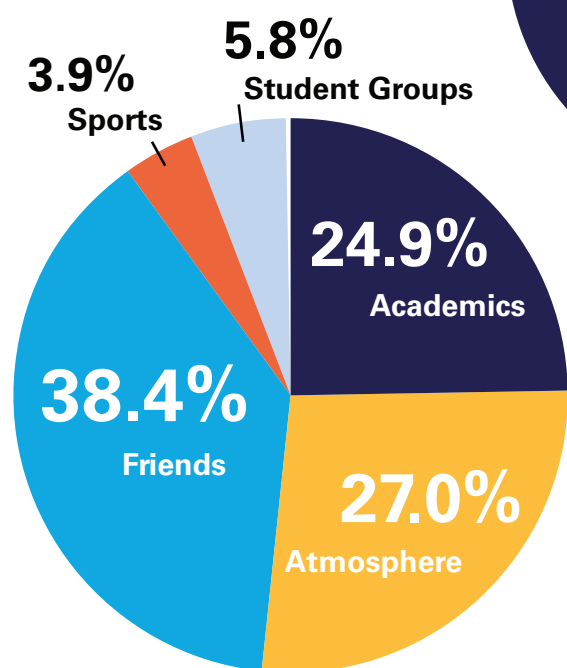
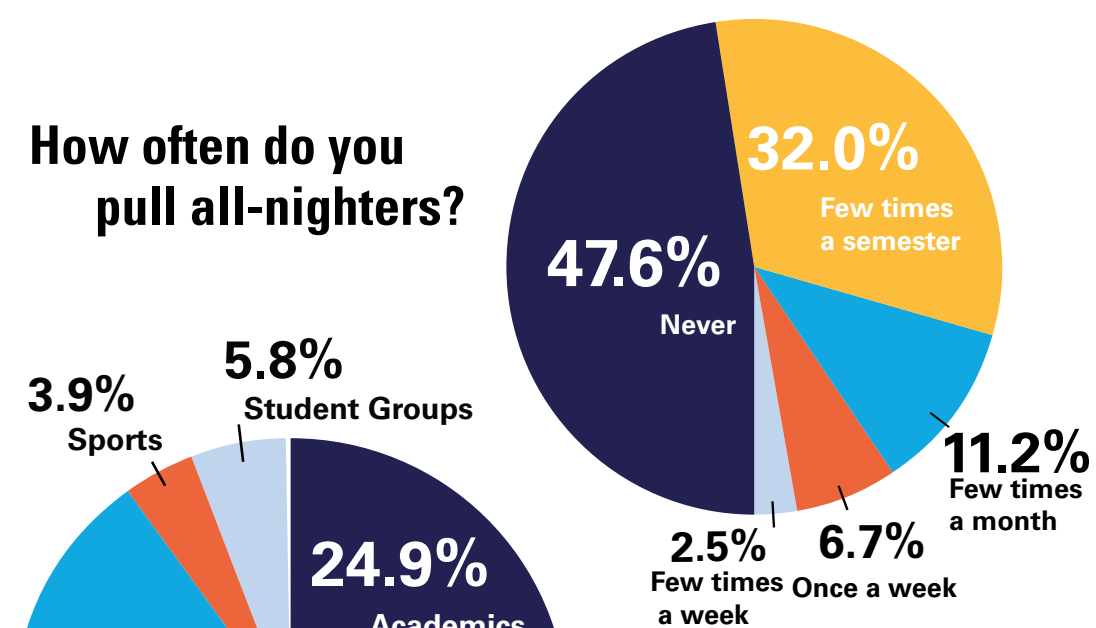
On average, MIT students believe their peers work harder, sleep less, and take more classes than they do.



## WHO SLEEPS WHEN?



## How often do you pull all-nighters?



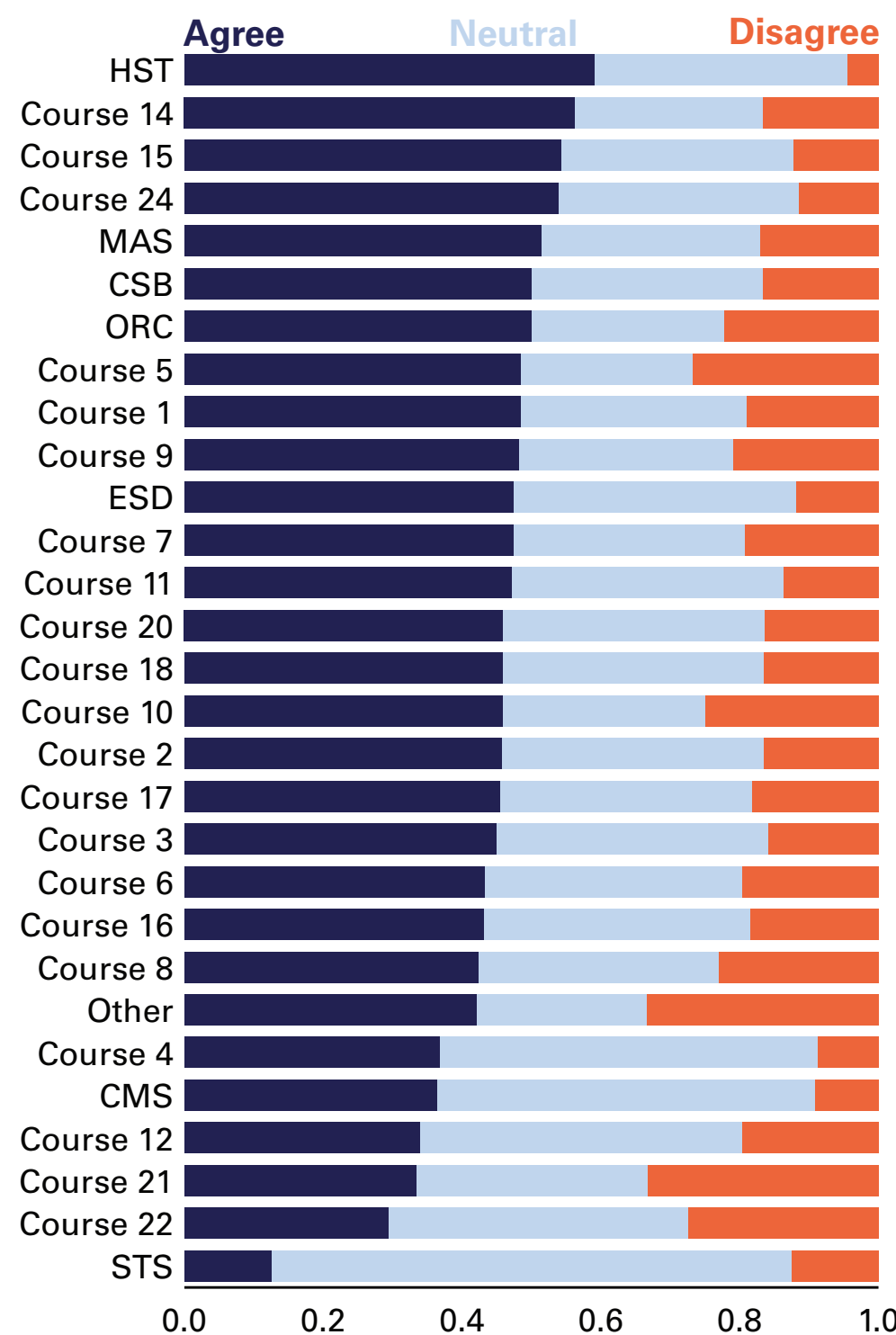
What makes you happiest about an being an MIT student?

On a scale from 1 to 7, how stressed are you?

4.5 Men  
4.8 Women

52.3% of MIT students have felt that they don't belong.

“I am happier than the average MIT student.”



## What are the “hardest” courses?

Ranked by the number of times each course was voted for as a “hard” or “easy” course, here are the top 5 for each category. Stress was on a 1–7 scale.

Rank	“Hardest” Courses	“My course is one of the hardest”	Stress Level
1	Course 6	29.2%	4.59
2	Course 10	10.8%	4.76
3	Course 16	10.3%	4.67
4	Course 8	11.5%	4.38
5	Course 2	27.7%	4.66

Rank	“Easiest” Courses	“My course is one of the hardest”	Stress Level
1	Course 15	20.3%	4.81
2	Course 21	0.0%	4.50
3	Course 9	1.4%	4.69
4	CMS	0.0%	4.91
5	Course 24	11.1%	4.76



Explore the survey data up close with our online interactives:  
<http://bit.ly/mitpressure>

# How do MIT student-athletes deal with stress?

*Athletes agree that playing sports helps them budget time and put things in perspective*

By **Nidharshan Anandasivam**  
and **Felicia Hsu**  
SPORTS STAFF

Resolute dedication, judicious time management, and hardy discipline are just a few of the qualities important to MIT stu-

dent-athletes as they strive to get the most out of both academics and sports. The academic rigor of a school like MIT poses a significant challenge for athletes here as they strive to succeed while keeping stress levels low and maintaining optimal physical and mental health. They invest a considerable

amount of time on school coursework and team practices alone. On top of these commitments, many student-athletes do even more, engaging in clubs and extracurricular activities. There is no question that this lifestyle is susceptible to conflicts and requires prioritization and prudent decision-making.

To gather insight on these important issues, *The Tech* asked MIT student-athletes about the challenges of balancing their academic and athletic lives. These responses feature a variety of experiences on the interplay between sports, academics, and stress at MIT.

## Men's Soccer: Jonathan K. Tebes '14

*TT: How does your involvement with soccer impact your academic life?*

**Jonathan Tebes:** MIT soccer definitely complicates my academic life. Sometimes we have games that conflict with lectures, and this puts me behind in



TAMI FORRESTER—THE TECH  
Jonathan K. Tebes '14

some of my classes. However, participating in a varsity sport at MIT has also forced me to improve how I budget my time. Because of soccer, I have become much more flexible with how I approach schoolwork — I can do it anywhere, including the bus ride back from a game — and I have become more efficient in completing tasks. This personal improvement in time management skills has enabled me to take on more classes per

**Because of soccer, I have become much more flexible with how I approach schoolwork — I can do it anywhere.**

semester and increase the activities I am involved with outside the classroom.

*TT: Do you notice a difference in your stress level and overall happiness during your sports season as compared to the off-season?*

**JT:** Yes. Surprisingly, I tend to be happier during the season than during the off-season. For the past two years, I have experienced a decline in mood right after the soccer season ends. The loss of the locker-room camaraderie and a reduction in athletic activity contribute to this decline in mood and outlook. This change in mood also manifests itself in my academic pursuits. Over my first two years at MIT, my grades have been better in the fall semester than in the spring semester, I think in large part because spring is the off-season for soccer.

## Men's Basketball: Mitchell H. Kates '13

*TT: Do you feel that MIT basketball increases or decreases your stress level?*

**MK:** I would say that there are times when it does both. Being on the team, I can't let work back up and simply pull an all-nighter because it would severely impact my performance. This does require a little more stress to get everything done on time, including academics, athletics, and job search. On the other hand, I think basketball can be a great way to release stress. Without basketball, I think I may put too much emphasis on just the academic piece of MIT. When things are not going great in the classroom, I can look at the positives of basketball to keep my life on an even keel, and vice-versa. In fact, I think athletics and academics are great complements to one another at MIT.

*TT: Have there been times when you've had to prioritize basketball over classes?*

**I think basketball can be a great way to release stress.**

**MK:** Yes. Last year in the NCAA tournament we had to travel from Thursday to Sunday and we missed quite a bit of class each week. Some teachers were much more accommodating than others about handing in missed work (especially work due while we were traveling). This year I am in a class which meets Tuesday and Thursday evenings. This class brings in exceptional speakers and it was a class I wanted to take before I graduate. The professor was very accommodating about



TAMI FORRESTER—THE TECH  
Mitchell H. Kates '13

missing a couple classes due to games, letting me work with him to make up the classes I would miss. It is great to see some professors understand the natural conflicts that arise, and work with athletes so they don't have to sacrifice anything academically to play sports.

## Women's Basketball: Kirstyn Hein '15

*TT: Do you feel that MIT Basketball increases or decreases your stress level?*

**KH:** Basketball increases my stress level, but at the same time it's AMAZING to ... not have a choice but to take a 2.5-hour study break every single day. While you're on the court, you forget how much work you have to do, and it's amazing. Then you get off the court and remember and feel completely screwed, but you're all in it together, which is extremely comforting and bonding and awesome.

*TT: Do you notice a difference in your stress level and overall happiness during your sports season as compared to the off-season?*

**KH:** When I'm playing well, my happiness level is much higher during the season (although, as mentioned above, so is my stress level). When I'm not playing well, everything all-around sucks, low happiness and high stress and the general feeling of unworth and fail that can emanate around this campus.



TAMI FORRESTER—THE TECH  
Kirstyn Hein '15

## Swimming and Diving: Jane W. He '15



TAMI FORRESTER—THE TECH  
Jane W. He '15

*TT: How does your involvement with MIT Swimming & Diving impact your academic life?*

**JH:** For me, swimming at MIT serves as a "safe haven" from all the academic work. When I step onto deck, my academic-related stressors and worries fade

away as I turn my focus over to working hard in the pool and having fun with my teammates. It also helps me manage my time and stay on top of all of my work.

*TT: Do you feel that MIT Swimming & Diving increases or decreases your stress level?*

**JH:** Doing a sport definitely decreases my overall stress level. When I go to practice, I am able to clear my mind that's cluttered with all the things I need to get done, and I leave feeling refreshed and ready to retackle tasks that were challenging me earlier.

## Women's Cross Country: Dacie J. Manion '15

*TT: How does your involvement with cross country impact your academic life?*

**DM:** My involvement with MIT track and cross country has shaped my MIT experience. Many of my best p-set and general study buddies are teammates, and on a daily basis my teammates help me survive the semester. Whether referring me to resources at MIT, helping me decide which classes to take, or just listening to me vent about an awful exam, the team is a support network I couldn't do without.

Running also keeps me healthier, which in turn helps me perform academically. I definitely make more time for sleep and eat more healthily because I know I need to be ready for practices, workouts, and races. I also take care of colds and other sickness much more immediately so they don't put me in a hole for the season. Finally, taking the time to go outside and be active

every day is very important to me, and committing to track and cross country means that time is built into my schedule.

*TT: Do you notice a difference in your stress level and overall happiness during your sports season as compared to the off-season?*

**Running and competing keep my mind busy and help me regain perspective.**

**DM:** I start feeling a little lost and lonely when I'm not going to practice at 5 p.m. every evening and interacting with the coaches and athletes. I definitely find myself less happy and motivated during the off-season as well as more likely to stress out about small issues. In-season, I might arrive at practice totally stressed



TAMI FORRESTER—THE TECH  
Dacie J. Manion '15

and upset, but by the end of practice, after running off some steam and talking with other

people, I feel human again. If I don't have that break in my day, I can get a little overwhelmed and

burnt out. Running and competing keep my mind busy and help me regain perspective.

## Women's Tennis: Candace Wu '13

*TT: How does your involvement with MIT Tennis impact your academic life?*

**CW:** Knowing that I have to commit about 15 hours each week to athletics actually enhances my productivity in academics. When I'm not at practice or at a match I know that I have to utilize my time more efficiently in studying for my classes. Also, I've found that exercising clears my mind and helps me focus better.

*TT: Do you notice a difference in your stress level and overall happiness during your sports season as compared to the off-season?*

**CW:** While competing can be stressful at times, I enjoy spending time with my teammates. Playing a sport takes my mind off academic obligations and in that sense, it decreases my stress levels. On the other hand, when I have a difficult academic week, athletic commitments require a lot of time and I do sometimes feel overwhelmed when I don't have time to focus on my class work.



TAMI FORRESTER—THE TECH  
Candace Wu '13

## Squash: Sung Won Cho '15

*TT: Do you feel that squash increases or decreases your stress level?*

**SC:** Squash definitely decreases my stress level, which is why I continue to play. Whether it's from a low test grade (or two ... or three ...) or just a bad day, playing squash helps to relieve the frustration. Sometimes, the stress from dai-

**Squash helps to relieve frustration.**

ly life carries over to my squash practice and I get frustrated on the court, but when that happens, I have great teammates who talk to me and encourage me. I always look forward to squash because I usually feel better after practice than before. While playing number one on the team can be a little stressful at times when I face opponents of much higher caliber, it's still the most interesting part of my school life.

*TT: How do you balance your sports and academic commitments?*

**SC:** I often have squash practice ei-

ther right before an evening exam or the day before an exam and sometimes, I consider not going to practice so I can study a bit more. Almost every time, I choose to go to practice because I feel that two hours of stimulating, physical activity will be more useful than two more hours of cramming. The most difficulty I have with balancing academic and athletic commitments comes from my UROP schedule. The nature of my research dictates that I have a regular schedule with large time blocks at a time in order to minimize waste of expensive reagents and to keep cell cultures alive. With games on weekends, that has been a little difficult lately, such that I had to run to my lab in between my Saturday games without getting much rest. Other than that though, I try to make it to practice whenever I can and play on weekends when I have some free time because I feel that physical activity helps me a lot in managing stress and staying healthy.



TAMI FORRESTER—THE TECH  
Sung Won Cho '15

## Men's Track and Field: Justin L. Bullock '14



TAMI FORRESTER—THE TECH  
Justin L. Bullock '14

*TT: How does your involvement with track impact your academic life?*

**JB:** My involvement with track significantly helps my academic life. I am a procrastinator by nature, and oftentimes, the only reason why I get things done ahead of time is because I want to get enough sleep to be able to train and compete at a high level. Coach Taylor has a sleep rule that says that we must get four hours of sleep in one night, ten in two nights and 18 in three or we are not allowed to practice. I think that the therapeutic benefits of

exercise along with the sleep requirement really improve my academic performance.

*TT: How do you balance your sports and academic commitments?*

**JB:** I have been doing sports as long as I can remember, so I do not understand what life is like without sports. So for me, balancing sports and academic commitments is not optional, it is something that I have to do. Because I really enjoy classes and running, I never feel that one conflicts with the other, they kind of go hand in hand.

## Men's soccer: Cameron McCord '13

*TT: How does your involvement with soccer impact your academic life?*

**CM:** Being a student-athlete has been extremely rewarding during my time here at MIT. I love playing soccer and I can't imagine enjoying my MIT experience nearly as much without it. Balancing both a sport and academics requires a lot of things: great time management skills, good foresight, organization, less sleep, and other things that make for any successful college student. The most important quality, though, is just an insatiable love for both. MIT students are extremely passionate about their areas of interest. For all of us here one of those areas of interest is academics but

for a lot of us it is also sports. That is why MIT produces such great student-athletes.

**It helps to have coaches and professors that understand what you are up against.**

*TT: Have there been times when you've had to prioritize soccer over classes?*

**CM:** I think most MIT student-athletes would agree that academics takes precedence over sports a majority of the time. Sports and academics are often seemingly pulling me in

different directions. It helps to have coaches and professors that understand what you are up against. Just this past season the MIT Men's Soccer team won the NEWMAC championship for the first time in history and qualified for the NCAA tournament. Our first round game was in Oneonta, NY, and we had to miss all day of classes on the Friday before the game. I had to miss important participation-based classes and finish work for the week early. I'm here at MIT because of it's academic opportunities, but when I have the opportunity to make history here in soccer I can focus on my sport alone without even a second thought.



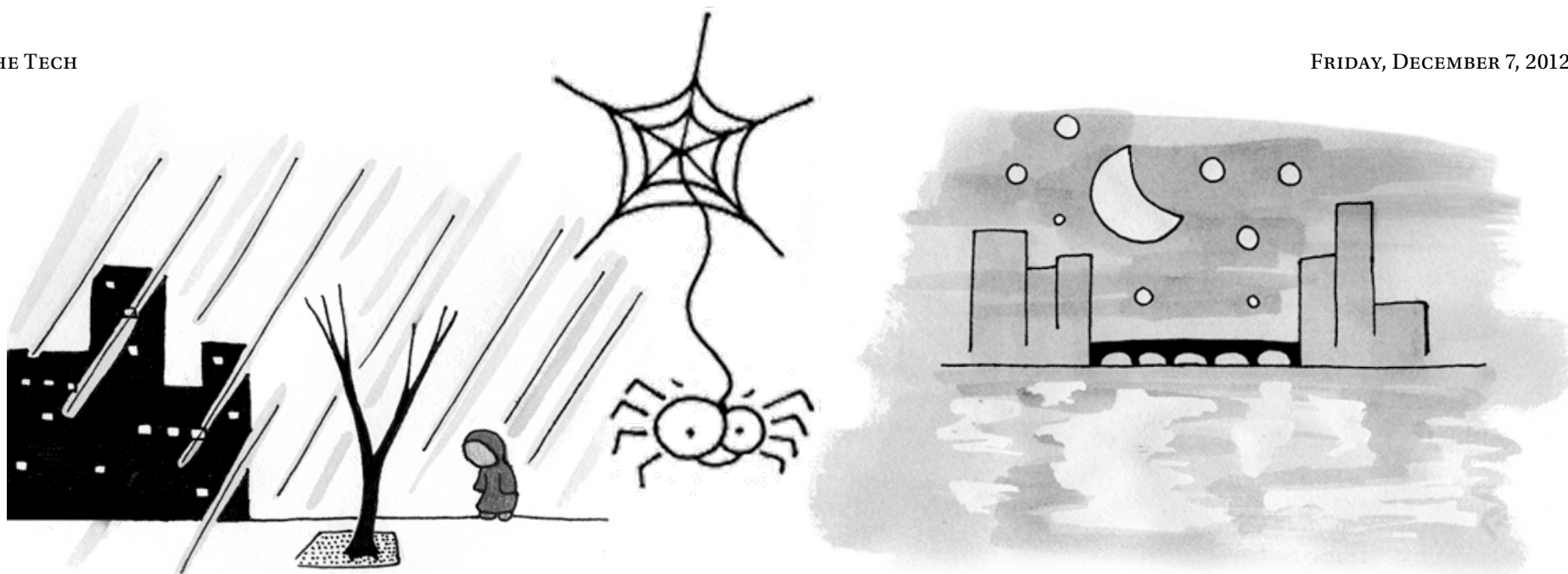
TAMI FORRESTER—THE TECH  
Cameron McCord '13











IMAGES COURTESY OF MIT ADMISSIONS BLOG

# Meltdown — The original admissions blog post

*The viral post that started the discussion: On instability, IHTFP, and leaving sometimes*

By Lydia A. Krasilnikova

This next week and a half promises to be electrifying. We're on the brink of an epic hurricane, a Presidential election, and either the most disappointing or the spookiest Halloween ever. But right now I'm going to talk about me, about MIT, and about why I haven't talked to you in a month.

Toward the end of September I became noticeably stressed out. I stopped talking to people, I stopped cleaning my room, and I got very lonely. It culminated in an hour-long cry session after a benign meeting with my biology professor about a class presentation.

"Cory," I said to my boyfriend, "nobody loves me."

"Nonsense," he replied, "I love you."

"I want to go home," I said. "My mommy loves me."

Then I watched an episode of America's Next Top Model and felt better. America's Next Top Model makes everything better.

"Have I always been this crazy?" I asked Cory.

"Well," he said, "you've always been a little crazy. It's only recently that you've become comprehensively insane."

That afternoon I went to S<sup>3</sup>. "I think I've gone insane," I said.

I have a fantastic dean at S<sup>3</sup>. Last year, I also came in feeling overwhelmed. We spent the half hour appointment talking about personal genomics and when I left I felt perfectly fine. This time, it took about three minutes for him to identify a medication I've been on that sometimes causes emotional instability. Two days later I had a procedure at MIT Medical to replace the medication. It was the most physically painful experience I've had. It stretched to four hours and left me nonfunctional for the next three days, and then it was over.

**“I got very lonely and I started to wonder if I'll ever retain enough information about the world contribute to our understanding of it.”**

The next week was my primary hell week of the term. It was doubled by the work I had to make up from the previous week and I did not do much other than study. There were lots of naps and not enough sleep, and there was a lot of frozen food. I stopped talking to people again. I stopped cleaning my room. I missed my dorm's annual apple picking event. I got very lonely and I started to wonder if I'll ever retain enough information about the world contribute to our understanding of it.

After my final all-nighter I woke up to someone waddling down the alley below my window and swearing angrily. I went to lab, had a conversation with my supervisor about grad school and grades and my future in the lab, and stumbled home crying in the theatrically-placed light rain. When I got home, I broke. I turned into a spiky blob of yelling and crying, completely freaked out my poor boyfriend, drank some cold water, and fell asleep.

Friday evening I went to visit my high school friend Eric at Tufts.

My dad tells me that when he and my mom were at Phys-Tech, the Russian counterpart to MIT, he went out to Moscow on weekends just to see other faces. There's something about seeing the same people every day, and all of us with similar problems, and seeing your particular misery reflected back at you everywhere you look. Visiting Tufts was like inhaling after holding my breath.

The people I met were beautiful. They were relaxed, they were happy, and they didn't have bags under their eyes. There was a spark, an extra degree of freedom, a young, harmonious vitality. The people around me were spending Friday experimental baking or jazz dancing until the a.m. hours. I didn't see anyone studying. They were just having

fun, and they were doing it guilt-free and not under the guise of putting off homework. There was something exciting and completely unpredictable about the situation: We might bake! We might dance! We might run out into the cold without our coats! It felt good to talk with someone completely new, and it felt good to be the nerdy one again.

We walked through vast lawns, past trees and scattered red brick houses with white columns. The buildings looked warm and inviting and none of them looked weird. For once, I didn't want weird. The cold wind bit through my sweater, and the sting felt tangible in a way I hadn't felt in a while.

"Why don't you transfer out?" Eric asked.

"Why would I do that?"

We stopped on top of the library to look at the Boston skyline in the distance. The roof was lined with trees and a path of white arches, which looked like they should have grape vines or roses. It was quiet except for the occasional airplane. I wondered if I could pick out the Green Building in the distance.

"I think I understand you," Eric said, "I understand your priorities."

"And what are my priorities?"

"You're willing to maintain your mental health to the extent that it helps you be a good biologist. You're willing to stay happy to the extent that it helps you be a good biologist."

When I got home that night, Cory and I sat down on his bed and talked about how miserable we both were. Something needed to change. Anything. We decided to break up. Half an hour later he came up to my room to collect his *Lord of the Rings* Legos.

"You forgot your spider," I said, gesturing toward Shelob, who was hanging by his string from my bed frame.

He unhooked the spider and folded its legs in, one by one, slowly.

"I'm making it more compact," he said. He wound the string up.

"The extra pieces are in the top shelf on my desk," I said. I sat down at my desk, pulled the shelf out, and handed it to him. I picked his sweatpants up from on top of my dresser and handed those to him too.

He wrapped his Legos in his pants, folded them carefully, and got up by my chair. He looked around the room slowly, avoiding my eyes, and stepped closer to the door. We stared at each other without making eye contact for a few minutes.

"I don't think I want to do this," he finally said.

"Me neither," I responded.

And we didn't.

(Cory agreed to let me post this on the condition that the money I get for this blog post goes toward Legos. "This building is 16+. Are you sure we can handle it?" "Yes. We're only emotionally immature. Luckily we don't build Legos with our feelings.")

The next morning I went to Artist and Craftsman in Central Square and bought a new pencil sharpener, masking fluid, three erasers, mixed media paper, and three small brushes. I stopped by Shaw's and bought apples, sharpened all my colored pencils, and spent the rest of the day coloring.

There was no swooping *deus ex machina*: not the operation, not Tufts, not the pencils, not the apples, not Legos, not boyfriends or the lack thereof. I hit the average on my exams, my supervisor ingeniously dreamt up my original life plan and presented it to me last week, and I'm still behind on work.

I'm trying to take it day by day, problem by problem, line by line. I'm calling my family more often, watching TV every now and then, and trying not to say no to opportunities to go outside. I'm trying to get nine hours of sleep a night, even if there's work to do.

I don't think many people understand what we mean when we say that MIT is hard. It's not just the workload.

There's this feeling that no matter how hard you work, you can always be better, and as long as you can be better, you're not good enough. You're a slacker, you're stupid, and MIT keeps an overflowing warehouse of proof in the second basement of Building 36. There's stress and there's shame and there's insecurity. Sometimes there's hope. Sometimes there's happiness. Sometimes there's overwhelming loneliness.

There's something to giving everything and always falling short. Eventually we'll walk out with a deep understanding of our fields, a fantastic tolerance for failure and late nights, and raised expectations for ourselves and for humankind. Someday, we'll look back on these four years as

the best years of our lives and the foundations of the kinds of friendships that can only be formed with some suffering. But right now, IHTFP. Sometimes it feels like MIT drags your self-esteem over a jagged, gravely rock face and stretches your happiness, your mental health, and the passion and energy that brought you here like an old rubber band.

I love this place. I love the amazing people I've met, I love watching myself grow as a scientist and a writer, and I love being engulfed in the heart of scientific progress and passion and feeling like I belong. At the same time, I'm miserable sometimes. IHTFP is the middle of the semester, when the lounges off the Infinite Corridor fill up with sleeping people, when I don't leave the dorm except to go to class or to lab, when I can't go apple picking because I'm hosed, and when the faces around me reflect my own anxiety. IHTFP is studying my butt off to hit the average, crying about my grades, and then helping a freshman with his homework and realizing how much better I've become at patiently disentangling a challenge.

MIT is paradise. Every sometimes. I love it here. My only consolation is that the salt in my tears will squelch any unsuspecting plants they land on. It's beautiful. That's right, unsuspecting Killian Court grass, wither. I wouldn't want to be anywhere else.

