Personality Test Reveals Problems of Average MIT Freshman

By Jeffrey L. Sieckfeld

The average freshman and the problems that surround him are investigated in the Undergraduate Association's 128-page study, the report, entitled "The Entering Freshman at MIT," was written by Leila Sussman and Gene N. Levine, staff psychologists hired by the Undergraduate Association for the project.

What are the characteristics of this typical freshman? He is about eighteen years old, white, Protestant, and an American citizen. His family background is middle-class, perhaps from a professional family or a small private businessman's, whose annual income was between $4000 and $6000.

In high school, he has spent about one hour a day in social activities, and twice as much time studying. He is coming to MIT as "an engineer"—most likely an electrical engineer—but his plans are still fluid. He has no more than a general-knowledge of his field, and feels that he could do well in several different careers.

Social Classes and Living Groups

Sussman and Levine clearly point out the grouping of MIT freshmen into social classes almost from the moment of arrival. They feel that the "social class" is the "chief" of the images that the "average" student has of his/her classmates. These classes are the living groups, saying "that the social class is the "social class" and therefore the "social class." The result of this is that the "social class" is the "social class" and therefore the "social class."

How do students choose their profession, and what determines his academic career? These questions are taken up in the freshman survey, and several important problems are found in the situation.

It is found that the definite choice expressed by a majority of entering students may be only apparent. The report holds that the tendency to stay in a professional field is in a function of the specialized studies which the student has mastered, and which he does not wish to throw over. Accordingly, "occupational choice among engineering students is likely to be more stable, more stringently education-oriented a specialist line. The young men exposed to excellent teaching of the humanities and social sciences (at MIT) is hence exposed to alternate career possibilities. Sociologists who believe in the direction, the more likely it is that some people will be chosen to "other" than science and engineering.

The nature of the first year course at MIT was found to be a powerful stimulant to those taking the courses. One freshman said: "They shouldn't give us this stuff." The report continues, "This disturbance did not occur so easily from difficulty in understanding the courses. It had something to do with all the viewing awareness that allows seeing a student's professional career, rather than those of later courses. One can firmly plant one's feet, is a room of multiple uncertainties. Conventionally, humanities, rather than being a realm of being a realm of abstract concepts, are hard in every sense of the word. Jobs like this are the unavoidable loss of freshmen.

The effects of these on students who happen to fall behind can be disastrous. The report cites an example: "When a student who is working hard goes his thinkingfour things a day, it's a little too much. He'll have to cut back on his activities."

M.I.T. Humanities Seminars presents ERNST LEVY, President in a program of works by:

SONATA, Op. 31 in E flat
SONATA, Op. 53 (Waldstein) Sonatina in F flat
SONATA, Op. 109 in E

MARCH 31 at 3:30 P.M.
KRESKIN AUDITORIUM, M.I.T.
Tickets 75C (Reserved) from ER, 4-3216