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This question is not known, as there are no Concourse alumni who are juniors or seniors, and only a handful who are sophomores. The consensus of this year's Concourse freshmen seems to be that Concourse is a lot of work involving a lot of reading. There is some feeling that "I'm not interested in learning as much physics as my roommate," or at least "I'm not spending as much time on physics as my roommate," but all agree that they like Concourse better than the standard curriculum, and doubt that having chosen Concourse will work against them in the long run. There is also much enthusiasm for Concourse's thematic nature.

Keeping up with the math and science part of the traditional freshman curriculum is a problem that has faced Concourse since its inception. Humanities come into Concourse on an equal footing with science, or as Professor Nancy Dworsky says, "not just equal, but integral." This means that if freshmen were assigned the usual physics and calculus problem sets in addition to the extra humanities work, their time might be severely overloaded. Says Busscariell, "What material is in a course is really a value judgment on the part of the instructor." He feels that students may see their roommates working long hours on physics problem sets and conclude that their roommates are learning more than they are, but it is the opinion of the Concourse staff that in the long run, their way of teaching science will work out at least as well as the standard way.

Part of the idea of Concourse is that, instead of just mindlessly doing problem sets, students will sit up and look around for possibilities. Professor Brian Schwartz says they would like students to "see the whole Institute as a library" where "you can map out your own education." Concourse does not occupy a student every minute of the day, and definitely does not mean "just attending a corner." Students are encouraged to find out what the Institute has to offer, and consequently, according to Schwartz, "a lot of students are into things they weren't into before."

The staff agrees, however, that Concourse is not for everyone. In particular, it is not for those who come to MIT specifically interested in some profession, who want to start taking courses in that field immediately, and it is not for those who believe that humanities should not be an integral part of the curriculum.

For the faculty, Concourse is a totally new experience. "The program offers to faculty members a kind of teaching and intellectual experience I know I have never experienced before," says Professor Travis Merritt. "Unfortunately, so far, we have not found enough ways of making informative contact with diverse faculty members who would probably be interested in doing the same sort of thing." The program seems to attract faculty who come into contact with it and the staff hope that there will be some day be more than one Concourse. They are eager to offer their program as a model and themselves as consultants to any like-minded group of faculty. The staff, most of whom are young professors, are especially interested in attracting more senior faculty members.

Concourse students and staff read excerpts from "In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer." The short story belongs to the Francis Bitter National Magnet Laboratory and has nothing whatever to do with the play. Photos by Dave Cutten

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