In Case of Insomnia—Whither the drop date?

By Storm Kuffman

The latest movement toward course Performance (CAP) has been toying with the idea of physically eliminating the drop date entirely.

Nasty rumors have circulatd about moves to advance the drop date for five weeks into the term, or, at the other extreme, eliminating the drop date entirely.

As a student, I've never had cause to drop a course near the end of the term, but the thought of being locked into a course after as little as five weeks is not terribly appealing. For one thing, many classes have not had their first quiz (or retumed the marked papers) by that time. If an instructor is going to use a quiz to judge a student's performance in a class, the student would be in the first mark as a basis for deciding whether or not to continue.

Additionally, I'm not sure that the Registrar could get those status reports out in time for a student to know where he or she stands. Registrar Warren Wells wouldn't let himself be pinned down on this because stating that the status reports "would have to be part of the consideration" of changing the drop date. He had no opinion on the idea, other than that it "has its pluses and minuses."

While advancing the drop date at the thought of not being able to drop a course until two weeks are left in the term would make the students feel different. Those in charge of courses must also feel the pressure of having no knowing for certain who just is going to stay or go. 

Physics instructor Walter Lewin has "strong feelings" about the late drop date — "in order to get his "European background," he speculated. Overall, he feels that MIT students have it too easy, they are spoiled. He was hardware, and that the Institute is "too lenient." "A month should be plenty for a student to decide, and it's not good if too many take "the chicken way out" of dropping a course with only a couple of weeks left. He also points out that when all those poorly drop the courses, it means seriously hindering madly high academic averages. 

In conclusion, he would definitely want the drop date retained, and would like to see it moved up to as little as a month into the term.

Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineerine Stephen Lourtel is not so vehemently opposed to the idea. He says the date up "would be a good idea. It would play against those students who take big loads and drop out without thinking.

He also feels that the "chicken way out" is not a problem, but more of a "safety net" for those who are planning poorly in." However, he would not be particularly upset if the status quo was retained.

Assistant Professor of Physics Bill Saika is not quite so enthusiastic about the date up. "I have a lot of sympathy for the date up" he would add. "It would be a good idea. It would put against those students who take big loads and drop out without thinking."

It would also seem that the faculty in (this admittedly small sample) would like to see the drop date moved up. However, there is no way to know if there is a case, and there should be no doubt that the drop date should not be pushed back. While advancing the date might make administration of courses significantly easier, it is suggested a drop date near the end of the term would make students take a harder look at their course loads, it would be a great injustice and hardship to students.

The best and easiest idea is letting the drop date remain as it is, not being advanced any more than two weeks.

The Wizard of ID

BY BRISTI PABKEV AND JONAH JOUR

Letters to the Tech

Life Insurance

To the Editor:

It has come to my attention that life insurance is being sold around the Institute under a plan that involves a loan to the policyholder. It is possible to pay the first annual premium. Several states have restricted this selling approach; however, the states have not been accurate in judging the marketplace.

I am firmly pro-life insurance for most young people who have family responsibilities and can see some strong reasons for others to purchase it while still young students. There are any number of ways of compensating this obligation through a retirement plan or premium. For example, most companies will issue permanent term insurance (for a small amount) that you can let yourself go up and become established before the big premium starts to be payable.

Furthermore, I believe that life insurance should be looked at as protection in your youth. Policies which include a savings element usually are a pretty poor investment.

In my judgment, Massachusetts Savings Bank Life Insurance is a "best buy" for young people who have financial responsibilities. It is available to any student and residents of Massachusetts. Young people who have family responsibilities should purchase permanent term life insurance. For example, the Massachusetts Savings Bank offers the best deal at this writing. There is no medical exam, no medical questions any questions when you first meet with an agent, and you can evidence read the fine print in what you are signing with a continuously talking agent at your leisure. Coverage is available in a large number of states. Sometimes I'm told that "preliminary" can turn out to be binding, but to my knowledge this is not correct. Protection Laws likely do not protect you if you are talked into in your place of business, i.e., probably your MIT office, and away from your dorm. I would suggest 3-5 days to get a disclaimer into the system so we can have some control over the results.

I am on leave from the Institute, but I am in Cambridge. If you have any questions about this business (or any other business), I would be glad to have you call me at 876-3656. I am in Cambridge. If you do have any questions about this business, I would be glad to have you call me at this number.

S. Curtis Powell

Prof. of Marine Engineering (ABEN)

No signature

To the Editor:

A letter from a number of SCC members was printed in the April 23 issue of the Tech. The statement of fact and spelling of the name was among the list of signatures to the letter.

I did not sign the letter. I read it, and I made a mistake at that time (it is interpreted incorrectly) at notating my signature was to be added, however when I returned the letter to its original signature, it was not.

This is not to say I agree or disagree with the contents of the letter, I do not choose to reveal my feelings at this time.

Bob Hendrickson

The UA election: The other side

By Stephen Shagoury

Now it is your turn to vote. The undergraduate Association Election is over and the necessity for your quick decision and a possible difficulty of voting, we feel the necessity to respond to the question that various parts of the MIT community have been given concerning the Committee for action during the past weeks.

The first set deals with material that has appeared in the campus newspaper. The Student Coalition has proposed a number of articles and columns most of which were unnecessary and contained factual inaccuracies that we now wish to respond to. The first is Mike McNamara’s “numeral of undergraduates” as listed in his article of April 9, 1974. The number of registered undergraduates varies enormously over short periods of time and the figure that we used was obtained at a different time than his. Given that an initial judgment had been made on the basis of an estimated 4000 undergraduates it was impossible to make any decision until our “actual” figures had been verified. As one part of the Registrar we did not obtain these figures until Friday April 5, five days before the election. Hence any comments about the approval of the petitions would be subject to this information. Later, the lists we received proved to be somewhat inaccurate, missing such relevant names as that of candidate Ron Zimmerman for whom the accuracy of data is of utmost importance. Several important problems were checked with the Registrar on Monday, April 8, and the numbers were then approved. We also wish to correct a mistake that McNamara made in his article of April 9 in his statement that 45% of the undergraduates voted in last year’s race. Furthermore, McNamara stated in an article on the 12th that no formal Elections Committee existed. Untrue, since a small group of people carried on the actual election. This was made of Stephen Shagoury ’75; Michael Matzka ’76; and Allen Allen ’75 (UAPV). Also, contrary to Storm Kuffman’s statement, we (Robert Nilsson) did not eliminate the valid vote of the student body. It was found, however, it was also decided that since the people involved in the election were indeed students and professional politicians that, in the interest of our studies, if a satisfactory solution could be arrived at which would not require more weeks of preparation and a new election this would be preferable. The candidates were consulted and informed of the situation, and after discussion they agreed with our conclusion and a decision was made that the results should be tabulated with the suspect ballots removed. The thing that we had not counted on was the cost of the election, we felt too close to use our trust as a judges to the number of stuffed ballots found being perfectly accurate was so not have a possible effect on the results. Therefore all considerations of convenience had to be made in the interest of a just result. The point being that had the candidates been notified before the election that such a possibility existed, they would have been better prepared to handle it. For such “would be nice.”

Our last comment deals with the general use in general which tended to concentrate on the inflammatory and on the ability to create “news” by making sufficient noise. To this extent we wish to congratulate our reporters—Curtis Reeves on his verboten 20-20 handicap and inceptoter assassinations. It is hard to say that the various media do have the right to report events as they see fit. However, all actions are not necessarily professional, manner and the information is inaccurate before publication.

The second group that we feel obligated to mention is the candidates of the Undergraduate Association. Currently the valid 710 who have seen this election through to the end. We do not deny that the student body has the right to be upset about the procedures with the valid ballots. However, we deny that this anger should be directed at the candidates. The first election had been tighter we would have been burning complaints of “improper actions” if this election had been looser he would have run the UA Committee. The fact is that we have done the best job that could be done and accuse the student body of being the source of the errors. What sort of a community do we have when we can have so much quality that less than one third of the student body cares enough to vote, yet somebody cares enough to stuff ballot boxes. Possibly not possibly be prepared to deal with these anomalies in a manner reasonable to all. We wish Hunter ‘76 Advertising that botched to vote for giving us purpose and tolerance. Any problems that you encountered in the final election we see as minimal and unimportant in the increased effort that is demanded of us.

Stephen Shagoury is the UA Secretary and was responsible for the election. Michael Matzka was a member of the election committee.