

By Michael Taviss

Yesterday before the freshman picnic many freshmen were introduced to their freshman advisors. These advisors will do their best to help freshmen through any problems that may happen in the coming year.

The Freshman advisor program in MIT is headed by Dr. Alan Lazarus, Director of the Office of Undergraduate Advising (OFA). He is aided by Assistant Dean for Student Affairs Betsy Kellermann.

Every freshman is assigned an advisor; of which approximately half are faculty, about a third are staff, and the rest are graduate students. Most advisors also have an associate advisor, usually an undergraduate, working with them. Each advisor submits a form to the office giving the number of students he or she would like and the number of students they will accept. The average number of students per advisor is four.

"The people who are advisors," Kellermann said, "are people who have a personal interest in the system. The OFA is always able to obtain a sufficient number of advisors." The advisors help freshmen with any problems that they might have and are "supposed to provide freshmen with specific contact with faculty... and more adult contact at MIT" according to Lazarus.

Advisors and students are matched both by computers and people. We ask all of the advisors for a list of interests," Kellermann said. "That we do the same with the students." Students are then matched with advisors with similar interests.

There aren't many problems with the system. The only real complaint is dissatisfaction with an advisor. According to Kellermann, "We encourage freshmen to change advisors any time if they're not happy."

Lazarus commented, "Every year there are complaints about specific advisors... All complaints... and any suggestions for changing the system should come to us. My general impression is that it (the program) is working well and if it isn't... my office is open to complaints and does something about them."

Kellermann agrees that "as far as we know it seems to be effective for most people."

About the freshman/advisor relationship Kellermann says that "We hope that the advisor can become a meaningful person to the freshman. We hope the freshmen will get to know [his] advisor well."

The origins of R/O Week

Editor's note: This discussion of the origins of R/O week first appeared in a 1978 editorial in The Tech.

Preliminary courses for freshmen preliminary to the opening of the regular college session are nothing new in American college and university life. Many of the smaller eastern colleges, and most of the middle-western colleges have either tried a so-called "Freshman Week" in years past or are trying the system for the first time this fall. In these institutions it is customary for the new man to arrive on the campus a full week before the opening of the fall term. There he is greeted with a view toward making him a part of the school before the upperclassmen arrive.

At these schools, the object of the assimilation period is to work the freshman into the scholastic division of college life. Emphasis is placed on the proper methods of study, the choice of subjects, and the relation between the student and the Faculty. Little is done to adapt the new man to the undergraduate life of athletics, publications, and dramatics—nor is it the intention, usually necessitated because the freshman seems to accept that part of college life as a natural thing.

The Freshman Week at MIT has remained for the TCA to point the way and prove to the undergraduate body that the spirit at Tech is essentially no different from that at the dear old "Rah! Rah!" colleges.

It is possible that the experiment will be successful—any benefits accruing to the freshmen and to the activities as a result of it will justify the time, labor and money expended. If the TCA can show that a freshman is better for having spent the weekend at Camp Massapoag, they will be justified in asking for the cooperation of the other activities in another camp next fall for the Class of 1931.

The TCA wishes the Tech every success in the undertaking and again congratulates it on putting an apparently good idea into practice.