Time away can be helpful
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Renter easy
In response to questions about the renter process for students who have withdrawn, Heine said that at the circumstances under which one leaves determine how easy it is to get back. Readmission is generally being handled basically a counseling session in which the student is helped to figure out why the student feels ready to come back. The Dean’s Office treats former students as a part of the family. Students who have done poorly and been asked to leave by the Committee on Academic Policy, however, may have to be readmitted by CAP.

As advisor said that if an unhappy student stays through a long, agonizing building before leaving, he is not likely to come back, whereas he is likely to return if he decides soon enough on his own to leave and do so then. The advisor advocated getting out before going a semester or a fall semester without making progress.

One student recommended meeting with one’s advisor every week to discuss academic progress. Others have found this approach helpful in handling or academic difficulties until it was obvious. Deans noted that students should feel free to come to them for change advisors. Financial aid officers pointed out that leaving in the middle of a term has aid implications. A term of scholarship eligibility expires although degree progress passes. Ninth-semester students can get loans but not MIT scholarships. Also, those eligible for educational social security benefits are eligible only through age 26.

On their own
Students participating in a formal year abroad program receive financial aid based on where they study. Students studying abroad or otherwise traveling are on their own financially, said Dean for Student Affairs Robert Halfman.

Huffman cautioned that MIT students usually make very little progress toward an undergraduate technical degree while abroad. He and Heine cited the Humanities Concentration requirement as one that is often satisfied in a foreign country.

The Dean’s Office should work to improve exchange programs with other American universities, proposed one student, and gather information as to what classes MIT and a given cooperating school would both accept for degree credit. “I don’t like it when what Stanford is like for a term,” he said. He added that encouraging MIT students to spend time at other colleges could help alleviate housing shortages on campus.

Housing a problem
Halfman replied that the number of students interested in exchange programs is too small to significantly affect the housing situation or to justify a mass information gathering project. He advised that progress on making a 26-term degree elsewhere, he called Stanford “probably the most likely candidate that would work.” He also explained that MIT needs a fund in order to start a fund for a new dormitory.

Deane declared that MIT’s inability to guarantee Institute housing for returning students is “a very complicated problem.” She cited preliminary results of a housing survey showing that the policy does discourage some students from taking time away.

Finding work had been difficult for several students. Halfman added that the student body work with its new officers to develop an effective job contact program through the Alumni Association. A placement officer urged all undergraduates and other community members, not just seniors, to seek jobs through the Career Planning and Placement Office.

Pie in the sky
A student was amazed that so few students are at MIT to have a good time as well as study. She said, “I was so happy at MIT that I felt like to be on it could be drawn up.”

Heine explained that students interested in working on projects related to taking time away to sign up after the meeting. She emphasized throughout the need for more research and for experience.

Huffman counseled students thinking of taking time away to “If you’ve got a clear idea of what you want to do, something you’re interested in doing while you’re gone instead of just running away from the Institute, it’s much more likely to be successful.”