I am speaking to you today to give you a report on the state of our institution. I want to start by saying that we are facing some tough economic news since the Great Divestiture. A few days ago, I was presented with a student budget. I didn’t like it, but you really won’t like it because you have paid for it.

I am not going to subject you to the jumble of charts, figures and economic jargon of that budget. The final decision is final and it’s not necessary that you understand why we did it.

First, however, let me give you a few “attention getters.” The student budget is our response to complaints about the quality of undergraduate education. Last year MIT undergraduates borrowed $3.5 million from state-administered financial aid programs. This year, that amount is down to $2.7 million. The final decision is final and it’s not necessary that you understand why we did it.

I am asking that you join me in reducing the student budget. With some sacrifice, it will be possible to reduce the projected figure by $955,000. This will still allow an increase of $725 over 1980-81 spending.

MIT will, however, continue to fulfill the obligations that spring from our limited finance. Basic needs are exempt from any cuts, so the room and board allowance will remain unchanged. Those who through no fault of their own must depend on the rest of us will continue to have financial aid provided. Since $2.7 million of next year’s financial aid will come from unrestricted funds, tuition—which provides many of these funds—cannot be reduced.

By reducing the book allowance, $150 can be saved. We believe students can do just as well by using the copies of required texts kept in the library. A limited supply of them is available. The $70 expense allowance is wasteful and duplicative. The mandated provisions portion of the room and board allowance will provide more than enough food for students, so no allowance for additional dining expense is necessary. Personal expenses can be cut to $1 per week for laundry, two 10S movies weekly, and one 25c game of pinball per week. This would require a budget expense cut of only $25 annually.

We can leave ourselves and our parents with an unrepayable massive debt and a shattered life, or we can leave them with a slight chance of paying off their loans sometime shortly before retirement. All it takes is understanding and willingness to wear the same clothes for four years and work three jobs every summer.

In a few weeks, we will discuss the possible effects of our proposal to be so frugal. So we must begin now, without incurring delay necessarily caused by attempting to gather student input. The budget is a statement of the way we believe the students are treated. They don’t demand miracles, which is good— they won’t get them.

### The Tech

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### Article: Offended by blind devotion, on priorities at the Institute

A few weeks ago there was a small controversy about a poster from LSC which offended some people on campus. I had forgotten about it completely until early last week.

I was sent to Senior House after putting in a long night at The Tech when I was accosted by a huge poster outside the Undergraduate Academic Office. It read: "We ASSIST MIT in THE TOUGHEST PROBLEM SETS AT MIT!" It was scrawled in red and white letters. Conveniently, the answer was also supplied: "COURSE XI!" I couldn’t believe it: these boxes were implying to their department that the most work was given to Course XI.

I was amused to recognize that I had just discovered a poster which offended me. The poster perfectly illustrates an attitude which is quite prevalent among those who control my college career: that a blind devotion to coursework and formal learning is the basis of an MIT education.

In a place where nearly every student himself included arrives either devoid of "social ability or interpersonal skills" or "inability to solve problems", this huge emphasis placed on formal learning is dangerous. It is far too easy for students to place their schoolwork above all else. I think it is the most important thing in life is to please the Institute. Social and emotional development are neglected.

MIT winds up serving what it seems to perceive as its function: to provide hard-working, service engineers for industry.

Don’t get me wrong — I’m quite devoted to my education in computer science. But very often, students here are forced to choose between success — defined in the Institute’s terms — and a pleasant social life. I probably go too far in the other direction. I spent thirty hours a week at The Tech, and for some time practicing guitar for my punk rock band, or at WMBR, or with friends. I spend a minimum of time working on coursework, and one of these days Course XI will rustle for me some. Certainly, my allocation of time is abnormal, too. But something which is missing from the Institute is an attitude which would allow too few to succeed at coursework and still have time for deep involvement in normal life.

When I look back on my college days years from now, I’ll probably be most proud of how I played guitar in my band, developed management abilities, and graphic arts talents at The Tech, acquired recreational drug habits, evolved sexual and social standards, and forged a personality and self-image. These won’t be the things that the powers-that-be at MIT will remember me for. In fact, I’ll probably have a sorry job by their standards. But I won’t care.

### Advice from an attempted suicide

To the Editor — Why?

Even now I sit here and wonder "Why?" it doesn’t make any sense. You see, last week I tried to commit suicide. What bugs me most of all is not just "Why do such a stupid thing?" (although that too), but even more so: "Why does the kind of an atmosphere exist which leads to such actions?" I realize now that I was trying to express my feelings that I thought nobody cared. Sure, now and then, people would show it. The concern for me and that which I was going through, but talking back to me seemed to me such a passive concern that it was done little more than out of obligation, or lack of watching better to do, rather than from a genuine interest in my affairs. Nobody knew it was coming: because I had it well — but hit them hard when they heard.

Some thoughts from an editorial by Bob Waterman (The Tech, Tuesday, April 11, 1978) came to my mind: Interpersonal relationships are really the key to solving the pressures at MIT. Perhaps all of us should walk down the halls with smiles on our faces and say hello. More importantly, if you know anyone who is seriously depressed, talk to him and urge him to seek out a counselor or a psychiatrist. What’s more, concern should be given to anyone who seems unhappy, or really to anyone at all because most people are quite good at concealing their emotions and discouragement.

What he has to say is valuable in two ways. First, that you should take initiative in your relationships. Smile, and saying hello is very superficial, but you have to start somewhere. And once you’ve gotten started, you have to keep going from there. Second, that although someone may appear to "have it all together" on the outside, he may be all mixed up on the inside. I don’t think many people would say that a problem of depression isn’t constant if someone is standing at their door crying, but what of the people who are crying inside that you’re not? — that are afraid to show their feelings for fear of some things — even perhaps losing up to the MIT image. In that case, one problem may not be the end of the world for you, but it may be for him. Yet, are you too busy to take time out for others? I hope not.

So what do you do? Reach out to those around you. Especially now, in the spring, when the inside of suicide is the highest — reach out in friendship to someone you know, find the time to take the initiative in relationships. Don’t wait for the crisis to come knocking at your door — he may never get there. Name Withheld by Request.