opinion

Column: Joseph Romm

Advice, but only for freshmen

This column is to be read only by freshmen. If you are still reading this and are not a freshman, you do not know how to follow instructions — which means MIT is the wrong school for you.

The best advice I can give you is to relax during the next year. Do not take more than five classes. Get to know Boston and MIT. This is Pass/Fail. No place exists about hidden grades except Johns Hopkins University — and if! Yes, Satan will know what you put in Freshman Calculus. You don’t worry — he likes people in C’s and D’s. Those who struggle for A’s get to help Sisyphus push his rock up the hill. Freshmen, in particular, should realize that much of what people say to freshmen, however, is not true. You can get all the dates you want. The freshmen will also date you: all you have to do is ask. Remember that, as my mother used to say, the worst a girl can do is laugh in your face.

Since most of you will never work up the nerve to ask a girl out (i.e., Get out girl! — I’m trying to steady) those of you who do will have surprisingly little competition. If you are a little nervous, start things off with a joke. Borrowing from Groucho Marx, say to the girl, “If I tell you you have a beautiful body, will you hold it against me?” Believe me, I have never failed with that line . . . and I’ve never even used it.

If you are still reading this and are not a freshman, you should be ashamed of yourself.

Stick with the freshmen. They are as unspoiled by college and MIT life as you. By all means get help from upperclassmen — they usually know a lot — but only academic help. I think you’ll be glad you did: maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow, but soon, and for the rest of your life. Much of what people say to freshmen, however, is not true. You can get all the dates you want. The freshmen will also date you: all you have to do is ask. Remember that, as my mother used to say, the worst a girl can do is laugh in your face.

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