Editorial

Lower pace, but not opportunities

Editor's Note: This is the second of three editorials discussing the recommendations of the Pace and Programs Subcommittee of the Committee on Educational Policy.

Freshman year should be a time to explore oneself, the Institute, and the basic sciences without fear of overloading by taking too many courses or worrying too much about grades. The Pace and Programs Subcommittee of the Committee on Educational Policy has made two recommendations intended to help freshmen ease into the MIT freshman year a reality, but one suggestion fails short and the other goes too far.

The subcommittee's proposal to issue freshman grade reports to every student at the end of each term overlooks the bounds of pragmatism and threatens to create even more tension for freshmen. Although the grade reports will be for internal purposes only, many multiple pressures for their release will develop.

Once word of the grade reports gets out, companies and graduate schools may request freshman grade reports. While MIT already has policies that address this situation, the existence of the grade reports may well lead outside groups to encourage freshmen to release their freshmen for which more than a nor-

lower load—up to the equivalent of the current unit limit—with only choose these alternatives, and they need an escape clause.

Freshmen should be able to take more than the normal course—up to the equivalent of the current unit limit—with only the written permission of their advisors. Freshmen should also be able to add both introduction and additional courses to the undergraduate academic support office. In the rush to decrease the pace for freshmen, the subcommittee should overlook their intentions for whom more than a normal pace is not overloaded.

Editor's Note: Ergo was given an opportunity to reply to this letter and declined.

To the Editor:

I used to think that nothing could be worse than listening to a lecturer in 10-259 or 24-100 without a newspaper to prevent me from dozing off. Recently, I've found that there is something worse. I was rushing off to class one morning like a good little marshall when I saw the usual stack of papers in Lobby 7. I grabbed one. When I sat down, I discovered that I had picked up Ergo. It has been awhile since I last actually read an Ergo. There's something about its appearance that says, "Leave me alone. Pick up last week's Tech or Link instead." I guess that's why I see so many Ergos in their original stalks.

What is it about Ergo that would object to? Well, it's not really the very conservative lack of one, that it represents. After all nobody reads it, so I'm not worried about it polluting the minds of our freshmen. (I say "freshmen" because after you've looked at your first issue of Ergo, most people never pick one up again, unless it's raining out and you need something to cover your head.)

Perhaps it's the waste of paper that upsets me. According to their circulation statistics, they print more than 5000 of those "campus voice of reason" sheets. I figure that roughly 80-85 get read (a liberal estimate). 400-450 get used as umbrellas (in conservative esti-

timate), and another hundred or so are used for miscellaneous pur-

poses (such as lining one's parrot cage). This leaves well over 4000 Ergos drowning in our hallways each week.

Another impression that bothers me about Ergo's existence is the impression of MIT students it gives to the students at Harvard, Bur, and Wellesley, where it is also distributed. I remember meeting a Harvard student who asked me something like, "A lot of MIT students are pretty conserva-

tive, aren't they?" When I asked him what gave him that idea, he replied that he had read a few copies of Ergo. I explained to him that nobody here reads it, un-

less they want a couple of good laughs or an instant car for in-

formation. The fact that the paper is associated with MIT although so few MIT students relate to anything it says is what concerns me. When students at other col-

leges see it, they don't know that the paper is almost totally disregarded here and is not taken seriously by anyone other than its staff (and even they can't believe most of the stuff they print, I'm sure).

I am in favor of the philosophy that people should be exposed to a variety of opinions. Certainly, alternatives to the Tech are desirable. I believe that the Link does a good job in this capacity. The students here can usually relate in some respect to the arti-

cles these 2 papers contain. It seems to me that the views expressed by Ergo would be better left to propaganda of the "Young Liber-

tarians" or the Ayn Rand Fan Club.

And now I must retire to pur-

suit my individual happiness. I think I'll shower some freshmen.

Kevin Hazl '82

Editorials, which are marked as such and printed in a distinc-

tive format, represent the official opinion of the Tech. They are written by the Editorial Board, which consists of the chairman, editor-in-chief, managing editor, and news editors.

Columns are usually written by members of the Tech staff and represent the opinion of the chairman and editor-in-chief. This week's column, however, was written by a staff member who is not a member of the editorial staff.

Letters to the Editor are written by members of the MIT community and represent the opinion of the writer. The Tech will attempt to publish all letters received, and will consider columns or stories. All submissions should be typed, preferably triple spaced, on a 5.7-character line. Unsigned letters will not be printed. Authors' names will be withheld upon request.