opinion

Jerri-Lynn Scofield

How to pick an ideal schedule

I have a confession to make: I am breaking a several tradition this fall. Wednesday, I registered for five courses (after the Registrar’s Office had preregistration materials and I had to visit an hour long line in front of a single computer terminal to be recognized. Where are MIT’s specialized computers? When you need them!) with plans to change something at a later date. My department registration officer was flabbergasted; I had just finally convinced him of the pseudo-rationality of my earlier ways. Registration Day and all its hassles forced me to think back to last year this time when I had an entirely different strategy for selecting courses at MIT.

Last fall term, after the third day of classes, I received a frantic telephone call from one of my freshman advisors. As a freshman who still accepts every syllable of the Freshman Handbook as Gospel, she was distressed because her course schedule was inadequate. The most important consideration in class selection is not always the quality of the learning experience.

Unfortunately, the Registrar’s Office assumes or pretends that these final week schedule changes accurately predict the courses in which student supposedly has precise academic goals it appears only natural, but in the midst of studying for a thermodynamics final, finishing a political science take-home exam, completing all of the thermodynamics/acoustics cases, and negotiating with a humanities professor for an incomplete, the student carefully selects his course of study for the term. To ensure that all lectures and laboratories had the need to call the Registrar, the office leaves a floor upon nearest non-conformist.

The sample method is surely the most sophisticated way to select courses at MIT and is published twice a week during the academic year (except during MIT vacations), weekly during January, and once during finals week. So does the Schedules Office, when it intends to enroll. So do professors, when they plan their courses. So does The Coop, when it orders books. So do departments, when they decide which courses to cancel. Twice each year, shortly before finals week, the Office of the Registrar issues its masterwork, Registration Material. Its clarifying description of class registration is the perfect example of the myth that class selection at MIT is a rational, orderly process, governed by each student’s desire for the best possible learning conditions.

The Tech

Ivan Fong

A daughter’s letter home

Dear Mom and Dad,

I felt like I’d been a long day. I’ve just finished moving into my new room and putting away stuff. Classes started yesterday, and I hope to relax this weekend — get some sleep, finish unpacking, and talk to the freshmen on my floor.

Strangely enough, I don’t feel the confidence and courage I always thought was second nature to the seniors I’ve known. I guess, deep down, I’m scared of what’s to come: both in academics and in emotions. I think back to the time I considered transferring from MIT, with the hopes of getting away from the stifling east-coast competitiveness and social pressures, and, in a way, wonder why I didn’t make that decision. Perhaps, again, I was scared.

When I first came to the Institute, and even sophomore year, I felt I could cope with the myriad of decisions I suddenly had to make. Decisions, for example, of how best to balance my studies and my socializing. Or how to deal with obnoxious girls. It’s funny how people outside MIT wonder what I say to MIT and think, “Boy, she must be strong.” While, at MIT, guys wonder whether I was admitted “just because I’m female.” As I look back now, I realize I didn’t really struggle to overcome these obstacles, but retreated to the comfort of my closest friends. While I could maintain an outward image of semi-confidence and semi-competence, inwardly, I died a thousand deaths.

So I hope this year to find my peace of mind, peace of heart, and discover what is it I truly want from life. More importantly, I hope to broaden my perspective of what “success” means — be it money, prestige, happiness, or whatever — I don’t know. Throughout high school and especially at MIT, I felt bombarded with the idea that to succeed meant to get a “good” job (i.e., well-paying) and plugged with the notion that I might not make it. I sense this realization in many women at school; they seem to work so hard just to prove themselves as women at a technical school.

Although I’m still dependent upon you financially, my dream is to prove myself as a woman at a technical school. For me, I don’t think it’s that bad. I am an old-fashioned, but I often wonder whether I was admitted for $10.00 per year. Third Class.

I look forward to the one day where you can be my close friend and companion first and foremost; who will be sensitive and understanding; gentle yet strong (although I do ask for too much. Maybe so), but I don’t think I’ll be a prisoner in a cell for anything less.

I love you.

Vince Light '86; Mlynarik '86. Andrew Wold '84. Eve Durra '85, Ken Hughes '84, Laurie Goldman '84, Amy S. Gorin '84. Tony Zamparutti '84. Weatherby '82.

PHOTOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT

Photo Editors: David G. Shaw '82, Joe Castle '82; Associate Photo Editors: Laura Goldman '84, Gerard Weatherby '82, Darkroom Manager: Bob Brown '82.

The Tech (ISSN 0148-9607) is published twice a week during the academic year, Monday-Friday, except during MIT vacations, weekly during January, and once during finals week. Printed by Charles River Publishing, Inc.

The Tech

Editors:

Associate Photo Editors: David G. Shaw '82, Joe Castle '82, Jonathan Cohen '82, Jim Vick '82, Linda Cutter '83, Bob Lane '84, Rod Woman; Andrew Hath '83, Eva Dana '85, Ken Hughes '85, Vince Light '86. Photography Consultant: David Tenenbaum '75.

PRODUCTION STAFF FOR THIS ISSUE

Night Editor: Bill Gruppe '84; Staff: David G. Shaw '82, Gerard Weatherby '82, Michael Brown '83, Bill Smith '83, Charlie Brown '84, Laurie Goldman '84, Amy S. Gorin '84, Tony Zamparutti '84, Bill Custeau '85, Daniel J. Weidman '85, Joel Gluck '86, Richard Mynard '84.

The Tech (ISSN 0148-9607) is published twice a week during the academic year, Monday-Friday, except during MIT vacations, weekly during January, and once during finals week in July for $10.00 per year. Third Class by The Tech, 64 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02139. Second Class postage paid at Boston, MA. Non-Filing Orig. Permit No. 58920. Postal approval: Change of address changes to Massachusetts Institute of Technology, PO Box 298, MIT Branch, Cambridge, MA 02139 (Telephone (617) 253-6568) for domestic and non-paying changes available. ©1982 The Tech. Printed by Charles River Publishing, Inc.

Dear Mom and Dad,

I’ve just finished moving into my new room and putting away stuff. Classes started yesterday, and I hope to relax this weekend — get some sleep, finish unpacking, and talk to the freshmen on my floor.

Strangely enough, I don’t feel the confidence and courage I always thought was second nature to the seniors I’ve known. I guess, deep down, I’m scared of what’s to come: both in academics and in emotions. I think back to the time I considered transferring from MIT, with the hopes of getting away from the stifling east-coast competitiveness and social pressures, and, in a way, wonder why I didn’t make that decision. Perhaps, again, I was scared.

When I first came to the Institute, and even sophomore year, I felt I could cope with the myriad of decisions I suddenly had to make. Decisions, for example, of how best to balance my studies and my socializing. Or how to deal with obnoxious girls. It’s funny how people outside MIT wonder what I say to MIT and think, “Boy, she must be strong.” While, at MIT, guys wonder whether I was admitted “just because I’m female.” As I look back now, I realize I didn’t really struggle to overcome these obstacles, but retreated to the comfort of my closest friends. While I could maintain an outward image of semi-confidence and semi-competence, inwardly, I died a thousand deaths.

So I hope this year to find my peace of mind, peace of heart, and discover what is it I truly want from life. More importantly, I hope to broaden my perspective of what “success” means — be it money, prestige, happiness, or whatever — I don’t know. Throughout high school and especially at MIT, I felt bombarded with the idea that to succeed meant to get a “good” job (i.e., well-paying) and plugged with the notion that I might not make it. I sense this realization in many women at school; they seem to work so hard just to prove themselves as women at a technical school.

Although I’m still dependent upon you financially, my dream is to prove myself as a woman at a technical school. For me, I don’t think it’s that bad. I am an old-fashioned, but I often wonder whether I was admitted for $10.00 per year. Third Class.

I look forward to the one day where you can be my close friend and companion first and foremost; who will be sensitive and understanding; gentle yet strong (although I do ask for too much. Maybe so), but I don’t think I’ll be a prisoner in a cell for anything less.

I love you.