Learn when to punt problem sets

(Continued from page 5)

tating and energy-draining. Most dorms are diverse enough that it will be easy to find people you fit well with, but try to get to know the others as well.

In particular, I recommend used dorms over single-sex ones — it becomes much easier to deal with members of the opposite sex when you’re lived with some for a while.

Don’t miss out on student activities, either; they can be incredibly rewarding and there’s such an abundance of them everyone can find a couple he or she likes.

I won’t presume to give much advice about work habits, as everyone finds his own routine (I did most of my work between 1 and 2 am and I am because I’m easily distracted and there was too much going on earlier in the evening). One indispensable thing to learn, though, is when to punt. There will be times when your workload becomes extremely oppressive. Many times. It is important to keep a sense of perspective, to realize that there is more to life than problem sets, and to notice when you haven’t slept for 36 hours. At these times, consider the relative importance of the assignments you have to do to each other, to your grades in those courses, and to your own well-being, and ask yourself: is this one really necessary? Then go out to a movie.

Column/Simson L. Garfinkel

How not to screw up your R/O Week

When I came to Boston on August 25, 1983, I really thought I knew what was going on. For starters, I decided to come up a few days early and stay with a friend. This gave me a few days to get to know Boston, get a local bank account and do other things like that. I was able to leave most of my baggage with my friend rather than cart it around during rush week. It worked out well.

I knew I would live in a dormitory; I never considered living in a frat or off campus. I wanted to live close to the center of student life, and I wanted the convenience of being able to eat anywhere on campus. Once I got the residence book in the mail, I decided within a week which dorm I was going to live in, solely on the basis of what I had read. I didn’t even bother to take the tours during Rush Week: I knew where I was going to live.

Making those decisions ahead of time was a mistake. For starters, frustrations and independent living groups at MIT are not like the frats at other colleges. Most groups here are fine places to live filled with kind people. While the pages of the residence book reflect the character of the individual living groups, they only approximate it. Four-paragraph descriptions are no way to choose a place for four years.

I was so sure that I knew what was going on. I didn’t think anything of leaving MIT for the first weekend of Rush to visit friends. By doing so, I missed my opportunity to decide on the housing options on offer and during interviews. Then classes began and I made more mistakes. I got scared about the workload. I had been told over and over again by upperclassmen and administration that I should expect to be at the bottom of my class, I should expect to fail my first test. I was told that everybody here was as bright as or brighter than I was.

This didn’t happen. The freshman workload isn’t impossible. It just seems daunting because they haven’t yet learned how to properly budget their time. The main problem is sitting down and doing the work. Rather than letting a problem set wait until the night before it’s due, work on it from the day it’s assigned. No course is so hard that you can’t solve any of the problems; if one were, every student in the class would get an A because class average determines final grade.

As a freshman, you shouldn’t be scared to take too many courses or to take courses that are labeled advanced; you’ll be on pass/fail. If you fail the course, it will just go away... it doesn’t show on your transcripts, or be part of your official record. Be concerned with learning the material, not stockpiling A’s. The Institute has much more to offer.

MARGUKS?

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