Students impose much of the pressure of MIT on themselves

James R. Munkres

There has been a good deal of discussion recently about the "pressure" of student life at MIT, about how gay an education here is "like trying to force a square peg into a round hole." Here are a few comments to the discussion.

Consider the present arts college background, by way of a couple of large universities. The whole philosophy of college education somewhat different from that popularly espoused at MIT. It involves (1) taking challenging courses, (2) for which one is prepared, (3) working hard on them, but (4) balancing the purely academic with other educational experiences, and (5) above all, keeping a sense of perspective about what one can realistically accomplish, on the basis of a given academic term.

I know students who have adopted this philosophy of life and by and large, they have a great deal of fun with their MIT experience.

The aspect of this culture that bothers me most is the fact that students are always in a hurry, always in a rush. There is no "normal" speed to things, but most insist on the other. The reasons they give vary widely, but for the most part...

I should get started on my major early.

Why?

I can handle 60 units OK. But can you handle them well?

I work better under pressure. Does that mean I don't like to face that, that you exercise your brain only when forced?

Perhaps I can graduate in three years. To impress some one to save tuition? -- I want to double major. Why? It won't be as much work. The people back home will say -- who may you get to do the price of one?

--- One of the subjects I'm taking doesn't require much work. Then why in the world are you taking it? You're not learning anything. Everyone else is doing it. No comment.

The real reasons, I suspect, are (1) panic that students impress on them; (2) that they have the right to impress on us; and sometimes of their teachers, by taking on an extra load. And the bigger it is, the more impressive it seems to be. Of course, this course may mean that they must navigate the subject's aspects in the syllabus aren't going to be graded, must skip the problems that aren't being handed in, must read the better reading assignments to fake their way through the classroom discussion, dissexualize in the sense that seems, it is, receiving credit toward the degree, but not the knowledge.

Who is responsible for this state of affairs? We all are, suppose. If we as facult...[Munkres, page 4]

Students have refused to become involved in the reform process

Jack L. Kerberbrock

The review of engineering undergraduate education has been under way with increasing seriousness since last June, when the initial contact with the review teams was made. The teams have been close cooperation with the review of basic science departments and the Engineering Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. They have collaborated with the CEUE and the SB committees, of science by the Silbey Committee on Science and Education. Those activities are all coordinated by at least bi-weekly meetings of the Undergraduate Council on Educational Policy Chairmen.

There has been a number of meetings of the Undergraduate Council, and the last of them were summarized in the excellent article about it all. Specializations of departments have an enormous effect on visibility and prestige of the School.

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Science and engineering professors often know more about the humanities and about each other's fields than the humanities department knows about science and engineering. "Differential equations -- what's that? one of my CQxy one advi...[Kerberbrock, page 4]