feedback

Requiring or eliminating IAP would be a mistake

(Continued from page 4)

because the several series that they set up were fairly extensive, and the lectures were good. The more interesting the topic, the more they would show up for it.

Another reason that students may not be attending even the interesting events is that many students work full-time during IAP to pay their tuition. More evening and weekend seminars should be added.

In addition, you seem to discount the "intellectual" IAP activities such as seeing Boston or going to museums. The pace of MIT often prevents many students from taking advantage of such things during the term. Is going to the MFA during IAP "unproductive" or should they just study their art history books instead?

We realize that there are problems with IAP. But we don't think that shortening it to one week and adding "IAP days" during second term is the answer. The MIT administration keeps talking about the pace and pressure of MIT and how they are going to reduce it. Frankly, we don't think it can be reduced within the term without radically changing MIT, which would be difficult.

But shortening IAP would be taking away one of the biggest pressure valves we have. Many students really need the six weeks between terms to be effective during second term. What is wrong with socializing with people? Is MIT counting leaders or machines? During the term it is often difficult to keep up with friends. If all we do is study, what kind of people will we be?

The "techy" mentality may work well enough here, but once we get out, we will have to deal with people, and that's where we'll be. We disagree with the categorization of socializing as "unproductive."

If IAP is shortened it would fall hard on students beginning UNIX. It is very difficult to start a new project or get adjusted to a new lab while working only 10-12 hours a week. Cutting IAP would also affect those students who depend on their IAP income to pay tuition.

The suggestion of having IAP days during spring term will probably not solve the problem if it is set out to solve. We sincerely doubt that the attendance at these events will be any higher, in fact it may go down. If students' minds, the coursework is going to make procedures go on to an extra seminar or lecture. There isn't enough time to do it all.

We also feel that requiring students to go to IAP events is a misguided idea. We have enough requirements. Why make a student go to something he/she is not interested in?

Also, requiring students to be on campus would be unfair to international students and those students who live far away. Because of expense, many of these students only go home during the term because it is worth the airfare to be home for two weeks. Some would not go home for a two week break. It is fair to them.

In addition, many students, especially freshmen, need more that two weeks at home to recharge themselves with their families and friends.

What we suggest is for MIT to offer several optional three or six unit classes that are based on some of the more popular classes, especially humanities

DIFFERENT FRESHMAN MUSEUM DAYS

Many students would like to take more humanities courses, but they cannot because of conflicts with their departmental requirements. Also, students would probably be interested in IAP versions of some of the freshman and undergraduate seminars. Often these students decide against taking a seminar when faced with a heavy course load.

Some themes of last year's Freshman dinner where speakers focused on choosing a major would be good. Similar themes could be found for all classes (beginning career plans for sophoms, grad school plans for seniors, and interview tips for alumni). It need not be a dinner, just some sort of forum where students could get answers to frequently asked questions.

If more 12 unit classes are offered, there is also the danger that some students would load up on IAP credit in an attempt to graduate early and save tuition. We don't think that IAP should become another winter term, such as many other schools have. This program is unique and a good one that convinces many people to come here. It is supposed to be a relaxed time of learning and exploration. Please don't impose Add Date onto it.

Prof. David Gordon Wilson made a comment about how students seem to want structure, and undergraduate seminars. Of course, it is not here just as an educational institution. It is a researcher's institution. It may not be attending even the in-teresting events is that many students work full-time during IAP to pay their tuition. More evening and weekend seminars should be added.

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