LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Opinion

MIT should support NSF fellows

I feel that MIT's recent decision to limit the number of National Science Foundation fellows which it will accept is unwarranted and shortsighted. The implication that NSF fellows are some kind of Lorenzo de Medici bound to the faculty's purse is ridiculous; competition for the program is intense and NSF fellows represent the best of domestic graduate students, the very same that MIT should be recruiting heavily.

Recent calendar changes not in students' interests

As you should be aware, the calendar changes proposed by the William S. Sieburth '87 committee were passed at the last faculty meeting by a vote of 41-6 (“Futility demonstrates error,” April 20). The committee which set forth this proposal defined its goal as two-fold: (1) to reduce the number of conflict exams in each semester; and (2) to relieve the stress and pressure students suffer during the final exam period. Unfortunately, the rearrangement of the calendar does little to diminish the stress placed upon students and in many respects increases it, not only during exams, but throughout the term. What negative affects will these changes have on students?

Lost of IAP weekend: Due to the intensity of Independent Activities Period classes, many students may now choose to not take them so as avoid the consequences of having no break before the work of spring term. In addition, students who rely on income during IAP may find it extremely difficult to find employment for less than a full month.

Cut-back on long weekends: As one pursued to finish, “Fatigue is cumulative; sleep is not.” Four-day weekends have given students a chance to escape stress, catch up on work, and visit home for emotional support. By eliminating these breaks, the pace and pressure are ultimately increased.

Extending Finals Period: Extending the exam period by one day does not alleviate the possibility of having four exams on the first two days of exams in the spring term. The length of the exam period is irrelevant if students are given proper time to prepare. Removing a reading day in the fall only serves to worsen the situation and promote cramming.

It was obvious that the faculty present for the vote had already made up their minds on the issue.

Those who were absent must have misinterpreted the importance of these changes. This “quick fix” fails to address the real problems of HASS-I0 finals, 12-seat classes with 20 hours of work, and the stress and pressure of the average MIT student. The calendar changes are simply for- mal alterations. They do not provide a comprehensive look at all the aspects of the problem. In reality, our problems have very little to do with the physical calendar.

What is most distressing is the lack of student input or discussion of developments of the calendar. It is astounding that students were not included on a committee which affects us directly on such a basic structural level. Perhaps this is too great a flag in the calendar and why the student body is so unresponsive to the idea of change. In the future, we are sure that you will help us regard the problem to be involved from the beginning in formulating policies which will affect students.

Colleen Schilling '92

Vice President
Undergraduate Association,
with the approval of the UA Executive Board

Reusable china and silverware vanish from campus dining halls

We would like to express our concern to the student body regarding the loss of china and silverware from the campus dining halls, especially Lobdell and Walker.

Share A Vital Earth (SAVE), a student environmentalist organization, has been working with MIT Food Service since January to reduce the amount of disposables used in the cafeterias. These plastic and paper disposable products threaten the environment and use up valuable resources. ARA was very receptive to this proposal. They implemented the first stage of a plan to minimize disposables by mid-March. This included offering china and more silverware to the dining halls.

Your cooperation in this matter will help us reach our environmental and economic goals. ARA’s actions are important; please make them count.

Thank you.

Aary Ravin '91
Jenny Zenzach '91

on behalf of SAVE

READABLE CHINA & SILVERWARE

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