Freshman essay enters in dormitory preferences on Monday into one of 20 computers during the dormitory selection at the Sala de Puerto Rico.

Essay Identifies Writing Faults

Texts, from Page 1

"They'd like to get it out of the way before rush starts," Enders said. "It seems to be the two essayists who choose their classes knowing how they performed on the test, she added.

Freshman essay evaluation

The essay exam measures a student's writing proficiency and is used for advising purposes, Perelman said. It identifies writing weaknesses, which could hurt a student's performance in humanities classes if uncorrected, he continued.

Passing the evaluation finals Phase I of the Institute Writing Requirement. Students can also pass Phase I by scoring a five on the Advanced Placement Language Composition test, 759 or higher on the American College Test, or through Internship. Otherwise, they must either submit a paper to the writing requirement office or pass a writing subject which fulfills Phase I.

A small percentage of students received a "conditional pass," meaning that there were minor structural or grammatical errors. The conditional pass can turn into a pass when the student revises his paper with a Writing Center tutor or attends a two-hour workshop, which Perelman will conduct this term.

Several reasons could explain why students who received a "not acceptable" or "not acceptable - subject required" may have failed to show writing proficiency, Perelman said. They could have writing problems, do not work on timed writings, have job lag, or not write as well as they could have given the question topics. These students will personally meet with Perelman or an assistant over the next month or two.

Perelman would not disclose the exact wording of the questions because he does not want future examiners to have an unfair advantage. However, he did describe the general context of the questions.

Students were given four essays: a narrative an argument piece, Perelman said. They had two options in the narrative section: describe an incident where someone was rude or uncivil, or illustrate or discuss an essay topic. Perelman said. They had two options in the argument section: a subject "acceptable" or "not acceptable - subject required".

Math diagnostic

The math diagnostic, like the essay evaluation, is used to "help people and flag for their benefit whether their pre-calculus background is rusty," said Professor of Physics Anthony F. French.

Test questions fell into four categories: algebra; geometry and analytic geometry; trigonometry; and logarithms, exponentials, and complex numbers.

Of the 1073 freshmen who took the math diagnostic, 362 had an adequate background, 213 were weak in one area, and 278 were weak in two areas or had a total score too low to pass, Enders said. The scores were distributed with "pretty much a bell-shaped curve," French said.

The average time to complete the test was 70 minutes, with times evenly distributed, he added.

French said the math diagnostic was created when he "developed a diagnostic test that students performing poorly in 8.01 (Physics I) had not have pre-calculus in their fingers." "For most students (the math diagnostic) was just a confirmation that they're fine." Enders said.

Students who are weak in two categories will take another test on Friday. Enders said she expects that most freshmen will pass the second exam.

Brush-up sessions will be offered

Each of the four sections on the math diagnostic had five questions, each worth five points. Students who scored lower than 17 out of 25 points in one section were considered weak in that section. Students who were weak in two sections who overall received less than 67 out of 100 points did not pass the diagnostic.

Partial credit was awarded on some of the questions, French said. The grading was done by about 20 graduate students and senior students with some experience in teaching math and physics, he added.

Enders said that students who are weak in one or more of the categories attend review sessions or practice on their own. Review sessions will be run by MIT students, she said.

If the weakness is easy to solve by going to the brush-up sessions, freshmen can get the practice they need and then they're all set," Enders said.

Another option Enders suggested was to take a combination of Calculus I (18.01) and the slower-paced version of Physics I, 8.01F. French added that 8.01F was a "tremendous success" last year, its first year.

With three extra weeks of class and a final exam scheduled apart from other finals, students may find it easier to learn the material.

Enders added that this year, students in all of the calculus classes, including 18.01, another version of Calculus I (18.01), and Calculus II (18.02) will need to attend reviews and pass the math diagnostic. Last year, only students in 18.01 had this requirement.

Many of them only had one or two other categories to take another test on Friday. Enders said she expects that most freshmen will pass the second exam.

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SOCCEER - ENTRY MEETING 9/10
BADMINTON - ENTRIES DUE 9/13
TENNIS - ENTRY MEETING 9/13
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