MIT Entropians

[Voo Doo apologizes to anyone who wasn't offended by the original "Extropians" mailing. What you are about to read will hopefully offend the rest of you. Due to insufficient postage, the U.S. Postal Service refused to accept this mailing. We will not stand for this blatant government censorship! Paradoxically, the Extropian pamphlet had no trouble getting through the Postal Service. We have thus resorted to distributing this to you by other means. Congratulations, you're now reading the pamphlet the government did not want you to see! We've not only spent our own money, but other people's as well, just to ensure that you receive this important information.]

CENSORED

Voo Doo

Welcome, MIT Freshman Class of 2001!

Welcome! You are arguably the brightest, most talented freshman class in the nation. But you did not come here without struggle. Many of you have known bitter loneliness all your life; we affectionately label people like you "losers."

Maybe your parents kept you on a strict 10PM curfew. Or perhaps you were beaten every time you mentioned you had a "friend." How many times were you out alone on a starry night, wondering what it would be like to have a date, or what it would be like to hang out with a group of friends? Or, worse yet, you've given up on people altogether and, as you lay there listening to your Beethoven too loudly, you dream about math and physics, about creating the first cybernetic implant and colonizing space.

If this describes you, then all we can say is: Get a life. And when you've found one, come back and talk to us.

For the rest of you, we have some advice on Rush. At this point, you've sloshed your way through several days of incredibly lame Rush events. But it was all worth it for one reason, and one reason alone: free food. As you go through your four years here at MIT, you'll find that Rush is the only time when you're offered that much free food in that short a time. Cherish the moment.

Also, Rush is the time to meet friends you can go to parties with. This is important too, because without that, you will start your four years at MIT closer to being a "loser" than other people. And it only goes downhill from here.

That's what the rest of this brochure is about. Your four years here at MIT. Most of you are probably thinking, "Yeah, I can have a good time here. There are cool people here, and I can hang out with them."

You are in for a big surprise.

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The Freshman Tragedy

Before the end of your freshman year, most of you will have forgotten how to have fun. Sucks to be you. Welcome to the "real" world of work and drudgery, where you dream about your 6.170 problem sets, everything you eat tastes like last week's dissection, and you keep thinking, "Dammit, didn't I once have a life?" You would mourn that, but it's time for 8.01 lecture. This is the Freshman Tragedy.

It is a moment of high anticipation, on some late August day, when freshmen arrive on campus. You are all giddy, for soon you will face your equals and see what a *real* party is like. You can't get enough of this place: you start to explore the absurd variety of drinks available, the myriad adventures to be had in Boston, the late-night debates on your favorite *Baywatch* lifeguards. Your advanced standing exams are the last thing on your mind. Before the towering LSC screen, the Reg Day porno holds your rapt attention. This was worth the walk from the dorm, you affirm. And there is so much more to come... It's a double feature! You solemnly swear your love for all that existence means to you... for the miracle of breast implants.

And you burst out in laughter. Why, several of your chemistry classmates are going to help solve that great mystery: how to build the world's largest beerbong. Why would anybody want to live a less inspired life? And now you've come to MIT, where at last, everybody is like this.

Wrong!! Most people at MIT do not have lives!

Shyly or boldly, each of you in your own distinct way, you introduce yourself to people, hoping to meet your fellow party animals and their friends and harems. But again and again, with each new introduction, each new handshake and exchange of pleasantries, you realize that the people you're looking for are not here. They're in Topeka.

You search MIT's living groups, but you find that the frats are just dens of academic obsession. "We have the best GPA on campus, man. Come look at our bible library." What the hell! You didn't come here just to study. You could have gone to Caltech if you wanted to tool and not get laid.

You eagerly await the Activities Midway. But, walking up and down the aisles of tables, all you find are rows of study groups, discussion sessions, dry social clubs, and some dull publications. Where are the beer-tasting societies? The nudist colonies? The dancing pyromaniacs? The skateboarding stoners? The Mile-High Club? Where can I have FUN?

R/O comes to a close. All the upperclassmen return. You'd think conversation would naturally focus on the new drugs they tried over the summer, what new games can make the next party even wilder. What sucks about classes, getting the problem sets from some dupe tool and copying answers from bibles together. Ways to have a strong social life without having to take time off to work. Perhaps watch TV, blow something up, attend movies with friends. But for some reason, the right people usually do not find each other. The great preponderance of you will spend your time with overworking, serious, and boring people, whose conversations often focus around how they are going to tool all night, how interesting the problem sets are, how they got up early to re-read the chapter before lecture.

You can tell a lot about people by how often they log in on Friday evenings. Come ON! This is the WEEKEND! You urge people to get off Athena and do something interesting. "Party!" "Get wasted!" "Smoke my fly, homey biatch!" "Sleep!" "Have sex!" "Play Quake!" "At least put on some pants, you freak!"

Meanwhile, the MIT machine churns along. Your courses get harder and harder, and you have to actually work to keep the CAP off your ass. Caps are supposed to be on your head. And what's up with that Noun Poetry thing, anyway?

Soon, you find yourself alone in your failures, alone in your attempts to keep the flame of punting alive, alone in your attempts to drop 8.01. You're standing in MacGregor trying to open the damn window all the way. You're wondering about all the things you never got to try. Like hijacking a T train and driving it to Cuba. Or climbing up Mass Ave. with pitons. Or gnawing on CP cars just to get arrested.

Many of you will lose your curiosity, and maybe your Tamagotchi. You nibble at party posters without going to them. You only go to LSC every once in a blue moon. You continue eating at Lobdell to avoid leaving campus.

All of these examples illustrate the Freshman Tragedy, kind of like in that Van Gogh painting, "The Freshman Tragedy." Only without the blood. It's like a sucking chest wound. But then again, all chest wounds suck. It's like a paragraph of bad similes. How did this happen? We believe it was Kenny G who once said, "God, I suck." The clear moral here is to burn your saxophone and cut your damn hair.

Affirmative Action at MIT: The Big Coverup

The first thing President Chuck will say to you at your Welcome Address is,

> *We know that we have made the right choice in you. Each and every one of you is a member of the MIT Class of 2001, because we know that you have the intellectual capacity, the energy, the imagination, and the personal will to succeed here.*

Let's analyze this statement carefully. The first sentence is clearly false; you and I both know that Joe Admissions Officer only admitted you because he had just been trampled by cows and in a comatose stupor checked the "accept" box.

The next phrase is true, if you are a freshman. The next few phrases are also true because "we" refers to the MIT Admissions Office, all of which has been trampled by cows and is currently completely comatose and flying around in a happy place with tangerine trees and marmalade skies. In reality, though, you don't have intellectual capacity, you lack energy, you've got a feeble imagination, and your will to succeed has made you the dismal failure you are today.

Woohoo! Perfect; you are exactly the slacker we're looking for. Join the Entropians today.

There's a clear corollary to this trend, contrary to what some few people seem to think:

The average woman and "underrepresented" minority at MIT is exactly as unintelligent, unintellectual, and unambitious as everybody else here.

Back to Vest's speech:

> *Your class is one of the most diverse in America. You come from 49 of the 50 states... 38% of you are women, and you come from an extraordinary array of ethnic, racial, economic, cultural, and religious backgrounds.*

Our first question is: What the hell is wrong with Mississippi?

Our next question is: You think you're diverse? Just look at yourselves! You are all the same- looking at you, we try to see true diversity, but it's just not there. Do you have any criminally insane people in your class? What about illiterate third world children, slave laborers, Nazis, dictators, murderers, rapists, etc.? These classes justly deserve representation in a truly diverse student body, but they're just not here in proper proportion. These classes are the truly underrepresented minorities of your class. There is something deeply disturbing about a 'diversity' policy that denies access to the true minorities of the world. The sheer hypocrisy of such an administration is both ugly and revolting.

The Zero-Sum Game of Admissions: Every decent citizen admitted is one fewer child molester who should be here but isn't.

We must push to admit all those equally deserving and truly diverse groups of twitchy Mafia hitmen, gay Amish women, rabid militant despots and poor alien prostitutes. We must save the Institute from utter homogeneity.

Intellectualism at MIT: The Social Scene

MIT admissions policy explains a great deal of the Freshman Tragedy. They keep admitting dedicated, inspired intellectuals who just don't get it. And they call themselves dumb things like "Ender." They probably got that from some book or something.

These people do a great deal to poison MIT social life. Here's a sample of some very recent articles from The Tech:

> *Mir Cosmonauts Prepared to Repair Damage to Module; Efforts to Reassure Hamburger Consumers Stepped Up; Town Tries to Cope in Wake of Shooting Rampage; "Off Course"; Extropians Matter Is Not About Free Speech.*

You can see that these articles have one very dangerous thread in common: Tomatoes. We must eat them before they eat us.

Another common theme here in these articles is the people involved need to get a life. And so should MIT students; some of them get excited by abstract algebra, yet they're totally turned off by a good bong.

We had thought of mailing you all a good bong. Unfortunately, the federal government has laws. So we smoked them all instead and then wrote this pamphlet. If there is one thing we want you to read before you get here, it would be this pamphlet, a fantastic work and absolute must-read for anybody. We cannot recommend it too highly.

But MIT is not concerned about you reading this pamphlet. The Institute did not spend a penny to distribute this manifesto to the class of 2001. Instead, they painted Senior House pink. They are much more concerned about you rushing a dormitory.

MIT's carefully orchestrated goal for Rush is to ensure 60% of you live in dorms. Towards this end, MIT will marginalize and trivialize the fraternities and sororities. Sure, they may say "Let the rush begin!", but what they really mean is, "Go back to your dorms now, sheep." Fraternities are left grabbing desperately for freshmen.

Look at how you're prevented from considering fraternities. The moat that is the Charles River sits between you and the castle where the Lords of the Manor live. And you are exploited by the Institute and forced into a life of academic serfdom in the havens of smoldering intellectualism, the dormitories.

All this while, the Lords sit in their castle, experiencing true brotherhood, course bibles, and enough beer to shake a stick at.

And you're munching on the falafel of dormitory living, and the spices are all at the bottom. God, you wish you had an orange smoothie.

The Entropian's Guide to Rocking MIT's Courses and Clubs

Picture yourself as a freshman. This should be easy because that's what you are. Now picture yourself taking classes at MIT. The thing about classes at MIT is: everyone is taking them. Freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors, grad students — they're all taking all sorts of classes here. That's one of the keys to understanding how MIT works — people go to school here.

Now, try to imagine how much that sucks. Because hey, nobody really wants to learn. People say they want to learn, but do they mean it? No. What they mean is they want to get money. That's what just about everything really boils down to, when you get to it. For example:

"I want to graduate." means "I want money."

"I want to be happy." means "Why don't I have enough money?"

"Is that your lava lamp?" means "Show me the money!"

"Yes, I want fries with that." means "Give me your money you freakish gimp!"

So anyway, when you take classes at MIT, keep that in mind. Is taking notes in this class going to get me more money? If I skip this problem, do I lose money? If I bribe my TA, will I — in the long run — get that money back tenfold? These are questions we all must grapple with, even those of us with no hands. Take for example 8.01. Everyone takes it. Even people who don't care. Especially people who don't care. Why? Because in the end, knowing how to calculate the height of a lamppost given the time of day and the length of its shadow WILL RESULT IN MONEY. For instance, let's say that there is money on the top of the lamppost. This will tell you how tall your ladder needs to be to fetch that money. Later classes will tell you what angle to put the ladder at, and if being near the speed of light will make the money look bigger. By the way, it is important to take 8.01 rather than 8.012 due to the Extra Digits Principle:

Extra Digits Principle: Classes with extra digits to the right of them are bad, because they are harder, and the administration doesn't care how hard the class is, so you shouldn't either.

For example, 6.001. It's kind of like 1.00, but backwards, and with that extra 6. Thus, it's better to take 1.00 than 6.001.

Here are some things to know about MIT's educational process:

Math: Math is hard. Avoid it. Political Science is to Math as Leisure Suit Larry is to King's Quest VI. It's easier, and there's more sex.

Physics: Physics is hard, if you try to take more than a few classes in it. Many people make the mistake of taking 8.01 and 8.02 and then forgetting to stop while they're ahead. Taking more Physics classes makes money harder to get, as Physics majors don't get jobs anywhere.

Pass/Fail: In speech, never refer to Pass/Fail by name. It is much more respectful to call it "That which is holy". For instance "Now that I'm a sophomore, I'm no longer on that which is holy."

Chemistry: Chemistry isn't that hard. Going to chemistry classes helps you learn to blow stuff up, and this is good. Try not to learn anything theoretical, though, and if you take any Chem classes, be sure to keep asking the professor "Does that element explode, if I shake it hard?" or "How much more of this do I need to add before it explodes?" You'll learn some fascinating things.

Concourse: Concourse is named after an airplane because most of the people in it are high all of the time.

Biology: Biology is easy. Some people argue that because it is so easy, lots of girls take it. More enlightened people will note that the administration hires girls to take Biology so that they can attract more guys into it. That way, they can graduate without stress and get fast money. Go ahead, ask a Bio girl who her "contact" is. They're usually secretive about that.

Prerequisites: Prerequisites are listed in the course bulletin because they are easier than the class they are listed under. That is, if you're looking at 6.170 and it says "Prereq: 6.001" the reason is because 6.001 is easier, and you should take that instead. In general, the goal of the Prerequisite system is to make sure people don't accidentally take a hard class.

6.001: This class is a great chance to meet some cool guys if you are a girl. All the guys take this, and they are hot. The class is sometimes referred to as "The Meat Locker".

Probability: Almost everything in life is probabilistic. You'll find this out soon enough. For instance, probably, you live at E.C. Probably, you are a man. Probably, you are Asian. Those of you who don't fit these descriptions will see that probability is totally useless. You're probably not going to buy a car tomorrow. This sort of stuff is studied a lot in probability. Probability is so fundamental that you don't need to study it. If you don't understand why Ivory soap is 99.44% pure, then somebody else probably does, and so you don't really need to worry about it. Go and read the MIT Bulletin. Only 41% of the lines in it contain information on classes. Thus, if anything in there is right, it's probably not the classes.

24.241 (Logic I): It only makes sense to skip this class. I mean, duh.

But what about activities? Sure, MIT has some extracurricular groups and clubs and stuff. For instance, there are 25 religious groups, some of which offer free food at different times of the day. The properly respectful attitude will get you at least 1 lunch a week, varying from communion wafers to live chicken heads. UROPs are great, as they also can involve free food. Be sure to get a UROP with the Media Lab, though, because they don't really do anything. 24% of the UROPs at the Media Lab just fingerpaint trees and people. For the non-probability-savvy, that means "Most of them". Also: Chocolate City, though it may sound scrumptious, is not actually a place to get candy. Well, I mean, they may have candy there — but not as much as the name implies. And plus, it's not really a city. Another student group to join is "The Thistle", and the Jugglers' club. They're about the same.

And don't forget to join the Entropians! We're forming an online discussion group now! The e-mail list will be entropians@mit.edu, and we'd love to see you there! To be placed on the list, e-mail entropians@mit.edu. And be careful to type it right.

Entropians' Recommended Lists

One Entropian Movie

The Kentucky Fried Movie

Non-fiction

Windows 95 for Dummies
The Standard Bartender's Guide
Voo Doo: MIT's only intentionally humorous publication
Encyclopedia Britannica
The Anarchist's Cookbook

Television

"South Park"
"Baywatch"
"Fresh Prince of Bel Aire"
"Punky Brewster"
"Beavis and Butthead"

Fiction

"Curious George and the High Tension Power Line"
Where's Waldo, Volumes IV and VII
Green Eggs and Ham
Fraternity Rush Books
Time Tunnel: Choose Your Own Adventure Volume XII
The Great Brain

Periodicals

Cosmopolitan
Victoria's Secret catalog
Boys' Life
Weekly World News

Music

Theme from "The Smurfs"
"I'm a Little Teapot"
"The Engineers' Drinking Song"

An Open Letter to the Underachievers, Class of 2001

Fellow Punters,

I know who you are. I know where you live. I know about the peanut butter. I know that late at night you lay awake in total loneliness. This seems natural, fitting, but there is pain nonetheless. This is because you ARE a loser. A full fledged, bona fide, absolute, complete LOSER.

So what? If you're like me, which we pray you aren't, you try to hide your lameness. You try hard to find an identity and experience achievement. You brand yourself as a nerd, by your choice of friends, by the games you play, by the books you read. You even apply to MIT just so you can pretend to have... potential.

I might tell you how the fate of humanity depends on you, but if it did then mankind would be doomed. Finished. Game over. So I won't. I might also tell you the Society of Ubermensch depends on you, but I don't have any idea what "Ubermensch" means. So I'm left, then, to appeal to your natural inclination: your laziness.

What makes a punter a punter? Some people feel compelled to cause revolutions, start movements, and live a life of lonely dynamism. These people are silly. There's little point in pretending you can make a difference when you are such a small, insignificant speck in the vast cosmos. Don't waste your time building a legacy that won't last or searching for eternal fame that isn't going to happen. You will gain much more by slacking off and not overextending your feeble mind.

For your training we insist you read *The Great Brain* by John D. Fitzgerald and *Windows 95 for Dummies* if you haven't already. You will identify with the other characters in *The Great Brain*, because they are all so stupid. *Windows 95 for Dummies* provides useless technical information that even YOU can understand.

Reorient your psychology towards my iguana! How? Begin by feeding and petting him... hey! Not like that! For music I strongly recommend the Smurf theme song. This is the most profound statement of human genius that one can immediately experience. It will attack your firmest prejudices, but in return it offers a shining vision of little blue men.

These books, this music, they are especially made for you: the few, the proud, the punters. These are the essential ideas, motifs, worldviews that you, like slackers everywhere, must struggle with and master. You will keep training until you find that those deadly serious activities, like school, are just a game and can be blown off. It is you who will either punt, or be punted.

Welcome to lunch,

Colonel Sanders