thetech.com

Volume 142, Number 1



WEATHER, p. 2 Rain, snow, sleet. SAT: 23°F 9°F Mostly sunny

Thursday, February 3, 2022

MIT declines Graduate Student Union recognition without an election conducted by NLRB

GSU: admin excluding 'graduate workers funded by fellowships' made it 'impossible to reach an agreement'

By Caitlin Fukumoto

MIT will not recognize a graduate student union without an independent election conducted by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), MIT Chancellor Melissa Nobles and Provost Martin A. Schmidt PhD '88 wrote in a letter to MIT graduate students Feb. 1. Nobles and Schmidt shared the update with the MIT community at large in an email later the same

Nobles and Schmidt wrote that "all eligible graduate students" will have the opportunity to vote. The NLRB has not yet scheduled a date for the election.

The MIT Graduate Student Union (GSU) announced that a majority of MIT's graduate studentworkers had signed union authorization cards in a press release on the GSU website Dec. 13. The press release stated that "graduate employees submitted a letter" to MIT

President Rafael Reif requesting that he "voluntarily recognize their union" the same day.

The GSU announced that they "filed thousands of union cards" with the NLRB to initiate the union election process in a press release Feb. 1, the same day Nobles and Schmidt sent emails to graduate students and the MIT community.

MIT declined the GSU's request for voluntary recognition in January 2021. The GSU's Dec. 13 press release stated that in this situation, graduate student-workers "have the right to file for an NLRB election to secure union representation and a start to contract negotiations."

Voluntary recognition of the union by MIT would have been followed by a verification of majority support for unionization through a third-party card count. The process would not have included an

The GSU spent January "working to collaborate with the MIT administration" over the terms of the union election instead of "filing with the NLRB the moment that voluntary recognition was off the table," stating that they "wanted to give MIT admin the chance to show leadership."

The GSU stated that "the MIT administration has insisted on excluding graduate workers funded by fellowships" from the union, making it "impossible to reach an agreement."

In their email to graduate students, Nobles and Schmidt said that "MIT's senior leaders believe that all eligible students should have the chance to choose for themselves, through an independent election, whether unionization is in their best interests."

Nobles and Schmidt wrote that they wanted "to share MIT's senior leaders' perspective on graduate student unionization" and "highlight what's at stake in this election," describing voting as "critical."

Nobles and Schmidt proceeded to present their reasons for be-

GSU, Page 2



Students walking towards Lobby 7 on the first day of spring classes, Monday.

IN SHORT

Spring registration deadline

Deadline for second-term juniors to submit their HASS Concentration Proposal Form is Feb. 4.

Deadline for final-term seniors to submit their HASS Concentration Completion Form is Feb. 4.

Third quarter PE classes begin

Feb. 11 is the last day to add halfterm subjects offered in the first half of term and to change grading options for these subjects.

Class of 2024 Ring Premiere is

Interested in joining The Tech? Email join@tech.mit.edu.

Send news and tips to news@ tech.mit.edu.



MIT students learn about succulents, scrabbles, memes, and more during Splash, Jan. 26.

Year in Review, see insert on p. 6

Judge approves federal motion to dismiss China Initiative fraud case against Professor Gang Chen

The case was dismissed 'in the interests of justice' based on new information obtained by the US Attorney's Office

By Wenbo Wu

EDITOR IN CHIEF

A judge approved federal prosecutors' motion to dismiss the case against Mechanical Engineering Professor Gang Chen Jan. 20.

The case alleged that Chen committed wire fraud, failed to file a foreign bank account report, and made a false statement in a tax return. Chen was arrested Jan. 14, 2021 and pleaded not guilty to all charges.

U.S. Attorney Rachel Collins wrote in a statement that "additional information pertaining to the materiality of Professor Chen's alleged omissions

in the context of the grant review process" had "recently" been obtained by the U.S. Attorney's Office of the District of Massachusetts. After "careful assessment," prosecutors concluded that they could no longer meet their "burden of proof at trial" and de-

Gang Chen, Page 2

Ad hoc working group charged to review free speech

Working group made after Carlson Lecture cancellation will present first findings end of term

By Kristina Chen

The Institute has charged an ad hoc working group on free expression, according to a Jan. 27 email to

L. Rafael Reif. Co-chaired by Professor of Biology Sallie "Penny" Chisholm and Professor of Urban Studies and Planning Phillip Clay PhD '75, the working group's membership also

the MIT community from President

includes the President-Elect of the MIT Alumni Association Stephen Baker MArch '88 and President of the MIT Alumni Association and member of the MIT Corporation Annalisa Weigel PhD '02, along with additional professors, Institute staff, and students.

The working group is expected to present its preliminary findings by the end of the Spring 2022 semester.

The creation of the working group was prompted by controversy over MIT's decision to cancel the 2021 Carlson Lecture sponsored by the Department of Earth, Atmospheric, and Planetary Sciences over statements made by the planned speaker, University of Chicago Professor Dorian Abbot. According to Reif's email, the cancellation caused "significant concern and contention" within MIT's community over issues of censorship and free expression.

Charged by Reif, Provost Martin A. Schmidt PhD '88. Chancellor Melissa Nobles, and Chair of the Faculty Lily Tsai, the working group will review MIT's existing statements on the free and open exchange of ideas; consider relevant scholarship, cases, and statements on free speech-related issues, particularly at institutions of higher education; and review input gathered from faculty, alumni, staff, students, and Corporation members through emails, reports, and forums.

In addition, the working group will work with MIT's Values Statement Committee to incorporate input that the committee has received from the community.

The working group will also address four questions written in its charge: "Does MIT need to revise or update its statements regarding academic freedom, freedom of expression, and/or pluralism?," "How should we define these and other related fundamental princi-

Free Expression, Page 2

WHO AM I?

Getting over an obsession with grades is actually harder than I made it seem.

CAMPUS LIFE, p. 7

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Advocating for healthier work environments through a union. OPINION, p. 5

MOVING INTO FOCUS

The train is closing in. CAMPUS LIFE, p. 7

LAST FIRST

My life is so full of love now; I'm terrified to watch it go. CAMPUS LIFE, p. 6

ASIAN/AMERICAN MENTAL HEALTH

Representation and cultural competence are necessary resources. OPINION, p. 4

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Thursday, February 3, 2022

WEATHER

A snowy campus welcomes the spring semester!

By Trinity Manuelito
STAFF METEOROLOGIST

Campus is alive and bustling with students heading to their classes once again. There is still snow around campus from last weekend's blizzard. On Briggs Field and Killian you can see where students have gone out to enjoy the snow. Make sure to wear your jacket when heading to class.

Yesterday was Groundhog Day and well, it's an uncertain forecast. Two different groundhogs had conflicting predictions. Punxsutawney Phil from Pennsylvania predicted six more weeks of winter. Meanwhile, in New York, Staten Island Chuck saw his shadow and predicted an early spring. Either way, we are in for some more rain and possible snow today and tomorrow. Don't worry, there is relief this weekend with sunny conditions!

Extended Forecast

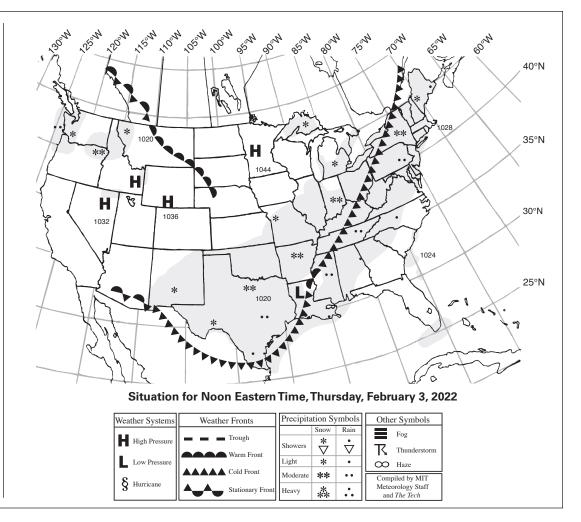
Today: Cloudy with a chance of rain. High around 44°F (7°C). Southwest winds around 8 mph.

Tonight: Rain. Low around 30°F (-1°C). Southwest winds around 6-10 mph.

Tomorrow: Rain, snow, and sleet. High around 35°F (2°C) and low around 15°F (-9°C). North wind around 14 mph.

Saturday: Mostly sunny and clear. High around 23°F (-5°C) and low around 9°F (-13°C). Northwest winds 10-14 mph.

Sunday: Partly sunny. High around 31°F (-1°C) and low around 22°F (-6°C). Northwest winds around 6 mph.



Chen's case has 'caused ongoing distress' for those 'of Chinese descent,' Reif wrote Jan. 20

Gang Chen, from Page 1

cided to dismiss the case "in the interests of justice."

Robert Fisher, Chen's lawyer in the case, said in a statement Jan. 20 that the "government finally acknowledged what we have said all along: [Chen] is an innocent man."

In an opinion piece to *The Boston Globe* Jan. 21, Chen wrote that he had known he "was under investigation by the Department of Justice under its China Initiative" established under Donald Trump's presidency.

According to the Department of Justice website, the China Initiative "reflects the strategic priority of countering Chinese national security threats and reinforces [Trump's] overall national security strategy." The website adds that its goals include identifying "prior-

ity trade secret theft cases" and "bringing enforcement actions when appropriate" to "unregistered agents seeking to advance China's political agenda."

Chen wrote in his piece that the indictment had been "rushed" and that both the indictment and complaint "were riddled with basic factual errors." Chen added that his arrest occurred during Trump's last week in office, which meant that Andrew Lelling, the thenfederal prosecutor in Boston who helped create the China Initiative and announced Chen's arrest, "was about to leave office."

Lelling wrote in a LinkedIn post December 2021 that the China Initiative "has drifted and, in some significant ways, lost its focus."

Chen also wrote that he and his family "went through a living hell" for "371 days," adding that there is "no winner" in what appeared to him as "a politically and racially motivated prosecution." The prosecution "managed to blunt" one of the U.S.'s "great strengths," its "rich history of academic research and collaboration," Chen wrote.

President L. Rafael Reif wrote in an email to the MIT community Jan. 20 that Chen's case has "caused ongoing distress" for "those across MIT and elsewhere who are of Chinese descent."

According to a Dec. 2, 2021 report by the *MIT Technology Review*, 88% of individuals charged under the China Initiative were of Chinese heritage.

"Having had faith in [Chen] from the beginning, we can all be grateful that a just outcome of a damaging process is on the horizon," Reif wrote. "We are eager for [Chen's] full return to our community," he concluded.

Eight op-eds supportive of the grad union omitted from site

GSU, from Page 1

lieving "that MIT's long-standing partnership with graduate students is a better path forward than unionization."

In both their email to graduate students and their email to the MIT community, Nobles and Schmidt shared the website *gradunion.mit.edu*. In their email to graduate students, Nobles and Schmidt noted that all "graduate students should cast an informed vote after considering both sides in this debate and visiting *gradunion.mit.edu*."

The grad-union.mit.edu menu includes a "student voices" tab, linked to an FAQ page titled "Student concerns about unionization." In response to the question, "What have students said in opposition to the current unionization effort?," the page features three op-eds published in *The Tech* between Oct. 6 and Nov. 3, 2021.

The Tech has published eight other student-written op-eds on the topic of graduate student unionization that are not featured on gradunion.mit.edu. These articles speak favorably of unionization and the GSU.

Working group to determine decision-making processes

Free Expression, from Page 1

ples?," "How can we give such statements prominence in our policies and the life of the Institute?," "What are processes for negotiating disagreements and making decisions on these and related issues so that we can accept the outcome even when we disagree with the decision?"

Following its review and consideration of these questions, the

working group will recommend "any changes needed to existing Institute statements or guidance," the charge writes. The group will also suggest principles and processes for decision making, "particularly with respect to how and when issues should be brought to or decided by the central administration."

MIT community members can share feedback on the working group's work by emailing working-group@mit.edu.

Meet your fellow tech staff. (aka, your new 3 a.m. pset support group)



join@tech.mit.edu W20-483, 617-253-1541







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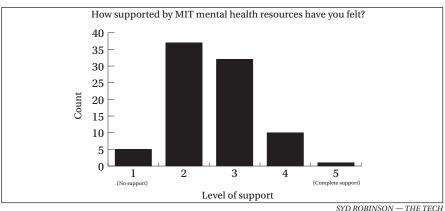
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GUEST COLUMN

Surveying MIT Asian/American students on campus mental health resources

Respondents share the importance of cultural competence, barriers in accessing resources, and suggestions for improvement



81% of respondents rated their perceived level of support from MIT mental health resources to be two or three on a five-point scale, where one indicates "no support" and five indicates "complete support."

By MIT Asian American Initiative

Italicized quotes presented below were anonymously collected in our survey. The term "Asian/American" is used to include both people who identify as Asian American and Asian only, such as international students.

A significant number of us are hurting. We are MIT Asian American Initiative's mental health team. Through these past several semesters, we've regularly hosted discussion circles to explore topics in a culturally safe space for Asian/Americans, touching on subjects such as imposter syndrome, body dysmorphia, and general anxiety. While we are grateful for the support that we have been able to provide one another, we can only do so much for one another while also dealing with our own mental health challenges. Time and time again, we hear from our friends, our neighbors, and our classmates about their mental health struggles, fighting countless battles without professional support.

What are the barriers at MIT that prevent Asian/American students from receiving the support they need? What can MIT do better? To gain insight on these questions, we called out to our campus's Asian/American students via an anonymous mental health survey emailed to dorm mailing lists and Asian cultural clubs, where we collected 85 responses over the course of December 2021 and January 2022. Although this number is small in comparison to the entire Asian/ American population at MIT, it is imperative that we listen to the voices of those who are struggling with the current resources in place. Here is what our respondents have to say

Ethnic representation and cultural competence

"It's incredibly important to me that the [mental health] professional understands my culture because a lot of the things I want to talk about are related [to] and rooted in my culture."

A growing choir of healthcare and counseling professionals and clients are calling for more cultural competence in the clinic. To be culturally competent means that providers are continuously introspecting and building awareness on their personal biases, interactional patterns, and value systems given the culture they were brought up in. Only after a personal journey can therapists begin to approach conversations related to race with their clients, according to Dr. Helen

Neville, professor of educational psychology and African American Studies at the University of Illinois. Without cultural competency, therapists may unintentionally push away the very clients they intend to support through a lack of cultural understanding or even perpetuation of microaggressions.

"Sometimes when I worked with therapists who were not of my racial or ethnic background, my concerns seemed trivial or ridiculous to them."

The American Psychiatric Association states that Asian Americans are three times less likely to seek mental health services than Caucasians, which means it is ever-crucial that once Asian/Americans have reached the clinic, we are uplifted by mental health professionals, rather than made to feel uncomfortable.

In our survey, a large majority of respondents indicated the importance of having therapists that share their ethnic background (70%) and are culturally competent (86%). Respondents noted that cultural familiarity increases therapists' empathy and understanding of sources of mental health issues. Asian/Americans face unique struggles, often including but not limited to: family obligations based on cultural values; difficulty balancing various cultures; and facing discrimination and stereotypes such as the "model minority" myth, which assumes innate perfection and subservience from Asian/Americans.

"I've come to realize that a lot of my issues have roots in my culture. I'm still working through a lot of race-related and culture-related issues from the past, and I've had a hard time opening up about some things in an honest way to white or non-Asian therapists. I just wasn't able to speak as candidly about some experiences (even [to] non-Asian therapists of color). It took me a really long time to find an Asian therapist in the Boston area who was also taking appointments. I wish there were [more] Asian therapists at MIT, considering we're not a minority race in the student body."

Many respondents noted feeling more comfortable speaking with a therapist with a similar ethnicity, where shared experiences can increase therapists' ability to empathize. Students do not want to deal with the burden of explaining their cultural background to their therapists, facing trivialization or misunderstanding of identity-related struggles and receiving ignorant commentary.

"Going to a predominantly white institution has caused issues like facing racism, feeling ugly, and [being] tokenized at times. I want a therapist that can help me navigate this world, and I haven't felt comfortable opening up to white therapists because I'm afraid they will think that I am insulting them or being too sensitive."

The unfortunate reality is that the demand for therapists of color does not meet the supply. In 2015, while 38% of the U.S. population is people of color, only 14% of psychiatrists in the U.S. are people of color, with just 5% of psychiatrists identifying as Asian. For MIT's most recently admitted undergraduate class of 2025, 41% of students are Asian American. Out of the 28 current care providers listed on MIT Mental Health & Counseling services' website, fewer than 15% are representative of the Asian/American community (as of January 26, 2022). Out of nine current deans at Student Support Services, none appear to be Asian/American. Even with the few Asian therapists at MIT Mental Health, some survey respondents have experienced challenges with continuity of care.

"I got super lucky this year to have an Indian-American woman therapist who was able to help me with a lot of conflicts and issues with my family that a white or non-Indian therapist would never have been able to help me with. I feel like I was finally getting better after being frustrated with white therapists before. But she left MIT because she wasn't getting paid enough and was being given too many patients because MIT Mental Health was understaffed so she wasn't getting to work with patients in-depth as she likes to. And because her private practice doesn't take my insurance, now I don't have a therapist anymore, and I feel like I'll never find anyone else as good as her at MIT Medical because she was the only person with a background that was similar to mine."

Despite the lower prevalence of Asian therapists, given student demand, it is necessary to continue to push for representation that reflects the student body and greater cultural competence training in mental health services.

Barriers in seeking support

"I hope that everyone is able to have a therapist who doesn't tell the patient, 'You are ghosting me' when a patient turns off video or really [push] the patient to answer questions when they are uncomfortable."

Asian/American students are less likely to seek out mental health treatment than other racial groups. A study published in the Journal of Adolescent Health sampling over 43,000 university students from 2012 to 2015 also found that Asians have 64% lower odds of medication use and 51% lower odds of therapy compared to all ethnicities.

A study by the University of Maryland School of Public Health found that common reasons for hesitance to seek treatment include stigma of being perceived as weak or ungrateful (particularly for those of refugee or asylum-seeking backgrounds), lack of awareness of resources, fear of worrying parents, lack of culturally competent professionals, and cost. The study observed that it is taboo to discuss mental health in many Asian cultures and can be perceived as disrespecting spiritual beliefs, leading people to "hide, neglect, or deny symptoms rather than seek help."

OPINION POLICY

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Dissents are the signed opinions of editorial board members choosing to publish their disagreement with the editorial.

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Letters, columns, and cartoons must bear the authors' signatures, addresses, and phone numbers. Unsigned letters will not be accepted. *The Tech* reserves the right to edit or condense letters; shorter letters will be given higher priority.

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 ${\bf Guest\ columns}$ are opinion articles submitted by members of the MIT or local community.

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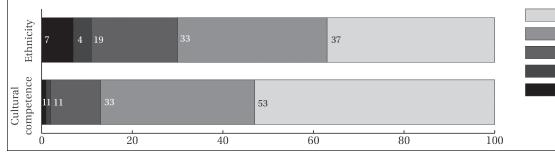
When surveying the Asian/American community at MIT, we asked respondents what prevents them from seeking support on-campus:

- **Time and effort:** Many respondents mentioned a lack of time and/or energy to reach out or that it is not a priority.
- Inaccessibility of setting up an appointment: Currently, the only way to schedule
 an initial appointment is through a phone
 call, which can be inconvenient and is a
 barrier to those with social anxiety.
- Long wait times: Many reported either experiencing firsthand or hearing from others about the long wait times to get an appointment, sometimes exceeding a month.
- **Distrust of professionals**: Multiple students felt rushed to start medication, leading to general distrust of professional support. Others reported doubt surrounding the effectiveness of treatment, some stemming from negative past experiences with therapists.
- Cost and confidentiality: Many reported being unsure about whether insurance covers the bill or not. Multiple also reported cost as an issue, likely stemming from misinformation surrounding insurance policies. Additionally, confidentiality is a significant concern, including mandatory reporting law and visibility of insurance bills
- Stigma and lack of perceived need: Multiple students reported feeling weak or experiencing difficulty acknowledging that they need help.
- **Difficulty with teletherapy**: Common challenges of teletherapy include difficulty in finding a private space to take sessions, which is especially an issue for students with roommates.

"I've heard wait times can be really long. [But] also the stigma that seeking help for mental health means that you're weak."

"I felt that stereotypes were being projected onto me due to being East Asian. When I hesitated to go on medication for a multitude of reasons, one being my parents' valid distrust of Western medicine, my psychiatrist would only focus on whether or not I had talked to my parents, rather than ask if other factors were bothering me."

When it comes to seeking mental health, the process should be as accessible and loweffort as possible. Students facing mental health challenges already struggle to set up How important is it that there are available clinicians who share your ethnic background? That the professional is culturally competent?



SYD ROBINSON — THE TECH

5 (Very important)

1 (No importance)

A majority of respondents indicated the importance of having therapists that share their ethnic background (70%) and are culturally competent (86%).

appointments; this struggle is further compounded for Asian/American students due to stigma surrounding mental health and distrust of professionals.

Bettering mental health support on campus

"I hope that MIT administration and those with power will listen to our desperate call to improve mental health resources for students. This means putting in the money."

This survey is far from the first time that MIT students have called for improved mental health resources. To probe the most pertinent and pressing needs, we asked respondents about how MIT can better support their mental health. In this section, 38% of respondents demanded that more money be invested in mental health resources, with specific calls to expand availability, reduce wait times, and increase therapist salaries to promote retention. Additionally, many students requested that MIT hire more Asian (or other non-white) counselors in order to provide better care for marginalized groups.

"Please get more therapists, preferably more non-white therapists too."

Numerous respondents pressed for an easier way to set up appointments, such as an online portal or text-based scheduling system. Citing personal and second-hand experiences, several students described waiting up to a month to secure an appointment, only to receive a phone call from MIT Mental Health while in class or another inconvenient setting where they may not be comfortable setting up a mental health appointment. Moreover, even after the first appointment is scheduled, therapists sometimes do not even show up. A phone-free scheduling system would mitigate

the exasperation faced by many students trying to schedule a first appointment, lowering a major barrier to seeking support.

Students called for better advertising of available mental health resources and information regarding common concerns (such as confidentiality, cost, expectation of low appointment frequency), more effective guidance towards internal and external therapy options, and the creation of more resources for neurodivergent students. These as well as the aforementioned changes (increasing the availability of appointments and therapists of color, and creating a streamlined, phone-free scheduling system) are all necessary steps towards better supporting the mental health of not only Asian/American students, but every member of the MIT community.

"We are constantly referred to MIT Mental Health as a beacon of hope for our problems by administrators and faculty whenever we are struggling. This was the case after the massage parlor shootings in 2021. But many of us face immense barriers [to] even getting an appointment and the consistent, basic care that we need."

Call to action

By probing the most pressing problems and pertinent solutions, we aim to amplify the collective voice of Asian/American students as we call out to MIT to improve mental health support for all.

To summarize, a majority of respondents expressed the following sentiments: a) more therapists (preferably Asian and POC) should be hired, as ethnic representation and cultural competency are important for their therapy experience; b) inconvenience and unresponsiveness are experienced when placing ap-

pointments by phone, and lack of follow-up or attendance of therapists are large concerns — instead, an online scheduling portal is desired; and c) respondents feel distrust, exasperation, and impatience when dealing with MIT's mental health support services.

We acknowledge and appreciate the efforts of MIT's mental health resources to improve support for its students thus far, including currently recruiting and interviewing clinicians, keeping in mind diverse backgrounds and cultural competency. MIT Medical has previously hired a director of diversity, equity and inclusion and appointed clinicians with experience in multicultural outreach in accordance with the MIT Black Students' Union and Black Graduate Student Association's 2015 recommendations. These BSU/BGSA recommendations also spurred the genesis of anti-oppression training in MIT counseling services and a graduate Black women's support group, laying the groundwork for a more equitable campus. However, as clearly demonstrated through the results of this survey, there is more work to be done. Our community is suffering, and we need change now.

"More therapists need to be hired, specifically POC and women/non-binary folks so that people with marginalized identities feel comfortable reaching out to these resources in the first place. I hope our call is not ignored, as it has been time and again."

This article was written by Alana Chandler '22, Jason Li '24, and Elaine Wu '22, members of the MIT Asian American Initiative, a student-run organization for Asian American advocacy, allyship, and civic engagement. Contact them at aai-exec@mit.edu or on their Instagram @mit.aai.

GUEST COLUMN

Unionize for a grievance procedure that puts students first

Every graduate student deserves fair treatment and a healthy lab environment

By Erin Reynolds, Maddie Dery, and Kaylee McCormack

I enjoyed my first nine months in my lab without incident — I got along with my PI and was nearing completion on a body of work that would result in a first-author publication. But one October evening, things changed. My PI sent an email accusing me of breaking equipment that I hadn't touched in weeks. When I tried to defend myself, she called me "combative" and called my communication style "unprofessional." She told me that I was a bad lab citizen, even though as lab safety officer I devoted hours every week to managing lab waste and keeping my labmates safe. My PI made several unreasonable demands in the following weeks, including that we work at least 60 hours per week and respond to Slack messages within one hour during the workday, a rule that completely disregards the fact that students have classes and experiments that prohibit swift responses at all times. When I tried to communicate my concerns, I was again accused of "giving pushback" and being disrespectful.

To resolve our "communication issues," my PI set up a meeting mediated by a "neutral" third party from the Office of Graduate Education (OGE). Unfortunately, the mediator had already talked to my PI and was biased in favor of her perspective. The mediator tried to frame the situation as if I were an obstinate student who did not respect authority, when the reality was that I was communicating realistic work expectations and advocating for myself in a healthy way. I understand healthy communication because I spent two years at a biotech company under several different managing scientists. My managers confirmed that my communication style was professional and often solicited feedback from me. I was shocked to find that here at MIT, healthy dialogue was apparently unacceptable: the "resolution" of the mediated meeting was that I would obey my PI without communicating concerns or offering feedback. I felt silenced and powerless. My relationship with my PI continued to

deteriorate, and eventually I decided that it was time to find a healthier lab environment. I could no longer even discuss science critically without being told I was disrespectful, making it impossible for me to grow as a scientist. I negotiated the process of transitioning labs over several meetings with my PI and another faculty member. Judging from the experiences of others in my department, I expected to wrap up and leave in two weeks. However, my PI demanded that I stay until I completed a long list of tasks and refused to commit to a concrete deadline until the faculty mediator intervened. They decided I would stay for siy weeks Unfortunately I had already set up a rotation in the lab I wanted to join. For six weeks I worked in two labs at once, often staying until 10 or 11 p.m. to finish my experiments. I was physically exhausted and frequently felt depressed.

Adding to my distress, my PI cut me out of the writing process for the paper based on my work. We had a mediated meeting to negotiate authorship, but it turned out not to be a negotiation at all. My PI declared that I would be the third author, after the postdoc who would finish the experiments and another postdoc who had performed a single preliminary experiment. I responded that I felt this was unfair, given that I had engineered the strains, developed the assays, and obtained the key results. Furthermore, I was on good terms with the postdoc who was to finish the work. and she agreed that it would be fair to do a co-first authorship. Nevertheless, the conclusion of the meeting was that my PI would have complete control over authorship.

My experiences with MIT's current processes for conflict resolution and lab transition were strongly negative: I was powerless to resolve the conflict with my PI and I struggled to advocate for myself during the transition period. I support unionization and signed my union card because I believe our union is es-

sential for correcting the systemic power imbalance between students and PIs.

The current avenues available for students to resolve advisor conflicts are woefully inadequate. Students can resolve issues one-on-one with their advisors, or they can have meetings mediated by "neutral" mediators from OGE or Ombuds or by another faculty member. In cases involving harassment or discrimination, conflicts can be reported to the Institute Discrimination and Harassment Response Office. However, all of these "neutral" entities are administered by MIT and are thus incentivized to prioritize the interests of the institution over the interests of individual graduate students. As a result, exploitative and abusive PIs remain in their positions with no incentive to change their behavior, while students are treated as dispensable and may need to switch labs or even drop out of their program to escape toxic situations.

Unionization will change this paradigm by introducing a more student-oriented grievance procedure to resolve conflicts with PIs. We can win a union contract that contains protections regarding work expectations, harassment and discrimination, and retaliation concerns. If a PI violates our contract, we can file an official grievance. For example, I could have filed a grievance about my PI's 60-hour workweek demand. Once a grievance is filed, mediation meetings can be used to resolve the conflict. If desired, a union representative (UR) can be present at these meetings to advocate exclusively for the student's interests and provide support. I believe that the meetings about my advisor conflict and lab transition would have been more positive and resulted in fairer outcomes if a UR had been at my side. In the case that the grievance cannot be resolved through mediation, it can be brought to a truly neutral third-party arbiter. Excitingly, Columbia's graduate student union recently won the right to neutral, thirdparty arbitration in cases involving harassment and discrimination.

In addition to flawed conflict resolution processes, transitioning labs is a messy process that leaves students vulnerable to exploitation by PIs. Recently, the RISE campaign won new guidelines around lab transitions including guaranteed transitional funding and time limits on wrap-up and hand-off duties. Transitional funding decreases the power that a PI holds over a student; I received transitional funding, and it is hard to express the magnitude of relief this gave me. Unfortunately, MIT can revoke these protections at any time. Our union can guarantee that we keep these protections by including them in a contract and can extend these protections to students who choose to switch labs for reasons other than an unhealthy advising relationship.

Graduate students and PIs share a common goal of producing top-tier research. Currently, the processes for resolving disputes are one-sided and do not promote fair or cooperative resolution. A union grievance process is negotiated and agreed upon by both parties — graduate student workers and supervisors — and ultimately ratified by graduate students as a part of our contract. Fair conflict resolution is essential for a healthy workplace, and every student deserves a lab environment where they can learn and reach their full potential.

Help win a fair grievance procedure by signing your union card and voting yes to form our union.

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CURSED THOUGHTS

To you. Yes. You.

Living out my new year's resolutions

By Ana Reyes Sánchez

I woke up today and thought about how it's my last first day, felt anxiety grip me in sweat and thought, how, how, how; is this it? I woke up today and I reread some of the messages I sent you last night. I'm listening to a very specific playlist, even though I probably don't understand all the songs quite right.

I sat up in bed and cried, because it's my last first day. I thought about how much I'll miss you and how close and far you are and how you, too, have that power to recontextualize things for me.

I'm scared, but more ashamed that our situation seems like an insurmountable hurdle. It's not easy for me to hear how I'm loved, when circumstances necessitate that I won't be able to feel it.

I got out of bed slightly too late, and texted you for a granola bar, and I walked to class thinking of you. I was distracted in class, despite the fact that it's my last first class. I called my parents on the way home, but couldn't speak right, and I felt something of substance hollowed out inside

You said parallels; you said narratives. About the playlist and the spreadsheet and the dumplings we'd planned for today and how we're living our lasts this semester.

It is my last first day, and I am looking to the future and knowing that I will be lonely

I texted you that my head felt stuffed full of little paper scraps, and we ate breakfast together and I kept thinking, thinking, thinking. It hurt.

Today is my last first day, and I went to get coffee with you, but we ended up eating tortas in an alleyway instead. I wanted to share something that belonged to me, but you picked up the bill. I'll get it next time; the days are so short; one more round of

We went on a walk throughout Porter Square and I thought about how happy I was to be there with you. Grateful, even, that I woke up today in the mood to ride the T for three hours.

My life is so full of love now; I'm terrified to watch it go.

But I don't say "I love you" enough, do I? I don't say I love you enough because sometimes I can only back away from the intensity. Sometimes "I love you" makes me feel backed into a corner, because there is so much substance in those words. It stings to see how much power I hold and how much power is held over

I won't be gone, because I don't want to be gone, but I don't brush my teeth every night with Ruth anymore. And we don't make breakfast together the way we always say we will. And we drive each other crazy, sometimes, and I'm sorry.

I don't say "I love you" enough and you thought this article would be about some-

But it's me, it's me, it's me; I will do better in the morning.

It's my last first day, and I keep listening the playlist I made last night on that playlist feel like they belong to other people. Many things in my life belong to others:

- the blanket covering me,
- the plushie at the head of my bed,
- · the bags of things that once belonged to you but will belong to the kids, · the trenchcoat hanging over my chair,
- the pride flag you gave me after that
- summer program, · the notebook tucked into my shelf that
- you made me,
- · the pin on my jeans, • the notes on my wall,
- the lights you put up in my room,
- the kraken on my table,
- the Mexican mug on top of my dresser,

- the letter you wrote for my birthday and
- the letter you had written,
- the post it note you gave me in high school.
- the poster you got for me that I look at when my dresser is open,
- the gender signs on the doors of my wardrobe,
- the mug we painted together in the Cheney room,
- the scarf on my door handle, wrapped around me with the promise of giving it back later.

I want to hide from them, but I can't because I love you. Yes. You.

I keep thinking about what you said in that Zoom room: "while you all are experiencing so many lasts, I'm getting many of my firsts." And I said thank you, right? For sharing those firsts with me?

It's my last first day, but it's different because it's no longer the last "first day" of a semester, but it's my "last-first" the same way that "sorry-grateful" and "laugh-shrimp" fit together like puzzle pieces in my head. It's my first day of classes, and the last time it'll happen this way, but the first time that we've made dumplings together in the kitchen.

I keep making a list of last-first things:

- You told me last sister week, as we sat in the philosophy lounge — that I remind you of your older sister. And yesterday you sent me a snapchat of your window frozen over, and I thought, oh sweetie, how'd you forget to close your window? Put on a sweater.
- I sat around a table at Flour with you. the four of you, and you didn't get your sandwich so you took half of someone else's. And I explained the activity, because it was your first time doing it but my last. You filled in some of the gaps that I had left behind, purposefully or not. And we made the same jokes that we've gotten used to making. I've forgotten the inside jokes behind my high school friend's contact names, but I don't want to forget these.
- You looked very cute, laying in the snow tunnel in those pictures. I'll post it on instagram, I promise, even if you don't read these words. You are spectacular, and intimidating because of it, and I will do my part to bully you more this
- Eventually, there will be a last "hello" message. Ruth told me, weeks ago, that you used to text her at 2 a.m., but you've stopped doing that since last semester started. And I tried to stop myself from the thought that I've been having lately: you will suffer when I'm gone, but eventually you will replace me.
- I've said this before, but have another thank you. For what you did that summer after sophomore year, but also for everything that has come after that. You're my favorite roommate, still, and I hope you read the text I sent you soon because it's really funny. I'll tell you all
- I wrote this in the end-of-year letter (the one I posted in the-most-ridiculousplace with the-most-ridiculous-name): I don't remember a lot of our lasts the way I remember our firsts. Maybe it w because so many lasts have been taken from us. We all know how loving ends, and I'm so scared about the mandarins. That "one-dimensional" day, I was scared to eat it. When I finally did, it was a little tangy, a little dry, and delicious. I ate the plums that were in the ice box; at lunchtime I bought a huge orange — the size of it made us all laugh; leave something of sweetness and substance in the mouth of the world.
- I was so scared in that emergency room because you were in pain and I didn't know how to fix it. But there was also something consuming about that environment, and the way that I gave you my sweater, pretending it wasn't cold.

I wrote this before, but I'll always put your hat on for you. Giggle more often, it's very cute.

- You told us we were family in the math lounge and I didn't know how to respond because you're always so genuine in your existence and I often feel scared. You remind me of Ash and me, sometimes, the way that we used to be together when I was in high school. Don't lose those traits in the shuffle of life, please.
- The last time we ate at Simmons together and I told you about the trenchcoat and how much it means. I also thought about how much you've grown since the time I met you. You're so much older already; keep writing your short stories and creating narratives and texting me my articles, even if they won't be articles soon.
- We walked to Toscanini's in the freezing cold, even though they didn't have anything warm like you promised. And I listened to you talk, even though it was a little bit windy and hard to hear. We'll get McDonald's later and recreate some moments, I promise.
- · We still have chayotes to make in the fridge; I want to prepare them for you the same way my mom does for me. We'll heat up Nesquik and drink it together. I still think that I was right for keeping that guava jam, both because I still have some for us to share and also because it's a memory, kiddo, not a jam. There's a limited number of guavas now that my neighbor has cut down the tree, but I'll still share future ones with you.
- · We're going to spend so much time this semester in your narratively circular New House single. Believe me, I have already blocked out the hours to make more pancakes and drink more oat milk on the fuzziest rug in the world.
- · Favorite memories are so strange. You could have never guessed the significance of that day walking back in the rain, or why I gave you my coat. You left before you saw me shivering in the rain, thinking of how glad I was that you were warm. But you're right, of course, that it's the insignificance of that moment that makes it linger. I can't remember if I told you, especially with everything that's happened, but my New Year's resolution just meant I wanted to linger with you. I'm sorry; I still want to hold your hand this semester, even though I know I won't be
- · "Hasta la Raíz" is playing and I'm remembering the Song Exploder episode I watched with Ruth and how one day we won't be family - shouldn't be, when I'm an alum — but you will still have cast your roots in me. It's been hard watching the gap I'm going to leave in you, but I hope you manage to fill them with light anyway. A secret hidden in plain sight, I wrote two years ago, let's love so much that we light up the world. The email's still probably somewhere in the drive, if you want to read it.

It's my last-first day and I've been on the T for three hours now. I'm trying to live in memories and hope for the future and remain in the present moment: impossibly I think I might actually be doing it, but not enough — never as much as I want to.

You told me to take the T across the river and I finally listened. And these are spoilers, but I already messaged most of them to you anyway.

I realized, first, that you must hear "Kendall/MIT" so often. Do you ever think about getting off there? Did you used to have the instinct? Has it been a while since you considered it an option?

And then we passed the stop and I waited with a playlist in my hand and I felt more than saw the light coming into the cabin. The song changed to dodie's "Arms Unfolding" and, stupidly I thought, emerging: it was once dark but then it was light.

The river was frozen over and the surface dusty. I could only think, G*d I hope you see it too. I thought about that Hozier song. I probably still don't understand it quite right, but listening to it makes me think of you.

I imagined when you saw the river the first-last time, it was probably moving and the waves glistened. And it was too bright to look at directly and maybe that made it hard to see. Difficult to look at, in the same way that love is for us, but substantive.

And I think you probably thought I was thinking of someone else, but I could only think about how I hope you see it often. I want to watch it with you, but we will have all the time in the world.

Thank you for sharing that with me.

I got back to New House late because I stayed a bit longer talking to you. It feels unfair to write it here before everything has been said, so I won't write it yet. But I will work on not saying "kid," especially because that care is not gone — it won't be if I can help it.

When I got back home we messed up the recipe for dumplings and I played Tracy Chapman in the kitchen and I sang along to it a little, did you hear me? And you cracked my back the way we've been trying to do for a semester. It hurt but not physically. It hurt because it was last-first and because I don't think you'll understand this article, even though it's for you.

And I almost cried, a couple of times really. The last-first of which was when you laid your head down on my arm like you do when you don't know how to comfort me but still want to be there. Thank you for staying. I'm so proud of you, kiddo. I love you so much; I say that in many ways, but in words less often.

The dumplings tasted really good even though the shrimp was precooked and we had to improvise. That's often how cooking goes for us. Don't forget me next semester when you're figuring out what to eat in the midst of classes and psets and meetings and stress.

I sent you a video of the dumplings and our kid trying them. I'm trying to make sure this isn't the end. Maybe our lives are running in parallel, but that's how the narratives work, love, each two inches to the left of the other. I want to delete that word "love" because we don't speak like that to each other. But I'm leaking out to you — for you. I just want to say that I believe what I heard in those songs, and I'm oddly looking forward to our individual office hours tomorrow because it's the last-first step towards something.

I finished the dumplings and started writing these paragraphs, but got interrupted because we ended up on the floor of my room swapping stories from the past week.

It was a type of fun I haven't had in a while. I tried not to think about how last-first it felt because I want to have so many more of those moments. I thought about how you put up my fairy lights last semester, and how I can still see us there, balancing on the corner of a chair But then I was in the present and we were giggling about my boss and I threw my body back into a full laugh.

And now, I'm in my room writing this and wondering if anyone other than you will understand these words, but also whether you will understand them yourself. But my stomach is full from the dumplings we shared and my bones are full of so much light they're going to burst along the cracks.

I think, I will fall asleep happy tonight.

Have a cursed thought, question, or piece of feedback/comment that you'd like to share? Email cursed-thoughts@the-tech. mit.edu. If you want undates on new articles under Cursed Thoughts, add your email to tinyurl.com/cursed-thoughts.

DID YOUR MIT ESSAYS GET YOU IN?

THE HOME PAIGE

Expiration

The inevitable?

By Paige Bright

CAMPUS LIFE EDITOR

I've been hearing the thunderous boom of the second hand being solemnly forced into movement — the pressing of a stopwatch counting up to a time I can't quite picture. I don't know precisely when this started, though I imagine it was always there, hidden in the moments that played in the background. Getting into MIT. Starting a new semester. Meeting a new friend.

This experience is exemplified by posts I made nearly a year and a half ago.

"First math class ever taken at MIT, complete." "First philosophy paper turned in." "First semester done!"

I could feel all of these firsts forming. I was nostalgic for a version of myself who didn't quite exist yet. And, to be frank, it made me appreciative. I could feel myself pushing the ball up the hill for once. Yet, only Sisyphus knows when his strength will give out. I created these firsts without ever picturing the inevitable lasts.

Then, something changed. I don't know when, but at some point I started to look at those around me and feel the end approaching faster and faster. I didn't feel this way in high school. I let myself drown in the love and care of my friends. I never pictured myself needing to come up for air. Then I got into MIT, and I felt my first "last" quickly approaching. Tied to the tracks of a train driven by my own motivation. And somehow, I got here.

I am finding it harder and harder to make deeper connections with those around me. Some part of me worries, and to some extent knows, that one day I will have to let these relationships go. Except I don't really know, do I? Who's to say that the friendships I make today won't evolve into something that outlasts my time here? And yet, I hesitate. I feel this subtle anger and frustration at the passing of time. But the longer I dwell on these feelings, the less time I have for anything else.

One of my friends calls me her "kid." Not quite in the way that we used to when we were kids in elementary school but arguably adjacent to that. More recently, this has started to hurt more. I know this isn't her intention; her intention as far as I can tell is to express that she cares. And yet, I have the worry that this care will expire.

I haven't needed a connection like this in a *long* time. In high school, whether through self-preservation or through necessity, I became independent. I didn't and still don't like the feeling of obligation that comes with friendship, and becoming independent helped ease that feeling. I know, of course, that good relationships with other people should come with some amount of obligation. But this obligation shouldn't be something you want to give up; I don't want to be a burden that my friends feel the need to retire from.

I feel the train slowly chugging its way along. The light is approaching, and I don't know if I should feel frustrated with the immovable tracks or with the conductor, ready for what comes next. Whichever the case may be, I am starting to feel a deep sorrow as the picture slowly moves into focus. The second hand is getting ready to breathe a sigh of relief. We are reaching the supposed inevitable.

First close friend to graduate, nearly complete.

Hi! I'm the new Campus Life Editor! Interested in writing for Campus Life or have comments or feedback you'd like to share? Email cl@tech.mit.edu.

Payment in kind

On healing and identity

By Tiffany Trinh

I don't think I ever told anyone this, but I cried many times out of stress over my grades in my time at MIT, and countless more times I have felt...

Worthless.

These past few years, I have been pretty open about not caring about grades since they're not necessary. As someone going into the tech industry, I laughed off my poor GPA. I'm sorry, but I was deceiving you all. Not lying, exactly, since I do believe that our grades-obsessed education system is inherently flawed, but I never admitted how much it pained me to have below-average grades.

Below average — but at MIT! I should be grateful, right? I am surrounded by some of the most intelligent people in the world, so even below average is pretty darn impressive. I didn't come from an Olympiad or a private school background! And our classes are really hard! I'm doing okay, all things considered, right? And yet.

And yet, it hurts. It really does. I feel like I'm not doing enough, like I'm not smart enough to be here. Logically, I understand that isn't true, but my heart is much harder to convince.

And what makes this pain in my heart much more difficult to bear is how fucking lonely I feel in my pain. I love my friends; I really do. They care for me and have supported me to the best of their ability, but I feel like it's not enough. They don't and won't understand what it means to struggle through my depression and my classes and to consistently have less than stellar marks on my transcript. I have been saying, "Oh, I just had a bad semester," for several semesters now.

Why does this matter to me, anyway? I should stop comparing myself to others and focus on a personal growth mindset!

Again, I understand that — logically, despite my depression and the hell that is MIT — I am doing alright for myself. But there's more to it than that. Secretly, I am so, so worried that I peaked in high school and that my life will just continue to go downhill from here.

I used to like school, actually! I was good at it! I absorbed everything I was taught like a sponge and could prove it on tests. In high school, I would've had to actively *try* to do poorly in class. Ask any of my peers during my high school years how they would describe me and most would start off with "smart" and probably not say much else. I even seriously considered going to grad school after undergrad. Academics came so easily to me, so why not?

That was the problem, actually. It was too easy, to the point that I never learned how to study. The classes I took at public schools were taught at a slow enough pace that I never really had to. So, by the time I came to MIT, I had a nearly perfect GPA but lacked the skills to preserve it.

My rude awakening came my freshman spring, when As turned into Bs and Cs, which eventually evolved into Ds and Fs. I couldn't handle it. I had built my entire identity and self-worth around being a straight-A student and being good at school. So when this identity crumbled, I felt empty. What did I have to offer the world except for my supposed intellect? I wasn't good at anything else! I wasn't sociable or athletic or crafty or funny or good-looking. I sucked at piano, I sucked at tennis, I sucked at clarinet, I sucked at swimming, I sucked at writing, I sucked at coding. I couldn't draw, sing, dance, act, cook, fight, do makeup, speak multiple languages fluently, or even run for more than five seconds without my lungs freezing up.

I was spiraling and probably selling myself short, but you get the point. I had

to contend with the question, "Who am I if not smart? Who am I without my achievements?" That was pretty tough to handle, especially since all my life I was under the impression that my only redeeming quality was my intelligence, and everyone's comments just seemed to support that.

I managed to break out of this harmful headspace by finding a few people who empathized with my struggles. Like me, their worries were not "will I get an A in this class and keep my 5.0?" but "will I manage to pass my classes this semester?" I wasn't alone after all. MIT breaks us, some more than others, but it's so, so hard to admit that you're seriously worried about whether you'll graduate in the typical four-year window because you failed too many classes. Knowing that this was not a unique experience and that taking longer to graduate was okay really helped me, especially since I could tell that these people were incredibly smart and skilled and wonderful in their own right. Maybe I could afford myself the same kindness that I afforded others.

And so, I started feeling better about my situation. I still hadn't figured out who I was stripped of test scores and numerical representations of my worth or ability. Not yet, at least, but I was determined to find it and develop it. Thus, I looked within myself and decided to prioritize things I valued or enjoyed, and I realized I loved my friends. I loved making people laugh and be happy. I wanted to support others as much as I could and make the world a better place, whatever that means.

So I chose to be kind. I chose to prioritize people over psets and to encourage others to do the same. And I'm still working on it, of course, but I hope sharing my pain and the beginning of my healing journey with you has helped, even if only a little bit. This is my kindness to you.

VIVIAN'S REFLECTIONS

Homecoming

Reflecting and recharging for 2022

By Vivian Hir

I have a confession to make. I wasn't excited or happy to be back home at the start of winter break. During the car ride from the airport to my house, all I could think of was how much I missed Boston and New House. Within a semester, I grew to love city life, exploring various places that were close to me on a whim. Seeing the endless suburban sprawl that lay in front of me as I stared out of my window made this feeling even worse. It was only the first day of break, yet I was already starting to count down the days till the first day of IAP.

Despite the warm atmosphere that I felt when I entered the kitchen, my feelings remain unchanged. The bedroom that I lived in for five years of my life felt distant and lonely. My bedroom stayed the same, yet reentering my room felt like I was invading the life of a ghost who spent weekends studying in her bedroom, refusing to take time to have fun when she needed it. I didn't want to think about that past self.

Even though living in my bedroom was objectively better than my dorm room because of its privacy and quietness, the aspects that I once liked about my bedroom had lost their charm. Outside of my bedroom, the only other teenager I could talk to was my 16-year-old brother. So, I went back to my quarantine-like routine of talking to him every few hours while he played games or watched YouTube. I missed the ease of entering the iHouse kitchen and talking about all sorts of things with my friends, whether it was math's presence in anime or the places we lived. I missed the countless light-hearted, funny dinner conversations I had at French House, a stark contrast from the quiet, serious meal conversations at

The first few days at home were dismal. I thought that I would get used to living back at home right away, but that wasn't the case. I felt homesick for MIT. I didn't want to be stuck in my house having nowhere to go besides the local middle school's 400-meter

track. I was tired of listening to my parents chide me for gaining weight. I couldn't stand hearing my parents lecture me about how I needed to dress more fashionably. I knew they were genuinely concerned about me, but being a slightly recalcitrant teenager, I didn't want to take their words in.

As the days passed, however, my attitude towards my house changed. The house that I once thought of as a stifling, confined place instead reminded me of Thoreau's cabin. The feelings of isolation turned into solitude, a state that I began to appreciate. I spent the remaining days of the year achieving my reading goal of 55 books. During the busy weeks leading up to finals, I found keeping up with my reading goal while balancing my academics to be difficult, causing me to fall behind. I thought it was delusional to think that I could read another four books in two weeks to reach 55, but to my surprise, I managed to accomplish my goal. I devoted time after dinner to reading alone in my bedroom, allowing me to return to a state of mind that I hadn't had in a long time: a sense of quietness and stillness. A sense of

There was a sort of unparalleled satisfaction when I entered this state. I was solely focused on the stories I was reading. No outside sources of distraction were there to steal my attention. Although it was nice to interact with people more often in college, I think I may have socialized a bit too much, considering that I am more introverted by nature. In other words, I did not have the proper balance of solitude and social time in college. As a result, I deprived myself of the solitude that was so necessary for refreshing my mind. My weekend nights in college left insufficient time for me to slow down, pause, and reflect.

Besides spending more time reading, I also used this period of isolation to think about changes I wanted to make for 2022. Although my fall semester did exhibit signs of personal growth, there were also some setbacks. I struggled to establish a regular

exercise routine and ended up going beyond the unhealthy food limit that I once kept to. The time I went to bed gradually shifted an hour later. I knew early on that these were problems I needed to solve, yet I kept delaying the process since I didn't take the time to sit down and reflect.

During winter break, however, the ample free time combined with my house's solitary setting enabled me to confront these problems that I didn't otherwise want to acknowledge. Normally, I would have recorded ideas in my journal as a form of self-reflection, but this time I simply sat and processed my parents' discussion. After listening to them talk about my health. I took the time to contemplate what I wanted to achieve for 2022. As much as my parents wanted to help me, ultimately the decision was up to me. I could choose between continuing this unhealthy lifestyle, or embracing a more active and healthy one.

After a week of winter break passed by, I realized how therapeutic it was for me to come back home, which I hadn't expected. The habits that I used to maintain before coming to college returned. Reading for an hour made me want to go to bed by 10:30 p.m., something that I didn't experience in my dorm room. Living in an environment that was devoid of many sweets and desserts was difficult at first, but eventually, I no longer felt the sugar craving that I developed in college. I went back to playing piano, something that I barely spent time on in college, and attempted to play pieces like The Lark. After more than a year of not running a mile, I picked up my former hobby of jogging once again, listening to a podcast while I ran a couple of laps around the track.

When it was time for me to return to the airport once again on New Year's Day, I looked back on winter break with gratitude. Yes, I sometimes felt lonely at home. But the solitude I experienced was essential, acting as a reset button for the upcoming year, as it forced me to reflect upon what truly mattered to me in life.

BEAVER BLITZ

THURSDAY 3

Phi Sigma Rho Clay Penguins 6 p.m., 5-134

MIT LSC: Moonfall Screening and Q&A 7 p.m., 26-100

AEPhi AEPhijinks (Game Night) 7 p.m., VIRTUAL

MIT Ballroom Dancing Club: West Coast Swing

8 p.m., W20-407

MIT MTG: Pippin 8 p.m., La Sala

MIT Poker Club: Study Break 8 p.m., 2-146

FRIDAY 4

MIT Resonance Auditions 5 p.m., 4-162

MIT Centrifugues Auditions 6 p.m., 4-159

MIT Ohms Auditions 6 p.m., 4-149

MIT Syncopasian Auditions 6 p.m., 4-270

MIT Muses Audition 6:30 p.m., 4-370

MIT LOST Spring Show Audition: The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime

7 p.m., 1-132

MIT Nritya: Freedom

7 p.m., Kresge Little Theater

MIT LSC: Dune Screening 8 p.m.

MIT MTG: Pippin 8 p.m., La Sala

SATURDAY 5

MIT Asian Dance Team Auditions 11 a.m., Lobby 13

MIT DanceTroupe Auditions: Choreogra-

pher Showcase 11 a.m., Kresge Little Theatre

MIT Muses Audition 11 a.m., 4-370

MIT Ohms Auditions 11 a.m., 4-149

MIT Syncopasian Auditions

11 a.m., 4-270 MIT Video Game Orchestra: Spring 2022

Auditions

12 p.m.

Pear VC: How to pitch to VCs 12 p.m., VIRTUAL

MIT Nritya: Spring Dance Series **Auditions**

1 p.m., T Club Lounge

ET Hidden Traitor Games 1:30 p.m., 35-308

AEPhi Puzzle Hunt

2 p.m.

Smash UltiMIT Tournament

2 p.m., 56-169

MIT Resonance Auditions

2 p.m., 4-162

Sakata Afrique

2 p.m., McCormick Dance Studio

MIT HSC: Vasanta Panchami 5:30 p.m., MIT Chapel

MIT Centrifugues Auditions 6 p.m., 4-159

MIT MTG: Pippin

6 p.m., La Sala

ET Factorio 7 p.m., at ET

MIT LOST Spring Show Audition: The Curious Incident of the Dog in the

Nighttime 7 p.m., 1-132

SUNDAY 6

MIT Asian Dance Team Auditions 8 a.m., Lobby 13

MIT DanceTroupe Auditions: Contemp 11 a.m., DuPont Basketball Courts

MIT DanceTroupe Auditions: Tap

1 p.m., DuPont Basketball Courts

ET Board Games 1:30 p.m., 35-308

6 p.m., W20-407

MIT DanceTroupe Auditions: Hip-Hop 2 p.m., DuPont Basketball Courts

MIT Concert Band: First Meeting

MIT Consulting Group: Meet the Team

ET Fermi Questions and Estimathon

7 p.m., at ET

ET Origami 9 p.m., at ET

MONDAY 7

MIT Consulting Group: DEI Hot Chocolate Chats

MIT Centrifugues Auditions

11 a.m., 4-261

AEPhi Pset Party

7 p.m.

MIT Consulting Group: Hot Chocolate

8 p.m.

TUESDAY 8

MIT Consulting Group: Resume Review 9 a.m., 2-190

Korean Cultural Association GBM 5 p.m., 10-105 (Bush Room)

MIT MTG Spring Production: Into the

Woods Auditions 7 p.m., W20-491

MIT LSC: I Want You Back Screening

8 p.m.

edu.

WEDNESDAY 9

Korean Cultural Association GBM 5 p.m., 10-105 (Bush Room)

Engineers Without Borders GBM 6 p.m.

MIT MTG Spring Production: Into the Woods Auditions 7 p.m., PDR 1 and 2 (W20-301 and 302)

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Flurry

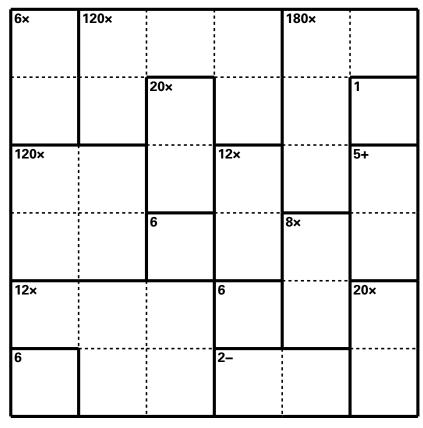
Solution, page 12

		1		6		5		9
	2				1			6
6							7	
			8		4			7
1	4	3				6	9	8
2			3		6			
	1							3
8			6				4	
8 9		4		3		7		

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column, row, and 3 by 3 grid contains exactly one of each of the digits 1 through 9.

Snow

Solution, page 12



Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column and row contains exactly one of each of the numbers 1-6. Follow the mathematical operations for each box.

Informal Eateries by Doug Peterson

Solution, page 12

ACROSS

- 1 Boston's state: Abbr.
- 5 Female parents, informally
- 9 Boca ___, Florida 14 Neighborhood
- 15 Cincinnati's state
- 16 Marry on the run
- 17 Window ledge
- 18 Wizard's stick
- 19 No-nos to avoid
- 20 Room where high schoolers have lunch
- 22 Piece of paper
- 23 Bikini top
- 24 Surface for chess or checkers
- 25 Female choir voices
- 28 Scary dinosaur, for short
- 30 With no decorations
- 31 A Great Lake
- 32 Creative thought
- 36 Place to buy snacks at a football game
- 39 Hide-and-go-__
- 40 Scheduled dental visit: Abbr.
- 41 Groups of cattle
- 42 Quaint hotels

- 43 61 Across citrus fruits
- 44 Bee's attack
- 47 __ for the course (about average)
- 48 Pop, as a balloon
- 49 Outdoor meal seller in a vehicle
- 55 Wipe clean
- 56 Cain's younger brother
- 57 "Author unknown": Abbr.
- 58 Happen regularly
- 59 Capital of Italy
- 60 Just hanging around
- 61 Color of shamrocks
- 62 Untidy scene 63 Short message

DOWN

- 1 Opposite of feminine: Abbr.
- 2 Opera solo 3 __-addressed stamped
- envelope 4 Money-saving store event 5 Lawn-cutting machines

6 Scarlett of Gone With the

Wind 7 Short skirt

- 8 Club __ (bar mixer)
- 12 __ for (chose)
- 13 Robin's home of twigs
- 21 Steakhouse cut
- long?
- 25 Soothing lotion ingredient
- 26 Narrow walkway
- 27 Clock sound
- 29 Very funny person
- 30 Alternatives to Mac
- purchase)
- 33 Act boldly
- 34 Conclusions
- 35 Billboard postings
- 38 Garment behind a necktie
- 42 Office apprentice

- 9 Boston baseball team 10 Hawaiian "hello"
- 11 Powder in a printer

- 24 "Have you __ waiting

- 28 Vacation excursions
- desktops, for short 31 Sports cable network
- 32 Big-ticket __ (major

- 37 Performed a tune
- 43 Soup-serving utensils
- 44 More confident
- 15 16 18 19 20 21 23 25 | 26 | 27 28 | 29 36 38 39 40 44 | 45 | 46 48 52 49 55 56 58 59 60 62 63
- 45 Slight amount
- 46 Magazine edition
- 47 Sonnets and limericks
- 48 Arctic ice mass 49 Where crops are grown
- 50 Woodwind instrument 51 Showery weather
- 52 Loosen, as shoelaces
- 53 Young stallion 54 Leg joint

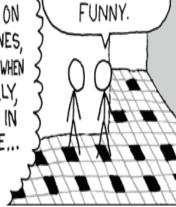






WELL, MY INSTINCT IS TO STEP ONLY ON BLACK TILES, BUT 3 THEY'RE TOO FAR APART. SO I'M LETTING MYSELF WALK ON THE TILES DIRECTLY IN LINE WITH THE BLACK ONES.

> BUT THAT MEANS THAT WHEN WE WALK DIAGONALLY, I HAVE TO STEP IN A PATTERN WHERE...



(I'M NOT WALKING

Blizzard

Solution, page 12

		4	6			9	
				3	5		
7			9	4	6	1	3
		6			4	3	
4							9
	9	2			1		
9	7	1	3	6			5
		3	7				
	6			1	3		

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column, row, and 3 by 3 grid contains exactly one of each of the digits 1 through 9.

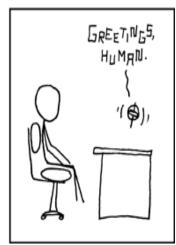
A WEBCOMIC OF ROMANCE, SARCASM, MATH, AND LANGUAGE by Randall Munroe

[332] Gyroscopes





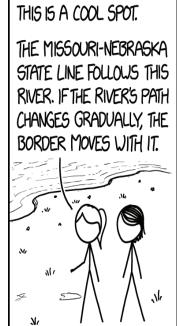


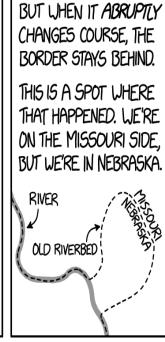


We didn't actually land on the moon – it just looked like we did because of precession. Also, gyroscopes caused 9/17.

[1986] River Border







WOW. 50... WE CAN COMMIT ALL THE CRIMES WE WANT HERE AND THE COPS CAN'T DO A THING!



could be charged with pieracy under marinaritime law.

I'm not a lawyer, but I believe zones like this are technically considered the high seas, so if you cut a pizza into a spiral there you

Sleet

Solution, page 12

5–	5–	 	!	25+	 	 	 	45×
	120×	 	63×	┪┈┈	64×	 		
20+	-	56×		96×			-	6×
	7	-	17+			-	5	
	16×		24×	1	-	280×		24×
7	-	9	-	· - + ·	3	-	3-	
40×		35+				16×	┪····	1
	18×	1	-	22+		-	8-	7
		24×		┥		9	┥	8
			; ! !		; ; ;			

SPORTS BLITZ

Friday, January 28

- Women's Track and Field obtained 18th (second in heat), 26th (first in heat), 29th (first in heat) and 39th (first in heat) for 400 meters; finished 5th in 4x400 relay; got 11th (first in heat), 38th and 42nd in the 5,000 meters; got 86th and 97th out of 143 competing in the mile; 61st and 72nd in the 3,000 meters at the John Thomas Terrier Classic.
- Men's Volleyball at Kean University was canceled.
- Women's Basketball dunked on Wellesley College 69-37.

Saturday, January 29

- Men's Volleyball against Misericordia University was canceled.
- Men's Swimming and Diving against Amherst College was canceled.
- Women's Swimming and Diving against Amherst College was canceled.
- Men's Volleyball against Alvernia University was canceled.
- **Squash** against Middlebury College was canceled.

Sunday, January 30

- Squash against Williams College was canceled.
- Men's Fencing at the Eric Sollee Invitational was canceled.
- Women's Fencing at the Eric Sollee Invitational was canceled.
- Men's Track and Field obtained 27th, 52nd, 71st and 72nd for 3,000 meters; got 17th and 40th in the 5,000 meters; won a heat in the mile; 30th, 41st, 47th and 52nd in the 800 at the John Thomas Terrier Classic.
- Women's Track and Field won first place out of 13 in the Branwen Smith-King Invitational.
- Men's Track and Field won third place out of 10 in the Branwen Smith-King Invitational.
- Men's Basketball dribbles the game away 74-79 against Clark University. Men's Swimming and Diving at the Intersquad Meet was canceled.
- Women's Swimming and Diving at the Intersquad Meet was canceled.

Monday, January 31

Women's Basketball against Connecticut College was canceled.

Wednesday, February 2

- Women's Basketball dunks on University of Southern Maine 85-42.
- Men's Basketball clutched it against Springfield College 71-66.

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Upcoming Sports Events

FRIDAY 4

Men's Swimming and Diving BU Winter Open 6:00 p.m.

Women's Swimming and Diving

BU Winter Open 6:00 p.m.

Men's Volleyball

vs. Benedictine University 7:00 p.m.

SATURDAY 5

Women's Track and Field Tufts Cupid Challenge

Men's Track and Field Tufts Cupid Challenge

Men's Track and Field

Bruce Lehane Scarlet and White

11:00 a.m.

Women's Track and Field

Bruce Lehane Scarlet and White Invite 11:00 a.m.

Squash

vs. University of Virginia $11:00 \ a.m.$

Men's Volleyball

vs. Stevens

1:00 p.m.

Men's Basketball

vs. United States Coast Guard $1:00 \ p.m.$

Men's Swimming and Diving

BU Winter Open 1:30 p.m./ 7:00 p.m. Women's Diving

Swimming and

BU Winter Open 1:30 p.m./ 7:00 p.m.

Women's Basketball

Emerson College 3:00 p.m.

Squash

vs. Dickinson College 3:00 p.m.

Men's Volleyball vs. Rivier University 6:00 p.m.

SUNDAY 6

Squash

MASC Round Robin

vs. Schreiner University

10:00 a.m.

vs. John Jay College 10:00 a.m.

TUESDAY 8

Men's Volleyball

vs. Emerson College 7:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY 9

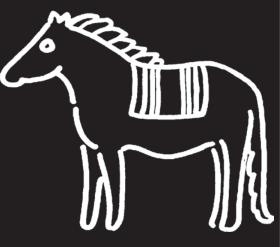
Men's Basketball

Worcester Polytechnic Institute 7:00 p.m.

Women's Basketball

Worcester Polytechnic Institute 7:00 p.m.

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Volume VVV, Number NNNN

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Solution to Blizzard

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5 2 9

9 5 1 3 8 6

2 5 4 9 8 6 8 3 5 6 7 2 9 4 1 9 6 4 1 3 8 7 5 2

Solution to Flurry

from page 9

6 5 9 2 8 3 1 7 4

5 9 6 8 1 4 2 3

8

2 7

Solution to Sleet

8	9	1	3	2	4	6	7	5
3	4	5	7	6	8	1	2	9
5	6	7	9	8	1	3	4	2
6	7	8	1	9	2	4	5	3
9	1	2	4	3	5	7	8	6
7	8	9	2	1	3	5	6	4
4	5	6	8	7	9	2	3	1
1	2	3	5	4	6	8	9	7
2	2	1	6	F	7	a	1	Q

Solution to Snow

		110111	page s	7	
2	4	3	1	5	6
3	5	4	2	6	1
4	6	5	3	1	2
5	1	6	4	2	3
1	3	2	6	4	5
		4			

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6 1 2 7 9 8 1 9 8 7 3 5 4 2 2 8 9 5 4 6 1 3

6 5 2 9 4 3 7 1 6 8 2 5 9 2 4 3 7 1 8 7 1 3 4 6 8 2 5 2 4 3 7 8 5 9 6 1 8 6 5 2 9 1 3 7 4 2 3 4 6 5 7 9 1 8 **Solution to Informal**

6 2 1 5 3 4

MOMS AREA OHIO SILL WAND CAFETERIA ELOPE DONTS SHEET BRA BOARD ALTOS TREX PLAIN ERIE IDEA CONCESSIONSTAND SEEK APPT HERDS I NNS LIMES STING PAR BURST FOODTRUCK
ERASE ABEL ANON
RECUR ROME IDLE
GREEN MESS NOTE