

MIT's endowment tax rate increases to 8%

The Big Beautiful Bill's tax hike will cost around 10% of MIT's annual central budget

By Vivian Hir
NEWS EDITOR

On July 3, Congress passed the H.R.1 bill, commonly referred to as the One Big Beautiful Bill, a spending and tax policy that will raise MIT's endowment tax rate from 1.4% to 8%. The House originally proposed a rate of 21%. According to the bill, universities with endowments between \$750,000 and \$2 million per student will be taxed at a rate of 4%, while endowments exceeding \$2 million per student will be taxed at a rate of 8%. Peer institutions that fall under the latter rate include Harvard and Yale. In 2024, the Institute had an endowment per student of around \$2.6 million.

The endowment tax rate increase is one of the many methods that the Trump administration has used to

pressure elite universities. Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee Jason Smith (R-Miss.) stated that the higher tax rate will hold "woke, elite universities" accountable by preventing them from "abus[ing] generous benefits provided through the tax code." Administrators and professors in higher education have criticized the endowment tax rate increase for being punitive and having a significant impact on financial operations.

In a letter to the MIT community on July 10, Provost Anantha Chandrakasan and Executive Vice President and Treasurer (EPVT) Glen Shor stated that the 8% tax rate would result in costs that are about 10% of the Institute's annual central budget. Besides the tax hike, Chandrakasan and Shor expressed concern about future cuts that could impact the

Institute's budget, including a cap on the indirect cost rate for research funding and research grant freezes. Currently, federal agencies such as the NIH and NSF have proposed an indirect cost cap rate of 15%, though they have been blocked and are currently pending before the courts.

According to the Understanding MIT website, the endowment consists of more than 4,500 individual funds, which are used to support research, education, and financial aid. The endowment allows the Institute to provide free tuition for undergraduates with family incomes below \$200,000, and attendance at no cost for family incomes below \$100,000. EVPT Office Communications Director Jennifer Burke stated that the increase in the endowment tax rate will not affect MIT's free tuition plan.



COLIN CLARK—THE TECH

Stata Center on July 8, 2025.

Currently, the Financial Scenarios Working Group is planning for further measures that are necessary for

addressing new budget constraints. More details about MIT's financial plan will be released in the fall.

MIT launches Understanding MIT ad campaign in D.C.

The advertising campaign coincided with the lead up to the vote on the Big Beautiful Bill

IN SHORT

Thesis is due for all September degree candidates on Friday, Aug. 8.

The last day to get off the September degree list is Friday, Aug. 15.

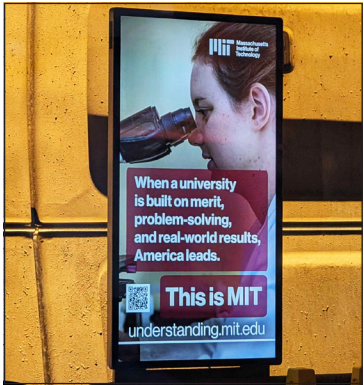
The deadline to submit the MIT health insurance waiver is Friday, Aug. 15.

International student arrival is from Saturday, Aug. 16, to Sunday, Aug. 17.

Freshmen Pre-Orientation Program (FPOP) arrival is on Tuesday, Aug. 19.

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Send news and tips to tt-news-editors@mit.edu



DIEGO TEMKIN—THE TECH

An Understanding MIT ad in the Farragut West metro station in Washington D.C. on Thursday, July 24.

By Vivian Hir
NEWS EDITOR

In late June, students reported seeing about 15 Understanding MIT ads in the Capitol South metro station in Washington. The ads were presented in various formats, including digital screens, banners, and two-sheet posters. The Institute was the only advertiser in the station, and all the ads were

part of the Understanding MIT advertising campaign.

Ending with the phrase "this is MIT," the ads highlighted MIT's leading education and research, as well as the Institute's contributions to science and technology in the U.S. One ad read, "When a university pioneers research for national defense, America leads." In late July, additional ads were found in the Farragut West station, which is near the White House.

The Understanding MIT website launched in mid April, followed by a video titled "Imagine a world without MIT" released in May 15. The website was created in response to the Trump administration's policies that have targeted universities, from federal research funding cuts to increased taxes on university endowment. Like the ads, the website highlighted MIT's education that is "committed to excellence," while emphasizing the Institute's role in national competitiveness, defense, and scientific innovation.

The launch of the ad campaign coincided with the lead up to the U.S. Senate's marathon voting session of the Big Beautiful Bill on July 1, a spending and tax bill that introduced many

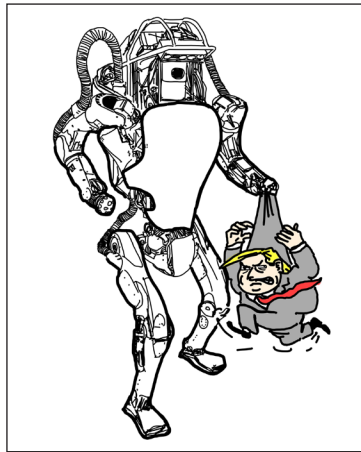
tax cuts and major cuts to federal programs such as Medicaid. The Senate narrowly passed the bill in a narrow vote of 51 to 50, and the House approved the bill in a 218 to 214 vote on July 3. The bill will increase MIT's endowment tax rate from 1.4% to 8%, as MIT's endowment exceeds \$2 million per student.

In a written statement to *The Tech*, spokesperson Kimberly Allen stated that the purpose of the ads was to raise awareness about the value of MIT's education and research to the "nation's prosperity and security" for lawmakers in Washington. According to Allen, the ad campaign will end at the end of July.

Spokesperson Courtney Richards of OUTFRONT Media, the advertising company used by Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, (WMATA) stated that many universities use out of home advertising in WMATA metro stations to achieve various goals, such as increasing enrollment or publicizing graduate programs. However, Richards believes that MIT's advertising campaign "stood out for its strategic execution" because of its specific location and targeted audience.

"The metro placement aligned with high-traffic commuter routes frequented by policy influencers, and the creativity clearly communicated the university's leadership in national defense research," Richard wrote. "It was a strong example of timely, targeted messaging that both reflected the MIT brand and resonated with a D.C. audience."

Diego Temkin '26 and Grace Zhang '28 contributed to reporting for this article.



LATYR NIANG—THE TECH

MIT Admissions will not participate in Schoolhouse Dialogues

The Dialogues portfolio will not be included as a supplement for the 2025-2026 application cycle

By Vivian Hir
NEWS EDITOR

On May 12, Schoolhouse.world, a free online peer tutoring platform founded by Khan Academy CEO Salman Khan '98, MEng '98, announced that MIT, among other universities, would be accepting Dialogue portfolios as optional supplements for undergraduate applications.

However, MIT later backtracked on this decision in July. A statement provided by to MIT spokesperson Kimberly Allen confirmed that, MIT will no longer be a Schoolhouse Dialogues university partner, and that undergraduate applications for the 2025-2026 cycle will not include the

Dialogues portfolio as an optional supplement.

According to Khan, the goal of Dialogues is to promote civil dialogue through meaningful conversations. The program allows high school students to partake in one-on-one Zoom conversations about global issues including artificial intelligence, climate change, and economic development. Besides individual conversations, Dialogues also has online clubs that meet every other week to discuss certain subjects. Students who participate in the Dialogues program can receive a portfolio with peer feedback, providing a summary of their conversations and the communication skills they developed.

Besides MIT, Vanderbilt University has also decided to end the pilot project with Schoolhouse Dialogues "after careful consideration and hearing some concerns," according to a press release on July 31. Six universities continue to be official Dialogues partners and will accept the portfolio as a supplement for the 2025-2026 application cycle. These colleges include Columbia and Johns Hopkins.

The launch of Schoolhouse Dialogues comes at a time of increasing tensions in higher education. The Israel-Gaza war has led to debates and protests in many college campuses, including MIT, and many social scientists have also noticed an uptick in political polarization in recent years.

In a recent essay, Khan wrote that the program aims to provide "students a space to speak honestly, listen bravely, and practice engaging across deep differences." In a world "fractured by ideological bubbles." In May 2023, MIT launched Dialogue Across Differences, a series that aims to promote civil dialogue on difficult topics. In the 2023-2024 academic year, the series invited speakers that discussed the Israel- Palestine conflict from various perspectives.

In a statement to *The Tech*, Allen clarified, "We understand the material would not have revealed the topics discussed or viewpoints expressed." Allen stated that MIT will continue to accept the Schoolhouse portfolio,

which provides tutoring certification for various courses. MIT also accepts calculus certification transcripts via Schoolhouse.

Although MIT will not accept the Schoolhouse Dialogues portfolio as a supplement, MIT Admissions states that the Institute remains committed to fostering civil discourse. "Being able to talk with people who might have different views than you do, on difficult topics, is a skill that we want to promote and that is being lost over time," Dean of Admissions Stu Schmill '86 said. "Dialogue is a key way to learn and sharpen one's own views."

Kate Pearce '27 contributed to reporting for the article.

SPORTS CHAMPIONS

xkcd [2022]. FUN, p. 4

AGES

xkcd [907]. FUN, p. 4



ALEX SHALEK, DIRECTOR OF IMES

on his many hats, MIT administration, and more. SCIENCE, p. 3

NEW AMENDMENT PROPOSED FOR THE GSU CONSTITUTION

The amendment did not pass. NEWS, p. 2

SECTIONS

News 2
Science 3
Entertainment 4

WEATHER FORECAST

Weather Systems	Weather Fronts	Precipitation Symbols	Other Symbols
H High Pressure	--- Trough	Snowflake Snow	Three horizontal lines Fog
L Low Pressure	Red semi-circles Warm Front	Light raindrops Light	Cloud with lightning bolt Thunderstorm
Hurricane	Blue triangles Cold Front	Moderate raindrops Moderate	Cloud with cross Haze
	Alternating red semi-circles and blue triangles Stationary Front	Heavy raindrops Heavy	Compiled by MIT Meteorology Staff and The Tech

Continued sunshine and warmth

By Conrad Straden
METEOROLOGIST

As the start of the semester draws near, we have reached peak summer weather in Boston. No substantial rain is in the forecast for the first half of the month. High pressure dominates, meaning lots of sun is in store for this weekend as it gradually heats up to the mid 80s by early next week. With no rain to cool things off it could start to get pretty hot later next week, but luckily afternoon sea breezes should offer some relief. In other news, cyanobacteria levels are running high in the Charles River, so it's advised to avoid contact with the water. Looking at the Atlantic, Tropical Storm Dexter swirls offshore well to our east this week, bringing some ocean swells and rip currents at the beaches. After a very slow start to this year's hurricane season the Atlantic basin is waking up—with more activity expected in the coming days.

AUGUST 7
SITUATION FOR NOON (ET)

Extended Forecast

Today: Clouds early, clearing in the afternoon. High around 77°F (25°C). East winds 5-10 mph.

Tonight: Clear. Low around 57°F (14°C). South winds 2-6 mph.

Friday: Sunny. High around 78°F (26°C) and overnight low around 59°F (15°C). Southeast winds 5-10 mph.

Saturday: Sunny. High around 80°F (27°C) and overnight low around 62°F (17°C). Southeast winds 5-10 mph, gusting to 20 mph.

Sunday: Sunny. High around 86°F (30°C) and overnight low around 65°F (18°C). Southeast winds 5-10 mph.

Rank and File Caucus amendment to the MIT Graduate Student Union constitution fails

Launched in April, the proposed amendment would have required a general membership vote for the union's external partisan political collaborations

By Vivian Hir
NEWS EDITOR

In April 2025, the Rank and File Caucus launched a petition calling for an amendment to the MIT Graduate Student Union (GSU) constitution that requires all external partisan political collaborations to be approved by a general membership vote. The caucus initiated this petition to increase member input and buy-in on partisan collaborations before finalizing decisions, particularly for groups that “federal officials have targeted for their alleged associations with foreign governments.”

The Rank and File Caucus is a graduate student group that was founded in Fall 2023 to encourage participation in the GSU by increasing voting member turnout and general membership meeting attendance. “The more people who are engaged in the activity, the more successful our organizing efforts are, and the more successful our political engagements are,” caucus member Brice Green G said.

In 2025, the GSU appeared to endorse two rallies sponsored by the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL), drawing criticism from some union members as the decision did not involve a general member vote. Instead, the Local Executive Board (LEB), which consists of five Officers and eight Area Chief Stewards, endorsed the events and collaborations via an internal majority vote. The Rank and File caucus members confirmed this event in an interview with *The Tech*. According to its website, the PSL believes that socialism is the “only solution” to ending capitalism. The political party supports the pro-Palestinian movement and advocates for causes such as universal healthcare and a living wage.

In a statement to *The Tech*, MIT GSU President Lauren Chua G stated that the

union “has not endorsed any one group or individual,” and that the proposed amendment was decided by democratic participation in the general membership meetings. “We respect the rights of all members to raise these questions and shape the union’s direction through democratic structures,” Chua wrote, stressing the importance of general member engagement in the union.

Furthermore, Chua noted that the GSU formed a working group on immigrant and international worker’s rights in response to the increased presence of ICE. Xin Hui Yong G, an international student, believes that the proposed amendment is important for protecting international students. They stated that international students have been worried about participating in certain rallies due to the risks associated with political speech in the current political climate. In March 2025, international students Mahmoud Khalil and Mohsen Mahdawi were detained by ICE because of their involvement with pro-Palestinian protests.

“Putting each other at risk without any kind of common ground is a recipe for eroding the kind of sense of safety and trust that’s required for political autonomy as a community,” Yong wrote. They maintain that the proposed amendment would not have prevented the union from cooperating with non-partisan organizations such as TransMIT and the LUCE Immigrant Justice Network, as the proposal mainly focuses on external partisan groups.

From April to May 2025, the caucus collected over 120 signatures. However, it needed 200 to bring the amendment to the floor of a general membership meeting. Before the May meeting, some members expressed concern that the amendment’s language regarding partisan collaboration

was too general and could interfere with the caucus’s political work in areas such as pro-Palestinian advocacy. As a result, the caucus incorporated this feedback when revising the amendment.

The caucus originally did not plan to bring the amendment to the floor for the May general membership meeting, intending to recollect signatures for the revised amendment. However, union members not in favor of the original amendment sent an email requesting the LEB vote on the amendment to bring it to the floor. The LEB ultimately voted against the original amendment. “All this voting discussion is not something we even expected, because we weren’t even pushing for this to be voted on,” Green clarified. “The fact that this [amendment] became big led people to misunderstand who we are.”

Caucus member Emma Batson G added that the amendment was not intended to stop rallies or end partisan collaborations — rather, from Batson’s perspective, the purpose of the amendment was to increase general member engagement related to deciding the union’s partisan collaborations. “If the general membership of the union said we want to continue to have these partisan collaborations, then I would be fine with it,” Batson said. “But I just felt that people weren’t being given that opportunity.”

MIT GSU At-Large Delegate Olivier Ng’weno Kigotho G acknowledged that requiring a general membership vote for partisan collaborations “could slow things down.” However, Ng’weno Kigotho believes that a slower but larger buy-in is a more effective solution for political work such as winning a union contract. “If you get people together, have them discuss and buy in and create a political plan together, then

all the members have ownership of the political program going forward,” Ng’weno Kigotho said.

The caucus attempted to bring the updated amendment to the floor for the June general membership meeting but ultimately could not do so. Changes made to the amendment included clarifications on the definition of a partisan political organization and examples of partisan collaborations. Batson attributes the outcome partly to a failure to share the updated amendment with general members before the meeting. “There just weren’t really communication channels that allowed us to do that, so that was disappointing,” Batson stated.

Despite this result, Green considered the meeting’s significant increase in member turnout a “big win for having a participatory union with healthy democratic input.” Over 120 members were present in-person, while others attended via Zoom. Prior to the amendment, the average member attendance for general membership meetings was around 40 people.

Moving forward, the caucus’s primary goal is to win a strong contract for 2026, a process that requires a super-majority of members in the bargaining survey. Besides achieving a successful bargaining survey, Ng’weno Kigotho stated that the GSU plans to create issue-specific working groups, such as those for trans workers and international workers, as these populations have been under significant scrutiny by the Trump administration. Furthermore, the GSU plans to restart former working groups such as the anti-racism working group that ran from 2020 to 2021.

“In some ways, it’s just getting back to our roots, trying to do this kind of work again,” Batson said.

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MEET THE MINDS

Meet Alex Shalek, Director of the Institute for Medical Engineering and Sciences (IMES)

For Shalek, institutes like IMES are all about creating cohesive units “greater than the sum of their parts.”

By Alor Sahoo
EDITOR-AT-LARGE

Even before his appointment to the Director roles at the Institute for Medical Engineering and Sciences (IMES), Professor Alex Shalek wore many hats. In his quest to understand how individual cells function and respond to their environment, particularly in the context of immune responses and disease, Professor Shalek has worked across the Broad, Koch, and Ragon Institute, and at Mass General Hospital and Harvard Medical School.

When *The Tech* sat down with Professor Shalek, it quickly became clear that he is not driven by academic title or turf. Rather, it’s the people — especially those he mentors. The work the Shalek Lab produces is “not really my work at this point,” he reflected. “It’s the students’ work. I’m just trying to help them accomplish their goals, and push them further and do so more efficiently.” Particularly, he hopes to teach them “how to show up as a scientist, how to engage with the world, and how to approach things with intentionality.”

He also wants them to channel ambition and avoid burnout. “There will always be somebody who got a paper faster than you. That doesn’t matter,” he says. Professor Shalek himself didn’t publish his first paper until five and a half years into graduate school. “It all works out in the long run.”

This humble response frames Shalek’s approach to leadership. When asked about his major vision as Director of

IMES, he rejected and redirected the question.

“Being a director is not about my vision,” he asserts. “A lot of what I’m doing is to try and help others build out programs that are nascent and bring things together in cohesive, collaborative ways.” These collaborations stretch all over the Boston ecosystem including to surrounding universities, industries, and hospitals, as well as internationally. Professor Shalek wants to accelerate that process, since institutes like IMES are all about creating cohesive units “greater than the sum of their parts.”

Part of the challenge, he acknowledged, is structure. MIT’s “entrepreneurial” spirit fuels innovation, but there may be a lack of collaborative cohesiveness. “There are people working with clinicians on problems everywhere at MIT,” Professor Shalek adds. “But everyone has one or two connections. It’s this very loose network.”

He wants to see MIT as “more of a hub of human health” through improved integration with hospitals and industry. Stronger partnerships would ensure that researchers have access to the resources they need and “are engineering towards the right problems.”

That’s where institutes like IMES and initiatives like the MIT Health and Life Sciences Collaborative (HEALS) come into play. Despite setbacks like the “erosion of a sense of community” during the pandemic, he is hopeful that a combination of “top-down administration” with “bottom-up creativity” will help.



IMAGE PROVIDED BY ALEX SHALEK, COURTESY OF LEN RUBENSTEIN

Alex Shalek is the Director of the Institute for Medical Engineering and Science.

“A lot of these [initiatives] require administrative legwork,” he continues, citing fields from pediatric health initiatives to AI in health research to climate-driven disease research to space medicine.

Yes, *space medicine*.

“You now have lots of people going into space,” Professor Shalek says. “And we don’t understand how space flight or space travel impacts human health.” He highlights MIT faculty like Lonnie Peterson, who IMES is supporting to build out the Space, Ecological, Arctic, and

Resource-limited Medicine (SPEAR) program at Mass General Brigham. New programs like this bring about new programs like clinical partnerships and fellowships. This collaboration, while perhaps unintuitive, reflects the multidisciplinary and collaborative attitude at IMES, driven by scientific questions more than anything else.

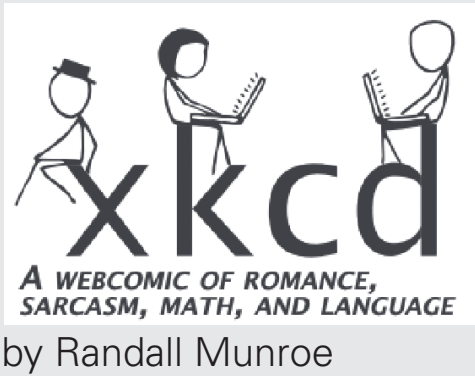
This is just one example. He concludes that it would be “incredible” if we could lower “barriers to partnership and collaboration. So that we could find the right experts to go further, faster together.”

Biz pays the billz

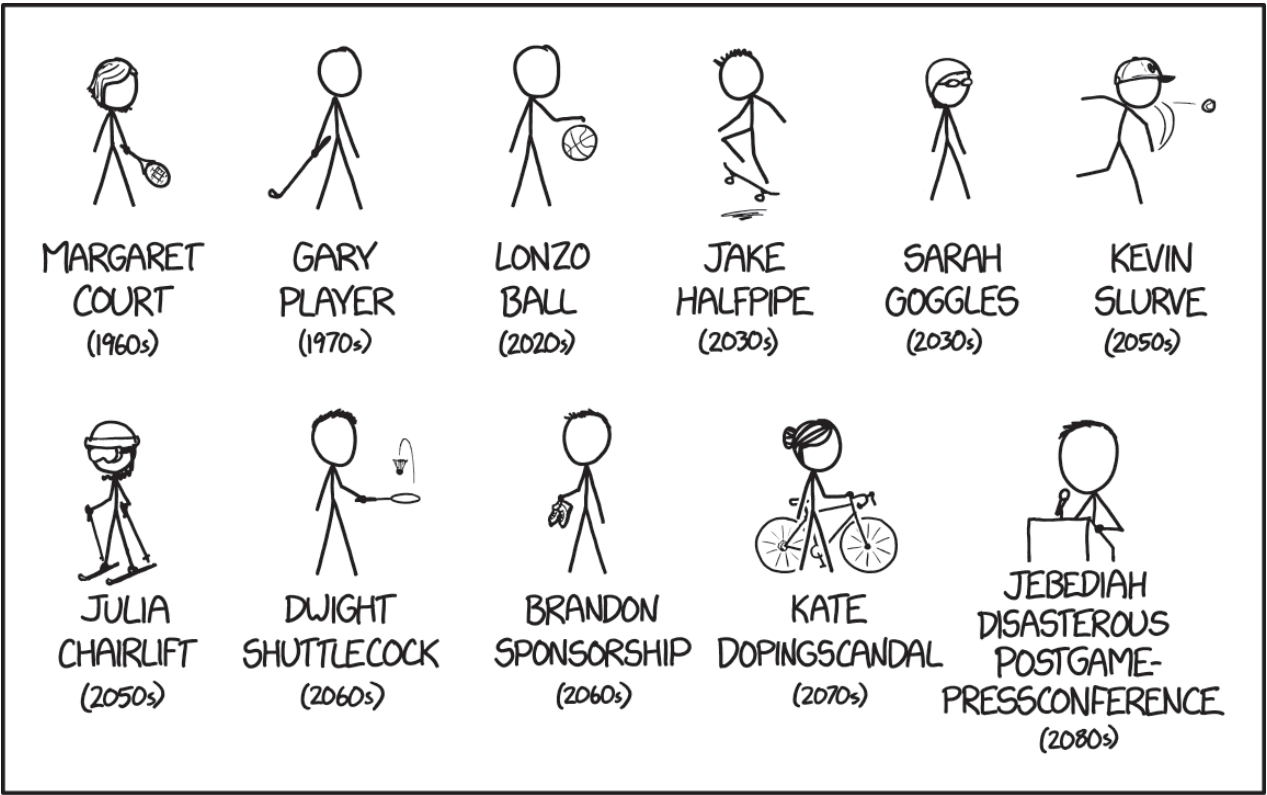
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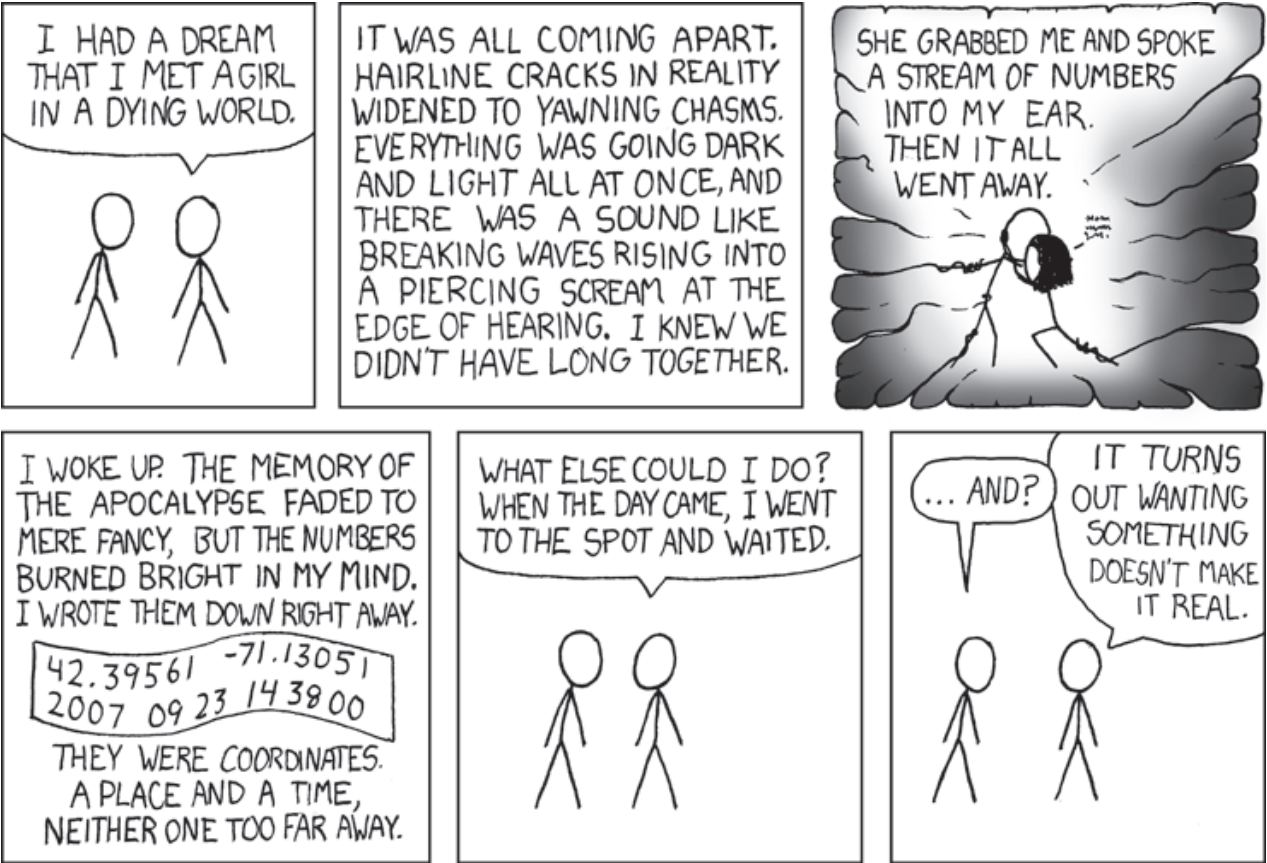
[2022] Sports Champions



FUN FACT: EVERY SPORT EVENTUALLY PRODUCES A CHAMPION COMPETITOR NAMED AFTER A COMMON ELEMENT OF THE GAME.

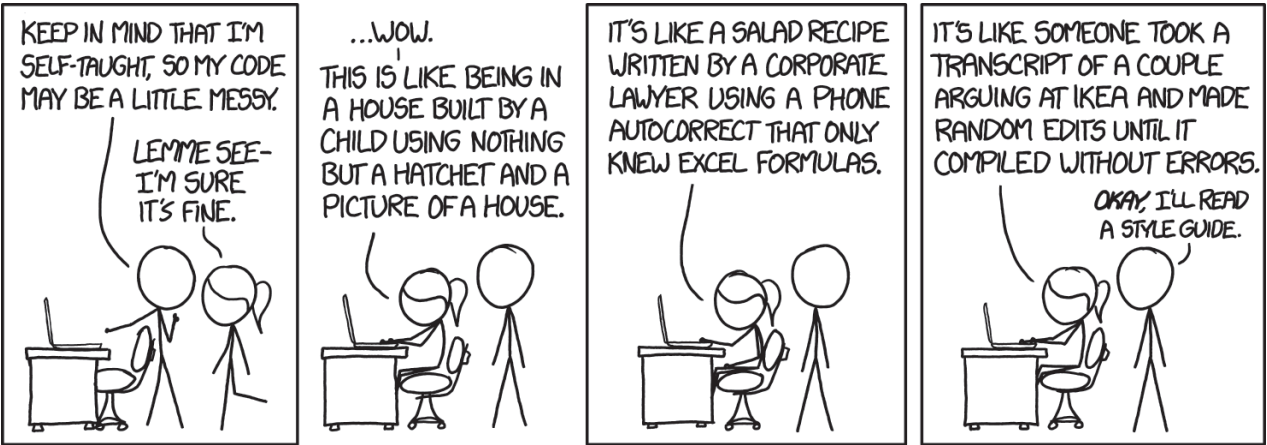
For a long time, people thought maybe Usain Bolt was the one for running, until the 2090s and the incredible dominance of Derek Legs.

[240] Dream Girl



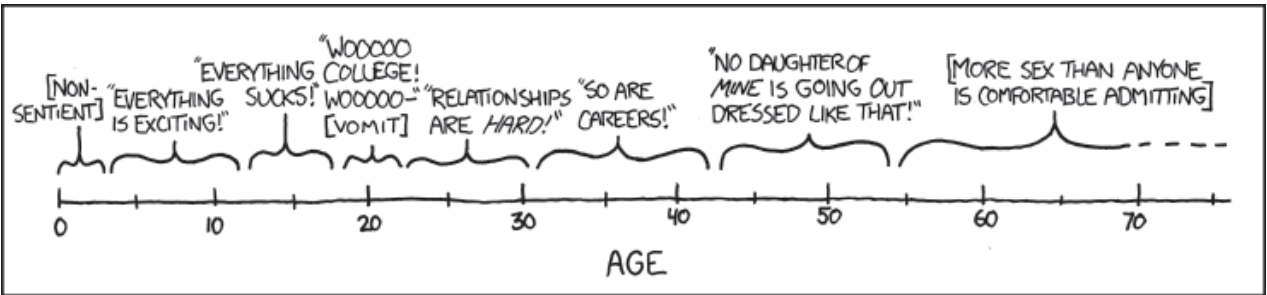
No matter how elaborately you fool yourself.

[1513] Code Quality



I honestly didn't think you could even use emoji in variable names. Or that there were so many different crying ones.

[907] Ages



Every age: 'I'm glad I'm not the clueless person I was five years ago, but now I don't want to get any older.'