

Cohorts and Teams in the First Semester at MIT Sloan

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MIT Sloan MBA Student Affairs



FAST FORWARD

CLASS OF 2005

Why Cohorts?

- Research suggests that students learn best in groups of less than 100
 - Sense of belonging = greater learning
 - Higher involvement = more personal development
 - Supports more learning styles
 - Cohort students report greater satisfaction/higher retention
- Cohorts provide a structured community
 - Ease the adjustment process in the first semester
 - Provide a support network

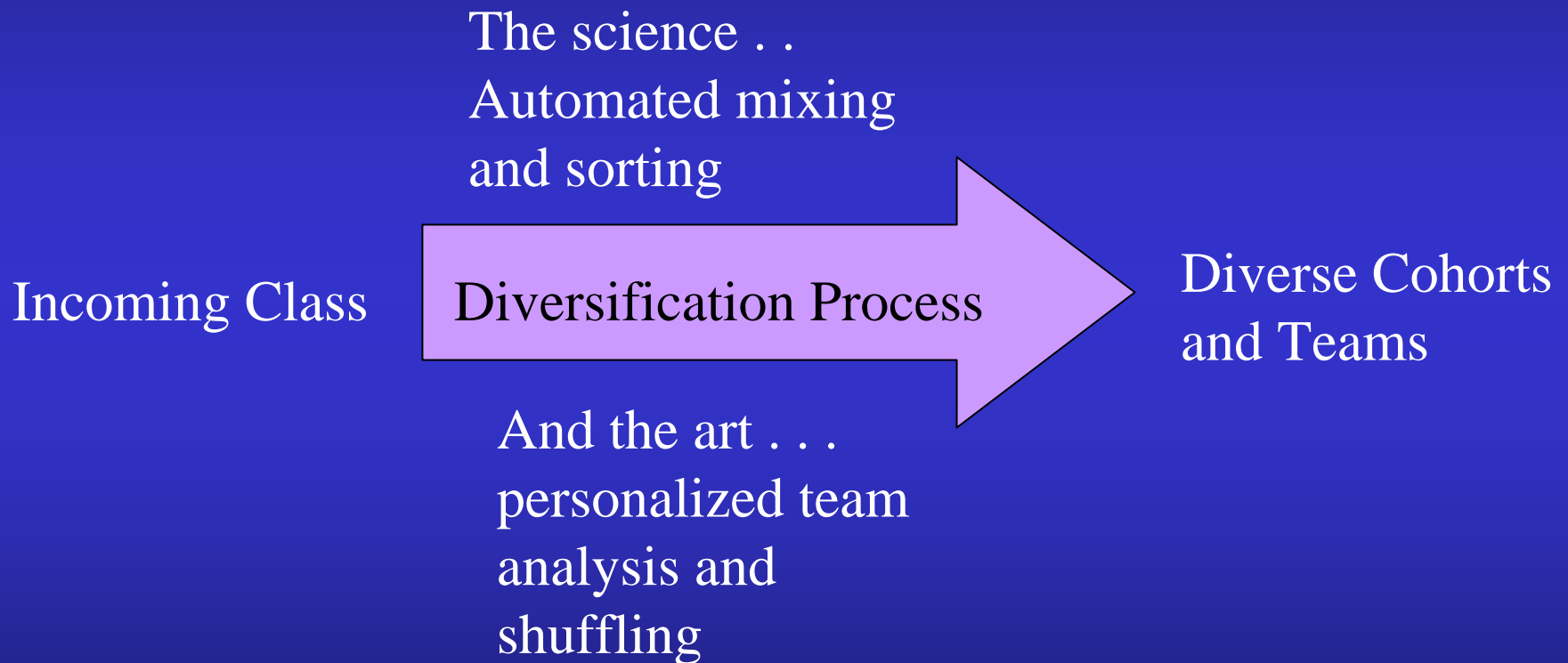
Many schools of management
use the cohort system

Why Core Teams?

- Students learn key skills in teamwork
 - Importance of accountability
 - Reliance on others to accomplish goals
 - Management of diverse skill sets
 - Interpersonal dynamics
- Concentrated exposure to diverse cultural perspectives
 - International viewpoints – cultural, business, social
 - Racial, gender, orientation, age differences
 - Promotes interaction and friendship across traditional social groupings
 - Preparation for a global diverse working environment
- Team is natural support group

The business community values team experience
and leadership skills learned in teams

How Are Cohorts and Teams Formed?



Six cohorts (“oceans”) each with 11 teams –
66 teams total

How Will My Core Courses Use Teams?

A Spectrum of Possibilities

Individual
Homework

Integrated
Team Project

In some cases, you will need to complete individual assignments with no consultation with your teammates

Sometimes, you will be permitted by your instructor to discuss concepts but not share results

Sometimes you will be expected to complete a project as a team

It's essential that you check your understanding of your instructor's expectations for each course

The OP Team Project (15.328)

- Is kicked off on September 11
- Requires that your team identify an organization (for profit, non-profit, etc.) to work with
- Working with the organization, you identify a change initiative to study (planned, in progress, or recently completed) using concepts from OP
- Your team collects information via web, documents, interviews, observation, etc.
- You present an oral report in Communication class “as if” to senior management, and a written team report to your faculty Team Project advisor

The First Year Challenge

- Is kicked off October 22, during the Sloan Innovation Period
- All teams will address a single business challenge, one that is currently facing a major company
- Will require you to focus on the larger business context, not on disciplined-based knowledge
- Will give you a deeper appreciation of what you need to learn during your time at MIT Sloan, and the importance of integrating discipline-based coursework into a broad management framework

Team Project Comparison

	OP Team Project	The First Year Challenge
Duration	11 Sept - 9 Dec	22nd Oct - 19 Dec
Subject Focus	Organizational Change	Focus on the larger business context, not on disciplined-based knowledge
Assignment	Identify a change initiative to study (planned, in progress, or recently completed) using concepts from OP	Address a single business challenge, one that is currently facing a major company
Company and interaction	Any company (profit, non-profit), chosen by Team. Extensive interaction with company	Fortune 500 company. Company interaction not permitted
Key Activities	Identify a willing organization Conduct interviews, perform research - company documents, web, observation	Perform research - project handouts, public company documents, industry info, web
Deliverables	Oral report in Communication class "as if" to senior management, and a written team report to your faculty Team Project advisor	Written report, with optional powerpoint presentation
Learnings/Outcomes	Deeper appreciation of complexity of human behavior within an organization during a period of change	Deeper appreciation of what needs to be learned during time at MIT Sloan, and the importance of integrating discipline-based coursework into a broad management framework
Team Members	Core team - all members required to present	Core team
Competition	No	Optional, present to company representatives

What Team Experiences Will I Have After the Core?

- You will have teams – and team projects – in many of your MIT Sloan classes
- In most cases, you will select your teammates
- You will work with many different teams at a time, as opposed to just one core team
- This can present scheduling challenges!
- We encourage you to think about the benefits of selecting diverse team members, as opposed to going with what's comfortable