By William Laser

Where one sees two moons in the sky, one assumes that it’s the wine, not that there are two.

That’s a quote from The Mark of Apollo by Mary Renault, and from it one might derive the theme of the Two Moons Written Composition Competition,” sponsored by the Undergraduate Association.

The rules of the contest are simple: write an essay, short story, poem or other composition of any length in any style or analytical nature about MIT and you.” The sole judge will be the president of the student body.

Compositions will be judged on the basis of “insight, perception” and “frank discussion of the issues.” Entries will not be judged on “writing style, genre, or point of view.”

That’s all that there is. Except, of course, that there is a cash prize involved – $500 to be exact. There will be eight prizes in all, three reserved for incoming freshmen. That’s a total of $400.

It seems a reasonable proposition – an institution of higher learning promoting reasoned analysis of pertinent issues. What is more academic and academic than an essay contest?

But Berke’s plan raises several questions, many of a more serious nature than the one that immediately springs to mind: what does the title mean, and what does the question: what do MIT or anything else?

First, the Undergraduate Association president justified spending a substantial sum of money on this type of activity: “If the UA has nothing better to spend its money on in an era of ever-increasing tuition and budget cuts, the budget should be reduced from $5000 currently appropriated.”

Berke’s plan, in this view, but the idea of offering a cash prize as an incentive seems to defeat the purpose of the venture. Honest, open exchange of opinions is necessary to evaluate the quality of the MIT life, to decide what the critics have no place in such a contest.

Second, the issue of the L.A.P spending the undergraduate’s money without, so to speak, their consent, is one which merits some thought. The UA was founded to be supported by funds, not to support an activity without the approval of the General Assembly of some other collective group of students.

Third, why does Peter Berke appoint himself as final and only judge? It would be far more appropriate for a special panel of representatives of the student body to act as a whetstone to whet the winner of the contest.

The idea of an essay contest is not a bad one. There are several areas of concern to MIT students which might be discussed and to which MIT must offer as its main incentive cold, hard cash and judgment by experts. However, the idea of assigning awards of such a high monetary value to this literary competition is more American and academic than an essay contest. In my view, contests with high monetary value have no place in a rational and objective decision-making process.

The idea of offering a cash prize to students, though, is not so bad. That’s a total of $400. One could charge Berke’s $500 to be exact. As long as one is not disturbed because it is unfair to the winners of the contest.

The editorial comments made by William Laser concerning the justification for the University of California’s affirmative action policies underlying the misunderstanding of the real issues involved. The question is: “Can the arbitrary and falsely repressed information be used as an integral part of a decision-making process?” Mr. Laser claims that the consideration of race in a university’s admission process is justifiable. Since race and religion be tolerated. If they are not taken into consideration, the policy is not consistent.

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An observation from an old-timer at MIT.

Some years ago, the students made such a to-do about the same issue and_ing to the Institute today: the students asked to be admitted to an intellectual fair to be held on campus. This fair was to feature a variety of topics, including physics, mathematics, and literature.

But at that time, MIT had a strict policy against inviting or allowing any external speakers or guests. The students were denied admission to the fair. But the students were not deterred. They managed to sneak into the fair and present their ideas and research projects.

The students were well-prepared and put a lot of effort into their presentations. They were able to show how their ideas could be translated into practical applications. The students' work was well-received by the attendees, who were impressed by the students' creativity and dedication.

The students' success at the fair encouraged them to continue their efforts. They formed a group and began to meet regularly to discuss their ideas and plans. They eventually formed a club, which was later recognized by MIT as a formal organization.

The club's goals were to promote intellectual exchange among students and faculty, and to encourage the presentation of new ideas and research projects. The club's members were able to gain recognition and support from the university administration.

The club's success was due in part to the students' determination and persistence. They were able to overcome the obstacles that were put in their way, and they were able to achieve their goals through hard work and dedication.

The club's success also served as a model for other groups on campus, who were able to use the club's experience to overcome similar obstacles. The club's success has had a lasting impact on the MIT community, and it has served as a source of inspiration for students and faculty alike.

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