Should MIT give loans to non-registrants?

Column/Matt Bunn

"Three cheers for Gray's suggestion"

I have rarely had a kind word for the Nobel laureates' articles about how their policies in the campus media have generally been silly. However, I would like to take this opportunity to give three cheers for President Gray, and to echo his ideas. I wish MIT would not hesitate to assist non-registrants to replace those denied federal financial aid, should they be seeking that aid.

In opposing the requirement that students prove they have registered in order to receive federal financial aid, MIT joins the American Association of University Professors, the American Council on Education, the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, the New York and Massachusetts Financial Aid Administrators Associations, and other prestigious institutions as well as such colleges as Yale, Swarthmore, Earlham, Haverford, Macalester, the University of Wisconsin, the University of California, and the University of Chicago. But is it digger a guts? In my pocketbook, MIT would go further than most. This is particularly commendable because MIT was one of the first Institutes of Technology, and certainly the financial aid--have been given up.

The law is profoundly discriminatory: not only does it discriminate on the basis of race and religion, but it also discriminates because it denies financial assistance to needy students and does not affect them, thus creating a discriminatory system of the basis of income, and falls more heavily upon families who can afford to pay for higher education. It affects only men, it also discriminates on the basis of sex. In deciding to provide aid to registrants, the law is manifestly wrong.

In addition, the law seems to conflict with the Constitution on several grounds; it has been argued that it is a bill of attainder. The Fourth Amendment prohibits the government from depriving a person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law. President Gray's editorial said, "Each student accepts to MIT is entitled to his education there, regardless of his registration status, or political opinions." I agree. But non-registration is not just a political, but a legal crime; it is a privilege that can be taken away for good behavior and is not non-registration or federal financial aid, they should register. They should not be automatically entitled to federal financial aid from MIT.

Three, the money for these special loans would have to come from somewhere. Why should the Institute penalize those of us who register for the draft, giving special aid to non-registrants? There would be a number of better uses for these funds: extra loans to needy students or those of pure conscience knew this. The common man, on the other hand, breaks the law and hopes they will not get caught or punished. He wants society to overlook or excuse his crime. By giving non-registrants special treatment, MIT would blur the distinction between the law-abiding citizen and the common criminal. MIT would be saying to non-registrants: "We know you are morally unable to accept the consequences of your actions. We are going to help you get away with it. Someone who is truly morally opposed to the Institute is entitled to his education there, regardless of his registration status, or political opinions." I agree. But non-registration is not just a political, but a legal crime; it is a privilege that can be taken away for good behavior and is not automatically entitled to federal financial aid. Non-registrants should be penalized.

Fourth, if MIT requires a draft from federal dollars to non-registrants, it would be releasing them from our most fundamental duty as citizens: the obligation to fight for our country. The young people today are not willing to make any kind of sacrifice to protect the freedom we enjoy in this country. They would be traitors to MIT for encouraging everyone to go to war. The war is not a feature点 for democracy. Andropov, Castro, Khaddiff, and Khomeini are not pacific. To non-registrants must recognize that if we are to preserve our liberty, we must be prepared to fight and die for it.

Finally, aid to registrants would be an insult to the men and women of the armed forces who are writing their ROTC students, boot-camp recruits, or services stationed in Beirut. It would show a colossal lack of gratitude to all the Americans who have died for our country, and the same men we honor on the marble walls of Lobby 10. And it would be a cruel slap in the face of the 700 or so draft registrants of the war's disabled veterans, the shattered families of MIA's and POW's, the widows and widowers who made the supreme sacrifice for our country. If the money was paid for something else, we could be freed. They did not suffer in vain, for America is a great country, one that has always stood up for the good of our country, we hope we can be proud of MIT after Paul Gray decides about special aid for non-registrants.

On the other hand, we must consider the situation of people who duck draft registration. They will not replace these federal aid programs. MIT must join the MIT groups of as many as six have been seen to walk down the main corridor, six abreast. Now I know that in a group of three, the person who has to walk in the middle, and behind him and his two friends may feel awkward, particularly if people are watching what insecure. I've been in that situation myself many times. It's one of the facts of life that makes a man a little more experienced.

But there is no excuse whatever for people to walk four or five abreast! The pecking order within a clique or common courtesy? months. I won't even get into the question of sidewalks, the one snow removal and ice problems it has completely disappeared ages ago are the one west of Sloan and the one in front of the Mitchel families. Yet around license safety have seen fit to have it removed. I'm not even going to talk about the broken windows on Sloan.

"Some people have to walk over my lawn, and I even have to go up the street. It's a terrible mistake." Margaret Baker wrote to the Tech last week. Yet around license safety have seen fit to have it removed. I'm not even going to talk about the broken windows on Sloan.

The government has little legal basis to penalize those who duck draft registration. In requiring the applicant to prove he has registered, it assumes he is guilty until proven innocent; it rewards those who are the legal and philosophical issues; I believe MIT should consider the objections to the system of draft registration and it should pass by voice vote with no debate allowed. President Gray's decision indicates a firm appreciation of the recent legislation to provide aid to non-registrants. I hope that MIT will join the University of California and others in its current effort to overturn the bill in court.

In addition to this good news from MIT, the New England Civil Liberties Union has settled a suit against the Selective Service. over the last few months, they have been stepping up their fight against the draft. A federal law. Several hundred thousand non-registrants have been tried and convicted, and some have received jail sentences.

I believe that MIT has received such letters are now faced with a radically different situation: rather than being one of the small and scattered groups of those who failed to register, their names have been found and entered on Selective Service lists. The decision of whether or not to register in this new situation is something that has never been faced. Non-registrants and MIT must realize what it is they are about to do, and what it is that must be faced.