Women computer majors harassed

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threatening sexual advance by another person, according to the report.

Women comprising nearly the Harvard exper- 
ience is different for men and wo- 
men," the report concluded.

"This is a very powerful state- 
ment that applies to MIT as well," Rowe said. "It is an ex- 
ample of sexual harassment, some women are derailed from normal aca- 
demic life."

Males at MIT compose 99 per-
cent of the offenders but only 5 
percent of the complain- 
ants, according to Rowe.

The rate at which incidents are 
reported, however, between the situations at Har-
vard and MIT, she said. "Har- 
vard's problems remain the same 
when I first came here more than 
the last two years," said Rowe, 
who has been at MIT for 11 
years. "Cases are reported more 
quickly and there are fewer terri-
ble incidents."

The rate at which incidents are 
reported at MIT is also higher than 
that of Harvard, due to the many 
sources available for help, 
Rowe said. They include the Of-
cine of the Dean for Student Af-
tas, religious counselors, living 
group leaders, faculty advisors, 
tutors, health care practitioners, 
Clarence G. Williams, also a spe-
cial assistant to the president, 
and Rowe herself.

"Department heads have also 
been very sensitive and willing to 
make accommodations in the mat- 
ter," she said.

Rowe believes social pressures have 
made other improvements in controlling 
sexual harassment in recent years, 
Rowe said. "Students have more 
a sense of control and individ-
ual power. They ask what they 
can do, instead of what we will 
do for them." Long-standing, un-
resolved cases are unusual and cases of open violence extremely rare.

MIT harassment studies

The Department of Architectu-
re published in 1976 results of a study in which "students recounted 
ences of vulnerability, hostility, 
splittng, and sexual in-
undation," as its report states. The report concludes that unequal 
education and unequal career de-
velopment are experienced by 
women and minorities within the 
department.

"Racism to Equality in Academ-
ia," another major statement 
on the sexual harassment was re-
leased in February by female graduate students and research 
staff members in the Laboratory 
for Computer Science and the 
Artificial Intelligence Laboratory.

That report describes problems that "unfairly limit academic, 
professional, and personal growth." Problems cited are so-
cial inequality, including unwar-
don attention and obseness, and 
professional inequality, including 
patronizing behavior, lack of re-
spect, and double standards.

A primary goal of the report was 
to delineate the sorts of be-
havior that characterize har-
assment, according to Karen R. Sol-
lins G, one of the authors. Several 
informal discussions brought the 
issue directly to other mem-
ers of the department. "Origi-
ally the subject was taboo," she 
said. "Now it's a legitimate topic 
of conversation."

The more severe problems de-
scribed in the report were con-
centrated in the computer science 
area of the Department of Elec-
trical Engineering and Computer 
Science, according to Marilyn 
Fierce, administrator for the 
department's graduate students.

"In fact, the environment in 
the rest of the department is 
quite healthy," she said. "We 
have seen some improvement in 
recent years." Women composed 
less than 10 percent of the enroll-
ment in Computer Science in 1982.

The report was limited to the 
problems of graduate students, 
which are not necessarily repre-
sentative of the undergraduate 
situation. Graduate students "work on a more personal basis 
with faculty and peer groups for longer 
periods of time than do under-
graduates," said Professor Arthur 
C. Smith, director of the depart-
ment's graduate school.

Smith said some women stu-
dents had expressed a desire for 
policy changes, to remedy differ-
ences in salaries, for example. "There is no discrimination of 
that sort going on," he asserted. "It's a problem of not getting 
done when you have to work to-
gether.

"I trust that this is a transient 
situation," he added.