Guest Column/Adam Kao
On learning chemistry

Column/Scott Saleska
Research may be classified

Column/Simson L. Garfinkel
Rose: the best teacher

The Tech
Tuesday, November 5, 1985

Editorial

Colloquium needs participation of all

The Institute Colloquium tomorrow and Thursday addresses the
issue of apartheid. For two days, the colloquium will offer
lectures, discussions and workshops on the racist policies of
the South African government. The program could be an exciting
and important milestone for the Institute. It could also fail.

The Tech thanks the Institute Colloquium Committee for
its efforts. But the success of the colloquium rests on two
pillars: student participation and MIT Corporation and
administration intentions.

- A six-member panel discussion on "What can and should
Americans do about South Africa?" will be the most important
part of the program. This forum will be held at 2:30 pm
Thursday in Kresge Auditorium.
- Two evening workshops will be held concurrently at 7:30
Wednesday. Associate Professor of Materials Systems Joel
Clark will discuss "The Myth of South Africa's Strategic Min-
erals" at Senior House. "Immorality, Inefficiency and the
Illegality of Absolute Divestment" will be the topic of discussion
at the forum in Aislings House led by Georgetown University
Professor of Law Roy Shattot and Vice President of the Uni-
versity Corporation Robert Zarin.

The event will conclude Thursday evening with discus-
sions in several living groups led by professors and colloquium
participants.

All students should make an effort to attend some, if not all,
of the events. Choices, however, will conflict with much of the
week's scheduled program.

If the registrar scheduled no classes for Wednesday after-
noon, I would be in favor of adding a day to the labor
week in order to make some of these colloquia accessible
for all students for future colloquia. The Institute should
consider this action with a strong contingent of student and faculty
input.

The success of the program also rests on the MIT Corpora-
tion and the administration. The colloquium is an Institute fo-
rum, not merely a student group. Corporation and administra-
tion must give the necessary means to observe and participate in the
discussion. This discussion must be the first step in resolving the
political, economic and moral implications of MIT's investments in
US companies doing business in South Africa.

In his Lecture Series Committee speech to students on Oct.
17, President Gray urged students to contemplate their experi-
experiences in terms of their responsibility to future leadership:
"You are an elite in terms of intellectual ability, in terms of
motivation for sustained effort, determination[s] [and] potential
for creativity," he said. "The future of this society...

In the same light, current leaders of MIT must recognize
their own responsibility. Corporation, administration, faculty,
staff and students must attend the colloquium.

Look, I don't hate chemistry. I believe chemistry is useful
to learn chemistry. I believe chemistry afflicts many other disciplines.
I can't figure out what 511.11 is teaching, or I'm supposed to learn. There
might be an instance in class, no sense of direction. When I decided to take
the course (rather than solid-state chemistry), I was afraid to take my
questions to the professor. It always used to be lines thick as a
chemistry major views with contempt a book filled with trivia, that in
trying to describe everything existing in the universe, we get into
"geology, spectroscopy," an obscure title, a limited experimental tech-
nique... a thinking example of a real-world application but an
algebraic analog of a separating concept. My tutor said it was im-
proved, "because it will be on the test."

I get homework problems assigned
from the same book, with
questions that required no thinking, no
understanding, only a quick flip to
the corresponding example in the
text. I used to feel that I'd drifted
reading a few P's changed to C's. I
got questions that told me I was
right, but irrelevant facts about aspirin,
and then set me the herculean
task of counting the carbons in the

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