Pornography committee report to Dean McBAY

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Several proposals were offered to "strengthen" the current sanctions. Technically of course the Committee at present has no power to apply sanctions; it merely reviews films and advises the Dean for Student Affairs as to the "appropriateness" of particular films. The various proposals for new sanctions do not overlook this fact; no committee member has in fact proposed that the Committee itself enforce the policy. Rather, the proposals amount to suggestions to the Dean concerning actions she might take:

a) Several members suggested that groups be forbidden to charge admission to films which were not "approved" by the Committee. As at least one member pointed out, however, this limitation would in reality affect only LSC. It is also worth mentioning however that only LSC has, during the past year, indicated an interest in showing pornographic/sexually explicit films on campus.

b) One member recommended that the Institute forbid the "public" showing of any "unapproved" film.

c) One member recommended that the size of the hall in which "unapproved" films may be shown should be further limited.

d) One member suggested that any group wishing to show a sexually-explicit film be required to "establish an educational format — lecture, discussion, etc. — as a part of the showing."

6. An alternative proposal

One member of the Committee offered what amounts to a complete revision of the current procedure. The following paragraphs take note of specific elements of this proposal; however, given the extent of the proposal as a whole, it seems only fair to outline it in toto:

a) "The policy should apply to all x-rated or sexually explicit unrated films shown in Institute facilities, scheduled through the MIT Schedule Office or the MIT Campus Activities Office."

b) No such films should be shown in rooms with a capacity of more than 600!

c) The sponsoring group shall notify the MIT community at least 6 weeks prior to the showing, by means of any campus media with a distribution of 8000 copies or more.

d) No one shall be admitted to the showing without proof of majority status and MIT affiliation; no one may enter as a non-MIT affiliate may be admitted.

e) At least two MIT campus police officers shall be hired for the showing.

f) The Dean for Student Affairs may waive any of the preceding requirements. Request for such waivers must be filed with the Dean's Office at least 3 weeks prior to the scheduled showing. The Dean shall notify the sponsoring group of his decision within two weeks of receiving the request, and shall notify the MIT community within one week of granting or denying a waiver.

g) Failure to comply with any of the above procedures will result in revocation of Institute room reservation privileges for up to 8 weeks, and "permanent revocation of room reservation privileges for sexually explicit films at the discretion of the Dean for Student Affairs."

7. Conclusions

There is within the Committee consensus (but by no means unanimous) in support of the following points:

a) There is a need for an explicit Institute policy regarding the showing of x-rated and sexually explicit films on campus.

b) A reviewing Committee which represents a variety of constituencies is a necessary and effective part of such a policy.

c) The Repeal guidelines provide at least the basis for a set of standards which such a Committee should apply.

The Committee identified the following as points in need of further consideration:

a) Does the allocation of membership on the 1984-85 Committee provide a truly "representative" sample of the community? Specifically, should student membership be increased? Should the allocation of student memberships be based on living groups? Should specific constituency groups other than LSC be granted membership? Should membership include representation of support staff?

b) Is the scope of the current policy clearly defined? Specifically, does the policy extend to films and other activities sponsored by sub-units of the faculty and arranged as a part of explicitly educational or curricular events?

c) What should be the result of a finding by the Committee that a particular film is not "acceptable"? Should such films be excluded altogether from campus facilities? Ought the present limitations on the timing and the location of the showing of such films be removed — or strengthened? Ought other sanctions, including limitations on admissions fees, be invoked?

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