Faculty to vote on MIT arrests

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Simmonds said, "First, the people who put in the proposal to build the shanties for March 2 to March 13 didn't formally request an extension. Second, we needed to free the space for other activities. We decided that the method of declaring the students trespassers would be the least consequential and safest.

"I was part of the group with Senior Vice President William R. Bill Dickson ['56], [Associate Provost S.] Jay Keyser, and the Chief of Campus Police [James Olivieri] who met last Thursday evening. We heard the pros and cons of removing the shanties. I didn't go into the meeting with a set decision to do what we did. But, it appeared to be the best means of avoiding violence."

The faculty members clashed over MIT's refusal to drop charges against the students. Smullin was one of several faculty members who argued for MIT to drop the charges. He pointed out, "The upshot is that the individuals against whom the violence was perpetrated are now in court."

James L. Kirtley Jr. '67, professor of electrical engineering, was one of the few to support criminal charges against the students. "I endorse the administration's decision," he declared.

Smith said he found it fitting that while "MIT is in the midst of a discussion of the entire undergraduate curriculum, especially concerning the humanities curriculum, that we have this event which illustrates the Institute's concern for humanitarian issues." Menand and lawyers from the American Civil Liberties Union concluded Wednesday night that the matter is now a problem of court procedures.

If MIT drops charges against the students who will be tried before the Massachusetts Court, the state can still try the case, according to Menand. But the court probably could not prosecute the protesters without MIT's witness information, he said.

MIT's dropping of charges against the six other students would clear the students' records immediately, he added.

Text of resolution

(Editor's note: Following is the text of the faculty resolution written by Gretchen Kalonji '80 and Jeffrey A. Meldman. The faculty will vote on the resolution April 3.)

We, the MIT faculty, regret the arrest of the eight students in the Kresge Oval on Friday, March 14. We urge the MIT administration to take all feasible steps to persuade the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to terminate the prosecution of all these cases and to expunge any resulting criminal records. We also urge the administration to reimburse the students for the court costs and legal expenses incurred in these cases.

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