Homosexual stereotypes hurt

To the Editor:

On April 15, 1986, The Tech printed a letter concerning the gay harassment case at East Campus ["Student apologies in cross cultural comments", p. E3, April 14]. I was appalled by the Office of the Dean for Student Affairs Robert A. Sherrill's handling of the problem. If intoxication could be used as an excuse for harassment, let us all get together, get drunk, and burn down the Institute. Two weeks later we shall apologize, and the case will be closed. Are there any volunteers?

I must say that I was not at all surprised to read about harassment of homosexual students. Since I came here, the MIT environment has become more conservative and intolerant of dissenting views. On the other hand, the kind of "disciplinary action" I was appalled by the Office of the Dean for Student Affairs Robert A. Sherrill's handling of the problem. If intoxication could be used as an excuse for harassment, let us all get together, get drunk, and burn down the Institute. Two weeks later we shall apologize, and the case will be closed. Are there any volunteers?

I must say that I was not at all surprised to read about harassment of homosexual students. Since I came here, the MIT environment has become more conservative and intolerant of dissenting views. On the other hand, the kind of "disciplinary action" taken against the vandal surprised me. I can remember three other cases that were handled with more severity:

1. On the last day of Residence/Orientation in 1984, a banner was set on fire in a Senior House entry. The student responsible for the torch was turned in and was subsequently dismissed. In spite of absence of malicious intent, this did not make: either this case was handled differently because the victim was a homosexual male, or it was not considered important by Associate Dean for Student Affairs Robert A. Sherrill, because the victim was a woman. In either case there is a strong discrimination.

2. Two students burned a problem set in a sink in MacGregor. The student responsible for the torch was turned in and was subsequently dismissed. In spite of absence of malicious intent, this did not make: either this case was handled differently because the victim was a homosexual male, or it was not considered important by Associate Dean for Student Affairs Robert A. Sherrill, because the victim was a woman. In either case there is a strong discrimination.

3. In August, 1986, a Besley Hall resident sprayed a physical plant worker with a water fire extinguisher. The student was not allowed to return to the Institute housing system and was declared "non grata" at Bexley, despite objections from other Besley residents. No one had a right for discrimination.

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