Feedback

Research and education are needed

(Editor's note: The following is an open letter in Richard Cowan, G, William M. Hesse '89, Ronald G. Indech '87 and Lawrence K. Kolodney G.)

Dear Messrs. Cowan, Hesse, Indech, and Kolodney:

This letter responds on behalf of the Academic Council and the Executive Committee of the Corporation to your letter of March 4, 1986 concerning the tenure decision in the case of Professor Frank E. Morgan '74 of the Mathematics Department. I regret that a personal accident has delayed this response.

Morgan is indeed an outstanding teacher who has contributed greatly to MIT. The support he has received bears testimony to the high esteem in which he is held by both students and faculty. I am certain he has a distinguished career ahead, and, as so many others, regret that he will not be awarded tenure. However, I understand the basis of the Mathematics Department position, and believe the decision, however difficult, has been reached fairly.

With respect to the three-point program you propose, I offer the following comments:

Part I. As you note, MIT policy requires that tenure at MIT be awarded for a combination of achievement in education and research. We do not see education and research as two separate activities. In fact, we believe that outstanding research and scholarship is necessary to guarantee future and lasting ability to educate. This is why research is a very important consideration in the granting of a permanent (tenure) appointment on the faculty. If the judgments between research and education are not being suitably made by a department or school, then corrective action can be taken through the process of promotion review. This balance should be applied to all candidates for promotion, not only those who benefit from a stereotype based on student voting.

Part II. As has been stated on many occasions, President Paul E. Gray '54 and all members of the Academic Council hold as a principal objective the recruitment and retention of minority and women faculty members. The Institute does provide special funds in permit arrangements to attract qualified minority candidates. It is of interest to note that the Mathematics Department has, in the past, taken advantage of this incentive program.

Part III. MIT vigorously presents its views on federal policy and programs, which bear on research and education. Currently, we view proposed reductions of federal support for undergraduate and graduate students and as the most serious near-term budget issue. Accordingly, we are making our views known on the relative priorities we place on student aid and research to appropriate executive branch and congressional officials.

If you should like to discuss this matter further, please let me know.

John M. Deutch '61
Provost

Editor's note: The following is an open letter to Alex B. Rosen '87, Michael Levine '87, and four others:

In your open letter to President Paul E. Gray '54: "Tapes could be used to blacklist students." April 29: you decry the videotaping of several Coalition Against Apartheid demonstrations as "shocking and unacceptable." You also demand a copy of the film so that "the MIT community will know the full extent of political espionage which the Institute has engaged against its own students.

We take up and spell the odor. First, MIT has a right to chronicle all public activities which occur on its property, including the March 14 Street. It's not as if the Campus Police has been bugging your dorm rooms to gather data on "subversive activities." Second, why are you all so squeamish about being filmed? Worried about security clearances? If you really do believe in what you ardently preach, you should at least have the courage to stand behind your views on MIT videotape. Hoten conviction and commitment to a course do not take a back seat to fears of blacklisting.

Dave Kranzl '86

Lack of tenure reform disillusions students

To the Editor:

As Provost John M. Deutch '61 acknowledged in a recent conversation with members of the Science Action Coordinating Committee (SACC) and in his letter responding to our proposals of May 4, [see "Research and education are needful"], the decision to deny tenure to Professor Frank E. Morgan '74 has caused considerable outrage among members of the MIT community. Deutch has expressed his "regret" about Morgan's departure, but remains convinced that the proper decision was made.

Students, however, feel disillusioned that no change in tenure policy has been made to prevent tenure mistakes from recurring. If the community does not question tenure policy and the imbalance of research and education priorities, MIT will not only continue to lose outstanding teachers like Morgan, but will inevitably lose all students who would have been the backbone of the MIT community.

Jim Killen and all members of the SACC

An American in Lebanon

Perspectives Past and Present

A Talk by Elaine Hagopian
Professor of Sociology, Simmons College
Former Visiting Professor, American University of Beirut

Tuesday, May 6
7pm
MIT Room 10-250
77 Mass Ave

Sponsored by the MIT Lebanon Club