Institute needs clear guidelines on harassment

"Why is it difficult to be a woman at MIT?" Just at MIT? It is difficult to be a woman anywhere. Overt and subtle harassment are a part and parcel of every environment, especially in institutions like MIT where women are a minority.

"Harassment of any kind is unacceptable at MIT." Yet to women are a minority. "Why is it difficult to be a woman at MIT?" Just at MIT? It is difficult to be a woman... "Why is it difficult to be a woman at MIT?" Just at MIT? It is difficult to be a woman anywhere. Overt and subtle harassment are a part and parcel of every environment, especially in institutions like MIT where women are a minority.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Harassment, a dedicated group of MIT undergraduates, graduate students and staff, has developed a set of policy proposals to rectify this situation. The new proposed policy draft offers specific options for action, specific guidelines for a formal grievance hearing, a provision for the resolution of anonymous complaints, clear possible punishments for those found guilty, and specific outlines for maintaining confidentiality.

MIT also currently lacks a system for keeping records of sexual harassment complaints. This has resulted in the absence of any information to assess the trends or the extent of MIT's sexual harassment problem. Problem areas, that is specific departments or living groups that have a high incidence of complaints, cannot therefore be identified. And the information impeded efforts at enhancing awareness and educating the community. The new proposed policy prescribes a detailed procedure for record-keeping to retain confidentiality so that data are available for statistical purposes and an annual report can be compiled in order to design preventive measures. The Institute needs a staff specifically dedicated to dealing with harassment complaints. Presently, harassed individuals do not know where to seek help and no structured programs exist for increasing awareness in the community at large. One of the proposed concrete measures is making available to victims a trained advocacy staff that will handle harassment cases and mobilize a campus-wide educational effort.

Priyamvada Natarajan '90

Abortion critic mistaken about morning-after pill

I write in response to Monica Williams's letter "Literature not focused on rape," Oct. 6. My concern focuses on the final paragraph of the letter "clarifying" the differences between the morning-after pill and RU-486 in which the author of the letter concludes "Morning-after medication is contraception; RU-486 is abortion." This is simply a misrepresentation of the facts. The word "contraception" is a shortening of contra-copulation. Properly speaking, contraceptives are agents which act to prevent conception. The morning-after pill consists of a high dose of synthetic estrogen, a female hormone which inhibits progesterone production. (Progesterone induces the thickening of the wall of the uterus.) This results in the prevention of the implantation of a fertilized ovum (not the prevention of fertilization of the ovum) allowing it to resorb out of the uterus and out of existence. Hence labeling the morning-after medication as contraception is, literally speaking, incorrect. Perhaps the term contraception is more accurate.

RU-486 on the other hand is a drug which inhibits the action of progesterone by binding to sites normally occupied by progesterone. Simply put, RU-486 prevents further thickening of the uterine wall and in so doing leads to the eventual expulsion of the lining of the womb. Here again, the appropriate term is contraception. A detailed discussion of the facts appears in the Sept. 22 edition of Science.

Morning-after medication and RU-486 are not the same drug. The difference, however, is not that one is "contraceptive" while the other is not, but rather that one is designed to block the development of a fertilized ovum before it is firmly implanted in the wall of the uterus while the other is designed to block the further development of an already implanted fertilized ovum. Needless to say, these observations have enormous ramifications for any group wishing to define life as beginning with conception and further endorsing morning-after medication (or for that matter birth control medication and the IUD). You can't have it both ways.

Patrick McDonald

Lotus blossoms in Japan.

Lotus is the largest, fastest growing American software company in Japan. Our 1-2-3 Release 2 has sold over 200,000 copies in Japan since its release in April.

Overwhelming response to 1-2-3 Release 2 has pushed sales over 200,000 units, making Lotus the number one spreadsheet software in Japan and the largest growing overseas market, and one of our primary focuses for growth in the 1990's.

So you see, you don't have to leave Japan to go to work for one of America's most prestigious software companies.

We have made a long-term commitment to the Japanese market, to understand the characteristics that make it unique, and to deliver the highest quality products and service to our Japanese customers.

Lotus is on the leading edge of a movement in Japan toward the networking of the corporate information in the Advanced Information Ecosystem by Lotus Notes

And you can help. With new product development, quality assurance, and sales and support, Lotus is ready to tap into this exciting and quickly changing environment.

To stay the best, we hire the best. Come join Lotus Japan in Tokyo and enjoy the small size of a company, the high quality of a business environment, the international competition, the quick decision-making, the top management involvement, the opportunity to use your full potential.

Lotus.

* Lotus and 1-2-3 are registered trademarks of Lotus Development Corporation.
© 1989 Lotus Development Corporation.