Honor Code Imperfect

As an undergraduate at the University of Virginia I felt safer under an honor code system. The code forbade anyone to commit or tolerate cheating, lying, and stealing. There was only one punishment available—expulsion. The judicial committee was composed of students, and the committee considered the severity of crimes.

We had to sign every exam and piece of homework, saying that it was our own work. There were occasional thefts of clothing and other violations. In addition, we could not find anything delicious about vandalism, assault, and fornication, all of which are illegal in Virginia.

In some European universities, a totally different approach is taken. It is virtually impossible to cheat on mid-term exams, quizzes, and homework because these universities have no such things. The final grades are based on heavily proctored final exams, complete with pictures ID checks and denial of bathroom use during the exam.

Tugbyity Kiyamas G

Vest Restricted Speech at U. of Michigan

President Charles Vest's assertion that he "defends freedom of speech and academic freedom" is less than truthful ["Free Speech Doesn't Protect Ethnic Jokes!", Feb. 14]. While Vest was provost of the University of Michigan, a speech code was adopted there which restricted freedom of speech so severely that the administration had to make exceptions for classroom discussion. Even after the speech code was loosened, a federal judge struck it down, finding that it unconstitutionally restricted free speech.

Vest's claim that a student's offensive behavior in posting anti-Semitic jokes was "proving a point," rather than being an expression of a warped sense of humor, is bullshit.

In its implied linkage of those who advocate freedom of speech with those who seek to offend, Vest's position paralyzes sensible advocates of civil liberties and to the communicative movement in the 1950s. In the context of campus-wide discussions of "free speech," honest, serious, meaningful answers to the question of the MIT administration's disregard for the spirit of free inquiry from which the truth emerges.

Liam Bader G

MIT Club Invitation Harasses

I recently moved back to MIT, having spent a couple of years living in the region referred to as the Delaware Valley. I was never actually involved in the MIT Club of the Delaware Valley, but when a friend of mine who still lives in that area forwarded club's most recent meeting invitation, I was, to say the least, rather shocked.

Picture this: In the top left corner, the MIT seal above large letters reading "MIT Club of Delaware Valley." In the top right corner, a sketch of a woman on one knee wearing nothing but frills and feathers and a skimpy sequined bikini. Underneath, the words "Lily Langtry's." The letter below refines the notion that the "MIT Club of the Delaware Valley is holding its February meeting at Lily Langtry's Restaurant and Theatre." Note that this gathering is advertised as a meeting, not a social event. The letter goes on to boast of the "spectacular entertainment," including "beautiful showgirls, diners," that can be found at that establishment.

Enclosed with the letter is a ticket, gift postcard from Lily Langtry's featuring a picture of a "showgirl"—a woman wearing frills and feathers and a skimpy sequined bikini. While I was personally offended by this, I feel even worse for my friend, who was the only one recipient of this invitation, and also for all of the female MIT students I know who live in the Delaware Valley. It is obvious not only from the invitation, but more importantly from the nature of the event itself, that the participation of these slurs was not conducted with any degree of sensitivity.

Considering that MIT is now about 40 percent women, it is obvious that the invitation was designed in an effort to drive the women away from the club, a message reinforced by the MIT administration's disregard for the spirit of free inquiry from which the truth emerges.

Liam Bader G

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Honor Code Imperfect

Jonathan Richmond PhD '91.

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OPINION

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