ROTC Controversy May Evaporate with New President

However, the committee also recommended that Harvard students continue to accept ROTC scholarships. "ROTC discriminates, and if a student wants to join, it is the student's decision, but Harvard shouldn't be supporting a program which discriminates," said Sidney Verba, chairman of the Harvard Committee on the Status of ROTC.

Clinton may determine outcome

If Clinton signs an executive order to end the gay ban in the military, or if the new Secretary of Defense issues a new directive, then the recommendations of the Harvard committee and the MIT faculty resolution will be irrelevant.

Protest on campus

President Mark S. Wrighton, chair of the ROTC Working Group, said that if Clinton fulfills his promise, ROTC will stay on campus. "MIT is receptive to having ROTC on campus," Wrighton said.

"If the new administration eliminates the ban on gays in the military... then Harvard will probably go back to the situation as it currently exists," Verba said.

If Clinton does not end the gay ban quickly, lobbying groups and the mainstream media will pressure him about the issue, said Robert J. Adams, the legislative assistant to Rep. Gerry Studds (D-Mass.), who has been active in opposing the gay ban policy.

"One thing I have some confidence in is that the military is very order-oriented, so if the guy on top tells the military what to do, they have to comply," Adams said.

Group working against ban

The ROTC Working Group has been lobbying the current administration and Congress to change the policy. MIT has also been working with lobbying groups such as the American Council of Education and with other universities.

A representative of a group of 15 colleges, including MIT, met with Dr. Christopher John, a Defense Department assistant secretary, in January of last year and discussed the policy. According to Gallop, John said the Pentagon would not change the gay ban policy, but that it was interested in creating a committee of DoD and university administrators to discuss the issue.

In addition, MIT has supported Rep. Patricia Schroeder's (D-Colo.) bill to end the gay ban in the military.

A decision to end ROTC at MIT would be a difficult choice, as many of MIT's faculty support ROTC, according to Margaret S. Enders, assistant dean for undergraduate education. Many MIT students receive scholarships from ROTC. For example, 95 percent of the cadets in the Air Force detachment at MIT have some form of scholarship. "It is to the student's benefit to have the (ROTC) program here. It benefits the country to have students of this caliber in the military," said Arthur C. Smith, dean for undergraduate education and student affairs.

In the Navy, half of the officers are trained by ROTC every year. In the Army, three fourths of the officers are recruited from ROTC. MIT makes a substantial contribution to the welfare of the country by having students get a perspective on the military," said Capt. M. E. Field, Commanding Officer of MIT's Naval ROTC.

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