

PERSPECTIVES ON DIVERSITY

Teaching Tolerance by Example

MIT Class Discusses Discrimination with Junior High Students

By Eun J. Lee
STAFF REPORTER

A black male walks up to a restaurant counter and asks for a cup of coffee. The white waitress behind the counter snubs him and attends to the white female who comes in after him. "Excuse me. All I want is a cup of coffee," pleads the black customer as the waitress rolls her eyes and ignores him. As the waitress continues to disregard the requests of this customer, his protests grow progressively louder and he gets more visibly frustrated.

As the customer eventually storms away from the counter, the dozen or so onlookers all have a good laugh. After all, the waitress and customer are just seventh graders, and the counter is just a desk in Gretchen Brion-Meisels' language arts class at Fletchard Maynard Academy, which is only a stone's throw away from MIT's campus. On this day, her students are participating in discussions of race and diversity with MIT students as part of a class project in the Martin Luther King Jr. Design seminar (17.920).

"It's always important to make time for conversations about race and diversity," Brion-Meisels says. "It's easy for teachers to lose track of this dialogue."

Teach your children well

When asked to define discrimination, one seventh-grader answered "it's a way to judge people in a way that's not cool." Although some students giggled when the topic of stereotypes and prejudices against sexual orientation was mentioned, the students discussed their own experiences with discrimination and performed skits about class-ism, racial discrimination, and gender discrimination.

"To make broad assumptions about different people is just wrong. There are different

ways to combat the stereotypes, injustice and discrimination that are everywhere, and you guys aren't too young to make a difference," said N. Ijeoma Ezeofor '06.

Examples of discrimination and stereotypes that exist seem all the more harsh when performed by seventh graders. From a minority job applicant whose resume is torn up to lower expectations for girls playing sports, the message is pretty clear that these students are familiar with situations that actually still occur in the real world.

"A good lesson to learn from these skits is that these situations can be switched around. Anyone can be discriminated against," Louis D. Fouche '07 told the class.

The presentation ended on a note of encouragement for the students to be proactive in dispelling stereotypes and playing an active role in their community.

"Soon you'll all be old enough to vote, and make sure you take advantage of that. A lot of people fought for a long time to give you that right," Christopher L. Smith '06 said.

The time that MIT students spent with the students illustrate the benefits of mentoring young people.

"Any time they interact with college students, it helps them set long term goals. Having young role models helps them see that they have options and think about what they want to do with their lives," Brion-Meisels said. "It's great that the students are being exposed to a diverse group of young people with different opinions."

"It's important for children of color to see that they aren't limited to being basketball stars or rappers. It seems like society puts them into this box and that's where they stay," said Nicole Green, a class aid. "This experience is going to give them something to talk about. I'm anxious to hear what they have to

say at lunch."

The same group of MIT students also visited the Morse and King schools in Cambridge and addressed similar topics through discussion and a role-playing activity on privilege and social class systems.

Becoming a mentor

"Mentoring is about building relationships, role modeling, and paying attention to kids' needs," said Sally Susnowitz, Director of the MIT Public Service Center. "Paying attention to people is a very powerful and sometimes transformative gift and that fact that you may be doing it around the context of reading or science makes it even more potent."

The MIT Public Service Center has several mentoring programs which target children and young adults of all ages, many of which take

place on MIT's campus or qualify for federal work-study funding.

"What I hear a lot from MIT students is somebody made a difference to them and they want to make a difference to somebody else," Susnowitz said.

However, Susnowitz gives the advice that because mentors can be so important to a child's life, anyone interested should make sure that they choose the right opportunity that fits their schedules. "We try to have a range of opportunities so that people can make a commitment they can keep," Susnowitz said.

For more information about mentoring programs, visit the MIT Public Service Center's web site at <http://web.mit.edu/mitpsc>. The PSC is located along the infinite corridor in room 4-104.

Local Ways to Promote Diversity

By Ivy S. Morgan

Eager to make a difference in the community? Here are some local agencies that help to promote diversity awareness and social equality:

Action for Boston Community Development

Action for Boston Community Development promotes self-help for low-income people and neighborhoods. It provides opportunities for upward mobility to Boston-area residents through innovative programs and services. <http://www.bostonabcd.org>

Center for Community Health, Education & Research, Inc.

The Center for Community Health Education & Research, Inc. provides AIDS case management and HIV education to the Haitian community in the greater Boston area. <http://www.ccher.org>

Boston Center for Refugee Health and Human Rights

The Boston Center for Refugee Health and Human Rights serves refugee communities and torture survivors, providing care to the whole person. <http://www.glphr.org/refugee>

International Institute of Boston

The International Institute of Boston fosters the success of immigrants and refugees in the United States by providing a range of comprehensive professional and cultural services. <http://www.iiboston.org>

Our Bodies Ourselves

OBOS challenges the institutions that devalue the lives of women. They provide honest information about health, sexuality, and reproduction from a feminist perspective. <http://www.ourbodiesourselves.org>

Boston Rescue Mission

Boston Rescue Mission helps homeless and poor persons move to self-sufficiency by providing meals, emergency shelter, a transitional program, and job training. <http://www.brm.org>

Greater Boston Legal Services

GBLS provides free, non-criminal legal assistance to low-income individuals, families and community-based organizations. <http://www.gbbs.org>

Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders

GLAD is a legal rights organization dedicated to ending discrimination based on sexual orientation, HIV status, and gender identity and expression. <http://www.glad.org>

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

NGLTF is a progressive organization working for the civil rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. <http://www.nglft.org>

Habitat for Humanity, Greater Boston

Habitat for Humanity, Greater Boston is a Christian-based housing ministry seeking to alleviate the shortage of quality affordable housing in Boston's urban neighborhoods. <http://www.habitatboston.org>



EUN J. LEE—THE TECH

Joseph A. Brown '07 and Louis D. Fouche '07 discuss issues of race and diversity with a group of seventh grade students at Fletchard Maynard Academy in Cambridge.

Gay Marriage Gains New Legal Ground

By Lara Rogers

From the Texas to Massachusetts, gay rights supporters have recently gained legal ground.

According to Cambridge City Clerk Margaret Drury, Cambridge will begin issuing licenses to same-sex couples "as soon as it's legally possible."

However, Drury said that she did not know when the issuing of licenses would become possible because the state registrar must first create the new marriage licenses that will recognize same-sex couples.

There are individuals at MIT who plan to apply for licenses when they become available, according to Ricky Gresh, staff coordinator of MIT's Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay & Transgendered (LBGT) group. The availability of gay marriage in Massachusetts may also play some role in the people interested in living and working in Massachusetts. However, Gresh said the legalization of gay marriage "does not represent a policy

change at MIT, which already has most benefits for same-sex spouses."

Gay rights gain ground in 2003

Two landmark cases upholding gay rights were decided in 2003.

In *Lawrence v. Texas*, the United States Supreme Court struck down a Texas law criminalizing sodomy between same-sex partners.

John G. Lawrence and Tyron Garner were arrested in their home after police were dispatched to the home to investigate a reported weapons disturbance and observed the two men engaged in sex.

The defendants argued that their conviction violated their constitutional rights to equal protection, liberty and privacy as protected by the Fourteenth Amendment. The Court ruled that the anti-sodomy laws did violate Lawrence and Garner's rights. Lawrence and Garner "are entitled to respect for their private lives. The State cannot demean their existence or control their des-

tiny by making their private sexual conduct a crime," Justice Anthony M. Kennedy wrote in the majority opinion.

By doing so, the Court overturned a ruling it had made 17 years earlier in the anti-sodomy case of *Bowers v. Hardwick*. The Lawrence decision is expected to invalidate anti-sodomy laws in the 13 states where such laws are still on the books.

Mass. gay marriage ban overruled

The second major gay rights decision of 2003 was handed down Nov. 18 by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court. Each state determines its own laws on marriage, and in November, Massachusetts' Supreme Judicial Court ruled that the state must provide "the protections, benefits, and obligations of civil marriage" to same-sex couples. Civil unions were already ruled legal in the state of Vermont.

In *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health*, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court found that, according to the state con-

stitution, there is no "constitutionally adequate reason for denying civil marriage to same-sex couples." The 4-3 decision made the Massachusetts gay marriage ban unconstitutional.

"The Massachusetts Constitution affirms the dignity and equality of all individuals. It forbids the creation of second-class citizens," wrote Chief Justice Margaret H. Marshall in the majority opinion.

The Supreme Judicial Court gave the state legislature 180 days — until May 2004 — to rewrite state marriage laws to comply with the ruling.

Even before the Goodridge decision, the Cambridge City Council affirmed its support for gay marriage in Policy Order 39, issued Aug. 4 of 2003.

Gay marriage draws opposition

Opponents of gay marriage are also seeking legal change.

Dr. King's Forgotten Dream

Charlotte L. Newman

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s struggles and triumphs were not omitted from our collective national history, yet the details of his legacy are recalled only in part. The annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. IAP Design Seminar chose this year to bring MIT's focus on the civil rights leader to one of the dreams America has forgotten. After the battle King and other leaders waged against the segregation of blacks and whites ended, King's heart and mind turned to the economic plight of black Americans. King's forgotten dream was one of economic equality.

King perceived his non-violent battle against injustice as dependent upon righting economic inequalities. King saw poverty as a debilitating force that held black Americans from fighting for their own basic rights. However, in his fight against poverty he called on all Americans regardless of their race or ethnicity.

King fell to the bullet of an assassin in 1968 while planning the Poor People's Campaign. This campaign sought to provide income or jobs to the nation's poorest citizens. After King's death, his closest aides and advisors built Resurrection City, a camp for the poor, on the mall in Washington, D.C. Resurrection city, ultimately disbanded by governmental order, did not achieve the elusive goal of ameliorating the position of the nation's poor.

Today, MIT's Design Seminar in honor of King, continues the fight for the impoverished in America. In agreement with the goals King marched for 40 years ago, students participating in the seminar created an installation concerned with the issue of poverty in today's society and the numerous affects it continues to have on society in Lobby 10. Though poverty in the U.S. was not the single issue that concerned the diverse group of students in the seminar, it stood alone as a significant part of King's dream which tragic circumstances prevented him from accomplishing.

As with the subject of race relations in America, the economic plight of America's poor begs the question, how far have we come? In a speech King once argued, "If our nation can spend thirty-five billion dollars a year to fight an unjust, evil war in Vietnam, and twenty billion dollars to put a man on the moon, it can spend billions of dollars to put God's children on their own two feet right here on earth."

This imbalanced scenario sounds all too familiar. President George Bush recently announced a \$12 billion plan to send astronauts back to the moon as the U.S. deficit balloons and the war on terrorism rages on with an \$87.5 billion backing.

So while the government hopes to ensure the nation's well being from the evils of terrorism it undermines the fragile existence of the poor. Our tax cuts undercut the middle-

class and the poor as revenues fall but the already fat pockets of the country's richest inhabitants continue to swell.

When denouncing the Vietnam War, King declared that "the problem of racism, the problem of exploitation, and the problem of war are all tied together." Though the particulars have changed, the end result has not. So we must proclaim as King urged many years before that we are "dissatisfied" with the status quo.

MIT administrators, faculty, students, and staff must be dissatisfied with the fact that the United States Census Bureau believes that \$41,000, the yearly cost of MIT, is enough to keep two five-person families with three children under 18 above the poverty line. All of America must become dissatisfied that in 2002, 26.5 percent of single-parent homes headed by women are below the poverty line.

The 2004 Martin Luther King Jr. IAP Design Seminar students invite all of MIT to join us in direct and active disapproval. Going into schools to talk about King's legacy, working on an installation displaying the fight for economic justice, and writing about current inequities that exist in our society have all been the fruits of our dissatisfaction. Of what will your own consist?

All of you have inherited the rich wisdom of King's many dreams. How will you use it? King dreamt of lands unscorched by missiles seeking political aims through violent

means, he dreamt of a guaranteed annual income for America's burdened and exploited citizens, he dreamt of political leaders wielding power motivated by love. So, although poverty is a worthy struggle, there are many more. Dissatisfied individuals must only choose one. Perhaps next year we might make honoring Dr. King a true celebration having fought for the restructuring for which he gave his life.

Currently Americans are complicit in their silence with governmental policies that neglect the poor and harm those abroad. However, because of the civil rights movement, the women's movement, and the Mexican-American labor movement America has a more able and diverse reserve of human capability. Arguably, our aptitude to overturn corruption and injustice is greater. If the problem has grown, America's citizens of all races and ethnicities must add their cognitive abilities to create political and social strategies that work.

If we are to get over the mountain of adversity that stands between our country's present reality and the promised land that envisioned by King, we must surmount the obstacles of racism, sexism, poverty, AIDS, bride burning in India, genocide, corrupt regimes, heterosexism, and all other social pathologies that plague our world together.

Charlotte L. Newman is a senior at Wellesley College and a member of the Martin Luther King Jr. IAP Design seminar.

Diversity in the NFL

Kevin M. Yurkerwich

The National Football League has implemented important policies in the last few years designed to promote minority head coaches throughout the league. For a league that has been dominated for the past two decades by great black athletes, to have so few black coaches is appalling. The current change in policy is the first step in the right direction.

Heading into this NFL off season there had only been eight black head coaches in the NFL out of the hundreds of coaches in the history of the game: Fritz Pollard, Art Shell, Dennis Green, Ray Rhodes, Tony Dungy, Herman Edwards, Marvin Lewis, and Terry Robiskie. That is a remarkable statistic when you consider that the league is made up of 50 to 75 percent black players. If the college game is any indication of the future of the NFL, then the league will continue to be comprised mainly of great black athletes, a la Michael Vick.

Of the black players, there are only a handful of black quarterbacks — highlighted by Vick, Donovan McNabb and Steve McNair. This fall on NFL Countdown, the controversial Rush Limbaugh claimed that Donovan McNabb was an average quarterback and the media tried to present him as a great quarterback because he was black. Donovan has been proclaimed as a great quarterback because he can beat you from within the pocket or scramble for yards outside of the pocket. The media may lose sight of his inaccurate, average throwing arm, but Limbaugh misunderstands this as a consequence of his skin color, not his tremendous athletic ability.

A few months ago, NFL commissioner Paul Tagliabue sent a memo to NFL teams requiring them to interview at least one black candidate in person and demanding that the owners be personally involved in the process. This policy is a progressive step in the right direction. Qualified black candidates will now be provided with the opportunity to interview for head coaching vacancies.

The league's policy has quickly borne fruit as two black coaches, Lovie Smith and Dennis Green, were hired in January. Smith and Green now accompany Dungy, Lewis, and Edwards as five current black head coaches. Additionally, Edwards was recently given a two year contract extension to stay with the New York Jets through 2007. The league now has more black head coaches than it has ever had, but there are some complaints that the system is inflexible with regard to some issues.

Detroit Lions' president Matt Millen was fined \$200,000 after he failed to interview a minority candidate. The five minority candidates he contacted to interview rebuffed him, recognizing the Lions outspoken interest in Steve Mariucci. After Mariucci was brought in

as the new head coach of the Lions, the league laid down the heavy fine on Millen. The NFL warned that the next offender of the league's policy would be charged \$500,000.

While demanding minority candidates be interviewed allows candidates the opportunity to present their skills, some candidates feel they are belittled and just used as a token black candidate. Former player Deacon Jones recognized this problem in a Fox News interview when he said, "You can't force nobody to interview me. What is that going to do? You can interview me and two other blacks ... (and believe) I've done my job. I've interviewed the blacks." Supporters of the policy believe that it is beneficial in the long run since minority candidates who are interviewed frequently have the ability to tune their interview skills and are presented with more opportunities to land head coaching jobs.

Whether you believe in the system or not, the results are undeniable. The five current black head coaches are more than there have ever been in the NFL. There are more and more minority assistant coaches in the NFL every year. An example of a great assistant coach is the Patriots defensive coordinator, Romeo Crennel, who will probably land a head coaching job in the next year or so. The league is moving in the right direction.

This experiment in NFL hiring policies might have the potential to also help to balance out the number of minority coaches at the college football level. There are important problems in college football. When was the last time you saw two black college coaches square off against each other at the college level? If you remember correctly, it was Ty Willingham at Notre Dame against Michigan State's Bobby Williams. Recently Williams was fired and the only other three black head coaches in the college ranks are San Jose State's Fitz Hill, New Mexico State's Tony Samuel, and Mississippi State's

Sylvester Croom. Of the 115 major division one college football programs there are only four black head coaches — that's three and a half percent for all you Course XVIII majors out there. How are NFL coaches going to develop out of the college ranks if there are only four black collegiate head coaches? Moreover, there are only 12 minority assistant coaches at those 115 schools whose teams are made up of 43 percent black players. While the NCAA does not possess the power of the NFL to heavily fine schools for not seriously considering minority candidates, it too must reconcile this problem. The NCAA ought to use its ability to reduce the number of scholarships from schools to promote the growth of black head coaches at the collegiate level.

Although minority hirings at the college level are less of an issue to the media than the flaws associated with the Bowl Championship Series, both lingering problems have the potential to degrade a nation's passion for football.

For a league that has been dominated for the past two decades by great black athletes, to have so few black coaches is appalling

States Differ on Gay Marriage

Marriage, from Page 9

According to a statement issued by the Vatican on July 31, 2003, "in those situations where homosexual unions have been legally recognized or have been given the legal status and rights belonging to marriage, clear and emphatic opposition is a duty" for members of the Catholic faith.

On Jan. 21, 2004, the Ohio Legislature passed a measure to ban marriage and civil union for same-sex couples. Ohio's ban will make it the 38th state with a Defense of Mar-

riage Act, an act defining marriage as a union that can only exist between a man and a woman.

Currently, a federal Defense of Marriage Act stipulates that states that ban gay marriages do not have to honor homosexual marriages or civil unions from other states. However, if additional states declare gay marriage to be legal, political momentum could overturn the federal act.

As in Massachusetts, courts in Hawaii and Alaska previously decided that state constitutions did not support bans on gay marriage.

Amendments to both states' constitutions were subsequently passed to ban gay marriage.

An amendment to ban gay marriage in Massachusetts will come before state lawmakers on February 11th. However, even if supported by lawmakers, the proposed amendment cannot reach voters until 2006.

Though gay marriage may conflict with the spiritual values of some members of the local and national community, Gresh said that LGBT members continue to find support. "MIT's a pretty welcoming place in general," he said.

New Focus for a New MIT

Terrence R. Strader

From building and remodeling roads and buildings to evaluating and articulating the goals, content, and structure of the MIT common undergraduate educational experience, MIT is in the process of a complete "makeover."

One aspect of this makeover that has come out in the open this past semester is the idea of MIT adopting a diversity General Institute Requirement. The lack of education in the areas of race, ethnicity, and culture is a major problem in our society today. Racism, discrimination, and segregation are severe effects caused by this problem, which currently plague communities across the world. Using education as a tool to inform others in our society about the many diverse people in this world would help to eliminate the discrimination and prejudice that cripples our society on a daily basis.

A diversity requirement is not new for most colleges and universities. According to www.diversityweb.org, 63 percent of colleges and universities either have in place a diversity requirement or are in the process of developing one. Some notable schools with diversity requirements in place include Boston College, Brown University, Penn State, UC Berkeley, UCLA, and Wellesley College. Most of these schools require their students to select from a list of designated classes to complete the diversity requirement.

Many colleges and universities are beginning to recognize that they can play a pivotal role in addressing the enduring problems of race relations. For example, the University of Virginia experienced a highly publicized racially charged incident on their campus just last year, when Daisy Lundy, a candidate for a hotly contested Student Council election who is of African-American and Korean heritage, was attacked by an assailant who allegedly used a racial slur during the attack. After this incident, the University of Virginia realized that they could play a role in preventing future racially charged incidents and established a committee to explore a diversity requirement for their school. Will it take something like this to occur at MIT in order for the institute to realize that they play a pivotal role in addressing these enduring racial problems?

For years, MIT has tried to use different approaches to promote awareness and understanding on the issues of diversity and race by offering a number of racial programs, extracurricular activities, workshops, and dis-

Are We Ready for a Minority President?

Natasha N. Rushing

Is the United States ready for a minority president?

It is very easy for people to immediately reply "yes" in response to this question. Yet, if our country is ready, then why has a minority candidate yet to survive the cuts of the party caucuses and primaries to receive the nomination? I venture to say that we are in denial of political inequalities, and the realization of a minority president is nowhere in the near future. There are many things in this country that we overlook that may be holding back our electoral process from reaching its full potential envisioned by our forefathers of representing all citizens of this country. Let us look at the primary example of African-Americans in national public offices.

First, the time elapsed since the end of blatant racial discrimination in this country is equivalent to an eye blink in the span of history. Slavery in America, which ended approximately 140 years ago in 1865, was in place for over 250 years. If you consider the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as the end of the civil rights movement, then there have only been 36 years between then and now. Despite the American ideal that any person can "make it to the top" with hard work, I find it

very improbable that a man can rise from the dregs of society to one of the most reputable positions in the world in the time span of only 36 years.

Secondly, the number of blacks in Congress is pathetically low. White males represent approximately 40 percent of the US population, yet comprise 77 percent of the House of Representatives and 87 percent of the Senate, a total of 79 percent of Congress. African-Americans (both male and female) represent approximately 13 percent of the U.S. population, 9 percent of the House, zero percent of the Senate, a total of 7 percent of Congress.

How can we expect the American people to elect a black president when they cannot keep a black Senator in office? Perhaps there just aren't that many blacks aspiring to public office. Even still, that cannot possibly account for the fact that there are currently no black senators.

Next, we can look at the trends for the blacks who have braved to run for the Presidential office. Jesse Jackson ran for the nomination of the Democratic Party in 1984 and 1988. Both times, he was unable to win the nomination. Colin Powell was speculated to become a candidate in the Presidency in 1996, but did not enter the race. In 2000, Alan Keyes ran for the Republican Presidential nomination, but eventually stepped down from the race. In this year's Democratic Candidacy

Race, we have seen Al Sharpton and Carol Moseley Braun. Braun, a former US Senator, recently dropped out of the race. Sharpton recently received zero percent voter support in the Iowa Caucus and the New Hampshire Primary. Democratic sources say Braun felt it was time to quit because her campaign failed to catch fire. Solely based on the trends of black presidential candidates, things aren't looking too good for the possibility of a black president.

Finally, the number of minority voters in the country is disproportionate due to voting restrictions. With the exceptions of Maine, Vermont, and Massachusetts, the remaining 47 states and the District of Columbia prohibit inmates serving felony convictions from voting in any public elections. While a majority of states restore voting rights to convicted felons after they complete their prison terms or probation periods, at least ten states, including Virginia, Delaware and New Mexico permanently prohibit former felons from voting. Due to the war on crime and racial profiling, there is a disproportionate amount of blacks convicted of felonies. Thus, more blacks are losing their rights to vote. This is not to say that these felons would vote for a black presidential candidate or even at all, but it is something to think about. Also, there are thousands of homeless people who are unable to exercise their right simply because they

don't have an address to register with.

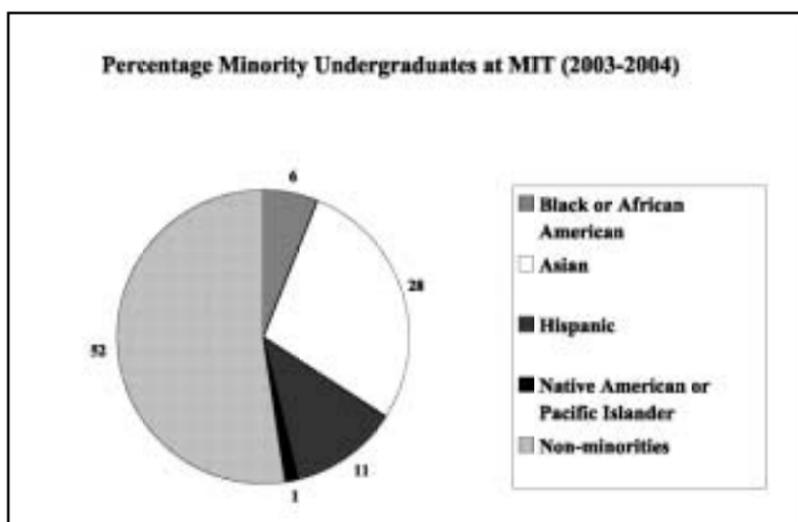
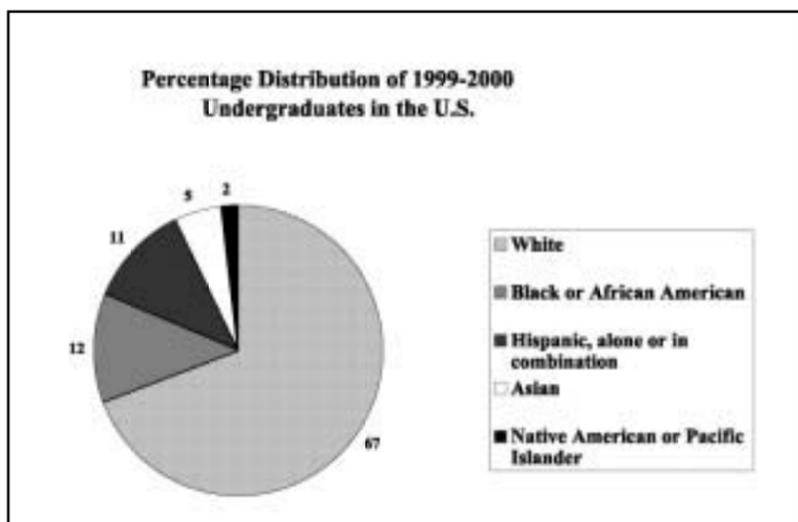
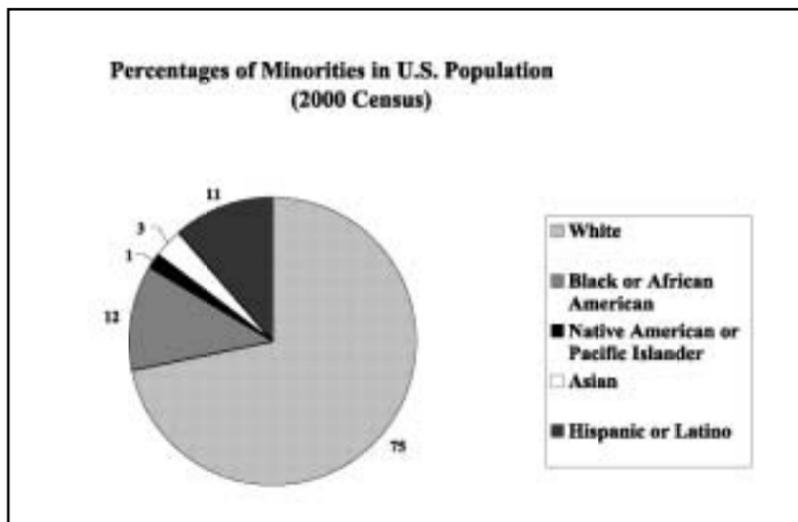
There are probably many other intangible constructs of our society that are working against the election of a black president. Being a black woman, I would love to think that this country has reached a point of equality for all, but then I would only be fooling myself. I do believe that one day this country will have a black president, and apparently I am not the only one. The television drama 24 and the movie blockbuster Deep Impact both have black presidents, so others are definitely open to the idea. But as usual, reality is far behind the imagination of Hollywood.

The question of whether our country is ready for a minority president is one we should all contemplate. The true answer to this question now and in the future will be revealed at the ballot boxes. In closing, I would like to urge all fellow students to vote. Based on the most recent census, only 63.9 percent of the voting population is registered and only 54.7 percent of the voting population actually votes.

There is a problem with that, especially since active participation in government is one of the principles that this country was founded upon. Please make an effort to learn about this year's presidential candidates and vote. The first step to change is action.

Natasha N. Rushing is a member of the class of 2005.

Race By the Numbers



Diversity GIR Will Benefit MIT Community

GIR, from Page 10

cussions. Many students and even faculty members of our campus have overlooked these opportunities. Now it is time to take a bigger step and increase our efforts.

This necessary expansion of diversity awareness would come from a required diversity class here at MIT. This class would be one of the eight required HASS classes; it could satisfy Phase I (if necessary), and could be listed as a Communications Intensive class. Consider the following benefits:

Alumni are very important people here at MIT. They are motivators and mentors for many students. Alumni could continue to play this role, but on a more active basis. If we have a mandatory class on diversity, we could have alumni come and speak to the classes. Dr. Clarence Williams' book, "Technology and the Dream," would be a great place to start searching for alumni dedicated to addressing diversity issues on campus. These alumni could come and reflect on their experiences here at MIT, and inform the students how much has changed or stayed the same since they were here. We must continue to break down barriers and progress forward. Actual testimonials would be great exposure to what is going on or has gone on in our society, instead of simply reading articles or watching videos.

A diversity class would not only improve the first year educational experience, but also the lifetime educational experience. Because most first year students come from high schools that presented students with homogeneous racial settings, they would greatly benefit from a college where there is so much diversity and the opportunity to discuss and explore the different people around them. Taking this class will allow students to learn more about everyone around them and feel more so a part of the crowd. When the class ends and the students begin the transition into their sophomore year, they could begin taking full advantage of the environment MIT provides

and develop into better leaders.

Advocates for Awareness (AFA) held a forum this past November to get the opinion of the MIT community regarding the adoption of a diversity GIR. The audience consisted of about 60 students, faculty, and administrators who generally supported the idea of having a diversity GIR. The structure of the class was the main area of debate. One of MIT's current courses, 11.023, "Bridging Racial and Cultural Differences," was suggested as a model for the class. At the end of the forum, a committee was formed to continue to investigate the idea of MIT adopting a diversity GIR.

This past semester, Tobie Weiner's class Solving Problems in Race and Education (17.907) took on the project of assessing the feasibility of implementing a diversity GIR as its final project.

The class found that many professors who already teach subjects focused on diversity supported the idea and expressed interest in teaching a diversity GIR class. Professor of Writing Kenneth Manning said that he thought it was "scandalous that we don't already have a diversity GIR."

The class will continue to investigate the possibility of a diversity GIR this upcoming semester. Members of the committee created after the AFA forum will also work towards the goal of helping to implement a diversity GIR.

We are currently moving towards the light in seeing a diversity GIR at MIT. A number of students who support the idea have applied to join the task force on the educational commons and the student advisory group for selecting the next MIT President in order to provide a voice for the adoption of a diversity GIR. If you are interested in learning more about the idea of MIT adopting a diversity GIR, e-mail Advocates for Awareness at afa-exec@mit.edu.

Terrence R. Strader '04 is a member of the Committee on Campus Race Relations and the founder of Advocates for Awareness.

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Racial Profiling Puts Everyone in Danger

Shawntel B. Hines

The last time I was in an airport was the beginning of January, when I returned for Independent Activities Period. As I stood in the security line of the airport, my thoughts were on how much I enjoyed break, how I really didn't want to come back to MIT, and exactly how cold would it be. Then, like others in line, I began to take off my shoes, my outer coat, my earrings, and checked my pockets for the usual: coins, keys, cell phones.

For one moment, I thought, I don't know why I have to go through this; you have never heard of a black person hijacking a plane. I've joked about such things with my family and friends, watching the news and placing a race to the criminals based on their crimes. The shoe bomber: thought he was a Middle Eastern male. The sniper: militant white male. It all seemed so simple. Blacks and hispanics don't commit those kinds of crimes.

While Sept. 11 has made people from the Middle East the newest victims of racial profiling, the attempts to crackdown on profiling has proven to be ineffective. An article was published in the January 21st edition of *The Boston Globe*, stating that in Milton, Massachusetts, minorities got 58 percent of tickets but were estimated to be 15.8 percent of drivers. In Boston, minorities received 49.8 percent of tickets but were estimated to make up 33 percent of drivers.

Are minorities worse drivers? No. Many believe that minorities get pulled over for absolutely no reason. No "Oh, your tags are expired" or "You were speeding" or "You just ran a red light." None of those. More drivers are being pulled over for DWM: driving while minority. What was once known as DWB (driving while black) has spread to other ethnic minorities. While I realize that the incident in the airport is also racial profiling, my idea of racial profiling goes like this: when someone gets robbed at with a gun (or knife) and the victim says it was a black man in a dark hoodie, the police sketch lacks so many details that any black man happening to be wearing a hoodie could fit the description.

The use of race in airport security procedures as a matter of safety, and the DWM situation are not examples of blatant racism. I realize that both instances of racial profiling are instances of prejudice and stereotyping. There is no way one race can be eliminated in any crime or potential crime without some type of identifying evidence. While racial profiling is not defined as a tool of oppression, it has become one, like so many other things designed for our safety. Admittedly, there are patterns in some crimes, meaning that most persons committing a particular crime may be mostly white, black, etc. But that does not mean that the entire race should be under scrutiny.

Even more appalling is that most of us are guilty of racial profiling in our daily lives. We've stood at the airport at looked at people with the thought in our heads "Someone might need to check that person out. He looks suspicious." Though our biases may not have resulted in people not being let on planes or being pulled over for no reason, they are still just as dangerous. These are still prejudiced attitudes. We are still judging people by the color of their skin, and clearly, not the content of their character. Sure, we don't know the character of every person that we see on the street, in the airport, in the convenience store, but this is all the more reason not to judge.

A matter of safety, is it? Well, when the sniper was assassinating people throughout the Washington, D.C. and Virginia area, the police were looking for a white male. Everyone thought it was a white male. But, as it turns out, he was black. Imagine who could have been saved if authorities had opened their eyes to the fact that anyone, of any race, could have been the perpetrator. Let's not forget about the shoe bomber. The man was white. Enough said. In the midst of celebrating Dr. King's dreams, we need to take note of the institutionalized prejudices that are affecting our lives. These prejudices are allowing us to maintain the idea that we are fit to judge. We are not. While you are judging someone, someone else is judging you.

Shawntel B. Hines is a member of the class of 2006.

Simple Ideas to Promote Diversity Awareness

By Ivy S. Morgan

1. Speak out against racist, homophobic, and sexist actions. Confront perpetrators of discriminating behavior, if you don't, you're sending the message that this behavior is acceptable.
2. Get to know people who are "different" from you. Take advantage of the diversity that exists around you. Make a conscious effort to befriend people who look, speak, act, or worship differently. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain.
3. Learn about issues and concerns of other people. Expose yourself to views of multiculturalism, racism, sexism, or homophobia. By improving your knowledge, you are better equipped to combat discrimination.
4. Consider the impact of your words and actions, not just their intent. Discriminatory jokes can be just as offensive as slurs. Don't perpetrate biases and prejudices in the name of fun.
5. Watch what you say. Some terms and phrases are demeaning to others. Everyone deserves to be addressed respectfully.
6. Understand and accept the differences among people. By denying the differences that make this society so diverse, you could also be denying aspects of someone's character that are very special to them.
7. Through your normal daily interactions, show younger children that diversity is a good thing, show them that it is okay to be around people who are different. Eventually, they will accept this as their own belief and perpetuate that philosophy.
8. Don't stay silent. If you become the victim of discrimination, say something. Don't let the incident slide. Tell your friends and family, tell your co-workers or classmates, they may be able to help and support you.
9. Be open-minded. Challenge your views and way of thinking, try to understand the point of views of others.
10. Don't underestimate the power of money. Boycott places that are racist, sexist, or homophobic, and encourage other people to do the same. Tell the place you're boycotting your reasons for doing so, otherwise they may not get the point.

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