

February 15, 2007

Dear Colleagues, Faculty, Students, and Friends:

After conducting a protest against unfair discrimination in the treatment and tenure process for minorities at MIT since December 20, 2007, including an ongoing 11-day hunger strike on my part, I am sad to say that Provost Reif and President Susan Hockfield have demonstrated a lack of moral character on this issue. Instead of working with my advocates to develop a fair and open hearing of the charges against MIT's upper administration and members of the faculty in Biological Engineering (BE), they have spent their time hiding behind the veil of confidentiality and propagating lies about the events that precipitated this protest. Chancellor Phil Clay has been selected to be the face of MIT when giving these lies to the media, even though his responsibilities are not for faculty affairs, and he has had no previous involvement in the events or proceedings that are the basis for the charges.

The administration has even gone so far as to send ex-president and lifetime MIT Corporation member Prof. Paul Gray to the protest site in the hallway outside of 3-208 in an attempt to bully me and other protestors. However, he only came armed with the same lies that the provost and the president are spreading among the faculty and department heads. For audio evidence of Prof. Gray's visit to the protest yesterday go to:

<http://pgen.us/Sherley.html>

On Monday of this week advocates acting on my behalf presented a proposal for an external arbitration process to representatives of the administration, including a suggestion for the external arbitrator. The administration's representatives initially accepted the choice of external arbitrator. However, after talking with the MIT attorneys, in later negotiations they rejected the proposal altogether. On Wednesday evening, the MIT representatives stated that all of my demands were non-negotiable. This action resulted in the current stalemate and amplification of the protest to end racism in minority faculty tenure at MIT.

I have learned that some of the faculty are considering other tenured homes for me at MIT besides BE. This is praiseworthy work and I am thankful for it. Certainly, if this conflict can be resolved I may need another department in which to continue my research at MIT. However, the grant of tenure will not suffice for me to end my protest. I have not lost 20 lbs to starvation just for tenure at MIT. Perhaps, the cynical, obtuse, and unclear among you will now understand that what this protest is about is fairness at MIT. It is to bring forth a process that will begin a committed effort by MIT to end racism in the treatment and tenure of minority faculty. I will not eat again until MIT's upper administration either admits that racism and obstruction of justice was a problem in my case and others, or works with my advocates to develop a fair and open process to decide the issue. Any admission of the validity of my charges and the obstruction of justice by Provost Reif, must include tenure, action to end racism going forward, and censure of the responsible members of the faculty and administration.

These actions on the part of our provost and president are nothing short of the water hoses, dogs, and billy-clubs of the civil rights struggles that Martin Luther King, Jr. led. How can we as a community sit and eat at a breakfast led by this administration, that in name celebrates a great warrior for social fairness and justice, when they have dealt in

this manner with a protest for fairness and the end of racism that is going on just across the campus? How can we? What will history say about us, if we allow ourselves to be compromised in this manner?

What would you give to end racism and other forms of discrimination at MIT? I invite you to show your will and resolve by boycotting the hypocrisy of the MIT MLK Breakfast Celebration. Instead attend a forum "ON THE COST OF UNFAIRNESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION" AT 7:30-9AM TOMORROW IN 32-124.

Please, share this e-mail and the attached flier with anyone who values freedom and a just society.

"LET FREEDOM RING!"

In truth,

James Sherley

P.S. OFTEN, DOING THE RIGHT THING IS HARD AND UNCOMFORTABLE