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Dear Faculty Colleagues,

Many of you have asked me about the published reports that our colleague, James L. Sherley, has expressed strong opposition to the decisions and processes regarding his tenure case. He believes that race was a factor in the decision not to grant him tenure. We consider charges of this nature with the utmost seriousness. Issues of fairness and the integrity of our academic processes are matters of fundamental concern to the Institute.

The policies and procedures for MIT's faculty mandate that the substance of tenure evaluations and deliberations be kept confidential to assure the integrity of the process and to respect individual privacy. As a result, I may not disclose or discuss the substance of the deliberations of Professor Sherley's tenure case. However, I will note that three important faculty reviews occurred between January 2005, when Professor Sherley was notified of the decision not to advance his tenure case, and December 2006, when I notified Professor Sherley that I am not going to overturn the tenure decision:

1. At the request of former Provost Robert Brown, a senior member of the faculty carried out a fact-finding review to answer questions raised by Professor Sherley relating to his tenure case. Professor Sherley agreed with the selection of the faculty member to act as fact finder and provided the specific questions to be addressed. Subsequent to the report of the faculty fact-finder, Professor Sherley filed a formal internal grievance.
2. Early in my service as provost, I asked an ad hoc committee of senior faculty members to address issues Professor Sherley raised in his grievance, including allegations of racial discrimination and conflict of interest. Professor Sherley agreed with the initial selection of the Committee members and was provided the opportunity to review and modify the charge to the Committee. Based on the Committee's detailed report of its investigation and its findings regarding the adequacy and fairness of the tenure process in Professor Sherley's case, I advised Professor Sherley that the original tenure decision would stand. Subsequently, Professor Sherley appealed this decision to President Hockfield and advanced additional information that he had not previously brought forward.
3. Because of the seriousness of this matter, the decision was made to go back to the Committee and to ask them to review Professor Sherley's additional information. Professor Sherley was given the opportunity to review and comment on what was sent to the Committee. The Committee produced a detailed addendum to its original report. Again, the Committee found that the process in Professor Sherley's tenure case was adequate and fair. Based on this addendum and the original report, I decided not to overturn the decision in the tenure case. This action is final.

I have recently extended the appointment of Professor Sherley through June 30, 2007. I expect that this time will allow Professor Sherley and the Institute to develop transition

plans that provide for the continuity of effort and the well being of his research group and for Professor Sherley to move forward with his career.

Since becoming Provost, and more intensely in the past several months, I have had conversations with many members of MIT's faculty to talk about how race affects the recruitment, retention, and experiences of under-represented minority faculty members at MIT. President Hockfield and I are deeply committed to removing barriers that may exist for under-represented minority faculty members and to examining and assessing effects that race may play in the hiring, advancement and experience of under-represented minority faculty. As a first step, and using the study of the status of women in science as a guide, we will work with the minority faculty and others to establish a committee of leaders, and provide them with the necessary resources, to undertake a comprehensive, rigorous and systematic study of these issues. President Hockfield and I look forward to reaching out to, and working with, the entire MIT community in these efforts.

Sincerely,

L. Rafael Reif