Vest informs MIT and public of agreement with Kruegers

September 20, 2000

President Charles Vest informed the MIT community of the agreement with the family of Scott Krueger through a statement published on the MIT News Office web site and sent by e-mail to faculty and student and administrative leaders. President Vest wrote:

"At noon today (Wednesday, September 13), the parents of Scott Krueger held a press conference to announce that they had reached an agreement with MIT regarding Scott's death in an alcohol-related incident at his fraternity in 1997.

"Under the agreement, which resolves all legal issues between MIT and the Kruegers, MIT will contribute $1.25 million for scholarships to be established by Mr. and Mrs. Krueger and, in addition, will pay them $4.75 million to be used as they determine.

"I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to sit down with Scott's parents and work out an arrangement that will bring some lasting benefit out of this tragic event. With this agreement, we can now move on with the healing process.

"With the Krueger's permission, a copy of my letter to them may be found at <web.mit.edu/newsoffice/nr/2000/letter.html>.

The letter also was released by the Krueger's law firm. The text of the letter, dated September 8, follows:

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"Dear Mr. and Mrs. Krueger,

??I am grateful that Rosalind Williams and I were able to talk with you and come to understand even more deeply your family's unimaginable anguish over Scott's death. Despite your trust in MIT, things went terribly awry. At a very personal level, I feel that we at MIT failed you and Scott. For this you have our profound apology.

The death of Scott as a freshman living in an MIT fraternity shows that our approach to alcohol education and policy, and our freshman housing options were inadequate. I am deeply sorry for this.

Scott's death galvanized us to action. It impelled us to greatly intensify our consideration and accelerate our actions with regard to alcohol, our housing system, and other issues of student life and learning. Starting in 2002, when additional housing has been constructed, all of our freshmen will be required to live for their first year in residence halls. Our approach to alcohol education as well as to policies regarding its use -- and their enforcement -- have been greatly strengthened. We are building a stronger sense of community and community responsibility. All this takes longer than I would like, and will never be perfect, but MIT is, and will be, a better institution for having undertaken substantial change.

I am a parent, and have devoted my entire career to teaching and
academic administration because I believe in young people and in the importance of their education. The death of your son has profoundly affected me. My MIT colleagues and I will continue to apply the lessons of this tragedy and make MIT the better for it.

It is with great respect and personal gratitude that I thank you for the opportunity to meet in person. With your help, I now have a greater understanding of your terrible loss and of MIT's responsibilities to its students and their families.

I understand that you wish to make this letter public. You certainly have my permission to do so.

Sincerely yours,
Chuck Vest (signed)
Charles M. Vest*

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