

“What can be learned”

To the Editor:

I want to thank you for your careful and balanced report and editorial (Campus, November 3) about Paul Cubeta and the college's handling of the events following his resignation and retirement.

I think it is appropriate that you focussed on the college's unwillingness to acknowledge a year ago that anything at all had happened. This matter goes way beyond the perfect hindsight of which we all are capable. While there is a moral obligation both to respect privacy and at the same time not be governed by fear of litigation and negative publicity, the engendering of public trust may involve risks that must be taken.

This tragic and sad story is not over, and its resolution has not been reached. You are right to be concerned about what can be “learned” from it all: I'd like to believe the administration at least knows now that more extensive consultations might have led to a different sequence of decisions. But a more important outcome is that we, the college community, now reconsider how we deal with such situations. Middlebury College (as well as other institutions) may need a special procedure when charges of intimidation

through sexual harassment arise. These matters are so complex in hu-

man terms that the responsibility to assess allegations and to make judgements might well include people with no connections to the college whatsoever.

Although some may see risk in such inclusion, public trust in the process can be enhanced by the willingness to involve outside reviewers when charges of sexual harassment are formally heard.

Sandy Martin
Chair, Dept. of English