

Office of Government and Community Relations

The Office of Government and Community Relations (OGCR) fosters interaction and understanding between MIT and its neighbors, as well as local and state government. The office also supports the mission of the MIT Washington Office, reinforcing the efforts of the president, faculty, and administrators in their contacts with the federal government and several national higher education associations. The principal focus of OGCR is the MIT/Cambridge relationship. The office promotes understanding among Cambridge elected officials, neighborhood organizations, businesses, residents, and MIT. The office endeavors to develop constructive working relationships, nurture partnership efforts, and collaborate on matters of mutual concern. OGCR staff engage in a variety of ongoing projects and respond to dozens of community and governmental inquiries and requests.

Local Government Relations

OGCR provided background and guidance on various licensing, permitting, zoning, safety, and transportation issues in Boston, Cambridge, and other towns. Staff met with representatives of the City of Cambridge's Inspectional Services Department, Department of Public Works, and Community Development Department on matters of mutual concern to the Institute and the city. Staff prepared for local regulatory hearings that involved the Institute, including a briefing with government officials on the issues surrounding a new antenna for the Haystack Observatory.

In December, the Institute's first formal, written agreement with the City of Cambridge about MIT's payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) was signed by President Charles M. Vest and city manager Robert W. Healy. OGCR staff participated in the presentation of this agreement to the City Council and subsequently at a hearing of the City Council's University Relations Committee.

OGCR provided background information for and scheduled several introductory meetings between local government officials and President Susan Hockfield. These officials included the mayors of Cambridge and Boston, Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney, and Massachusetts Senate president Robert Travaglini.

OGCR staff led the effort to prepare the Institute's annual Town-Gown Report. Staff participated in hearings to determine the shape and nature of the report, compiled data from several MIT offices, and planned the presentation to the Cambridge Planning Board.

Office staff worked with the City's Election Commission to coordinate the use of MIT facilities as a polling place for the September 2004 state primary and the November 2004 general election.

Federal Government Relations

OGCR staff continued to represent MIT on several committees of national associations focusing on community service, work-study financial aid, and other educational topics.

The office worked with the local staff of the Massachusetts congressional delegation to include Congress members in Institute activities and respond to their queries.

OGCR provided background material and other assistance for President Hockfield's trips to Washington. Staff also supported President Hockfield at local meetings with federal government officials.

The office maintained its annual practice of managing the president's mailing to members of Congress, providing each member with the names of freshmen in his or her state admitted to the Institute. OGCR staff also aided the MIT Washington Office with preparations for the annual Congressional Staff Seminar.

Community Relations

Office staff accommodated dozens of community-based facility use requests, such as hosting the Community Art Center's teen film festival and providing a venue for a fundraising celebration for Tutoring Plus of Cambridge. OGCR continued its practice of making donations to neighborhood programs and institutions, including Summerbridge Cambridge, Cambridge School Volunteers, the YMCA and YWCA, and Just A Start. Staff represented MIT on more than 20 nonprofit boards and committees.

OGCR staff encouraged members of the MIT community to participate in Cambridge events. This year, vice president and secretary of the MIT Corporation Kathryn Willmore spoke at an October meeting of the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce. OGCR brought Institute staff to attend various events at the Chamber and elsewhere in Cambridge. Office staff welcomed city officials to campus for events, including the Broad Institute's groundbreaking ceremony in July, the 25th anniversary of the University Park/MIT/Forest City partnership in September, and the Broad topping off ceremony in February. OGCR staff invited members of the Cambridge community to special Institute activities, including the community celebration in honor of the Vests at the Stata Center in September and inaugural activities in May.

In November, MIT hosted a celebration of CASPAR's Emergency Service Center's 10th anniversary in the 240 Albany Street facility and its 25th year of continuous service to the homeless population seeking services in Cambridge. Guests included government and elected officials, local business people, representatives from nonprofit organizations, community residents, and MIT staff, as well as CASPAR staff, student volunteers, and clients. Cambridge city manager Robert Healy and President Vest were among the key speakers. In June the office hosted the thirteenth annual Cambridge First Day celebration, honoring the Cambridge Food Pantry Network for its contributions to the health and dignity of the residents of the City of Cambridge. Among the speakers at the event were MIT Corporation chairman Dana Mead and Elaine DeRosa, executive director of the Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee.

Schools

The office worked closely with the Cambridge Public Schools, the MIT Public Service Center, the MIT Museum, the Edgerton Center, and others to carry out a wide variety

of educational programs and initiatives on behalf of Cambridge schoolchildren. OGCR managed MIT's hosting of the Massachusetts State Science Fair and assisted in the planning of the Elementary School Science Expo. Office staff coordinated the Keypals program, which pairs middle school students with MIT staff for email exchanges and visits to campus. OGCR staff planned a dinner event hosted by President Hockfield at which the Cambridge School Committee, the City Council, and members of the MIT community involved in K-12 education programs shared ideas about the Institute's involvement with the public schools.

Business

Office staff served on the boards of both the Cambridge and the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, as well as on various committees of those organizations. Through MIT's involvement in the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce Community Outreach Committee, office staff are participating in a campaign called the Cambridge Challenge. The purpose of this initiative is to link businesses and youth in an innovative way that highlights youth as community assets. The office also worked closely with members of the Central Square Business Association, the City of Cambridge Community Development Department, and the Department of Public Works to organize the first annual "Central Square Spruce Up" in May. Members of the community were encouraged to take part in a variety of activities to clean up Central Square, such as picking up litter, documenting where graffiti is located, beautifying planted areas, and sweeping the sidewalks.

Community Service Fund

The office oversaw the 37-year-old Community Service Fund (CSF) in its mission to support the efforts of MIT volunteers in the community. OGCR managed the disbursement of nearly \$125,000 in CSF grants to more than 30 local nonprofit organizations and student projects.

The 484 Phi Alpha Foundation, an alumni organization for the MIT chapter of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity, donated \$30,000 to CSF as the final installation of its three-year, \$100,000 pledge to the fund. The 2004 Community Giving Campaign again yielded great results for CSF. The annual sale of the plants from MIT's Commencement ceremony in June brought together volunteers from across the community to help raise money for CSF.

Internal Institute Activities

OGCR provided other Institute offices with analysis and strategic guidance on Cambridge political issues. Office staff worked to improve the understanding of OGCR's role at MIT by making a presentation to the Resource Development Peer Group for Support Staff in April. OGCR staff also supported several Institute events, including those surrounding the inauguration of President Susan Hockfield and Commencement activities.

Two OGCR staff members co-facilitated a freshman seminar entitled "Politics, Public Policy, and Leadership" and served as advisors to nine first-year students. The course

featured guest speakers from local, state, and federal government, including Cambridge city councilor Henrietta Davis, Massachusetts state senator Jarrett Barrios, Governor Michael Dukakis, and US Congressman Michael Capuano.

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Codirectors

More information about the Office of Government and Community Relations can be found online at <http://web.mit.edu/govt-relations/www/>.