

Chancellor

The Office of the Chancellor was reestablished by president Charles M. Vest in August 1998. The office was assigned a number of responsibilities associated with President Vest's goal of enhancing the Institute's education program and student life. The office was also responsible for oversight of some of the Institute's emerging international and industrial initiatives.

Academic year 2009 was a pivotal year in the nation's economy and in higher education. While the year started on a high note with the excitement of the opening of school and new students, we were soon faced with a major economic crisis, which challenged MIT and its ability to advance its goals.

As the economic crisis deepened and its dimensions became better understood, we continued to pursue our goals, including the October announcement of the Campaign for Students which was seeking to raise at least \$500 million to support student aid and to advance campus life and learning initiatives. We considered how the evolving financial environment would shape the success of the campaign, enrollment and financial aid projections, and our ability to make continuous improvements in student life and learning. We understood that the economic recession could well affect families, shaping both those who would be donors and those who would be recipients.

The condition of the economic crisis clearly indicated that this would be a long and deep recession. Our goals for the year were to plan for budget cuts in all units, which inevitably meant reducing staff or eliminating empty slots and cutting back on some programs. We also planned to hold harmless financial aid for students and instructional programs. Finally, we committed to a long-term budget planning process to identify ways to sculpt and streamline operations and programs to match the new resource environment.

While focusing on the economic situation was central to the year's experience, we did not allow budget reductions to define the year. In each of the three areas—undergraduate education, graduate education, and student life—we sought ways to continue the mission of enhancing the student experience. The details of our efforts are contained in reports by the individual deans. They are summarized here with highlights and context.

Division of Student Life

The beginning of the year saw the transition from dean Larry Benedict to Constantino "Chris" Colombo as a Dean for Student Life. Larry Benedict's legacy is that over a period of almost a decade, he built the division from a collection of offices spun off from the dissolution of the old Office of the Dean for Undergraduate Education and Student Life to a set of functions appropriate to the new emphasis MIT wanted to put on student life function. In this changeover, a separate office was created for the Dean for Undergraduate Education.

Dean Colombo came to MIT from Columbia University where, in over 16 years, he built the student life function in the College of Engineering and in Columbia College. When Dean Colombo arrived in August 2008, he was almost immediately challenged with making budget cuts to meet the new financial reality. It soon became clear that a reduction in the number of sports would be one of the major ways that the division would meet its first budget target. MIT has long led Division III in the number of varsity sports it offers, 41. This is nearly three times the average of similar schools.

While the question of the number of sports had been active for a number of years, the budget crisis created a new urgency to act. The Department of Athletics, Physical Education, and Recreation had a management tool in place, based on data available for several years, to identify the strength and sustainability of each sport. Using this data, and consulting with various committees and coaches associated with varsity athletics, the department recommended elimination of eight sports, characterized by an inability to maintain a sustainable program, student interest, and other indicators. The opportunity for students active in these sports to continue their play did exist and by the end, all of the sports had moved from varsity status to club status. This data-driven approach was reasonable because what it accomplished was a significant budget reduction without any reduction in resources and support for the 33 strong varsity teams that remained. Budget cuts in other units were more conventional, in that positions which would produce the least loss of valuable services and program support, were eliminated.

Not all of the efforts were negative. At the beginning of the year, the division opened a new dormitory. Ashdown Residence Hall was opened. This new construction project in the northwest sector replaced and added beds to the graduate stock. The new building kept the name of the dormitory that had been the graduate house for many decades and artifacts were moved there. The old building, now named W1, was closed for renovation. The Phoenix Group was formed as the nucleus of the undergraduate community for W1. They would begin to plan for the culture and governance of the new community.

While the recession initially delayed the start of the renovation of W1, work started later in the year when sufficient funds were raised in the Campaign for Students to restore the exterior of the building. This timing was fortuitous both to take advantage of lower construction costs and available donations, and to preserve the building's exterior against deterioration that might otherwise occur with an indefinite postponement of the complete renovation.

The year also saw continuing improvement in the status of fraternities, sororities, and independent living groups as measured by the number of groups that had successful rushes and met other targets. Greater efforts to engage younger alumni members of these groups to work within their houses and house governments to strengthen sustainability, recruitment, and finances were made, another legacy of Dean Benedict. While one house was lost during the year, even the loss reflected a new strength and stronger student leadership in the Interfraternity Council. The students would hold the fraternity accountable and manage the review of status.

Other good news was that the basketball team won the New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference championship; MIT continued to receive honors for academic all-Americans; and students continued to work on dining issues and on a host of residence and campus-based programs.

Dean for Undergraduate Education

While the Office of the Dean for Undergraduate Education (DUE) did have its share of activities to assess the impact of the economic recession, it nevertheless had a long list of positive outcomes starting with a strong admissions class and an increased number of distinguished scholarships.

First, some highlights: AY2009 was a very strong admissions season. This was reflected in both the 17 percent increase in the number of applications and in the quality and diversity of those applications.

The faculty approved the move from double degrees to double majors. This was a historic move and it greatly rationalized opportunities for students interested in more than one discipline.

The year saw a dramatic increase in our success in competitions for prestigious fellowships. MIT students won two Rhodes Scholarships and four Marshall Scholarships. This was the best result in recent years in matching the competitiveness of our peers. Seventeen students won other distinguished awards and 33 more reached the final rounds of competition for national and international recognition.

DUE worked with the Committee on the Undergraduate Program and various special curriculum task forces to develop a set of proposals for curricular reform. While, in the end, the faculty did not accept the full package of proposals, several elements were advanced during the year, including changes to the HASS requirement, which greatly improved the focus and clarity of that part of the curriculum. DUE also worked with various faculty committees and departments to generate a set of experiments that will be the basis for future proposals to advance the undergraduate program.

The dean for undergraduate education, together with the dean for graduate education and the vice president for information technology, worked on developing what would be the vision and the process for achieving the next generation of student service system support. This began a long process, where first aspects focused on the process changes in education and student services that needed to be made so that a future seamless transition to a new system could occur.

The dean created a Global Education Center that, combined with Career Development, provided a new mechanism to support both the career and global education goals for the office.

DUE advanced the diversity theme, which followed a successful diversity congress that pulled together stakeholders from across the Institute in a daylong workshop. The dean's office piloted a Mentor Advocate Program as a way of providing improved

mentoring to minority students. The program started with 50 students and 16 mentors. The Laureates and Leaders Program was expanded in 2008, having been started a year earlier. This program was aimed at identifying a group of minority students to be supported in achieving graduate and professional degree programs.

The dean worked with the dean for graduate education to develop a graduate student teaching certificate program. The impetus for this program came from both the desire to improve teaching and to offer more structured support for graduate teaching assistants to want to improve their teaching in anticipation of a career in teaching. There was very strong interest: 27 students completed the program in the first year.

The dean for undergraduate education did not plan for massive budget cuts. In his budget proposal for the next academic year, he outlined a process for what would be a significantly larger decrease in the budget for the year that followed. In order to assure that the cuts were not draconian and to collaborate with faculty committees and deans, DUE set up a number of task forces designed to identify ways to sculpt the budget to meet budget targets without undue hardship to the educational enterprise.

Dean for Graduate Education

The Dean for Graduate Education had a number of important developments during the year. The dean led the integration of the new Ashdown dormitory into the graduate community. The dorm had a successful full opening. Working with the graduate housemasters and using specially trained graduate students designated as “community fellows,” the dean was able to further develop a graduate community of more than 1,500 graduate students in residence halls throughout the northwest section of the campus.

The dean was one of the coordinators for the long-range budget planning process together with the vice president for finance and the associate provost. The dean brought considerable experience to the full range of issues associated with long-range planning.

One of the financial issues facing graduate education in the wake of the recession was the need to make sure that graduate admissions at the department and program levels was done with consideration for the forward resources that would be available to support them. While stimulus funds were becoming available, the concern was that because graduate students are in residence typically four to six years, we should moderate the increase in graduate students consistent with the long-range resources that would be available. The dean met with various department heads and program directors to review their plans and help them take account of central resources in order to generate a moderated growth in the number of students admitted during the spring in the various graduate departments at the Institute. This initiative was successful in moderating the growth and, in some cases, reducing the size of the new class.

The year also marked success in increasing the enrollment of underrepresented minority graduate students. While the number remains too small there was some growth owing to new efforts at outreach and new engagement by a number of departments in boosting the pool and supporting efforts to get admitted students to enroll.

Other Developments

There were a number of other important developments in the Campaign for Students. The public phase of the campaign was launched in October 2008 with a Campaign goal of at least \$500 million. Its specific goals are: \$200 million for undergraduate scholarships; \$100 million for graduate fellowships; \$100 million for student learning initiatives; and \$100 million for student life (including housing and athletics). At the Campaign launch, we had raised about half of the \$500 million minimum target for the Campaign. The rest of the year, after the October economic meltdown, became increasingly slow. Development visits showed that alumni were still interested in supporting MIT but were concerned about the depth of the recession and their personal or business circumstances and uncertain over areas such as taxes and business recovery. The Campaign picked up slowly after about six months.

We continued to boost our efforts at student engagement. A Student Engagement Task Force, composed of leaders from the undergraduate student government organizations and the Graduate Student Council, along with the student deans, the chair of the faculty, the vice president for institute affairs, and the chancellor, met regularly to explore a number of ways to improve communication. One of the initiatives we tried during the year was the inauguration of random events—dinners, cookies and lemonade, and other events—where random students were invited for discussion with senior officers. Four of these were held during the year and were so successful that plans were made to convert them into a formal program along with other initiatives such as newsletters and briefings.

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