

School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences

The [School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences](#) (SHASS) worked hard this year to strengthen existing research and teaching programs and to expand the mission of the School in new directions.

After two years of budget cutting due to the economic turndown, the School returned to a more normal schedule of activities. With a budget that is more focused on SHASS priorities, and with faculty and staff who are more alert than ever to the importance of maintaining a leaner budget, the School was pleased to return its attention to research, teaching, and outreach.

SHASS hosted four visiting committees during the year: Humanities, Music and Theater Arts, Political Science, and Economics. Each of these meetings was exciting and productive, and the School continues to address the issues that came up during discussions.

The reorganization of the humanities sections in Foreign Languages and Literatures, Writing and Humanistic Studies, and Comparative Media Studies (CMS) is continuing to develop. While it has taken longer than anticipated, it is crucial that the School find exactly the right academic design to not only accommodate existing research and teaching but also to open up space for the expansion of effort into media studies, including SHASS collaboration with other Institute schools. This reorganization will mark an important transition in the humanities at MIT, emphasizing the impact of the digital revolution on our culture and world.

This year was the 150th anniversary of MIT's founding, and for SHASS it was an exceptional opportunity to join with colleagues across the Institute to celebrate the past and anticipate the future. SHASS sponsored two panel discussions. The first, on economics and finance, was a two-day event that filled Kresge Auditorium despite a blizzard that threatened cancellation. The second, on the history of MIT, featured historians of science and technology as well as many alumni, and was similarly well-attended by those eager to hear more about MIT's remarkable story.

In addition, faculty, staff, and students from Music and Theater Arts worked tirelessly as part of the Festival of Arts, Science, and Technology (FAST), which was headed by Tod Machover of the Media Lab (School of Architecture and Planning). This collaboration between schools generated a large number of concerts, artworks, installations, recordings, and receptions throughout the spring term. The 150th convocation event featured a number of musical groups, including the MIT Symphony Orchestra, Rambax MIT, MIT Festival Jazz Ensemble, and others; commissioned several new works from MIT composers; and brought together 400 MIT students on one stage. The entire FAST initiative has inspired SHASS faculty to try to continue collaborations between Institute schools as the School moves forward.

Finally, faculty and staff from SHASS turned out in force for the MIT Open House, and talked to thousands of visitors about the strength of humanities, arts, and social sciences at MIT. There were musical events as well as poetry readings, tours, and videos. Many descriptive materials were available.

Faculty in SHASS collaborated extensively with the new Singapore University of Technology and Design effort, providing guidance and materials for the humanities part of this initiative.

As for physical space, Anthropology moved from Building 16 to E53, joining the other social sciences on the east end of campus. CMS moved into E14, the former Media Lab space, providing CMS with important avenues of collaboration and exchange with scholars there.

Undergraduate Education

All MIT undergraduates must complete the HASS Requirement in order to graduate. This requirement, which is overseen by the School, is the principal point of contact between SHASS faculty and undergraduates. Undergraduates who wish a deeper engagement with the disciplines represented by the School may pursue a major or minor in one of SHASS's departments or sections, or choose from among several interdisciplinary majors and minors. In AY2011, 120 students completed undergraduate degrees in the School.

As the interests of students admitted to MIT continue to diversify, the School's role in the mainstream education of MIT's scientists and engineers becomes even more important. Having faculty members of national rank in the fields of humanities, arts, and social sciences ensures that MIT undergraduates receive the rounded education that they expect when they matriculate. SHASS faculty regard this educational mission seriously, as is reflected in the high-quality teaching evaluations they receive and the continuing educational innovation that emanates from the various faculties.

A main focus of the work of the associate dean in AY2011 was planning and implementing the transition from the previous HASS Distribution (HASS-D) system to the new streamlined HASS-D Requirement, as approved by the MIT faculty on May 20, 1999. Oversight of the HASS Requirement has moved to the new Subcommittee of the Committee on the Undergraduate Program on the HASS Requirement (SHR). Students entering after fall 2010 will enter under this new requirement, while for three more years the previous cohorts will graduate under the old version of the requirement.

As of AY2011, oversight of the HASS Requirement has been shifted from SHASS to the Office of Faculty Support, within the Office of the Dean for Undergraduate Education. Students entering MIT after fall 2010 are subject to the revised HASS Requirement, which requires one arts, one humanities, and one social sciences subject (instead of the specifically designated HASS-D subjects). SHR has been charged with overseeing the revised requirement. SHASS associate dean Kai von Fintel has been serving as ex officio to the committee.

As part of the effort to centralize the General Institute Requirement in HASS, the licensing of communication-intensive HASS and HASS writing subjects has also moved from SHASS to the Subcommittee on the Communication Requirement (in consultation with SHR).

Because all undergraduates entering MIT prior to fall 2010 are still required to take three HASS-D subjects as part of their eight-subject HASS Requirement, the School devotes considerable resources to overseeing the HASS Requirement, particularly the subjects licensed as HASS-D, until they are discontinued in AY2015. The SHASS Education Advisory Committee (SHEAC, formerly the HASS Overview Committee) bears direct responsibility for reviewing subjects that are proposed to fulfill the HASS-D requirement. In AY2011, the committee was chaired by associate dean von Fintel; other committee members were professors Edward Flemming (Linguistics), Eric Goldberg (History), Helen Elaine Lee (Writing and Humanistic Studies), Roger Petersen (Political Science), and student Laura Royden (Course 17). Liz Friedman, HASS academic administrator, served as ex officio. Some HASS-D licenses were granted for new subjects but SHEAC is no longer requiring HASS-D relicensing, as the courses are being discontinued.

The SHASS dean's office continues to support curricular renewal and especially the development of First Year Focus subjects, both logistically and financially.

Affirmative Action

While the numbers of SHASS women faculty over the last decade have fluctuated, the total percentage of SHASS women faculty remains in the proximity of one-third of the total faculty. In AY2011, 51, or 31%, of the School's 166 faculty members were women, and in AY2012 the School will again have 51, or 31%, women faculty, out of a total of 165. While SHASS lost two women faculty (one senior and one junior) at the end of AY2011, two women faculty (both juniors) were hired. Despite the stagnant numbers, the School remains committed to increasing the numbers and hopes to yield an increase during the coming academic year's recruitment efforts. Of the 51 women faculty in AY2011, 37 were tenured (representing 29% of SHASS tenured faculty).

The School has had moderate success in recruiting minority faculty, and this year will again have a total of 33, or 21%, minority faculty members. However, SHASS will be losing two underrepresented minority faculty members at the end of the year, bringing the numbers down from 16 in AY2011 to 14 in AY2012, or 8% from the previous 10%. Obviously, this is not a trend the School embraces, and consequently SHASS has instituted a stronger system of junior faculty mentoring. The School will continue its efforts to further diversify the faculty for the AY2012 recruitment season.

The School also remains committed to increasing minority representation within the administrative staff. There are currently eight minorities—three African Americans, two Hispanic Americans (one from Puerto Rico and one from the Dominican Republic), and three Asian Americans—among the 39 members of the SHASS administrative staff, which is 21% minority representation. Three of the minority staff members are in the SHASS dean's office, which is 38% of the dean's office staff. The School hopes to further its efforts at diversifying its administrative staff by working closely with the departments and programs in the School and with MIT's human resources department.

Honors and Awards

SHASS faculty members garnered an array of honors and awards in AY2011. Most notable were the following:

- Peter Diamond PhD '63, Institute Professor and professor of economics, won the 2010 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences.
- Pauline Maier, William R. Kenan, Jr. professor of American history, won the 2011 George Washington Book Prize for *Ratification: The People Debate* [http://theaterarts.mit.edu/e the Constitution, 1787–1788](http://theaterarts.mit.edu/e-the-Constitution,1787-1788).
- John Harbison, Institute Professor, received the American Music Center's Founders Award, given since 1999 for lifetime achievement in the field of new American music. Previous winners of the award have included Elliott Carter, Steve Reich, Charles Ives, William "Count" Basie, and Philip Glass.
- Charles Stewart III, Kenan Sahin distinguished professor of political science, was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.
- Adam Berinsky, associate professor of political science, won the 2011 James A. (1945) and Ruth Levitan Prize in the Humanities.
- Jay Scheib, associate professor of theater arts, won a 2011 Guggenheim Fellowship.
- David Pesetsky, Ferrari P. Ward professor of modern languages and linguistics, was named a fellow by the American Association for the Advancement of Science.
- David Kaiser, Germeshausen professor of the history of science, was elected a fellow of the American Physical Society.
- Amy Finkelstein, professor of economics, won a Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers.
- Ford International professor of history John Dower was a 2010 National Book Award finalist for *Cultures of War: Pearl Harbor/Hiroshima/9-11/Iraq*.
- Stefan Helmreich, associate professor of anthropology, won the Gregory Bateson Book Prize for *Alien Ocean: Anthropological Voyages in Microbial Seas*.
- Marcia Bartusiak, professor of the practice in writing and humanistic studies, won the Watson Davis and Helen Miles Davis Prize for her book *The Day We Found the Universe*.

Fundraising

New gifts and pledges to SHASS for FY2011 totaled \$22,583,733. Some gift highlights included new full fellowships for the Economics and Political Science departments, a new \$1M commitment to Chinese language studies, and several new six-figure endowments for international internships.

Faculty Promotions, Administrative Changes, Retirements

In AY2011, SHASS had two retirements, four resignations, and seven new faculty hires. Institute Professor and professor of economics Peter Diamond and Class of 1949 professor of music Ellen Harris retired from MIT. Four faculty members resigned: assistant professor of writing and new media Beth Coleman, Class of 1948 professor of theater arts Thomas DeFrantz, professor of literature John Hildebidle, and associate professor of the history and culture of science and technology David Jones. Six faculty members were approved for promotion to tenure, effective July 1, 2011: William Broadhead (History); Taylor Fravel (Political Science); Caspar Hare (Linguistics and Philosophy); Parag Pathak (Economics); Heather Paxson (Anthropology); and David Jones (Science, Technology, and Society [STS]), who resigned before his promotion would have become effective.

The School was successful in recruiting a total of seven new members to the faculty during AY2011—six will join the School effective July 1, 2011, and one effective July 1, 2012. All seven were hired as assistant professors—one in Economics, two in History, three in Political Science, and one in Writing and Humanistic Studies.

In the coming year, the SHASS Council will lose three long-standing department/program heads:

- Economics—Ford International professor of economics Ricardo Caballero will be replaced by Jane Berkowitz Carlton and Dennis William Carlton professor of economics Whitney Newey
- Linguistics and Philosophy—professor of linguistics Irene Heim will be replaced by professor of philosophy Richard Holton
- STS—Francis and David Dibner professor of the history of engineering and manufacturing David Mindell will be replaced by Germeshausen professor of the history of science David Kaiser.

Deborah K. Fitzgerald

Kenan Sahin Dean

Professor of the History of Technology

More information about the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences can be found at <http://shass.mit.edu/>.