

Vice President for Research

The Office of the Vice President for Research (VPR) is responsible for stewardship of MIT's research enterprise. It seeks to foster strong, mutually beneficial relationships with research sponsor groups, including federal agencies, Congress, industry, foundations, and foreign governments. The VPR's responsibilities also include research administration, policy, and compliance, all executed in a manner to maximize effectiveness of and minimize burden on faculty and research staff. The Office of the VPR is also responsible for environmental health and safety at the Institute, as well as postdoctoral affairs and international scholars.

Readers should consult the individual reports on each of the laboratories, centers, programs, and offices that report to the VPR to learn about research highlights and accomplishments.

A few notable achievements and changes include the following:

- MIT announced an Institute-wide research initiative on innovation to amplify ongoing efforts and to identify new approaches for translating basic science into concepts and technologies to serve society. This initiative is co-led by Professors Fiona Murray and Vladimir Bulovic.
- The Institute also announced an initiative on the environment, led by founding director Professor Susan Solomon. The MIT Environmental Solutions Initiative is anchored by the new Abdul Latif Jameel World Water and Food Security Laboratory (J-WAFS), which is led by Professor John Lienhard and aims to ensure the world's food and water supply for the 21st century.
- MIT's Ludwig Center received a major enhancement in support from Ludwig Cancer Research that will greatly amplify research in the area of metastasis.
- The Clinical Research Center has been revitalized and located within the Institute for Medical Engineering and Science (IMES). The objective of the center is to create a translational research infrastructure to support and promote innovation.
- The Research Laboratory for Electronics launched a Translational Fellows Program to provide training and support for the possible commercialization of research-based innovations to a group of competitively selected postdocs. The program will be scaled up in the coming year in light of its early success.
- In further support of postdocs, the VPR Office advised adherence to the National Institutes of Health salary scale and increased support for campus-wide access to career development services.
- Lincoln Laboratory, in collaboration with the School of Engineering, launched Beaver Works, a maker space dedicated to exposing students to opportunities in engineering, research and service to the nation.

The VPR Office instituted a number of administrative improvements. Among them, the office:

- Reduced the barriers to underrecovery funding of foundation grants, developing arrangements for support for each school.
- Worked with the vice president for finance, to develop a research administration strategic plan and roadmap targeted to assure excellence in research administration. Included are plans for the Kuali Coeus grants management system, a project to track faculty effort, and a research administration forecasting tool (RAFT) to manage grants and support research administration best practices.
- Hired a new assistant director for the Office for Sponsored Programs (OSP) tasked with improving service regarding industry contract negotiations.
- Implemented workload balancing in OSP to more evenly distribute and accelerate internal proposal reviews among the grants and contracts team.
- Made progress in transitioning OSP to an enabling organization, where the focus is on allowing departments to take compliance risks and responsibility at the local level, while still providing efficient and professional communication, high levels of customer service, and solution-oriented approaches that support MIT's sponsored programs.
- Added staffing and budget to meet growing needs of international scholars.
- Under the leadership of Chris Hill, launched an effort to improve research computing.

In FY2012, MIT's total research volume (independent of Lincoln Laboratory) reached \$678M, compared to \$674M last year. Federal funding constitutes 69% of the on-campus research expenditures, marking the first time since World War II that this percentage has fallen below 70%. Increases in support from industry and foundations have mitigated the decrease in federal support.

During FY2013, an across-the-board cut in federal programs, referred to as sequestration, was implemented and the VPR Office closely monitored its impact on the MIT community, and developed a strategy and process to monitor effects on our researchers. After a severe cut, nearly full funding was restored to the Alcator C-Mod experiment of the Plasma Science and Fusion Center. MIT maintained its research volume during this very challenging fiscal period, thanks to the creativity, hard work, and perseverance of our research community.

Maria T. Zuber
Vice President for Research
E.A. Griswold Professor of Geophysics