

Institute Community and Equity Officer

The [Institute Community and Equity Officer](#) (ICEO) devotes attention to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion across the MIT community, including students, postdoctoral researchers, staff, faculty, and the extended community of alumni and friends of MIT.

This was a busy year for community and equity at MIT, with major efforts to advance two of the main recommendations from the [ICEO report](#): the MIT Compact and unconscious bias workshops.

The MIT Compact was initially planned as a brief statement of what we aspire to as a community and what we expect of one another as MIT community members, constructed by a representative committee spanning the MIT community. After discussions with many groups, an alternative approach was started based on discussions of MIT culture and values across campus. Graduate and undergraduate students working with the ICEO proposed a series of discussions which ended up shaping the resulting Community Dialogue series. Attendance at these dialogues included staff, faculty, postdocs, students, and alumni, ranging from 30 to 200 people. The format included lunch and discussions in groups of about eight people at a table for durations of 75 to 90 minutes. For the more challenging topics, facilitation was provided at each table by trained staff or faculty. During FY2016, the ICEO hosted nine dialogues with the following topics:

- What are MIT's core values?
- How can we make MIT a kinder place for all community members?
- Unpacking white privilege
- Vulnerability at MIT
- How to tell somebody something they'd rather not hear
- The Institute and me: If you could change one thing about MIT, what would it be?
- Race and reality: a community dialogue on race and diversity at MIT
- Power in vulnerability: a community dialogue on being human
- Subverting the gender binary: trans rights in today's America

The community dialogue on race and diversity held in December 2015 was attended by about 200 people. A post-event survey showed high satisfaction with the event: 87% of respondents said the event was "satisfying" or "very satisfying." When asked if the event empowered them to discuss race and diversity at MIT, 37% responded definitely yes, 55% said they already felt comfortable, and 8% left the event feeling uncomfortable with these discussions. More than 97% of respondents agreed that the subject matter of race was both timely and warranted at MIT.

The community dialogues acquired greater significance when student protests against racism broke out at many college campuses starting with the University of Missouri

in September 2015. At MIT, student activism developed collaboratively with the senior administration. In November 2015, black student leaders met with MIT president Rafael Reif to offer a set of preliminary recommendations for improving equity and inclusion for everyone at MIT. In preparation, the students had consulted with staff and with many student groups and had studied previous recommendations, including those from the 2010 [Report on the Initiative for Faculty Race and Diversity](#) and the 2015 [ICEO report](#). On December 1, 2015, two co-leads each from the Black Students' Union (BSU) and the Black Graduate Student Association (BGSA) [presented their recommendations](#) to the Academic Council.

To facilitate response to the student recommendations, the Academic Council Working Group on Inclusion (AC working group) was formed and included two undergraduate and two graduate student representatives as well as members of the Academic Council. Chaired by Vice President Kirk Kolenbrander, the group quickly began to implement several of the recommendations and to begin a process for adopting more. The AC working group also sought recommendations from other groups on how to improve the MIT community. A Staff Alignment Group was formed to support the efforts of the AC working group. Co-led by Kolenbrander and Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education DiOnetta Jones Crayton, the group included staff members working on diversity and inclusion in many different offices at MIT as well as a representative of the Black Alumni of MIT.

In March 2016, MIT addressed one of the BSU recommendations by announcing a 10.4% increase in undergraduate financial aid. [Progress was made](#) on additional recommendations. By May, MIT Medical had hired a psychologist who specializes in issues relating to the African diaspora and expanded its counseling capacity to assist students who are dealing with race-based traumatic stress.

One of the BGSA recommendations called for unconscious bias training for faculty, staff, and students, reinforcing the second major recommendation of the ICEO report. During FY2016, at least nine workshops on unconscious bias were given at MIT reaching more than 400 people. These included a workshop for Academic Council members in April 2016 led by experts from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The ICEO delivered a workshop to about 60 community members in March 2016.

In FY2016 MIT Lincoln Laboratory began moving forward with implementing recommendations of the ICEO report pertinent to the lab, including unconscious bias training for all lab leaders. Lincoln Lab led the rest of MIT in the establishment of [employee resource groups](#). The lab also published a diversity and inclusion report, and lab personnel participated in many campus activities supporting diversity and inclusion.

This year also saw the release of a major report written by two seniors, [The Status of Undergraduate Women at MIT](#). The report was based on surveys of undergraduates along with focus groups and it summarizes ways in which male and female students experience MIT differently.

In addition to these major efforts, other events included the October 2015 discussion “Whose Lives Matter? A Community Conversation with Rinku Sen,” featuring the rescheduled Martin Luther King (MLK) celebration speaker whose February trip was canceled due to inclement weather. The February 2016 MLK celebration speaker was Freeman Hrabowski III, president of the University of Maryland Baltimore County. An all-MIT diversity forum was held in May 2016. All together, 48 events were featured during FY2016 in the ICEO events calendar.

This year MIT hosted six Martin Luther King Visiting Professors and Scholars:

- Professor Baratunde Cola (Georgia Institute of Technology), hosted by the Department of Mechanical Engineering
- Professor LaShanda Korley (Case Western Reserve University), hosted by the Department of Chemistry
- Professor Israel Ncube (Alabama A&M University), hosted by the Institute for Medical Engineering and Science
- Professor Hakeem Oluseyi (Florida Institute of Technology), hosted by the Department of Physics
- Mayor Kenneth Reeves, hosted by the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
- Professor Jacquelyn Taylor (Yale University), hosted by the Department of Biology
- Each visiting professor or scholar gave a public presentation and built a lively community around their presence on campus.

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