

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

During AY2004, OGCR provided background and guidance on various licensing, permitting, zoning, safety, and transportation issues in Cambridge and in other towns. Staff prepared for local regulatory hearings that involved the Institute. The office assisted in bringing Cambridge officials to campus as participants in groundbreakings, building openings, and other events at the Institute. OGCR staff led the effort to prepare the Institute's annual Town-Gown Report and the subsequent presentation to the Cambridge Planning Board.

OGCR staff took part in efforts of the Cambridge City Council and the City's Economic Development and Long-Term Planning Committee to establish channels through which Cambridge could derive economic stimulus from the 2004 Democratic National Convention in Boston. The office also represented MIT on the board of directors of the Cambridge Office for Tourism, which was similarly engaged in planning events for this period of increased economic activity in the Commonwealth.

Office staff worked with the City's Election Commission to coordinate the use of MIT facilities as a polling place for the November 2003 municipal elections and the presidential primary in March of 2004.

Over the past year, negotiations with the City of Cambridge about MIT's payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) have continued. Although the Institute has made such a payment to Cambridge since 1928, the current negotiations will result in the Institute's first formal, written PILOT agreement with the City in more than 30 years.

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 members of Congress in Institute activities and respond to their queries. Office

staff devoted significant attention to visa issues concerning international students and scholars.

OGCR continued to provide background material and support for President Vest's trips to Washington this year. Office staff compiled a comprehensive record of President Vest's visits to Washington over the past 14 years.

The office maintained its annual practice of managing the president's mailing to the members of Congress providing each with the names of first-year students admitted to the Institute from his or her state. OGCR staff also assisted in the distribution of President Vest's annual report to members of Congress and other Washington, DC, contacts and 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 Cambridge Community Center's 75th Anniversary Gala, providing a venue for the Community Art Center's teen film festival, and—in conjunction with the Brothers McWilliam Foundation and the MIT Public Service Center—coordinating a basketball tournament to benefit the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. OGCR continued its practice of making donations to neighborhood programs and institutions, including Summerbridge Cambridge, Cambridge School Volunteers, the YMCA and YWCA, and Tutoring Plus of Cambridge. Staff represented MIT on more than 20 nonprofit boards and committees.

The office hosted the ninth annual President's Community Service Awards program, honoring Susan Richards, out-of-school time coordinator for the City of Cambridge's Agenda for Children, and Karl Reid, executive director of special programs in MIT's School of Engineering. OGCR also hosted the 12th annual Cambridge First Day celebration, honoring the hospitality industry for its contributions to Cambridge's community, culture, and economy.

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 is working closely with the superintendent of schools on a new initiative for science education in the Cambridge Public Schools involving the Museum of Science and other Cambridge-based corporate and university partners.

Business

Office staff served on the boards of both the Cambridge and Greater Boston Chambers of Commerce as well as on various committees of these organizations. In September

OGCR helped to organize the first Massachusetts Life Sciences Summit, which brought together leaders from the life sciences cluster in the Commonwealth. Office staff continue to represent MIT on an offshoot of this project, the Boston Chamber's Life Science Alliance, a working group dedicated to supporting the life sciences in the metropolitan area.

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.

In January the MIT Faculty Club hosted a Central Square Business Association (CSBA) dinner meeting on Cambridge's emergency response plan. This event featured presentations by representatives from various city departments and attracted local government officials and business people. Currently OGCR staff are helping to organize another CSBA dinner meeting to promote greater local business involvement in environmentally friendly initiatives, including recycling, the proper disposal of hazardous waste, and adopting energy efficient practices.

OGCR staff brought several members of the MIT community to address the Cambridge business community at special events. President Vest was the keynote speaker at the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce's annual Excellence in Business Awards dinner in May. In October, Lotte Bailyn, T Wilson professor of management at the Sloan School, also addressed a Cambridge Chamber audience at a Networking Breakfast forum. Professor Rudolf Jaenisch gave a presentation on his work in transgenic science to the Rotary Club of Cambridge.

Community Service Fund

The office oversaw the 36-year-old Community Service Fund (CSF) in its mission to support the efforts of MIT volunteers in the community. This year, the CSF website was enhanced, allowing grant seekers to apply electronically. The MIT Public Service Center made this improvement possible by donating the time of webmaster Bryan Guzman, who designed and programmed the site. The 484 Phi Alpha Foundation, an alumni organization for the MIT chapter of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity, donated \$35,000 to CSF as the second installment 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 volunteers from across the community together to help raise money for CSF. OGCR managed the disbursement of nearly \$140,000 in grants from CSF to local nonprofit organizations.

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