

Vice President for Research and Associate Provost

The Office of the Vice President for Research and Associate Provost serves the MIT community by providing opportunities for interdisciplinary research through support of interdisciplinary laboratories, centers, and projects. The office also supports graduate students and postdoctoral scholars and is highly engaged in oversight of research policy issues. The office has been involved in a number of activities in 2003–2004.

Our involvement in research policy issues has continued to increase. In collaboration with the Office of Sponsored Programs, the vice president for government relations, and the International Students and Scholars offices, we have developed MIT's responses to several research policy issues, including research restrictions, export controls, and international student and scholar visa policies. We have worked with the Research Policy Committee on a communication and education effort toward improving understanding of the impacts of restrictions on government grants and contracts and export control issues. Our policy guidelines can be found at the OSP website at <http://web.mit.edu/osp/www/>.

Work with the dean for graduate students focuses on policy issues relating to graduate student research and funding. Much of this year's activities focused on a solution to the rising health care costs for graduate students, resulting in a new policy to cover these costs from within the Institute. A new Association of Postdoctoral Scholars has been formed to better serve the needs of that community, and their website at <http://web.mit.edu/mitpostdocs/> has useful links and announcements of upcoming activities.

An exciting event in this past year was the transfer of the Human Genome Center from the Whitehead Institute to MIT. This allowed us to launch the Broad Institute, a collaboration between MIT, Harvard, Whitehead, and the Harvard hospitals. This dynamic and excellent group of researchers is pursuing the promise of the sequencing of the human genome for radical improvements in medicine. Their director, Eric Lander, summarizes the quest as one to move medicine from the treatment of symptoms to the treatment of the molecular mechanisms of disease. They eagerly await the completion of their new building on Main Street next to the Whitehead Institute and MIT. Updates on their exciting research activities can be found on their website at <http://www.broad.mit.edu/>.

Another relatively new interdisciplinary activity, the Computational and Systems Biology Initiative (CSBi), has launched an extensive research program and started a new PhD program in systems biology. This initiative brings together dozens of faculty, students, postdoctoral scholars, and research staff from disparate areas of the campus to provide a systematic analysis and computational approach to complex problems in biology.

We were able to recruit an exceptional new director for the Nuclear Reactor Laboratory. Dr. David Moncton comes to this position after having served as the executive director

of the Spallation Neutron Source at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, as well as the associate director at Argonne National Laboratory. A renewed national interest in novel reactor fuels provides promise for future support of the NRL.

The vice president for research works with the Materials Facilities Council to engage in strategic planning of space, renovation, and facilities needs.

You will learn more about the interdisciplinary laboratories and centers from the reports that follow.

Alice P. Gast

Vice President for Research and Associate Provost

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