

Office of Academic Services

The Office of Academic Services (OAS) provides services supporting MIT's academic mission. OAS is organized in three working groups: Academic Information and Communication (AIC), the Academic Resource Center (ARC), and Faculty and Alumni Support (FAS).

Academic Information and Communication

Academic Information and Communication collaborates with others in the Office of the Dean for Undergraduate Education (DUE) to ensure the accuracy of academic information and to improve its delivery, using technology, primarily web-based. AIC also supports the technology that underlies many of the programs offered throughout OAS.

New Initiatives

- AIC spearheaded the ongoing development and maintenance of a new website, U-Info (<http://web.mit.edu/uinfo>), which serves as a gateway to academic information for undergraduates and their advisors. More than 100 pages of content were developed. AIC staff members have created a new database-driven system for auto-generation of web pages, directory structure, and navigation, as well as a content-management process.
- AIC worked with FAS and the DUE Office of Special Projects to create the new Scholarships and Fellowships website, <http://web.mit.edu/scholarships>. AIC staff helped with site organization, writing and editing content, and web development, and is maintaining this site, which will continue to grow.
- AIC is also working closely with FAS to introduce a new Subject Evaluation Form for Engineering and Science. AIC staff contributed to the design of the new form, analyzed and made necessary technical changes, and is testing a set of forms completed in the spring.
- A staff member led the Institute-wide Content Management System Project.
- AIC helped develop and implement policies and procedures for sophomore exploratory subjects, an initiative of the Committee on the Undergraduate Program.
- The staff is working with the Registrar's Office and Student Services Information Technology (SSIT) on a project that will allow departments to use the Who's Teaching What system to identify instructors who should have access to online class lists.

Functional Enhancement

- AIC assumed responsibility for the Academic Guide for Undergraduates and Advisors, (<http://web.mit.edu/acainfo/undergrad/academic-guide/>) and will coordinate development of that site with U-Info.

- AIC created a Filemaker database for Residence-based Advising (RBA) applications, allowing easy import of data into the Firstyear database. AIC continued to make improvements to the Firstyear advising databases for ARC.
- AIC took over management functions for the database files system for the Committee on Academic Performance (CAP).
- For the Subject Evaluation Process, AIC staff completed the successful upgrade of Eyes and Hands scanning software, provided troubleshooting for production errors, and contributed to improvements to the process.
- AIC staff worked with the Reference Publications Office to reorganize the section of the MIT Bulletin on Undergraduate Education.

Academic Resource Center

MIT's Academic Resource Center (ARC) provides high-quality, student-centered services to all undergraduates, especially to freshmen, to significantly enhance their academic success, social adjustment, and assimilation to the Institute. ARC programming encourages access to Institute resources and related services that recognize the many needs, diversity, and uniqueness of students at the Institute. This office is responsible for all freshman programming including advanced placement/transfer credit processing, orientation, academic advising, choice of major, learning strategies, and other academic support. Additionally, ARC manages, operates and oversees the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP), as well as coordinates the Independent Activities Period (IAP) and provides staff support to CAP.

New Initiatives

- The Advanced Placement/Transfer Credit/IB/A Level processes were transferred from Admissions to ARC. With SSIT, ARC developed a new advanced placement/transfer credit system that accepts electronic scores from the Educational Testing Service (ETS), allows data entry processes, and provides tracking systems. Data from this system is directly uploaded to the Freshman Advising Folder and subsequently transferred to the Registrar's system for upload to the MIT Student Information System. Consequently, enhanced reporting is available not only to DUE, but also to academic departments developing strategies on recruiting students for unique exploratory subjects, participation in under-enrolled Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (HASS) subjects, and for review of trends on preparation prior to entry to MIT.
- ARC worked with Residential Life and Student Life Programs, housemasters, Learning Communities, academic departments, the Office of Minority Education, Athletics, ROTC, the Registrar's Office, student representatives, and other stakeholders in finalizing a new orientation schedule that meets all programmatic needs and facilitates all freshmen living on campus. Additionally, the Freshman Pre-Orientation Programs (FPOP) was expanded to ten offerings, including five programs sponsored by academic departments. Approximately 40 percent of the freshmen participate in the FPOP.

- As part of the effort to facilitate the transition of freshmen to their sophomore year, a student information and sophomore transition questionnaire has been created and will be included in the student advisor folder when transferred to the sophomore advisor. Also, a new section on the Class of 2007 website was developed with advice for successfully making the transition to a major department, and is linked to U-Info, the new resource site for undergraduates.
- With SSIT, ARC began the development of a new UROP database that will ultimately include an online proposal system. Testing of the database should commence late fall 2004 and be fully operational spring 2005.

Functional Enhancements

- ARC enhanced and expanded the First-year website (<http://web.mit.edu/firstyear/>) that supports all first-year, transfer-student, advisor, and associate advisor information needs. Appropriate information is also provided to early admits. The Class of 200X page goes live May 1 of each year and moves through ten update cycles over a 16-month period to provide timely information and advice and to facilitate the transition to the sophomore year.
- The office also enhanced the online freshman advising folder that is available to freshmen and their advisor after August 15 each year. Tentative credit and/or results on Advanced Placement and advanced standing exams, the Freshman Essay Evaluation, math transfer credit, math diagnostic, Freshman Advising Seminar assignment, Mission 200X acceptance, Humanities and Social Services Distribution (HASS-D) lottery, and more are included in the folder. Placement recommendations based on credit and/or exam results are included as well as links to supplemental/support sites such as the Communication Requirement, ETS, and HASS. The folder provides comprehensive, accurate, and organized information for the advisor to appropriately advise and register his/her advisees.
- ARC expanded and enhanced the freshman database, which provides data on fifth-week flags, end-of-term outcome, grade distributions, CAP actions, their advisor, advising seminar, and so on, and reports on all sub-populations that ARC and other departments desire to track. Data are being used to develop intervention strategies and programming to ensure end-of-term success.
- ARC continued to offer a comprehensive professional development program for freshman advisors, including special workshops for new advisors. Seventy-four faculty or teaching staff and 111 administrators advised 1,019 freshmen in the Class of 2007 (including 70 Freshman Advising Seminars).
- ARC completed the fourth year of the Residence-based Advising Program with all freshmen living in McCormick and Next House. Depending on assigned spaces allocated for freshmen, 20 to 25 percent of the first-year students participate in RBA. All advisors also accept the role of house fellow within their assigned residence.
- During Independent Activities Period (IAP) 2004, 661 approved non-credit activities were available to the MIT community, and 101 for-credit subjects were taught.

- During summer 2003 a total of 944 students participated in UROP; 96.5% of the research was conducted for pay, 0.8% for credit, and 2.7% on a voluntary basis. Of this group, 41.3% were female, and 58.7% were male.
- In academic year 2003–2004, 64.3% of UROP research was conducted for pay, 33% for credit, and 2.7% on a voluntary basis. Within these two terms, 44.3% of the students were female, and 55.7% were male.
- UROP funding allocations for this year as compared to previous were as follows:

	Summer 2002	Summer 2003
Faculty allocations	\$2,537,040	\$2,183,494
UROP Office Funding	\$1,206,881	\$1,350,064

	2002–2003	2003–2004
Faculty allocations	\$2,928,140	\$2,005,221
UROP Office Funding	\$637,317	\$622,900

- Overall, the total funding of undergraduate research projects has decreased from \$7,309,378 to \$6,161,679 from the previous year, a decrease of 15.7%. Funding remains a challenge. Available dollars have decreased, while the number of submitted proposals has increased.
- UROP's book-value endowment is presently \$9.8 million; the Paul E. Gray Fund for UROP remains the largest of the program's individual endowment funds. Other major sources of endowment income include the Ralph Evals '48 Endowment, the Robert Muh '59 Fund, the Meryl and Stewart Robertson UROP Fund, and the UROP Endowment Fund.
- UROP's IAP Research Mentor Program continues to be a highly effective means of preparing freshmen for UROPs. Throughout the four-week program, 27 experienced UROP students and one faculty member provided guidance to 64 freshmen while working on their ongoing research. A shortage of research mentors resulted in 48 freshmen applicants not being matched with a mentor.

Faculty and Alumni Support

Faculty and Alumni Support (FAS) provides services to support educational initiatives of faculty and to draw alumni into the education of our students. FAS also works closely with AIC to provide academic information to support educational efforts.

New Initiatives

- FAS led a team to revise the Science/Engineering Subject Evaluation Form to focus more on teaching and learning metrics. FAS also worked with OAS staff and others to develop an implementation plan for this form, with a pilot this spring term.
- FAS worked with a team to review the Subject Evaluation Process, including consultations with Academic Media Production Services, SSIT, a FileMaker Pro consultant, and a scanning and reporting outside vendor. This process resulted in a decision to use the current Science/Engineering format with revised questions for the intermediate term.
- FAS helped develop content for the Scholarships and Fellowships website, implemented this spring. FAS worked with AIC, Foreign Scholarships, and others to develop a standard template and additional content for website information.
- FAS assumed responsibility for the Jack Kent Cooke Graduate Scholarship, Peter J. Eloranta Fellowship, and Randolph G. Wei Award.
- FAS worked with the Alumni Association to establish the Class of 1999 Fund for Excellence in Student Learning, adding to the three existing alumni-sponsored funds.
- An FAS staff member served on the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Committee. All four MIT nominees this year were selected as finalists, and one was awarded a scholarship.
- FAS assumed responsibility in supporting the growing Service Learning Program finances and budgeting.

Functional Enhancements

- FAS managed the alumni-sponsored funding process for the Dean for Undergraduate Education and the classes of '51, '55, and '72. Three times as many proposals were submitted compared to two years ago, and approximately \$180,000 was awarded in support of undergraduate education and teaching.
- Written documentation continues to be developed for the entire Subject Evaluation Process, with expanding knowledge and involvement among staff.
- Alumni were recruited for various educational roles in subjects and programs, including 2.009 The Product Engineering Process (alumni project ideas and mentors), 6.002 Circuits and Electronics (alumni volunteer tutors), 12.000 Solving Complex Problems: Mission 2007 (project mentors), the Undergraduate Practice Opportunities Program (internship hosts), and the IDEAS Competition (project mentors).
- Staff members provided administrative support and oversight to a number of scholarship and fellowship programs.
- FAS staff provided budget monitoring and projections for FY2004 and FY2005 to manage OAS programs during challenging budget times, including supporting nonbase positions.

Staffing Changes

There were three new hires in 2003–2004. Hollis Lilly was hired as a staff associate to support the Committee on Academic Performance, advanced placement, and transfer credit processing. Patricia Ginese and Stephen Pepper were hired as support staff for UROP/CAP and freshman advising/academic support, respectively.

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More information about the Office of Academic Services can be found on the web at <http://web.mit.edu/acser/>.