

Office of Minority Education

The mission of the Office of Minority Education (OME) is to provide effective academic enrichment programs to enhance matriculation, promote higher retention and greater excellence in underrepresented minority (African American, Hispanic, and Native American) students' academic and general educational achievements, and to encourage their pursuits of higher degrees and professional careers. This year, the OME continued to provide underrepresented minority students with a cadre of academic enrichment programs designed to enhance student's opportunities to succeed at MIT. There are approximately 700, or 17 percent, underrepresented minority students attending MIT. The faculty, staff, and students of the OME continued to heighten their visibility, accessibility, and increased the quality of services offered to the students. The staff of the OME continued to participate in an array of Institute committees, programs, and other initiatives during the 2003–2004 academic year.

Project Interphase

Project Interphase is one of MIT's major commitments to students of a variety of ethnic backgrounds, to ensure their academic and social success at MIT. It is a rigorous seven-and-a-half-week residential, academic-enrichment, confidence- and community-building program for admitted freshmen who will benefit from support in their transition to MIT. Project Interphase is designed to provide academic support as well as community-building opportunities, in order to enhance matriculation and promote success in participants.

This year's academic staff of tenured faculty and instructors, with the assistance of graduate and undergraduate students, made up the teaching core of Project Interphase. Faculty and tutors are major contributors in preparing students to face the rigors of MIT. Through teaching, advising, and serving as mentors, they fulfill an invaluable role in the intellectual development of the program participants. Project Interphase alumni/ae represent a high percentage of the tutor core for the academic component of the program. The academic metric for Project Interphase focuses on how many students receive advance placement for calculus, and how many of the participants receive academic warnings in the first year. A number of students were successful in receiving advance placement credits for 18.01. We still see a small cohort of students who receive warnings during the fall semester.

Seminar XL

This year Seminar XL continued to be an effective academic-enrichment program for first-year underrepresented minority and non-minority students. Participants who enrolled in the program were divided into small interactive study groups that covered calculus, physics, chemistry, and other freshmen core courses. These groups met twice per week for one-and-a-half hours during the fall semester as well as the spring

semester. All study groups were coordinated by XL facilitators who are current upper-class and graduate students. Facilitators oversaw the interactive discussion of course material covered in the respective subjects of calculus, physics, chemistry, and computer science.

Second Summer Program

The Second Summer Program (SSP) is an academic program that enriches and supports students' intellectual growth while assisting them in developing a keen sense of their potential. For more than 30 years, SSP has balanced MIT's academic rigors with practical experiences in an array of engineering and science disciplines at participating Fortune 500 Companies. Program interns explore possible fields of interest, while making a real contribution in their assigned workplace.

The OME received 29 applications for SSP from students who attended three OME-sponsored orientation sessions. In addition, students were required to participate in the program's Engineering Design Workshop taught by Professor Alexander Slocum from the Department of Mechanical Engineering. Again this year, the Engineering Design Workshop was spread out over the Independent Activities Period, without increasing the total hours required to complete the product design. SSP participants were divided into teams, and each team was required to design and build a product around the theme of games and puzzles. They had to conceptualize their ideas regarding the product, research the market to identify similar products, develop a consensus on the product utilizing the Rube Goldberg method, build a prototype and review its functionality, and then build the final product for the competition. In addition, each team developed a market analysis, conducted research on the product, and provided a business plan. Representatives from industry and members of the faculty judged the competition.

After completing the SSP Engineering Design Workshop, participants entered an intense interviewing process with companies that are members of the OME's Industrial Advisory Council for Minority Education (IACME). Nineteen of the 28 candidates were selected for internships.

Tutorial Service Room

The Office of Minority Education's Tutorial Services Room (TSR) continued to provide effective academic support to a broad range of underrepresented minority and non-minority students. The TSR is managed by a core of upper-class students who receive close supervision by the associate dean/assistant director. The OME employed more than 50 tutors from an array of ethnic backgrounds and disciplines to tutor in over 40 subjects. The associate dean/director, in conjunction with the associate dean/assistant director, interviewed, hired, and trained tutors and staff for the program. This year tutors conducted tutorial sessions in courses from 13 departments as well as the core freshmen curriculum for the fall and spring semesters. The TSR provided more than 1,000 service hours for the 2003–2004 academic year.

Industrial Advisory Council for Minority Education

The purpose of the Industrial Advisory Council for Minority Education is to provide a variety of opportunities to participate in the realization of the OME's goals. To that end, members of IACME provided financial support for the OME to provide effective academic and professional development programs to assist student organizations such as the American Indian Science and Engineering Society, Mexican American Engineers and Scientists, National Society of Black Engineers, and Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers. Members of IACME supported students' participation in cultural organizations by providing financial support to organizations that promote improving the quality of life of students of color. During the academic year 2003–2004 IACME supported numerous events that covered personal, group, and professional development.

In addition, members of IACME have formed a subcommittee to develop a curriculum for Leadership Development for minority students in engineering and science. The focus of the committee is to provide a day-and-a-half training module for students who are in leadership roles or for students who have demonstrated leadership potential in their organizations.

Office of Minority Education Student Advisory Council

The Office of Minority Education Student Advisory Council (OMESAC) provides a mechanism for minority students to bring their concerns and issues to the associate dean for undergraduate education and director of the OME. The membership of OMESAC includes 16 student organizations that represent both professional and cultural focused organizations.

Minority Scholarships

The OME continues to be a repository for information on internships and scholarships that target underrepresented minority students. Many companies and foundations continue to focus support on underrepresented minority students. Their goal is to continue to provide financial and professional support to increase the number of students of color in the engineering and science professions.

Minority Awards Banquet

The Office of Minority Education held its annual Minority Awards Banquet at the end of the 2003–2004 academic year. The banquet was supported partly by the generosity of IACME, as well as OME, Counseling and Support Services, the Graduate Students Office, and the Office of the President. More than 200 students, faculty, staff, and administrators attended the event to recognize students who had contributed to

improving the quality of life for minority students. This year keynote speaker was Dr. Christine Ortiz, assistant professor of materials science and engineering.

Kim Beamon
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More information on the Office of Minority Education can be found on the web at <http://web.mit.edu/ome/>.