

## International Scholars Office

The International Scholars Office (ISO) facilitates visas for international researchers and faculty who come to MIT for a variety of purposes. ISO advises on immigration matters, issues visa documents, and provides guidance, workshops, print, and web-based information on a wide range of issues relevant to the international scholar population. Weekly orientation sessions are held for all incoming scholars and family members. Orientation specifically for new international, tenure-track faculty members is held annually or biannually as needed. Additional programming for scholars and events open to the campus community are held throughout the year. ISO also engages in advocacy efforts to protect international educational exchange, prevent burdensome regulations, and clarify and improve related regulations and procedures.

### MIT's International Scholar Population, Fiscal Year 2007

ISO served 1,654 international scholars affiliated with MIT as well as their accompanying family members during FY2007. This reflects a two percent increase over last year. According to the most recent Institute of International Education *Open Doors* report (2006), MIT ranked 13th nationally with regard to the numbers of international scholars at US institutions.

International scholars came to MIT from 82 countries, with the highest numbers coming from the People's Republic of China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Germany, India, Canada, Italy, France, the United Kingdom, and Israel. Scholars from these top 10 countries constitute 66 percent of MIT's international scholar population. This distribution of countries and numbers closely mirrors that of the population of all international scholars in the US.

ISO worked closely with administrators in 73 departments, laboratories, and centers preparing the appropriate visa documents and petitions for incoming and continuing scholars and their families. The areas hosting the largest number of scholars were the following, in descending order: MIT Sloan School of Management, the Department of Chemistry, the Department of Materials Science and Engineering, the Department of Mechanical Engineering, the Research Laboratory of Electronics, the Department of Chemical Engineering, the Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, the Broad Institute, the Department of Mathematics, and the Picower Institute for Learning and Memory. Seventy-seven percent of international scholars were male and 22 percent were female.

The majority of MIT's international scholars were sponsored on MIT's J-1 exchange visitor program. There were 802 scholars under MIT's J-1 program sponsorship during the reporting period. An additional 88 scholars were here through other J sponsors. There were 326 scholars on campus in H-1B status, sponsored by MIT. This reflects a nearly 10 percent decrease since last year. This may be due to the new ability of J-1 program sponsors to extend J-1 documents for up to five years versus the previous three-year limit. There were nine international scholars on campus this year whose O-1 visas were sponsored by MIT. The rest of the scholar population had other sponsors or

nonimmigrant categories. According to Human Resources Information Services data, 65 percent of MIT's postdoctoral associates and fellows are non-US citizens, as are 53 percent of "visiting" appointees.

ISO submitted 14 permanent residence petitions to US Citizenship and Immigration Services and 17 labor certifications on behalf of MIT faculty members and upper-level researchers.

An unprecedented number of new international faculty members (30) accepted positions starting in AY2007. ISO has already been informed of another 18 international faculty members who have accepted positions for the AY2008. Visa processing begins as soon as ISO is informed of incoming faculty members.

### **Professional Activities**

The director served on various subcommittees and task forces of the Association of International Educators (NAFSA) on scholar issues, regulations, government agency processing, and legislative action. On these ongoing subcommittees, she provides information and ideas for use in advocacy, practice, and agency relations. ISO also worked with members of the Office of Federal Relations and Claude Canizares, vice president for research and associate provost, who continue to be instrumental in communicating MIT's concerns.

### **Communication with the Institute**

Several times this year ISO staff conducted workshops for new personnel administrators in departments, laboratories, and centers (DLCs). These individuals work closely with the ISO on visa matters. Primary DLC liaisons are also informed of changes in procedures, immigration regulations, and ISO practices through a custom listserv.

**Penny Rosser**  
**Director**

*More information about the International Scholars Office may be found at <http://web.mit.edu/scholars/>.*