

## **Dean for Student Life**

There is hardly an aspect of the student experience that is not touched by the Division of Student Life (DSL). It is the part of the MIT community that helps to create and sustain the community. The division provides the services and support—from dining halls to residences to health and well-being—that form the basis of daily life at the Institute. At the same time, DSL is home to many of the clubs, teams, and activities that make living at MIT so rich with possibility.

The 2008–2009 academic year was a time of transition, evolution, challenge, and accomplishment for the Division of Student Life. It marked the first full year for the new dean of student life. The division underwent a reorganization to streamline its operations. New programs and initiatives were introduced to provide better service, while many existing activities were augmented and improved. And, like every department and unit at the Institute, DSL grappled with the unprecedented financial crisis facing MIT and the nation.

As an integral part of the MIT community, DSL staff responded to these opportunities and challenges in true Institute fashion: with creativity, inspiration, collaboration, and hard work. This report presents some of the highlights from the past year.

During the spring of this academic year, the decision was made to reorganize the division. The new structure comprises five major areas: the Department of Athletics, Physical Education, and Recreation (DAPER); Religious Life; Residential Life; Student Development and Support; and Administration. This new structure is intended to streamline the division's work, foster new collaborations, and enhance the MIT student experience while reducing costs.

### **Responding to the Economic Challenge**

Consistent with a request from senior administration, each area was asked to cut 5 percent of its budget this year, with consideration that 5 percent will also be cut from the next two fiscal-year budgets. Each area complied and returned with its recommendations regarding where it could most effectively make these reductions with as little impact as possible on the student experience. In some cases staff positions were eliminated, and in other situations programs were scaled back. For example, the division eliminated eight athletic teams: men's gymnastics, men's ice hockey, men's golf, men's wrestling, women's gymnastics, women's ice hockey, pistol (coed), and alpine skiing (coed). Careful consideration was taken, and decisions followed a deliberate and reasoned process incorporating data from the Health and Vitality Report, a report from an external consultant review, and with consideration of Title IX. In spite of these cuts, MIT still has the largest number of intercollegiate teams (33) of any Division III institution.

The global economic crisis also affected many students and their families. Throughout the year, student and parents came to Student Support Services (S<sup>3</sup>) with financial concerns. As a result, S<sup>3</sup> consulted frequently with other offices throughout MIT to help students complete their term.

## **Environment**

MIT students, faculty, and staff care deeply about protecting the environment and using sustainable sources and systems of energy. Since these issues are important to the MIT community, they are reflected in the efforts and accomplishments of the Division of Student Life.

In a partnership among many offices and departments across the Institute, DSL supported the students of Biodiesel@MIT, a student-led initiative to turn used vegetable oil from campus dining facilities into biodiesel fuel for MIT diesel campus vehicles. This group, which is recognized by the Association of Student Activities, represents an exciting blend of research and service with student activity. Students created and now lead and run an MIT laboratory, with oversight and support from key campus offices including the Student Activities Office, the Campus Activities Complex, the Edgerton Center, the Energy Initiative, several faculty members, and DSL's Environmental Health and Safety Program manager.

DSL staff also collaborated with MIT Facilities to convert cleaning procedures to a green system, including use of new products and training throughout the residence halls and campus commons. These tools and techniques are more environmentally friendly and will reduce costs.

The Campus Activities Complex and MIT Facilities also teamed up to encourage biking for MIT community members, with specific improvements such as new types of bike racks at the student center and other locations around campus as well as the introduction of a free-standing bike-repair station. In addition, in response to community interest, DAPER introduced a Bike Commuter Membership to provide before-work access to showers.

Campus Dining collaborated with alumni, students, student organizations, and others in several green initiatives. These initiatives included a Community Supported Agriculture pickup site, the MIT Fruit and Vegetable Market, the Clover Food Truck, and the House Dining Eat Local Challenge event. A successful pilot program for reusable take-out containers was also conducted at Next House this year and will be rolled out to all House Dining operations in fall 2009.

## **Alumni Engagement**

Alumni are one of MIT's greatest resources, and DSL is seeking ways to involve them more intentionally using current successes as a model. For example, the Fraternity, Sorority, and Independent Living Groups (FSILGs) have excelled at engaging their alumni, and now over 200 alumni are directly involved in their operations. Alumni-related initiatives include those mentioned below.

DSL's relationship with the Association of Independent Living Groups (AILG) has been extended and deepened. This alumni group is a true partner in supporting FSILG-affiliated students. For example, this year AILG conducted its first round of accreditation reviews of the entire community. In three cases, the alumni panel returned a result of "not recommended for accreditation." FSILG office staff intervened immediately,

and two of the three cases have already been resolved. This relationship is giving the chapters tools and advice that will raise the standards community-wide.

The Chapter Alumni Risk Management Advisor (CARMA) program trains alumni to be effective, knowledgeable advisors for the undergraduates in their chapters. Through CARMA, advisors learn risk management policy, gain access to key MIT resources, and receive a stipend to fund programming. CARMA held several successful community discussions this past year and expanded the number of participating chapters to 15.

During Reunion Weekend, 24 FSILGs hosted reunion receptions to welcome back alumni to their living groups—more than double the total for 2008, the inaugural year for this program. This year, the first residence hall, Next House, participated with good results as well. DSL expects this program to continue to grow next year.

Over the past five years, AILG and MIT collaborators have developed a series of courses on FSILG operations for students during Independent Activities Period (IAP). This year, DSL introduced two new courses: Chapter Officer Advising, which targets alumni, and the Delta Factor, which was developed by recent graduates and focuses on change management and shifting the culture of organizations.

In October, MIT observed the 50th anniversary of the original painting of the Smoot markings on the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge. This celebration received an astonishing level of public and media attention throughout the United States and all over the world. DSL welcomed back many alumni with a weekend of events that included the return of Oliver Smoot '62 and many of his Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity brothers, an oldies concert by the famous Platters, a party at the MIT Museum, a service project in which hundreds of people painted riverbank railings and cleaned the Charles River shore, and a formal ceremony that featured officials from MIT, the cities of Boston and Cambridge, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The high point of the ceremony was MIT president Susan Hockfield's unveiling of a special titanium plaque designed and machined in the MIT Hobby Shop. During Reunion Weekend, it was installed with much fanfare in its own custom-designed concrete post on the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge. See <http://web.mit.edu/smoot/> for more details.

The landmark residence hall event was the Baker House Reunion, organized around July 4 weekend, which attracted more than 300 Baker alums and over 500 guests in all. In addition, East Campus pioneered a new way to engage MIT graduates by welcoming back several alumni to teach current residents how to prepare healthy food. The casual networking atmosphere also fostered conversations about the transition from college to professional life.

DAPER continued its alumni engagement efforts as well, as it welcomed back alumni for anniversary celebrations for men's lacrosse and football along with the DAPER Tech Day breakfast, an Alumni Row, and a Reunion Row. DAPER also invited alumni back for the dedications of Roberts Field, the Morrison Jump Pit, and Steinbrenner Garden. The latter was done in conjunction with the 80th anniversary celebration of men's lacrosse.

## Leadership

Preparing the world's next generation of leaders remains a priority within DSL. Now that successful programs such as Community Catalyst and LeaderShape have been established, the division is creating other opportunities for students to develop their leadership skills.

In 2009 the Student Activities Office developed a new leadership conference for younger MIT undergraduates. The Emerging Leaders Conference is an invitation-only, overnight leadership conference for students who have been identified as having leadership potential or have expressed interest in becoming a leader on campus even if they do not hold a leadership position.

With a \$15,000 grant from the MIT Alumni Fund, iHouse developed a module to allow undergraduate students to gain necessary skills for leadership. As important, the module also provides students with opportunities for self-reflection and analyzing their own leadership strengths and weaknesses.

Leadership Evolution for Graduate Students is a new five-workshop leadership series for graduate students coordinated by Residential Life Programs, Student Activities, and the Graduate Student Council. Topics included organizational communication, event planning, group motivation, and organization financial planning. Sixty-three students participated, with many attending more than one workshop. Eighty-eight percent of the participants who responded to a survey said that they learned something new, with a majority applying the knowledge in follow-up.

This year, the Public Service Center (PSC) launched the Paul and Priscilla Gray Value-Added Internships. These internships provide a means for students to work with nonprofits to perform tasks for which they are hired while using their ingenuity and leadership skills to address additional emerging needs. Fifteen internships have been awarded for IAP and summer. To pilot the program, an internship was awarded to Ke Zhang '09, who went to Tanzania to assist in developing infrastructure for a clinic in the summer of 2008. In addition to his assigned duties, Zhang discovered that the clinic's electrical system was badly wired, and he assisted in ensuring that the issues were corrected. Zhang also tackled computer-based needs, creating patient registration and pharmaceutical inventory systems. More of the story can be found at <http://web.mit.edu/mitpsc/showcase/stories/zhang.html>.

As part of their work with PSC, 15 students completed the AmeriCorps Student Leaders in Service program, which requires a minimum of 300 hours of service per year and results in a \$1,000 education award for each student leader. Through joint PSC and Student Financial Services support, the Community Service Work Study Program opportunity came to MIT this year. For more, see <http://web.mit.edu/mitpsc/showcase/beyond-the-infinite/online/spring09/>.

Another natural leadership development opportunity came to fruition this year within the Community Development and Substance Abuse Center (CDSA), as it transferred the ownership of student committees to the students themselves. This has been the goal for

several years, and now, for the first time, all student committees within CDSA are student run, student led, and self-reliant. These committees include the Policy Committee, the Alcohol and Drug Collaborative, SaveTFP, and the Drug Education Committee.

### **Mind and Hand—Learning by Doing**

A special feature of DSL is its natural tendency toward experiences for students to connect what they learn with what they do—*mens et manus* in action. This year, the evidence of this mind and hand connection is as clear as ever. Whether it be service, research, projects, extracurricular learning, international experience, or invention, DSL is filled with opportunities to help round out the student experience.

iHouse began a for-credit freshmen seminar titled *Selecting, Formulating, and Solving Complex Problems in a Global Environment*. This seminar helps incoming iHouse students acquire personal, professional, and social skills with topics in leadership, teamwork, professional ethics, and systems thinking. Sessions were taught by faculty, graduate students, industry professionals, and community partners through hands-on projects, culminating in a for-credit undergraduate research project over IAP. The seminar was supported by a \$10,000 grant from the 484 Foundation, which was established by alumni of MIT's former Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity.

The Hobby Shop continues to offer an assortment of specialty classes to the MIT community, with members volunteering as instructors. During IAP, classes included building electric guitars and introduction to machining, taught by MIT staff, while for the fifth year electrical engineering student Michael Price taught a class on designing and building speakers.

MIT hit a milestone for students working on issues related to Hurricane Katrina. Now more than 150 MIT students have participated in service projects in the affected region, with continuous involvement in rebuilding New Orleans since Katrina hit. Initially PSC grants helped over 100 students respond to immediate calls for volunteers. Since then PSC fellowships and grants have enabled dozens more MIT students to contribute to long-term redevelopment issues such as soil remediation, school revitalization, neighborhood revitalization, and strategic city planning. Partners include the Department of Urban Studies and Planning through the NOLA fellowships, which provide support to students for periods up to a year.

The MIT IDEAS competition, a program that encourages teams to develop and implement projects that make a positive change in the world, also expanded by one third. This year, there were 60 teams in the initial stage and 36 final proposals. Entries are judged on their innovation, feasibility, and community impact.

### **Living at MIT**

DSL staff pays close attention to our student's living experience and campus lifestyle. Significant accomplishments in this area include the following.

A new graduate residence, Ashdown, opened in the fall of 2008, enhancing the graduate student neighborhood in the northwest section of MIT's campus and moving toward

the goal of housing more graduate students on campus. As part of the new building, the new Thirsty Ear Pub was completed and opened, creating a community space for students and adding a grill pub dining option.

MIT and Panhellenic successfully colonized a sixth sorority, Pi Beta Phi, after a rigorous and competitive selection process. MIT is considered to be among the best campuses for FSILGs in the nation, so 11 national sororities vied for the honor of being the first new FSILG here in over 15 years. The Pi Beta Phi chapter is off to great start, successfully recruiting 52 members. In conjunction with its national headquarters, Pi Beta Phi is now actively looking for permanent housing. Another sorority, Kappa Alpha Theta, completed its first year of operation in Green Hall. The sorority is very pleased with the new arrangement, which more than doubled the number of live-in members to over 40 after its move from Sydney & Pacific residence hall. Residential Life also is pleased that Green Hall occupancy is much higher than in previous years and its new leasing model with an FSILG is working out so well.

A new emergency management protocol was developed for Residential Life after pipes burst at both Alpha Tau Omega (July 2008) and Delta Kappa Epsilon (January 2009). Both events resulted in Cambridge licensing interventions and temporary facility closures.

The Blue Ribbon Committee on Residential Dining completed its charge and submitted its report of recommendations to the dean for student life. The committee serves to address concerns about the cost and direction of campus meal plans and to devise a process for aligning future meal programs with MIT community goals, culture, and dining service objectives.

Campus Dining piloted two programs for the new Ashdown residence hall. First, it tested an all-you-care-to-eat dinner buffet in Ashdown to evaluate the potential for five-day-per-week dinner service for graduate students on the northwest campus. In addition, Campus Dining tested a prepaid meal plan pilot in the fall term for undergraduates living at Ashdown and compared it with the House Dining membership plan in the spring. Although the pilot program saw more patronage than the prepaid plan, not enough graduate students participated to ensure economic sustainability. Therefore, Ashdown dining will not continue, and an alternate program will be developed for the 50 undergraduate students living there.

Senior House undertook a community campaign to instill a sense of personal responsibility and to help residents articulate the values of their community. A combination of formal and informal programming shifted how residents perceive their identity as a community, as citizens of Senior House, and as part of MIT. Senior House also created a comprehensive document explaining its culture, values, and traditions. Overall, communications improved between Senior House and MIT administration.

### **Wellness and Support**

Ensuring a safe, healthy, and supportive environment for students is another important component of how DSL ensures a quality experience for the MIT community.

Campus Dining expanded offerings for the MIT community in several new ways:

- Making fresh fruits and vegetables available to the MIT community. The MIT Market is a weekly produce stand on campus created through a collaboration among DSL, the Undergraduate Association, and other MIT students. The service is provided by Russo's Market of Watertown.
- Bringing healthy choices to the food trucks. Clover, a new food truck at the MIT Campus, offers a healthy and sustainable vegetarian menu of local food ingredients. This new venture has received attention from both local and national publications.
- Augmenting breakfast options. The Stratton Student Center now offers a full hot breakfast service, and DSL is actively working to expand breakfast service in the Steam Café and other retail properties.

DSL created a new student outreach and support position to provide more cohesive and comprehensive support for students in crisis and their families. This position will offer a "whatever it takes" style of support, including visiting students who are admitted to a hospital, assisting families in the case of a student death, and arranging convenient lodging for families of students in crisis. In addition, DSL has created systems for more regular help and a consistent safety net.

More than 200 people participated in Sexual Assault Awareness Week. This new event included a community speak out, a faculty and staff training session, and an awareness campaign utilizing various modes of communication to foster awareness of sexual violence and its prevention within the MIT community. The program was initiated by Residential Life staff and planned and organized by a committee made up of eight departments and three student organizations.

S<sup>3</sup> expanded efforts to inform the MIT community on available support structures for students in need. As part of this outreach, S<sup>3</sup> relaunched When Support Gets Personal, a seven-week program designed to provide opportunities for staff and faculty to interact with key student service resources at MIT. This program, which will remain under the S<sup>3</sup> umbrella, will be offered during the fall and spring terms. S<sup>3</sup> also offered a session for the Physics Department staff and faculty to help them understand the resources and support available for student needs. In addition, S<sup>3</sup> relaunched the Brown Bag Lunch seminar series for staff; the first lunch session was MIT After Dark, a program highlighting the support available for students at MIT during nights and weekends.

There are strong signs of growth in various Institute fitness efforts. DAPER memberships have increased to approximately 14,246 within the MIT community (including students). Daily use has also increased. Physical Education added classes to its offerings, including a women's self-defense class, kayaking, triathlon training, and additional sections of Upgrade Your Health and Happiness. And participation in GetFit@MIT jumped to 2,786 individuals from the MIT community—a 17 percent increase over the previous year.

The Drug Education Committee, founded by CDSA in 2008–2009, developed and administered a campus-wide drug survey. Approximately 900 undergraduate students participated. This survey assessed attitudes on campus regarding drug use and social

networks, and the data will be used to identify needs and develop programs to address any areas of concern. For example, the survey indicated that when students don't feel like they have peer support and connection, they are more susceptible to using drugs. In addition, this committee partnered with MIT Medical and the Mental Health Service to pilot programs addressing these needs.

The Policy Committee, also founded by CDSA, instituted and/or revised three important policies in 2008–2009: the Good Samaritan Policy, the Safe Ride Passenger Bill of Rights and Responsibilities, and the Orientation REX Recruitment Agreement.

DSL revised the Party Safe Social Host Alcohol Service training. This year, the sessions utilized personal response technology to enable more immediate and anonymous responses from participants and to cultivate more relevant and personal conversations among the group. Nearly 600 fraternity residents and 250 dorm residents participated. DSL also mandated that students take an exam to gain certification. Each year, two thirds of each fraternity chapter's membership must complete this training, and at least two members must be trained in CPR.

The number of reports to the Dean on Call system nearly doubled from 2007–2008 to 2008–2009, jumping from 353 to 693. The increase in reports may be attributed to a number of factors, including trust in the system, increased awareness, and better reporting. Reports varied in severity and source and included medical transports, injury, theft, crisis, and fire alarms. Also, DSL formalized an intercollegiate sports injury protocol and linked it with the Dean on Call system.

With support through Mediation@MIT, the number of departments offering Resources for Easing Friction and Stress increased from three to six. These programs are student run and faculty sponsored within departments and designed to provide support and advocacy for a department's graduate students.

Student Disability Services worked with Facilities to write a plan to upgrade and update current facilities, and ensure access for the physically disabled in future building projects.

### **External Honors**

DSL takes great pride in all of the accomplishments of its students and staff. However, these talented men and women received so many awards and honors that this section must only note those of the greatest national and international significance.

Hobby Shop staff member Hayami Arakawa received a grant from the Council for the Arts to produce a functional piece of art. *The Intellectuals Circle* debuted in April 2009 and now travels around the MIT campus to display furniture as art in public spaces.

In academic year 2008–2009, MIT intercollegiate teams won seven of the 18 New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference (NEWMAC) championships, the best NEWMAC record of all time. The men's basketball team also received their first-ever NCAA Tournament invitation. MIT's Sears Cup ranking was 24th among the 310 Division III institutions.



Other MIT athletic honors were as follows:

- 39 athletes designated as all-American
- 11 athletes designated as academic all-American
- 125 athletes designated as all-conference (NEWMAC and others)
- 4 athletes selected for NCAA postgraduate scholarships, tying for second place in the country overall and leading in Division III
- 10 coaches honored as coach of the year

PSC provides students opportunities to compete for distinguished scholarships. Thirteen students, MIT's highest number on record, received Fulbright scholarships in 2009. The Fulbright scholarship winners from MIT were Koyel Bhattacharyya, Nathan Cisneros, Greg Distelhorst, Erica Dobbs, Nicholas DuBroff, Xaq Frohlich, Jennifer Furstenau, Gabrielle Kruks-Wisner, Anneka Lenssen, John Lopez, Matt Orosz, Amanda Shing, and Rebecca Woods. One student, Natasha Scolnik, received a Truman scholarship, two students, Tanya Goldhaber and Vinayak Muralidhar, received Marshall Scholarships; and three students, Ugwechi Amadi, Caroline Huang and Steven Mo, received Rhodes scholarships in 2009.

Other noteworthy student accomplishments include the SolSource Project, which received the Yunus Challenge Award for an innovative design of a solar cooker intended for use in the tough climate of western China. It is the product of Scott Frank '09, a 2008 IDEAS competition winner. Doctoral students Amy Mueller and Matt Orosz recently won a coveted award for technology from the Environmental Protection Agency. Their \$75,000 grant will help them install a next-generation prototype solar collector at an African clinic this fall or early next spring.

### **Assessment**

DSL values the use of data and studies to inform its decisions. Following are some surveys conducted in the past year and their results.

Assisted by staff in the Teaching and Learning Lab, PSC surveyed faculty in selected departments to gauge their attitudes and expectations about service learning, as well as their involvement in public service. Out of 675 faculty, 158 responded, yielding a 23.4 percent response rate, which is high for faculty surveys. PSC is using the responses to shape and expand service learning opportunities.

CDSA also completed a five-year grant project to assess drinking by class year at MIT, to compare MIT with other colleges, and to assess the success of programs to curb excessive drinking. When the data were first collected five years ago, they indicated that drinking among undergraduates was highest among freshmen and gradually declined over the next three class years, which coincides with statistics at other colleges. Now, however, that curve has reversed and suggests that drinking is highest among upperclassmen and lowest among first-year students. These data are still being assessed to further understand contributing factors.

PSC and the Edgerton Center commissioned a study to review literature on young adult development in order to understand the effects of public service. Conducted by Rae Simpson, codirector of the MIT Center for Work, Family, and Personal Life, the study was completed in April 2009. It concludes that public service makes significant contributions toward developing community building, leadership, problem solving, and other skills in students.

In a survey about satisfaction with their DAPER experience, 82 percent of respondents rated their experience as “above average” or “excellent.”

DAPER completed a core values process involving all work groups over several years. The result is the development and implementation of these values throughout the department via publications, hiring, training, and operations. They will also be integral to future planning and evaluation.

DAPER hired an outside consulting group (Ice Miller) to conduct an external review of the department, including an operational review and a strategic review, which included amendments to the DAPER strategic plan (2003) and an implementation plan.

### **DSL Resources**

DSL is a large division with responsibility for approximately 25 percent of the campus space, more than 400 staff members, 200 contract employees, and several hundred alumni volunteers. It is of the utmost importance to DSL to respect its resources and to use them modestly and efficiently to accomplish the community’s goals.

### **Facility Stewardship**

The Campus Activities Complex (CAC) partnered with MIT Audio-Visual to renovate the Coffeehouse Lounge in W20 and upgrade the A/V system. The renovations will save money for student groups while making the space more functional for the other community groups that use it.

CAC partnered with Music and Theater Arts to provide new performance equipment, such as furniture for the main stage, including padded performance chairs and a conductor podium.

DAPER replaced and upgraded many of its facilities this year. Three major capital projects were all completed on time and on budget. The largest of these was the construction of Roberts Field, home for MIT’s football, lacrosse, and soccer teams. Also, the Henry G. Steinbrenner ’27 Stadium was rededicated after the addition of a new entryway and garden. Finally, the tennis bubble and its bathrooms were replaced and made handicap accessible.

### **Technological Stewardship**

Physical Education implemented a new system that streamlines and systematizes the registration process. It automatically gives priority to undergraduate students who need to complete their General Institute Requirements and tracks pertinent data for future decision making.

Residence halls and FSILGs each underwent technological advancements this past year. A \$2 million project funded by the Independence Residence Development Fund enabled the FSILGs to upgrade their internet networks to state-of-the-art technology. MIT Housing, in cooperation with IS&T, began upgrading all of the Internet and wireless access in the residence halls. To date, Green Hall, Burton Conner, and MacGregor have been completed.

### **Communications**

DSL launched a new website in 2009 to better facilitate communication with students, parents, alumni, faculty, and staff. Based on information architecture studies on how students look for information, the new site now helps students and other visitors find answers to their questions. The new site is on a Drupal platform and is located at <http://studentlife.mit.edu/>.

Residence Life, the FSILG Office, and Mediation@MIT all prepared articles for the MIT parent newsletter. The first, "Life and Learning Resources in the MIT Residence Halls," was a well-received primer on available support mechanisms in the living units.

**Chris Colombo**  
**Dean for Student Life**

*More information about the Division of Student Life can be found at <http://web.mit.edu/dsl/>.*