

Office of Government and Community Relations

The Office of Government and Community Relations (OGCR) fosters interaction and understanding between MIT and its neighbors, as well as local and state governments. The office also supports the mission of the MIT Washington Office, reinforcing the efforts of the president, faculty, and administrators in their contacts with the federal government and several national higher education associations.

OGCR is charged with maintaining and developing the relationship between MIT and the Cambridge and greater Boston communities. The office promotes understanding among Cambridge elected officials, neighborhood organizations, businesses, residents, and MIT. In addition, the office endeavors to develop constructive working relationships, nurture partnership efforts, and collaborate on matters of mutual concern. OGCR staff engage in a variety of ongoing projects and respond to dozens of community, governmental, and media inquiries and requests.

Cambridge Government Relations

OGCR oversaw MIT's preparation and presentation at eight hearings before the Cambridge Planning Board, License Commission, and City Council on issues related to dormitories; the Fraternity, Sorority, and Independent Living Group (FSILG) community; Town Gown reporting; and university relations in general. Office staff managed the political campaign for two additional Cambridge Planning Board hearings, working with MITIMCo on the 650 Main Street project.

Office staff developed and led MIT's political strategy in relation to various issues including proposed non-rDNA lab regulations, MIT's response to the city's proposed community path in the Grand Junction corridor, union concerns about layoffs, the Urban Ring, the city's interest in MITIMCo's provision of a lot for a community garden, a proposal for MITIMCo to donate land to the Pacific Street Park, FM Global's requests regarding the city's water main breaks, and a documentary about MIT's nuclear reactor lab, among others.

To facilitate internal communication and coordinate efforts, OGCR arranged for group sessions for the many MIT departments and individuals requiring access to the Cambridge government. These sessions covered specific Cambridge issues, such as coordination with the Inspectional Services Division; process issues with the Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department; licensing topics with the Cambridge License Commission; and the Institute's Cambridge First Purchasing Policy.

Office staff met frequently with all nine city councilors, including the mayor, and many city staff, including the city manager, on a variety of issues related to MIT. OGCR staff also met with several state legislators and state administrators on selected topics, bringing appropriate MIT staff members to these sessions to provide as much information as possible to the public officials.

Regional and State Interactions

OGCR managed MIT's political strategy for several legislative initiatives including storm water regulations, taxing endowments, university tax-exempt status, and public disclosure of police reports. Office staff worked closely with MIT experts on these issues and with the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts in a coordinated effort to influence the legislature.

In Boston, OGCR staff managed the Institute's interactions with the Boston Traffic Department around MIT Shuttle routes and stops. Office staff set up a very positive meeting between MIT president Susan Hockfield and Boston mayor Thomas Menino. Held on September 25, the meeting enabled the two to discuss MIT's work at John O'Bryant High School and economic development issues.

Office staff contributed to the planning of an IT breakfast held at MIT on October 15. Attendees included CEOs of several local IT companies, Governor Deval Patrick, and members of the governor's cabinet. OGCR staff also assisted in the announcement on June 11 in Holyoke, MA, of plans for a high-performance computing data center in that city. The center is to be a collaboration among several research universities led by MIT and including the University of Massachusetts and Boston University. The governor's office will also play an important role. A detailed agreement is now being worked out.

Federal Government Relations

OGCR staff coordinated several visits to MIT by members of Congress invited by President Hockfield on her visits to Washington. This year, Representative Brian Baird, chair of the Energy Subcommittee, and Senator Tom Carper were among our guests on campus. In addition, office staff welcomed Representative Edward Markey to the Institute for the Clean Power: Building a New Clean Energy Economy event on April 13. Also attending this event were John Holdren, director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, and Carol Browner, assistant to the president for energy and climate change. OGCR staff members were heavily involved as well in arranging for secretary of energy Steven Chu to present the Compton Lecture on May 12.

The office provided background material and other assistance for President Hockfield's trips to Washington. OGCR staff assisted in coordinating President Hockfield's testimony on September 10 before the House Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming, the crux of which was presented in an op-ed in the *Washington Post*. Dr. Hockfield's visits to Washington are not limited to Capitol Hill but also extend to agency heads, cabinet secretaries, and leaders of associations.

OGCR staff continued to represent MIT on several committees of national associations focusing on community service, work-study financial aid, and other educational topics. The office worked with the local staff of the Massachusetts congressional delegation to include Congress members in Institute activities and respond to their queries.

Community Relations

Campus Events

In response to the Institute's real estate activities in Kendall Square and the surrounding neighborhoods, OGCR produced Area IV Day at MIT for the second year; this event, an open house for Cambridge neighborhood residents, took place at the MIT Museum. Office staff accommodated dozens of community-based facility use requests, providing a venue for the Cambridge Police Awards, which included city manager Bob Healy and many city councilors; the Cambridge Business Links vendor fair; the Cambridge Public Library's panel discussion, "Celebrating James Marshall and Humor in Children's Books"; and the Cambridge mayor's annual Senior Citizens' Lunch, attended by nearly 1,000 residents.

OGCR staff also participated in several campus-wide events, including planning the political aspects of the Smoot 50th-anniversary event and serving on the Martin Luther King Breakfast committee, working on the event's theme and securing the keynote speaker, Johnnetta Betsch Cole. Office staff continued to integrate city officials into campus community gatherings. This year, events hosted by MIT brought Cambridge mayor Denise Simmons to campus five times in the month of May alone.

Work with Local Nonprofit Agencies

During the course of the year, OGCR staff represented MIT on the boards and committees of various local nonprofits, including both the Cambridge and Greater Boston chambers of commerce. This year, an OGCR staff member represented MIT on the newly formed Kendall Square Association, serving as a board member, chairing the Marketing and Promotions Committee, and providing political guidance to the effort. OGCR was also active in the Central Square Business Association, in which a staff member serves as chair of the Events Committee, working to promote unity and networking among Central Square businesses and organizations.

OGCR staff served on the planning committee for the grand opening of the Central Square Theater and planned MIT's community meeting with two Cambridgeport neighborhood associations. Office staff also coordinated the Rotary Club's National Honor Society Leaders Today and Tomorrow breakfast with 10 prominent Cambridge leaders and 60 National Honor Society students from the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School.

OGCR continued its practice of making donations to neighborhood programs and institutions, including Girls' LEAP, Food for Free, and Breakthrough Cambridge. In addition to providing expertise and funding, OGCR staff participated in hands-on service efforts in the Cambridge community, delivering turkeys, serving a Thanksgiving meal to low-income residents, and ringing the bell for the Salvation Army, among other outreach activities.

Schools

The office worked closely with the Cambridge Public Schools, the MIT Public Service Center, the MIT Museum, the Edgerton Center, and others to carry out a wide variety of educational programs and initiatives on behalf of Cambridge schoolchildren. The office managed MIT's hosting of the Massachusetts State Science Fair in May. Office staff coordinated the Keypals program, which pairs middle school students with MIT staff for email exchanges and visits to campus.

Community Service Fund

The office oversaw the MIT Community Service Fund (CSF) in its mission to support the efforts of MIT volunteers and neighborhood partners in the community. Funds for distribution were raised by the Community Giving at MIT Campaign through the Institute's annual charitable giving drive, used book sales held on campus and at Lincoln Laboratory, and the annual sale of the plants used at MIT's commencement ceremony. OGCR managed the disbursement of nearly \$110,000 in CSF grants to more than 20 local nonprofit organizations and student projects.

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More information about the Office of Government and Community Relations can be found at <http://web.mit.edu/govt-relations/www/>.