

Institute Events

The mission of Institute Events is to meet the information needs of the MIT community, of visitors to the campus, and of the public; to promote a sense of community within MIT; and to support conferences and events that enhance MIT's role in the broader academic community. Institute Events is comprised of the Events and Information Center, the Community Services Office, and the Conference Services Office.

Events and Information Center

Serving as an information and welcome point for visitors, the Information Center is increasingly a central information source for members of the MIT community. During the past year, staff assisted faculty and administrative staff with the registration of 1,151 departmental events and 232 Lobby 7 Kiosk registrations. In addition, the staff provided training sessions for users of the online events calendar. Information Center staff also distributed 58,500 pamphlets, brochures, maps, guides, and catalogues; answered and redirected thousands of telephone and in-person inquiries; and served as a clearinghouse for mail addressed simply to MIT. A new role for the center this year was the scheduling and oversight of the Bush Room in Building 10, when it transitioned from the ownership of the Alumni Association following their move to W92; 494 reservations were managed. Joseph Coen manages the Events and Information Center. Staff members include Lee Corbett; Colette Stevenson, who joined our staff in September to coordinate special tours and delegations and to manage the student tour guides; Judith Zinker, who came on staff in July; and Marie Seamon, who retired from MIT in April after nearly 40 years of service. Following Marie's retirement, the Stata Information Desk closed; this site now functions primarily as a MIT Activities Committee (MITAC) box office.

The undergraduate student guides number 133. Among them, they conducted tours for 30,866 visitors, 13,325 of whom were prospective students.

The director and center staff were involved with the logistical management of many events throughout the year, including the fall Community Picnic at the new Ashdown House to welcome dean Chris Colombo; the Compton Lecture by Paul Kagame, president of the Republic of Rwanda; the State of the Institute forum; an economics panel chaired by professor Ricardo Caballero; a memorial service to celebrate the life of Alex d'Arbeloff; a visit and lecture by George Soros; the Energy Club's "Candidates Energy Debate"; the Diversity Leadership Congress in November; the community-wide Winter Break in December; a lecture by Wenzhong Zhou, ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the US, in February; the MIT Excellence Awards, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast and the kick-off event for the Institute-wide Planning Task Force meeting; the MacVicar Faculty Fellows reception in March; a panel on Clean Energy hosted by Congressman Edward Markey and a campus visit by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in April; and a Compton Lecture by energy secretary Steven Chu in May. Professor Rafael Bras, recipient of the 2008 James R. Killian Jr. Faculty Achievement Award, delivered the Killian Lecture on March 30.

Commencement activities began on Thursday, June 4, with the hooding ceremony for 450 doctoral degree recipients. Chancellor Phillip L. Clay presided over this year's ceremony. The 143rd Commencement exercises were held on Friday, June 5, and featured an address by the honorable Deval Patrick, governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, who spoke before 2,280 degree recipients and 10,000 family members, alumni, and guests.

Community Services Office

The Community Services Office is home to the MIT Quarter Century Club, the MIT Activities Committee, the Association of MIT Retirees, Community Giving at MIT, and the MIT Retirement Dinner. These programs aim to optimize the work/life experience for faculty, staff, students, and retirees, and strengthen the connection between MIT and its community members. Chris Ronsicki joined the staff this year to assist with programs and to provide technical support for the office.

This year, the MIT Activities Committee (MITAC) celebrated 25 years of service to the MIT community. MITAC organized more than 255 cultural and recreational events for over 14,000 participants, selling nearly 30,000 tickets. MITAC's total annual revenue exceeded \$543,000, an increase of four percent from FY2008. MITAC customers enjoyed substantial savings this year—a total of \$142,265. Led by co-convenors Karen Shaw (Lincoln Lab) and Emmi Snyder (MIT campus), the 15-member committee provides broad representation from across MIT. Emmi Snyder retired as committee co-chair at the end of FY2009. Cheryl Vossmer was appointed as a new co-convenor, effective July 1, 2009.

The Quarter Century Club (QCC) reached a membership of 3,680 after having inducted 25 new members: 88 from campus, 35 from Lincoln Laboratory, and two from Haystack Observatory. At a spring induction ceremony, President Susan Hockfield welcomed the new inductees and honored those QCC members who had reached 50 years of service. The club also organized three seasonal events and awarded 10 grants to retired members through the William R. Dickson Education Fund. Retiree Yvonne Gittens is the president of QCC and leads a 15-member board of directors.

Community Giving at MIT is a workplace giving effort that serves as a conduit between the MIT employee and retiree community and the MIT Community Service Fund, the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley, and other health and human service nonprofits. The FY2009 campaign raised \$292,753 (United Way received \$157,187, the MIT Community Service Fund \$88,521, other local charities \$47,045), a decline of less than one percent from FY2008. Six hundred and twelve employees and retirees participated. Sixty-two percent of donors contributed online, an increase of 11 percent from FY2008. Professor Roger Kamm served as campaign chair, leading a steering committee of 11 faculty and staff members.

The Association of MIT Retirees marked its 15th anniversary and served more than 900 registered members. A successful outreach effort to all retirees increased membership by 10 percent. Retirees Robert Blake, Richard Dolbec, and Jane Griffin served as co-chairs and led a 15-member volunteer advisory committee that organized membership, travel, educational, and social programming. The MIT Retirees Undergraduate Education

Scholarship Fund remains an important priority and has raised more than \$27,000 from retiree donations since its inception in FY2007. This year the fund awarded its second scholarship, to Mary Hatch '09, granddaughter of a Lincoln Lab retiree.

Conference Services Office

The Conference Services Office staff manages logistical coordination and registration services for conferences and meetings sponsored by MIT faculty and staff. This year, the staff coordinated logistics for 40 events that brought nearly 13,000 guests to campus; more than 350 were housed in MIT residence halls during the summer. Recurring events included the Procurement Vendor Fair, the International Genetically Engineered Machine Competition (iGEM), the Council for the Arts annual meeting, the MLK Breakfast, the MIT/Kauffman Seminar for Senior Congressional and Executive Branch Staff, and the Industrial Liaison Program Corporate Series. Additionally, office staff coordinated presentations to MIT undergraduates by 140 organizations recruiting under the auspices of the MIT Careers Office.

Conference Services staff members were manager Cathi Levine, Eva Cabone, Nancy Cain, and Nicole Silva. Jeannie Lauricella continued to provide support throughout all of the offices within Institute Events.

MIT's Sesquicentennial Celebration

In 2011, MIT will celebrate its 150th anniversary. Planning for the sesquicentennial began in fall 2006. From that autumn until June 2008, Kathryn Willmore, former vice president and secretary of the Corporation, chaired a planning committee that defined the principles, scope, central events, and theme of the celebration. The planning committee comprised faculty members from all five Schools, students representing the Undergraduate Association, the Graduate Student Council, the Class of 2011 (designated by the president the Sesquicentennial Class), and staff with related expertise or administrative responsibilities. The planning committee defined the principles and scope of the celebration before disbanding at the end of the 2007–2008 academic year. The work now continues under the administration of Institute Events. The MIT150 Steering Committee—of a similar composition as the planning committee—formed in the summer of 2008. It is led by professor David Mindell, director of the Program in Science, Technology, and Society, who will oversee the direction of the planning along with Gayle Gallagher, as the sesquicentennial's senior director and Ted Johnson as director of planning and operations. Rebecca Tyler has a dual role coordinating communications for MIT150 and Institute Events as a whole; Kimberly Nelson transitioned from her former position in the MIT Information Center to administrative assistant for MIT150.

The sesquicentennial planning principles include creating a celebration that will be distinctive and participatory, to position education and service as priorities of MIT, to celebrate the past and envision the future, to break stereotypes, to communicate to the world, and to be as “green” as possible. The top priorities in programming events and activities are to be reflective of history while looking to the future and cementing science and engineering as the cornerstones of an MIT education.

The period of celebration has been defined as January to June 2011. This 150-day period will include a launch event during IAP and a Charter Day event in April, and will culminate on Commencement and alumni weekend. While there are still many activities and events to be determined, some key events and initiatives have begun. They include two books; an expansion of the Cambridge Science Festival in April; a festival of arts, technology, and sciences; an oral history project; a content-rich public website; the MIT IDEAS Global Challenge (modeled on the IDEAS Competition); and an interactive timeline of MIT's first 150 years. The focus of MIT150 programming is on academic and service programs. We anticipate an academic convocation and/or a monthly symposium series during the celebration period. A website designed to assist MIT groups in planning associated activities is under development and will be made available to the community in January 2010. A theme—or tagline—for the sesquicentennial has been approved by the president; it will be made public in 2010 along with the official MIT150 logo.

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