

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.

The principal focus of OGCR is 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 and governmental inquiries and requests.

This year, the contributions of the office to the Institute and community comprised a combination of innovative new ventures that expanded the office's impact, especially on neighborhood involvement and school matters, as well as steady oversight and increased staff efforts on established OGCR undertakings.

Community Relations

Neighborhood Involvement

OGCR staff became increasingly involved in the activities and organizations of the many Cambridge neighborhoods that are adjacent to the Institute. In Kendall Square, OGCR staff serve on the board as well as chair and serve on many committees of the Kendall Square Association. OGCR's productive involvement in Kendall Square helps to support MIT's initiatives in the neighborhood. Office staff also manage the political strategy for engagement with external stakeholders and provide communications guidance for the MIT Investment Management Company's projects in the square.

OGCR continued to deepen its relationship with neighbors in Cambridge's Area IV. Office staff assisted in the planning and promotion of Area IV Community Pride Day, an award-winning neighborhood festival organized by the staff of the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House. As MIT's representatives on the Kendall Community Group board, office staff contributed valuable input on fundraising, event planning, and volunteer recruitment to the three Area IV-based nonprofit organizations that are members of the group.

OGCR staff remained active in Central Square community groups and activities. Office staff served on the board of the Central Square Business Association (CSBA) and headed the group's events committee, promoting unity and networking among Central Square businesses. Staff were also involved in CSBA's retail mix and vacancies working group, which comprises local residents, city officials, and business owners, and was created as part of the city's and CSBA's efforts to revitalize Central Square.

In other areas of Cambridge, the office implemented regular meetings with the Ward 5 Democratic Committee and the Cambridgeport Neighborhood Association to discuss MIT projects and general neighborhood issues and concerns with Cambridgeport residents. Since the establishment of the East Cambridge Business Association in fall 2009, office staff have attended association meetings and have brought marketing ideas to this new entity. For the Institute's neighbors along the Charles River, office staff organized a public meeting focusing on a new floating dock project at the Wood Sailing Pavilion. OGCR continued to respond to frequent constituent inquiries, on topics ranging from noise complaints to graffiti to the effectiveness of raised sidewalks, creating connections between MIT and the larger Cambridge community.

Nonprofits

OGCR organized and contributed to many of the Institute's efforts to back nonprofit organizations that address the challenges faced by its host community. The office continued to donate to neighborhood programs and institutions, such as the Cambridge Community Center, the Cambridge branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the Community Art Center. Throughout the year, OGCR staff represented MIT on the boards and committees of various local nonprofits, including the Cambridge and Somerville Program for Alcohol Rehabilitation, National Braille Press, and the Cambridge YMCA. Staff also shared in several hands-on service activities with local agencies, including delivering Thanksgiving meals to low-income Cambridge residents and coordinating the annual ringing of the Salvation Army bell on the steps of 77 Massachusetts Avenue.

OGCR continued to manage the myriad requests from community and government entities to use campus spaces for their functions. This year staff handled more than 40 such requests, which included ceremonies for the Cambridge police and fire departments; graduations for Cambridge charter high schools; and fundraisers, workshops, and performances for a variety of community groups.

In the local and regional business community, office staff continued to promote collaborations with the Institute. OGCR staff members served on the boards and various committees of both the Cambridge and Greater Boston Chambers of Commerce. Staff assisted in arrangements for President Hockfield to address the Greater Boston chamber's executive forum and the Kendall Square Association's annual meeting, both held in February.

Schools

OGCR partnered in several new initiatives involving the Cambridge Public Schools (CPS). In September, MIT hosted the new CPS superintendent, Dr. Jeffrey Young, for his first meeting with the district's teachers. Both Dr. Young and President Hockfield addressed the 1,200 teachers who attended the program. For this kickoff event, the office prepared and distributed a guide to MIT activities and resources that are available to Cambridge teachers. OGCR staff also began collaborating with local partners to leverage the Institute's internal resources to expose Cambridge high school students to a professional work environment and to help them explore possible career options.

The office also engaged in a cooperative effort with members of the Public Service Center staff and representatives of CPS to determine appropriate ways in which MIT can support the science curriculum of the schools. OGCR is taking on more of the management of this evolving collaboration, which was manifested in April as the Student Science Showcase, a one-day expo for Cambridge eighth-graders. Students displayed their science projects; interacted with MIT volunteers who could discuss the science, math, and engineering aspects of the projects; interacted with students from other schools about their science education; and explored several science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) demonstrations and exhibits by MIT presenters.

OGCR continued ongoing work with CPS and other MIT offices to carry out a wide variety of educational programs and initiatives on behalf of Cambridge schoolchildren. For the second year, office staff planned and led the Rotary Club's National Honor Society Leaders Today and Tomorrow breakfast, connecting 10 prominent Cambridge leaders and 70 Cambridge honor students. Office staff coordinated the Keypals program, which pairs middle school students with MIT staff for email exchanges and visits to campus.

The office's projects with schools also reached beyond Cambridge. OGCR staff recently implemented strategies for Prospect Hill Academy, a local charter school, to benefit from MIT resources such as lab equipment and furniture slated for donation, and participated in activities such as MIT Museum workshops and the annual Cambridge Science Festival. In September, office staff hosted a delegation from Boston mayor Thomas Menino's office and the Boston Public Schools for a meeting to discuss online resources with MIT OpenCourseWare staff.

Federal Government Relations

A highlight of the year for OGCR staff was President Barack Obama's visit to campus on October 23, 2009. The office worked with many others in the campus-wide effort to plan this meaningful visit, which highlighted the stature of MIT's research and educational endeavors. Other office federal government activities included coordinating the Institute's 2010 census team, in collaboration with the Institutional Research section of the Office of the Provost. OGCR staff assembled a team and carried out a campaign to educate the MIT community about the importance of responding to the census questionnaire. The campus response rate was well above the national average.

The office continued its work to plan and support President Hockfield's visits to Washington throughout the year. Her meetings with key members of Congress, administration agency heads, and congressional staff have enhanced MIT's Washington mission and presence. MIT continues to build important relationships with the Department of Energy that include significant internship opportunities for MIT graduates.

State Government Relations

At the state level, office staff worked collaboratively with internal and external colleagues to manage MIT's response to several legislative initiatives. These issues included storm water regulations, payments in lieu of taxes, taxing endowments,

university tax-exempt status, architectural access board regulations, yacht club rules, bio lab restrictions, data breach regulations, new lobbying laws, and public disclosure of police reports. Office staff met with several state legislators and state administrators to discuss selected topics.

OGCR worked with MIT staff and members of Governor Deval Patrick's staff to proceed on the Holyoke High-Performance Computing Center (HPCC) initiative. Staff members participated in discussions with our partners on this project, addressing questions concerning public benefits for the host community. This discussion and planning effort will continue as the HPCC project is rolled out.

Office staff planned and hosted a campus visit in February by Massachusetts lieutenant governor Timothy Murray that included a meeting with President Hockfield and briefings on transportation, energy, and STEM education. As a result of this visit, MIT was asked to host a meeting of the lieutenant governor's STEM Education Advisory Council in April.

Local Government Relations

OGCR guided the Institute's strategies in relation to Cambridge and Boston policy issues on a range of topics. Office staff worked with several other MIT departments to persuade the US Postal Service (USPS) to maintain its presence in the Stratton Student Center after the USPS announced its plan to shutter a number of campus branch retail locations. The MIT team successfully convinced the Boston district manager that enough retail volume and real need existed on campus to justify keeping the branch open.

OGCR oversaw public processes for two academic projects: the graduate student solar air conditioning research project in Cambridgeport, and the wind turbine project in Middleton. Staff oversaw MIT's preparation and presentation at seven hearings before the Cambridge Planning Board, License Commission, and City Council on issues related to Town Gown reporting, university relations, and other matters.

Community Service Fund

The office oversaw the Community Service Fund (CSF) and the disbursement of almost \$125,000 to two dozen local nonprofit organizations and student projects. In its mission to support the efforts of MIT volunteers in the community, CSF received generous support from funds raised through the annual Community Giving at MIT campaign, on which OGCR staff collaborated. CSF also collected the proceeds from several fundraisers, including used book sales held on campus and at Lincoln Laboratory, and the annual sale of the plants used at MIT's commencement ceremony. These activities brought together volunteers from across the Institute who dedicated their time to aid the broader community.

Institute-Internal Activities

OGCR provided other Institute offices with analysis and strategic guidance on local and state political issues. OGCR staff also continued to participate in several Institute committees and groups, such as the Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast planning committee, Information Group, and the Communications Operation Group. Staff also supported Institute-wide efforts, including commencement activities and general cost-cutting measures.

Sarah Gallop

Paul Parravano

Codirectors

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