

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 community, as well as the 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 members engage in a variety of ongoing projects and respond to dozens of community and governmental inquiries and requests.

In this milestone 150th year for MIT, OGCR staff engaged in endeavors that encouraged MIT's government and community partners not only to join the celebration of MIT's past, but also to help prepare the way for the realization of the Institute's future vision. In addition to promoting and taking part in many MIT150 events, OGCR contributed to ventures that lay a foundation for MIT's development in terms of the Institute's physical presence and its influence in the region.

Community Links to MIT Initiatives

MIT150

OGCR staff produced and assisted in the planning of several MIT150 events, inviting government officials and engaging the broader Cambridge and Boston community in the celebrations. In December, OGCR staff planned a reception at Gray House with President Hockfield, senior officers, and the city of Cambridge's elected and appointed leadership to preview MIT150 events. Office staff also organized a Celebration of Innovation in Kendall Square on April 29. This celebration, which featured President Hockfield, offered an opportunity in which Cambridge and MIT community members presented 16 stories of innovation in Kendall Square and Cambridge. For this celebration, OGCR commissioned an art installation outside of the David H. Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research depicting the use of nanotechnology to target cancer cells. The art installation was created by local chalk artist Sidewalk Sam.

The office also promoted and provided outreach for other MIT150 events, with special focus on the April 30 "Under the Dome" open house. Staff delivered event promotional materials to neighborhood groups and organizations and collaborated with other MIT offices in welcoming and orienting school groups to the open house. OGCR served as liaison to Cambridge mayor David Maher for his role in the open house, as well as making arrangements for the mayor to speak at the building openings for the David H. Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research and the Sloan School of Management.

MITEI, Energy, and the Environment

The OGCR staff, who serve on the Greater Boston Chamber’s Energy Policy Committee, orchestrated a campus visit and discussion for this group with MITEI director Ernie Moniz. This meeting brought approximately 30 senior-level energy leaders from the region to MIT to hear from Professor Moniz about MITEI and its efforts to connect with local entrepreneurs and industry.

The office worked this year to help in the planning the “Efficiency Forward” event program, held in January and featuring President Hockfield, state officials, and NSTAR. The event celebrated how hard our campus is working—in conjunction with our government and industry partners—on environmental and sustainability issues.

This year the US Environmental Protection Agency asked MIT to host a Green Chemistry Initiative. This program brought together a number of industry, government, and university representatives to showcase efforts in green chemistry. The office provided planning and logistical help, in addition to communications about this program on campus. MIT was well represented in the discussion, and thanked for hosting the event.

Holyoke Computing, Cambridge Science Festival, and Other Initiatives

OGCR staff participated regularly in a discussion group created around the Holyoke Green High Performance Computing Center project. Composed of colleagues from the other university partners, the group monitors events and discussions in the City of Holyoke in order to maximize positive results for this important initiative. These discussions are carried on in consultation with Jim Morgan and Claude Canizares, both of whom lead MIT’s role in this effort.

This year, OGCR staff facilitated the upcoming expansion of the Cambridge Science Festival. The successful implementation of this effort was based on ensuring that the expansion beyond Cambridge was properly understood and supported by Cambridge officials and the festival’s old and new partners, who have invested significantly in this now well-established and high-level program.

In December, office staff assisted in arranging a discussion between President Hockfield and City of Boston mayor Thomas Menino devoted to the South Boston Innovation District. From this meeting some additional conversations with the mayor’s staff took place involving MIT’s Industrial Performance Center and its new leader, Liz Reynolds.

OCCR made several connections between Cambridge agencies that work with senior citizens and the MIT Age Lab and worked with the Age Lab, its researchers, and director Joe Coughlin to host the New England Motor Press Association’s Awards Ceremony in May. Several Institute faculty members involved in transportation studies helped choose the winner of the Yankee Automobile Technology Award, which was presented at the event. A number of senior auto industry technology officials were present for this program and were introduced to the MIT Age Lab and its work.

Office staff continued to work with the MIT Public Service Center (PSC) to assist the large number of students on campus who wish to perform community service. The office has advised the center on its local activities, assisting staff with contacts and appropriate engagements in the Cambridge and Boston areas. Staff have also held discussions with PSC founder Pricilla Gray about her desire to increase public service opportunities for MIT students.

Neighborhood Involvement

For the Kendall Square Initiative, MIT's proposal to enhance the Kendall Square neighborhood, OGCR manages the dynamic political strategy, including the Institute's incremental approach and interactions with local and state elected and appointed officials, neighborhood associations, and other key internal and external stakeholders. In 2010–2011, the office planned more than 50 meetings to discuss the project. OGCR staff provide overall strategic guidance and support for the project, and serve on the management team, as well as the project's communications team.

As part of MIT's representation on the Kendall Square Association (KSA), a community group that works to establish and realize a shared vision for the future of Kendall Square, office staff members served on the organization's board, executive committee, and CEO council committee, as well as chaired the marketing and promotion committee. OGCR staff also served on the executive director search committee. Staff were on the planning teams for the KSA's annual meeting in March, held at the Media Lab, and the CEO council meeting in May.

Office staff encouraged the revitalization of Central Square by representing the Institute on local boards and committees, including the Central Square Business Association (CSBA). OGCR staff managed CSBA events that promoted unity and networking among Central Square businesses and organizations, and led a team to plan and execute the CSBA Unity Luncheon honoring members of the Cambridge Police Department. OGCR also represented MIT on the Red Ribbon Commission on the Delights and Concerns of Central Square, a group of various Central Square stakeholders in the Central Square revitalization efforts convened by a Cambridge city councilor.

Office staff again assisted in the planning, promotion, and production of Area IV Community Pride Day, an award-winning neighborhood festival held in September and organized by a diverse group of city, neighborhood, and nonprofit constituents.

In other neighborhoods surrounding the Institute, OGCR continued to foster proactive communication and organize regular meetings with residents on a range of projects and issues. Office staff brought representatives from the Department of Facilities and MITIMCo to the sessions so that the assembled group could address both academic and investment topics. OGCR also represents MIT at East Cambridge Business Association meetings. The office managed external noise issues between MIT's Edgerton House and its neighbor, Novartis, leading the effort to decrease noise disturbances experienced by Edgerton House residents.

State and Local Government Relations

In 2010–2011, OGCR oversaw MIT's preparation and presentation at 11 hearings before the Cambridge Planning Board, Cambridge License Commission, and city council committees on a range of issues, including dormitories, Town-and-Gown reporting, economic development, building projects, retail development, campus safety, union issues, and university relations. The office guided the creation of the Institute's political strategy in relation to various local issues including student housing in Boston, use of the Grand Junction corridor, MIT's nuclear reactor, the Institute's Cambridge First Purchasing Program, Vassar Street maintenance, and interaction with the Historic Commission. OGCR managed MIT's interaction with several legislative initiatives related to Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT), taxing endowments, university tax-exempt status, yacht club rules, and public disclosure of police reports.

With so many different Institute parties interacting with the Cambridge government this year, OGCR often coordinated efforts among MIT constituencies on various topics, including: the Cambridge and Somerville Program for Alcoholic Rehabilitation (CASPAR) shelter, PILOT, the nuclear reactor, union representation, Fraternities, Sororities, and Independent Living Groups, construction projects, and tour buses. OGCR also coordinated multiple hearings before a single board, and overall MIT objectives with regard to the Cambridge interface. The office met with the Graduate Student Council leadership to discuss its goals in interacting with the city leadership around MIT matters. OGCR also facilitated interactions between Division of Student Life staff and the Boston Licensing Board and among investment and academic staff members and Cambridge's new assistant city manager for community development.

During the course of the year, office staff met frequently with all nine city councilors and many city staff, both to address issues related to MIT and to informally and openly discuss a variety of city political and civic matters. These regular meetings aid in maintaining strong relationships that will serve the Institute when issues arise. OGCR staff members also met with several state legislators and state administrators on selected topics, accompanied by appropriate MIT staff to provide relevant information to the public officials.

Farther afield from the main campus, OGCR managed the interface with the town of Middleton around the Department of Facilities' wind turbine project and the Massachusetts Division of Capital Asset Management's request for property acquisition related to the Essex County Jail.

Support of Nonprofits

Youth Initiatives

This year saw OGCR staff increasingly involved in novel and established activities and organizations focused on serving the youth of Cambridge. OGCR has begun a new conversation with the Cambridge superintendent of schools regarding MIT's support of science education for the district. The Cambridge schools are undertaking a new model of instruction in the middle grades, and superintendent Jeff Young has asked for MIT's

engagement in his new plan. The office has brought together MIT staff and faculty resources to consider what this engagement might look like.

The office has also engaged in big-picture assessment of youth services through staff's role on the board of the Cambridge Community Foundation, a group of civic leaders who control a modest endowment that is annually appropriated to city nonprofits. OGCR staff have been asked to lead a group of board members to assess the quality and level of youth services in Cambridge.

OGCR staff members represent MIT on the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce's Community Outreach Committee (COC), where the office has been a part of a successful effort to inspire local businesses to hire Cambridge youth. OGCR was instrumental in organizing a COC event that brought together business leaders to share their professional journey with Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School students. Through staff involvement in the Cambridge Rotary Club, the office also planned and led the Club's National Honor Society Leaders Today and Tomorrow breakfast in May, which also brought together prominent Cambridge leaders and Cambridge students.

Many requests for use of Institute facilities handled by OGCR are related to providing and supporting youth services. The office assisted the youth programs of the Cambridge-based Community Arts Center (CAC) by coordinating the logistics of the CAC's Do It Your Own Damn Self Festival, a two-day youth film festival held on campus. OGCR also arranged to provide space on campus for Cambridge Community Television's Summer Media Institute for teens.

The office continues to coordinate the KeyPal email pen pal program at MIT, a collaboration among Cambridge school volunteers, the Kennedy-Longfellow School staff, Draper Laboratory, and IBM. Staff arranged campus visits by local sixth-graders and planned all aspects of the KeyPal year-end celebration luncheon.

OGCR also worked on youth-related projects outside of Cambridge. OGCR assisted Lincoln Laboratory officials in their efforts to continue a childcare arrangement with the Lexington-based Minuteman School. As part of these discussions, the Institute hosted a group of officials from the school to highlight ways in which MIT outreach activities could be helpful to their vocational and educational mission. The office also fulfilled requests from educators from across the nation for MIT-themed materials to promote higher education and achievement in their classrooms.

Other Nonprofit Engagement

In light of MIT's Kendall Square Initiative, OGCR has given particular attention to strengthening connections to those agencies and nonprofits in and around this neighborhood with which MIT has a strong and historical relationship. In March, the office collaborated with other corporate partners to highlight the work of three such nonprofits, as part of the Kendall Community Group. Staff contributed valuable input on fundraising, event planning, and volunteer recruitment to the Cambridge-based nonprofit members of the group.

To celebrate the move of an important Cambridge organization to MIT's property at 438 Massachusetts Avenue, OGCR planned a celebration for 175 community members to welcome Cambridge Community Television to its new home. Office staff serve on CCTV's Advisory Committee as part of their greater role of representing MIT on boards and committees of dozens of organizations throughout Cambridge. This representation ensures that the Institute is participating in, and contributing to, the overall enhancement of the broader community.

One important engagement is OGCR's connection to CASPAR, a nonprofit agency providing community-based services for those affected by substance use disorders. Through the CASPAR advisory committee, office staff acted as a liaison for resolving issues with the Emergency Services Center, which is located on MIT-owned land. To highlight awareness of this organization, OGCR staff created a CASPAR fact sheet for the MIT community and assisted in arranging a tour of CASPAR for the newly appointed warehouse headmasters. These efforts help to cultivate a mutually beneficial relationship between members of the MIT community and their neighbors.

OGCR continues to serve as the sponsor of Institute facility use by outside groups, an effort that provides an important part of our foundation of goodwill towards our neighboring community. Dozens of nonprofits benefitted from the sharing of MIT's facilities.

Office staff engaged in service activities and charitable drives to benefit a host of local organizations. By delivering Thanksgiving meals, ringing the bell for the Salvation Army, organizing a winter clothing drive for the CASPAR shelter, and facilitating departmental holiday charitable contributions to local groups, OGCR fostered connections between the Institute and its nonprofit neighbors.

The office oversaw the Community Service Fund and the disbursement of funds to local nonprofit organizations and student projects. OGCR also provided small donations and sponsorships to nonprofit partners in the community.

Federal Government Relations

The majority of OGCR's work in the federal capacity continues to be the planning of President Hockfield's visits to Washington, DC. Through these meetings, Dr. Hockfield continues to have great opportunities to deliver the MIT message to members of Congress, industry leaders and executive branch officials.

One notable program on campus this year was the Small Business Administration-sponsored round table discussion concerning regulatory barriers to innovation, which was held in March. Working with senior Institute staff, the office assisted in the planning of this event, which brought to campus a number of high-level government officials.

Another important campus visitor this year was US senator Scott Brown (R-MA), who attended the David H. Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research dedication, for which OGCR planned invitations and outreach to elected officials. On a separate campus visit arranged by the office, Senator Brown attended a life sciences discussion and

faculty briefing on a variety of research issues. As a result, this relatively new member of the Senate now has a dramatically increased understanding of MIT's role in leading education and research.

OGCR continues to respond to information requests and calls for assistance from MIT's Congressional representative, Michael E. Capuano (D-MA). The office aided the Congressman in his effort to change US policy and openly welcome degree recipients from other nations by providing information about the number of foreign students receiving degrees from MIT.

Communications

This year, OGCR updated its website by writing and editing most of the web content to better provide information that site users were seeking. Office staff responded to numerous inquiries from various media representatives regarding Kendall Square, PILOT, MIT's nuclear reactor, building projects, and other "town-and-gown" issues. The office responded to daily inquiries from neighbors and others about all things pertaining to MIT in order to maintain MIT's reputation as being helpful and attentive. These contacts generate connections between Cambridge and MIT people on a multitude of diverse topics.

Institute Internal Activities

OGCR staff continued to serve on several Institute committees, such as the Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast Planning Committee, Communications Operation Group, the 2030 Advisory Committee, and the Office of the President's "STEAM group," which reviews President Hockfield's speaking requests. The office worked closely with the Community Giving at MIT campaign. This year, staff helped build a stronger connection to, and level of support for, the charitable giving drive from the MIT Federal Credit Union. Staff also supported Institute-wide efforts, including commencement activities and MIT150.

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