

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 office coordinates MIT's community relations activities in Cambridge and beyond, and supports the President's Office and the MIT community-at-large in a broad range of activities. The OGCR staff is available as a resource to members of the Institute community who need information or assistance with the government or with the community of Cambridge, and to MIT's neighbors who need guidance in their interactions with the Institute. This office is a communications link, a catalyst for action, and a resource for both MIT and the external community that is committed to promoting productive collaboration in all of its interactions.

Community Relations

Support of Nonprofits

OGCR takes a lead role in supporting local nonprofit organizations that address the challenges faced by its host community. The office supports Cambridge neighborhoods through donations of money and hands-on assistance, use of MIT facilities, and engagement on nonprofit boards and committees.

Through monetary donations, the office supported approximately 50 nonprofit organizations in the Cambridge area. Donations range from event sponsorships of the East End House's annual Cooking for a Cause, to support of galas and community events such as the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House's Sweet Soul Supper. In addition to monetary support, the office dedicated resources to community fundraisers and drives, including an Institute-wide winter clothing drive organized by OGCR to benefit the CASPAR Emergency Service Center. CASPAR provides community-based services for people with substance use disorders. The clothing drive resulted in a donation of over 500 pounds of clothing to CASPAR. OGCR staff also shared in several hands-on service activities with local agencies, including delivering Thanksgiving meals to Cambridge residents and coordinating the annual ringing of the Salvation Army bell on the steps of 77 Massachusetts Avenue.

OGCR continued to deepen its relationship with local organizations by donating the use of its facilities to nonprofits. The office worked with the Campus Activities Complex, Office of the Registrar, and MIT Athletics to provide space for over 15 events throughout AY2012 including: the Cambridge Breakthrough Celebration, the Food for Free Party Under the Harvest Moon, and the Free for All concert. OGCR often assists with the coordination and logistics of these campus events, helping with large projects, such as the Cambridge-based Community Arts Center "Do It Your Own Damn Self!!" National Youth Video and Film Festival.

To enhance MIT's visibility and participation in the community, OGCR staff dedicated time to representing the Institute at dozens of external community events and public meetings in AY2012. Office staff serves on the boards and committees of various local groups including CASPAR, the Cambridge Community Television Advisory Committee, and the Cambridge YMCA, among many others.

Civic Engagement

In addition to non-profit organizations, OGCR has numerous working relationships with the Cambridge and Boston business communities. The office collaborated with the Boston Chamber of Commerce and other MIT staff to host over 100 people for a Go Green Energy Efficiency workshop at the MIT Sloan School of Management featuring presentations by MIT's Department of Facilities. OGCR staff also helped to organize the Central Square Business Association's annual meeting at the MIT Museum, bringing Central Square stakeholders to campus. In addition to hosting events, OGCR staff members are involved in the activities of local business associations and represent MIT on the boards and committees of the Boston Chamber of Commerce, Central Square Business Association, Cambridge Combined Business Association, East Cambridge Business Association, Cambridge Chamber of Commerce, and the Kendall Square Association.

Educational Initiatives

The introduction of the Innovation Agenda by the Cambridge Public Schools (CPS) provided MIT with a valuable opportunity to interface with local schools in AY2012. OGCR coordinated meetings between Jeff Young, superintendent of CPS, and Professor Kim Vandiver, MIT Edgerton Center Director, to provide guidance and develop professional workshops for local teachers. Through positive interactions and significant MIT facility use, efforts between OGCR and the Edgerton Center have strengthened MIT's partnership with two highly regarded charter schools in Cambridge.

OGCR provided significant support to a variety of nonprofits that complement the work of CPS and increased educational opportunities for the community. Programs like the Science Club for Girls, Tutoring Plus of Cambridge, and Junior Achievement have received funding from MIT in AY2012. OGCR also dedicated resources to honor achievement in Cambridge schools. For example, office staff planned and led Cambridge Rotary Club's National Honor Society (NHS) Leaders Today and Tomorrow breakfast, which featured nine prominent Cambridge leaders and 70 Cambridge NHS students in a meaningful discussion about leadership traits.

OGCR works collaboratively with the KeyPals Program to strengthen student communication skills, including writing and social problem solving, as well as encouraging students to think about their future career paths. OGCR assisted the KeyPals program by collaborating with Cambridge School Volunteers and Kennedy-Longfellow School staff, as well as program coordinators at Draper Labs and IBM to determine programming and logistics for Key Pals events.

OGCR partners with other state and local agencies to promote educational programs for children of all ages. In December, OGCR worked with the Cambridge Public Library to host a young children's literature event on campus. The event featured readings

from renowned authors and illustrators of children's literature. In May, the office hosted the Massachusetts State Science and Engineering Fair, now in its 62nd year on the MIT campus. Over the summer, OGCR provided facility space to the Work Force Youth Program for the College Immersion Program offering SAT preparation classes and writing workshops to students entering their last year of high school at Cambridge Rindge and Latin.

Local Government and Neighborhood Relations

Maintaining productive and open communications with city officials and governmental bodies is an essential part of the work of OGCR. For the 15th year, office staff continued to provide critical information through the compilation and production of the annual Town Gown Report and presentation to the Planning Board. OGCR also led MIT's preparations and presentations for 11 different public hearings before various governmental boards on a broad range of topics, including the Kendall Square Initiative, economic development, building projects, and campus safety.

OGCR worked with the City of Cambridge to host a number of events, including the Go Green Awards at the MIT Museum, The Mayor's Office Senior Citizen Luncheon in the Johnson Athletic Center, and the Cambridge Police Awards at Kresge Auditorium. MIT also hosted the Innerbelt Symposium at the Stata Center, featuring local government leaders and city planners who discussed activism and community development. Event hosting resources is one of the greatest resources OGCR offers to the MIT community. It also routinely provides an opportunity for relationship building, as City of Cambridge Mayor Henrietta Davis and other Cambridge officials visited MIT's campus multiple times over AY2012 to preside over a variety of city-related programs.

OGCR continued to connect city and neighborhood leaders with MIT staff for meaningful exchanges of information on topics of mutual interest. Teams of knowledgeable staff were assembled to meet with neighbors, city staff, and elected officials to address matters, such as the proposed relocations of grounds services, graduate student housing needs, and MIT's nuclear reactor. OGCR staff also helped coordinate a research presentation that brought several local Police Commissioners, including Cambridge Police Commissioner Robert Haas, together to review, research, and provide feedback on a laser-based system that could protect law enforcement personnel during "out-of-vehicle" traffic and road work.

An OGCR staff person was appointed by the Cambridge city manager to represent MIT on the Central Square Advisory Committee composed of various stakeholders in Central Square. Office staff also supported MIT's role on the Kendall Square Advisory Committee, attending all of its meetings in an examination of the future of Kendall Square.

Supporting MIT's Innovation Partnerships

OGCR supports the Institute's efforts to create partnerships with industry in order to advance science and technology in the local area. Among these partnerships, the staff continues to provide guidance to the Kendall Square Initiative, which is now in its third year of public process and aims to revitalize the square with an infusion of lab, office,

retail, and housing space. OGCR also continues to manage the dynamic political strategy of the effort, including the Institute's incremental approach and interactions with local and state officials, neighborhood associations, and other key internal and external stakeholders. In AY2012, OGCR planned nearly 50 Cambridge meetings to discuss MIT's proposal. OGCR staff attended nearly 30 public meetings related to the City's Kendall Square urban planning process, and met frequently with the Cambridge City Council members, as well as Cambridge city staff.

OGCR also managed the political components of the respective groundbreakings for Pfizer Pharmaceuticals and Novartis Pharmaceuticals. Both companies are building Cambridge-based research centers on MIT property. OGCR staff supported communications with the neighborhood regarding these two construction projects, and problem-solved as needed. In addition, OGCR helped plan the City of Cambridge's reception for attendees of the BIO Conference, which showcased the vibrant life sciences sector in Kendall Square.

State Government Relations

OGCR staff worked with internal and external colleagues to manage MIT's response to Massachusetts legislative initiatives. A sampling of these matters include environmental and energy policy, tax exemption for universities, and public disclosure of police reports. OGCR partnered with senior MIT leadership, peer institutions, and the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Massachusetts to provide feedback and ideas for legislative consideration.

OGCR also worked with senior institute officials to continue to develop the strong relationship between MIT and Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick's office. The partnership has resulted in an increased number of visits to campus by Governor Patrick and state involvement in the Regional Advanced Manufacturing Partnership (AMP) meeting that took place in November 2011. In addition, our office assisted in securing participation by Governor Patrick in the industry, university, and state partnership known as the Massachusetts Big Data Initiative.

Federal Relations

OGCR continues to work closely with the Washington office to support the MIT President in interactions with federal officials and to further MIT's mission at the federal level. To accomplish this goal, OGCR assisted President Hockfield in her meetings with key members of Congress, administration agency heads, and congressional staff. OGCR staff also helped coordinate an AMP regional meeting, by securing participation by the State of Massachusetts and working with invited federal and regional groups.

OGCR continues to respond to information requests and calls for assistance from various federal representatives. Common requests for university statistics, constituent inquiries, and visa related issues provide opportunities for productive interaction and relationship building with federal officials.

Communications

This year, OGCR embarked on a number of communication projects to increase awareness of MIT activities in the community. Staff participated in the launch of the new OGCR website, both writing and editing web content to provide more targeted and helpful information to the Institute community and to the community-at-large. OGCR maintained regular communications with the Institute's abutting neighborhoods of Cambridgeport, East Cambridge, Wellington-Harrington, and Area IV regarding MIT projects and initiatives. As part of this effort, OGCR provided monthly updates to Area IV residents on the construction at 610 Main Street, and to Cambridgeport residents regarding the construction at 130 Brookline Street and 17 Tudor Street.

Office staff responded to numerous media inquiries regarding Kendall Square, PILOT, MIT's nuclear reactor, building projects, and other so-called "town gown" issues. In addition, staff collaborated with the MIT News Office to produce articles about the Kendall Square Initiative and the dasHAUS sustainable building technologies pavilion.

Internal MIT Relations

OGCR staff supported the work of several Institute committees and groups, such as the MLK Breakfast planning committee, which delivers an event each year to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. OGCR also supported the work of other groups, including Community Giving, the Information Group, and the Communications Operations Group. In each case OGCR provided these committees, and other Institute offices, with strategic political advice and guidance. Staff also provided support to Institute-wide efforts, including commencement activities and President Hockfield's gala.

Community Service Fund

This year, the office helped lead an effort by the MIT Community Service Fund board of trustees to examine the mechanics that guide funding decisions for the Community Service Fund (CSF). The board's faculty chair facilitated four meetings to develop a plan for clearer and more efficient CSF operations. Plans include an expanded board membership and an integrated role for OGCR and the Public Service Center in board activities.

Sarah Gallop
Paul Parravano
 Codirectors