

## Office of Government and Community Relations

MIT has a unique commitment to its host city, Cambridge, and cares deeply about the community of which it is a part. Housed in the Office of the Executive Vice President and Treasurer (EVPT), the [Office of Government and Community Relations \(OGCR\)](#) serves as a liaison to the City of Cambridge and coordinates a wide variety of outreach efforts that benefit the local community. From supporting nonprofit organizations to participating in neighborhood dialogue on public policy matters, MIT strives to be actively engaged in the vibrant civic life of the City of Cambridge. In addition to its work in local communities, OGCR is a liaison to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and supports the mission of the MIT Washington Office by reinforcing the efforts of the president, faculty, and administrators in their contacts with government officials and policy organizations.

The office is available as a resource to the Institute community for matters related to government or the community of Cambridge. It is also a resource available to MIT's neighbors who seek guidance in their interactions with the Institute. OGCR is a communications link, a catalyst for action, and a resource for both MIT and the external community. The office is committed to promoting productive collaboration in all of its public interactions.

### Support of Nonprofits

OGCR is charged with managing the Institute's relationships with local nonprofit organizations. The office supports area agencies through financial donations, hands-on assistance, use of MIT facilities, and engagement on boards and committees.

Through direct donations, the office engaged approximately 70 nonprofit organizations in the broader Cambridge area. Monetary contributions supported a diverse range of nonprofit activities including community events, K-12 programming, and housing assistance. OGCR also makes in-kind contributions by donating or subsidizing the use of MIT facilities for nonprofit events. The office continued its work with the Campus Activities Complex, the MIT Media Lab, the Office of the Registrar, and MIT Athletics to provide space for 65 events in academic year 2017. These events brought visibility to MIT and fostered positive relations between the Institute and its neighbors.

In addition to tangible support, office staff worked with area nonprofits to further their missions directly. For example, OGCR staff worked with the Community Art Center to create a community-based public art project at the Kendall Square Initiative construction site. Office staff collaborated with Community Art Center staff to develop the creative vision for a mural, and assisted in planning a number of events across the neighborhood to solicit community input for design elements. The ["Walls of Unity" mural](#) was erected along Main Street and celebrated with a successful unveiling party that brought together local public officials, community leaders, and the communities of Kendall Square and The Port.

In 2016, the City of Cambridge established a Community Benefits Advisory Committee and appointed OGCR staff to serve on the board. Office staff members continue to participate in thoughtful committee discussions on how the pool of developer fees distributed into the Community Benefits account can best serve Cambridge neighbors.

OGCR staff serve on the boards and committees of many local nonprofits. In the past year, these included the Cambridge Community Foundation, the Cambridge and Somerville Program for Alcoholism Rehabilitation (CASPAR), Just-A-Start, the Salvation Army, the YMCA, and Cambridge School Volunteers.

### **Civic Engagement**

OGCR is responsible for managing the Institute's relationship with civic organizations in Cambridge and Boston. This past year, OGCR staff represented MIT on the boards and committees of the Boston Chamber of Commerce, the Central Square Business Association, the Cambridge Business Coalition, the Cambridge Combined Business Association, the East Cambridge Business Association, the Kendall Square Association, and the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce. The office's continued engagement in Kendall Square has deepened since Sarah Gallop, co-director, has served as board chair of the Kendall Square Association. In her third year, she has overseen the transition to a new association president and the reorganization of the association and its programs.

### **Educational Initiatives**

Over the past few years, the City of Cambridge has placed an increased focus on developing educational opportunities for its residents in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and the arts. In pursuit of this shared goal, MIT announced the creation of a K–12 outreach administrator position as part of the MIT2016 celebration. This new position gave staff an opportunity to discuss operational needs and opportunities for collaboration with the MIT Edgerton Center, the MIT Office of Digital Learning (ODL), and others to improve educational outcomes for Cambridge students in grades K–12. The office plans to hire a new K–12 outreach administrator in September 2018 and integrate the position into the overall town–gown relationship.

The office partnered with the Lemelson-MIT Program to develop Pathways to Invention, a K–12 outreach initiative, at the Fletcher Maynard Academy in The Port neighborhood. Using the Lemelson-MIT Program's expertise and curriculum as a foundation, the program introduced students to making and inventing, as well as the various college and career paths that are available from an interest in and talent for innovation. The program had a successful first year and is planning to expand in Cambridge following Lemelson-MIT's successful bid to create a community center in East Cambridge's Foundry Building.

### **Local Government and Neighborhood Relations**

Maintaining productive and open communications with City of Cambridge officials and governmental bodies is an essential part of the work of OGCR. Office staff continued to provide critical information to the city through the compilation of the annual Town Gown Report and presentation to the city's Planning Board. The office also coordinated MIT's preparation for public hearings and meetings before various governmental boards on a broad range of topics such as graduate housing, the Envision Cambridge city-wide plan, climate resiliency, Hubway bikeshare plans, next steps for Grand Junction transit, proposed bicycle lanes on Massachusetts Avenue, and lighting ordinance review.

In January 2017, MIT signed an agreement with the federal government to redevelop the John A. Volpe National Transportation Systems Center land in Kendall Square. OGCR staff were heavily involved in planning and outreach to secure a successful vote during the Cambridge rezoning process. Staff continue to work with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Investment Management Company (MITIMCo), City of Cambridge officials, and residents to advance MIT's vision for a reimagined Volpe Center area.

OGCR provided guidance for all of MIT's development projects, including the Kendall Square Initiative, the Vassar Street residence hall, and the Metropolitan Storage Warehouse project. This support included strategic planning, internal and external communications, updates to City of Cambridge officials, participation in hearings, and interactive meetings for the MIT and Cambridge communities.

In June 2018, the office, in partnership with Boston Properties, organized a "discovery" farmers market, scheduled for every Monday in the summer and fall of 2018. Under the banner of "MIT Inspiration Station," the office recruited student groups, departments, laboratories, and centers. It also oversaw a number of hands-on activities that showcased MIT's broad effect on the community—ranging from research and educational priorities to student initiatives and community programs.

## State Government Relations

OGCR continues to forge relationships with Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker's administration; in 2018, the office further connected members of his cabinet to research and policy activity around campus. For example, OGCR staff continued to facilitate positive discussions between the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities and the leadership of the MIT Energy Initiative (MITEI) around their *Utilities of the Future* report. This partnership is providing practical steps and advice for Massachusetts public utilities regulators in making good recommendations for energy efficiency and climate action. Through this partnership, MIT has arranged faculty speakers at a number of regional regulatory commissioner meetings, further disseminating the important work of MITEI's report. This growing collaboration promises to build research opportunities for MIT using this enhanced understanding of regulatory challenges.

OGCR staff also worked with colleagues inside and outside the office to manage MIT's response to state legislative initiatives—dealing with matters such as taxation, sexual misconduct, storm water discharge, and public access rights for transgendered people. OGCR continued to partner with senior MIT leadership, peer institutions, and the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Massachusetts to provide feedback on legislative considerations.

## Federal Relations

OGCR works closely with the MIT Washington Office to support President Reif in interactions with federal officials, furthering MIT's mission at the federal level. With the Trump administration in its second year, the office has worked extensively to forge relationships with government leaders and elected officials who influence public policy issues that are important to the Institute. Working with the Washington Office, internal communications groups, the Association of American Universities, and the wider

MIT network, OGCR has been heavily involved in establishing connections for future collaboration and has made successful contacts and meetings within the administration.

OGCR assisted President Reif with a number of trips to Washington, DC, to discuss MIT's interests in online learning, advanced manufacturing, the evolving work of the future, and the importance of federal research funding with indirect costs. The office hosted governmental officials on campus for tours and events. For example, OGCR coordinated support for government representatives at the MIT Climate Summit in December 2017.

In May 2018, MIT worked closely with the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, which acted as the lead organizer for the Business Research Coalition's "fly-in," an organized two-day lobbying event to emphasize the importance of federal research funding to local economies and businesses. The office also organized a meeting between the Chamber of Commerce leadership and MIT's Vice President for Research Maria Zuber to strategize and plan events.

## **Communications**

The office completed its first graphic identity and branding exercise to develop a logo, color scheme, and style guide to reflect the personality and objectives of the office. Using these new design features, the office redesigned its yearly Town Gown Report to the City of Cambridge, embarked on a redesign of the OGCR website, and developed a social media presence.

OGCR staff created the 2018 MIT in Cambridge report to communicate MIT's broader community influence through graphics and selected statistics. Focused on education, research, innovation, sustainability, and the direct community impact of OGCR's work, the report sought to highlight MIT's vision for direct and meaningful engagement with the Institute's neighbors through its research, student body, and community programs.

OGCR explored new avenues of communication with local communities through the use of Twitter and NextDoor. As part of an overall strategy of engagement, these avenues for communication offer different ways for the office to tell MIT's story and new opportunities to reach different audiences. In the first year, the office's handle created 200 posts that attracted 36,000 engagements. The office also maintained regular communications with the Institute's abutting neighborhoods of Cambridgeport, East Cambridge, Wellington-Harrington, Central Square, and The Port regarding MIT projects and initiatives. Office staff also responded to many media inquiries about Kendall Square, the Volpe Center project, MIT's payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) to the City of Cambridge, real estate taxes, building projects, student housing, and other town-gown issues.

## **Internal MIT Relations**

OGCR staff served on several Institute committees and groups, such as the planning committee for the Martin Luther King, Jr., breakfast, the Transportation Committee, Community Giving, the Human Resources Employee Resource Group on Persons with Disabilities, and the Communications Operations Group. Additionally, OGCR staff have begun providing regular updates on the office's work to the EVPT.

OGCR staff collaborated extensively with MITIMCo, the Office of Sustainability, the Department of Facilities, the Department of Student Life, the Office of the EVPT, and Human Resources on a range of policy and community outreach matters in order to develop consensus around MIT's approach. Staff provided strategic guidance to offices and departments advancing Cambridge-based projects.

### **Community Service Fund**

In 2016, the Community Service Fund (CSF) welcomed Professor Helen Elaine Lee as its faculty chair, and Kate Trimble, executive director of the Priscilla King Gray Public Service Center (PKG Center), as a new trustee. Under Professor Lee's leadership, OGCR staff managed the CSF application and disbursement process, which awarded grants to almost 20 local nonprofit organizations and student projects. With the inclusion of Trimble, staff worked in close collaboration with the PKG Center to enhance grant advising to student groups and to further advertise the availability of the Community Service Fund as a resource.

OGCR staff continue to work closely with Community Giving—the annual campus fundraising campaign—to raise awareness of local nonprofits in need of support and the work of the Community Service Fund. The fund is exploring future opportunities with Community Giving to increase donations and campus-wide awareness of its work.

**Sarah Gallop**  
**Paul Parravano**  
**Co-directors**