

# MIT Alumni Association

## Overview

This year, the [MIT Alumni Association \(MITAA\)](#), along with the rest of the Institute, experienced the challenging headwinds generated by the Jeffrey Epstein-MIT Media Lab matter, followed by the once-in-a-century COVID-19 pandemic that produced impacts on all aspects of society. Later in the academic year, the widespread antiracism movement, sparked by police violence, added further complexity and offered opportunity for connecting with our community. These extraordinary circumstances, though, did not deter the Association from staying the course in year three of its strategic plan with its North Star vision: To engage and inspire the global MIT community to make a better world.

It was the foundational partnerships between the Association, its board of directors, key Institute leaders, and many dedicated volunteers and donors that helped to keep the MIT community of alumni, parents, guardians, and friends close and engaged throughout the year.

Following the revelations of MIT's engagements with Jeffrey Epstein, the Association served as a conduit between the Institute and the alumni community, providing senior leadership and the MIT Corporation with important insights on sentiment and offering opportunities for repair and restoration. This work help diffuse tensions and kept our alumni community focused on the long-term health of MIT.

In the final weeks of the academic year, as the MITAA was pivoting its signature event, Tech Reunions, to a virtual global gathering, the murder of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis and the subsequent calls for social justice in America prompted the Institute to affirm and energize its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Association encouraged regional activity on this issue and rolled out a global forum for equity as two early responses.

The community stayed close and engaged throughout. While the first part of the year saw continued strong attendance in signature, in-person events and meetings around the globe, year-over-year virtual engagement rose significantly due to the increase of online programming developed in response to the COVID-19 public health guidelines and travel restrictions. The MIT Annual Fund also held steady, in context, with the number of donors slipping slightly but overall dollars remaining strong—following trends of MIT's peer institutions. This is remarkable given the challenges of the year.

At the close of FY2020, 66% of living alumni had engaged with MIT in one or more of the ways noted above, with that figure representing a 16% increase over the previous year. In addition to sustaining relationships with the engaged 91,360 MIT graduates, the Association continued to foster connections with students and Institute friends, including parents, guardians, postdocs, and non-alumni donors.

All of this work was undertaken through effective partnership with our alumni volunteers and Institute colleagues.

## Highlights

The MIT Annual Fund raised \$86 million in FY2020 from 36,462 donors—the third-highest dollar total on record.

MIT Tech Reunions, MIT’s largest gathering of alumni each year, went virtual for the first time ever this year, and welcomed more than 4,850 attendees around the globe and saw \$44 million raised by reunion classes.

In an effort to further unite the community during the virtual era, the Association created a digital mosaic, which saw more than 6,500 alumni and friends submitting individual, MIT-centric photos that, when combined, created an image of the iconic Great Dome.

The Association participated in the Institute’s virtual Commencement event by producing a postceremony “welcome to the MIT alumni community” event that drew more than 6,000 viewers.

Working with the Association, the MIT Office of Resource Development, and the Institute’s MIT Medical Outreach team, alumni volunteers from clubs in Greater China led a personal protective equipment, or PPE, donation drive that yielded 15,000 N95 respirator masks and 1,000 medical gowns for Massachusetts hospitals.

The Institute saw a year-over-year 2% rise in volunteers, with 18,412 alumni, students, and friends contributing their time to help the MIT community to make a better world.

In its fourth year, the MIT 24-Hour Challenge, held on March 12, 2020, was refocused within hours in response to COVID-19 to raise critical, timely support for MIT students, online learning, and research efforts. The virtual give-athon, which also featured 58 microchallenges, raised \$2.95 million from 5,155 donors in a single day, aided by the efforts of 297 volunteers who supported the effort.

To foster connections between the Institute and the alumni community looking to support MIT during the COVID-19 crisis, the Association increased the frequency of key communications, like the Tech Connection e-newsletter, and launched dedicated how-to-help emails from the Association CEO and president.

The MIT Campaign for a Better World global tour, in partnership with the Alumni Association, continued for the third year to visit major regional hubs where MIT alumni live and work, with three events and more than 600 attendees.

Logins to the Infinite Connection—the alumni’s virtual home—increased 11% from last year, to 61,407, and the number of website visitors was 804,430.

The MITAA’s Parents Association hosted 837 families with 2,196 attendees at Family Weekend 2019.

The MITAA CEO and president devoted considerable time to individual outreach during the Jeffrey Epstein-MIT Media Lab matter to ensure that alumni and alumni leaders felt heard and that the Institute understood the range of sentiment found in our diverse community. This outreach resulted in summary memos to MIT leadership and to the MIT Corporation to inform governance.

The MIT Alumni Travel Program launched 27 trips with 520 travelers, with 14 trips led by MIT faculty, prior to the program's suspension in March 2020 due to travel restrictions.

More than 6,177 people attended the Association's virtual Faculty Forum Online series, which increased its frequency during the pandemic.

The MIT Alumni Advisors Hub saw an 80% increase in engagement in FY2020, with 1,331 career consultations recorded and 780 new student advisee accounts created; 320 new alumni volunteered to be advisors. The Hub houses 2,200 alumni advisors, and 3,400 advisees hold accounts.

The CASE Circle of Excellence Awards, which recognize excellence in programs in educational advancement internationally, honored the Association with its Grand Gold for the MIT Alumni Employers' Showcase and a bronze award for the MIT Research Slam.

### Quick Facts

At the end of FY2020, living MIT alumni totaled 141,208. Approximately 54% have graduate degrees only and 25% of undergraduate degree holders also have MIT graduate degrees. In addition, 25% are women and 15% are international residents. By school, 48% hold engineering degrees; 20% hold science degrees; 19% hold management degrees; 7% hold architecture degrees; 5% hold humanities, arts, and social sciences degrees; and 1% hold degrees in other categories. Interesting data of interest in FY2020 are:

- An all-time high of 18,412 alumni and friends volunteered for MIT or the Alumni Association
- The Association supported 1,004 events—a year-over-year 14% decrease that actually drew 3% more unique attendees than FY2019, with 28,068
- The MIT Annual Fund raised \$86.0 million—the third-highest dollar total on record—with a less than 1% decline from last year
- The Association maintains contact information for 96% of alumni which is exceptional in the advancement world

### Annual Fund

Annual giving contributes to the financial footing that makes MIT the extraordinary place of education, research, and innovation it is today.

Over the past 75 plus years, the annual engagement of the global MIT community—alumni, students, parents, guardians, and friends—has strengthened the Institute and supported its greatest advancements.

Highlights from the Annual Fund this year included a strong Giving Tuesday, comparable to the previous year's best, with more than 2,300 donors contributing nearly \$1.1 million to the Institute on Tuesday December 3, 2019. Later, on March 12, 2020—Pre-Pi Day, and an unofficial holiday for the MIT community—the MIT 24-Hour Challenge saw 5,155 alumni, students, and friends contribute \$2.95 million to one or more of 58 microchallenges supporting education, research, and innovation at the Institute, despite the disruption associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Annual Fund fundraising results this year are as follows:

- \$86,032,622 was raised—the third-highest dollar total on record
- 36,462 alumni, students, parents, guardians, and friends donated to MIT
- MIT hit an alumni participation rate of 20%, representing 26% undergraduate and dual-degree undergraduate alumni, and 15% graduate student-exclusive alumni
- 17,373 donors contributed \$17.55 million to unrestricted and scholarships through the annual fund
- The team made connections with nearly 800 alumni and friends, including 400 individual visits, that resulted in nearly 902 gifts totaling \$14.9 million
- The MIT Annual Fund participated in a special giving Tuesday on May 5, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic; featured funds included a COVID-19 Emergency Fund, a COVID-19 Research Fund, and two funds to support students; more than 2,000 donors contributed over \$800,000
- In the MIT Student Philanthropy Program, 447 undergraduate students made gifts this year totaling \$43,990; the dollars are comparable to FY2019, yet the disruption to campus life forced us to discontinue the spring campaign, which resulted in a substantial drop in the number of student donors
- Class-based fundraising efforts engaged more than 230 volunteers and established two new class scholarship funds; nine classes set a new class record, including a class participation record for the Class of 1970
- The William Barton Rogers Society, which stewards annual leadership donors making single gifts of \$2,500 to \$100,000, recognized 4,569 alumni and friends
- Comprising donors who give five consecutive years to the Institute, the 1861 Circle honored 18,284 alumni and friends—2,312 of whom have given every year since graduation, including one donor who has given for 75 years consecutively
- The team managed 44 volunteer Class Stewardship Agents, who wrote more than 12,000 thank-you notes

MIT thanks all Annual Fund donors.

### **Alumni Relations**

Alumni Relations develops and fosters an interactive global MIT community through quality programs and services designed to increase support for, awareness of, and interest in, MIT.

Through this work, Alumni Relations engages its constituents to generate future volunteers, leaders, and donors. It serves as the connector for alumni, students, and friends to each other and the Institute.

## Gatherings and Programs

In response to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, MIT Tech Reunions was held virtually for the first time this year. More than 4,858 users signed in to our platform, which featured more than 70 online programs. This included an all-time high of Graduate Student Exclusive alumni, with 1,144 in attendance.

The Association also produced a postshow for MIT's virtual Commencement, with 6,057 logging in to view the program.

The Cardinal and Gray Society and Emma Rogers Society held four events in Massachusetts and California that drew 500 attendees.

The Events team worked with nine departments, labs, and centers on campus, supporting the production of 30 major events.

The Student/Alumni Relations team worked with 56 departments, labs, and centers on campus, supporting outreach for 15 events. It supported eight DAPER alumni events that brought 272 alumni, students, and friends together.

The Faculty Forum Online, MIT Research Slam, MIT Career Lunch and Learn, and MIT Alumni Employers' Showcase series, along with programs from MIT affinity and shared interest groups, collectively drew over 30,000 registrations from over 14,000 alumni.

Collaborating with MIT Alumni Association board leadership, MIT alumni volunteers, and colleagues, the Alumni Relations team ran point on two Strategic Change Implementation Committee sprints on "better world" perceptions and activities and metrics, in support of making recommendations for these key areas in the MITAA strategic plan.

The Alumni Careers program produced 10 Career Lunch and Learn webinars this year and expanded the alumni employer relations program to include live regional events at corporate headquarters. These events drew 14,625 registrants in FY2020. We reached 12,000 alumni accounts on the Alumni Job Board in FY2020. The MIT Alumni Advisors Hub, in partnership with the Chancellor's Office saw an 80% increase in engagement in FY2020, with 1,331 consultations recorded and 780 new student advisee accounts created; 320 new alumni volunteered to be advisors. The Hub houses 2,200 alumni advisors, and 3,400 advisees hold accounts.

The MIT Volunteer Summit for alumni volunteers on the West Coast took place in San Francisco with 106 attendees. The summit focused on three major themes: C^3 (i.e., communications, collaborations, and connections); personas and journeys; and leadership development.

The MIT Club of Austin and San Antonio celebrated its 25th anniversary with a special event in partnership with the William Barton Rogers Society and MIT Solve.

In partnership with the Sophomore Class Ring Committee, Alumni Relations piloted the Brass Rat Melt Project, raising more than \$3,100 in donated Brass Rats and \$7,250 in outright gifts, for a total of \$10,396 given to the Class of 2022 Brass Rat Financial Assistance Program—providing aid to roughly 60 students.

Over 350 graduate alumni saved spots for the Graduate Alumni Gathering, scheduled for late March 2020. Three keynote speakers and 16 alumni speakers were confirmed for the event, which was ultimately canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Alumni Travel Program hosted 27 trips, 14 of which were faculty led. The program served 520 travelers in FY2020, including 251 alumni. Due to COVID-19, 14 trips had to be canceled; those trips included 244 registered travelers.

## **Strategic Communications and Marketing**

The Strategic Communications and Marketing (SCM) team leads and executes against marketing and content strategies to help the MIT Alumni Association meet its goals of engaging its constituents with the Institute and with one another.

### **Key Accomplishments**

- Worked with design partner Pentagram on a visual and messaging rebrand for the Association, with a visual direction, selected in consultation with the board and key campus stakeholders
- Developed new client/strategy and digital marketing tracks in the SCM team structure, complementing existing creative and content teams
- Worked with partners to drive traffic to the MIT Alumni Association website, with 804,000 visitors—an increase of more than 158,000 from FY2019
- Completed more than 800 communications and marketing projects in support of the MIT Alumni Association
- Provided key marketing support for the MITAA's signature events, including the Alumni Leadership Conference and Family Weekend in the fall, as well as the MIT 24-Hour Challenge—refocused during the pandemic—and for the first time ever, a virtual Tech Reunions
- Provided full-press marketing support for the inaugural MIT Graduate Alumni Gathering, including communication guidance during its cancellation due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Partnered with Institute colleagues on the distribution and collecting of alumni feedback to a number of presidential letters on key community topics, including the creation of discrete alumni “how-to-help” COVID-19 communications
- Worked to relaunch the MIT Parents Association site and design a new e-newsletter
- Logged 558,542 *Slice of MIT* blog views—a 29% increase year over year



- Saw the Association's YouTube channel views climb to more than 1.25 million views
- Co-led, with Information Services, the first year of the MIT Insights Forum, a virtual focus group of 1,700 alumni offering up valuable perspective and insights on the MIT alumni experience; FY2020 survey topics included regional engagement, Tech Reunions, volunteerism, and Campaign for a Better World
- Produced or consulted on 29 original videos to support the MITAA's engagement goals
- Increased social media followers on Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram year over year
- Supported the marketing and social media amplification around three Better World global events, as well as regional alumni volunteer events in Northern California and Germany
- Partnered with the MIT News Office and MIT central communications to promote alumni-specific content on their main channels, including The Daily email and the Institute's home page
- Liaised with the MITAA board's Legislative Advocacy Ad Hoc Committee to produce programming for the Legislative Advocacy Network, including a visit to Capitol Hill to meet with relevant Congress members representing volunteers' districts
- Continued to implement recommendations from the Strategic Change Implementation Committee sprint on brand and communications—a major focus of the MITAA strategic plan
- Led creative development of President Rafael Reif and Christine Reif's holiday e-greeting, with increased collaboration with Resource Development
- Devised email marketing strategies that contributed to nearly 76,000 alumni clicking on links in emails
- Developed strategic marketing plans for partners in several Alumni Relations, Information Services, and partner departments
- Provided editorial lead up and round-the-clock social media coverage for the MIT 24-Hour Challenge, Giving Tuesday, and the Day of Giving

### **Information Systems and Volunteer Services**

The Information Systems and Volunteer Services (ISVS) team seeks to deliver value to alumni and other constituents by providing data input, analytics, online services, and volunteer services that strengthen opportunities for philanthropic, online, and face-to-face engagement.

In addition, ISVS supports the organization's infrastructure by providing world-class technology support to our staff.

## Volunteer Leadership Development

Volunteers continue to power the MIT Alumni Association and all its activities. Every club and class activity, every interest and affinity group, every mentor and internship opportunity is made possible because of the countless hours alumni and friends devote to MIT. The FY2020 statistics reflect this.

- 18,412 volunteers worked on behalf of MIT and the Alumni Association (up 2% from last year)
- 17,291 were alumni volunteers (up over FY2019); 1,121 were non-alumni
- 13% were international
- 34% were women
- 41% were donors

The Association thanks all MIT volunteers.

The Alumni Leadership Conference, held September 27–28, 2019, drew a record 704 attendees. The event included Institute leaders, faculty, students, and volunteer speakers; workshops designed for volunteer roles; and the annual Leadership Awards Dinner. The event also featured a conversation with Association president R. Erich Caulfield SM '01, PhD '06 with President Reif and the 120th anniversary celebration of the Association of MIT Alumnae. The Association also facilitated the nomination and selection of alumni Corporation members, recent graduate members, and Visiting Committee appointments.

## Infrastructure and Operations

The Office of Records maintains MIT's database of records documenting contact and other information for alumni and friends of MIT, with key results in FY2020:

- More than 141,000 combined record updates and gifts/pledges were recorded
- The annual email update campaign, bolstered by a refreshed marketing campaign, drew 21,009 alumni to update their information

Web, Database, and Support Services for the MIT Alumni Association also logged a number of achievements in its efforts to support its programmatic partners' goals. In FY2020, the team accomplished the following:

- Implemented a new, cross-functional tool for volunteer-to-peer solicitation and event outreach
- Rolled out new alumni mailbox services as part of newly configured Email for Life
- Created online areas of the Infinite Connection specifically for MITx MicroMasters credential holders
- Implemented a series of enhancements to the Giving site to enable multiyear pledges, gifts by companies, and recurring and one-time gifts in the same transaction
- Acquired over 500 new email addresses for alumni without prior email addressability



- Replaced platform for giving day (MIT 24-Hour Challenge), with excellent results, through MightyCause
- Implemented three new virtual platforms for virtual event engagement
- Completed moving all Association staff email and calendars to Office 365 and built up SharePoint file storage structure for the department; provided staff training on cloud-based file storage
- Upgraded/replaced all Windows 7 PCI workstations
- Converted VoIP system and upgraded to BroadSoft cloud
- Supported recommendations of the Strategic Change Implementation Committee from FY2019 and implemented key performance indicators through Metrics SCIC
- Worked with consultants and the Office of Resource Development to review Advance privacy and security in response to the Epstein-Media Lab matter; this work will continue into FY2021

## **Governance**

In FY2020, R. Erich Caulfield served as the 125th president of the MIT Alumni Association board of directors, and Charlene C. Kabcenell '79 served on the board as president-select.

## **Board Highlights**

- Worked with MIT Alumni Association CEO Whitney T. Espich and senior Association staff to deliver on MITAA priorities during year two of the MITAA strategic plan
- Navigated the unexpected challenges of FY2020 with pragmatic Institute citizens representing the 140,000 MIT alumni
- Collaborated with MITAA staff to successfully execute against two Strategic Change Implementation Committee sprints on metrics and the Campaign for a Better World
- Conducted with Brodeur Partners five in-person and four international virtual focus groups on Better World perceptions
- Promoted the Alumni Association's fourth annual MIT 24-Hour Challenge
- Partnered with the Office of Resource Development to deliver three MIT Campaign for a Better World roadshow events around the globe
- Served as ambassadors for key Institute messages with their peers and networks
- Made the volunteer pipeline more visible to the board and its selection committees, created a process for an annual screening by the board of directors; illustrated volunteer path scenarios

## Finance and Operations

The Finance and Operations (FO) team supports all program areas by providing financial strategies, tactics, and operations oversight to support the annual and long-term commitments and aspirations of the Alumni Association.

### Budget Summary

In FY2020, the Association's total expense budget was \$18,047,935, which included \$1,879,709 allocated for subscriptions to *MIT Technology Review*. The budget was funded by \$15,498,506 in General Institute Budget funds, \$115,000 from the Association's reserves, and program revenues of \$554,720.

During FY2020, the FO team continued to provide responsive and effective service to all units in both departments, emphasizing collaborative planning and teamwork to meet departmental goals. Senior members of the FO team supported the Office of Resource Development (ORD) associate vice president and chief operating officer and the executive directors, as well as the MITAA chief executive officer and the executive directors in managing the FY2020 strategic planning and budget allocation process. The team also provided key support to the MITAA CEO in implementing the strategic objectives of the MIT Alumni Association board of directors.

Even before MIT officially announced that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the campus would close and all business would be conducted virtually, the FO team worked diligently with the MITAA staff to quickly stop payments and process refunds and event contract extensions due to COVID-19 event cancellations. This resulted in a helpful budget surplus being returned to MIT through substantial cost savings and cost avoidance measures. With the closure of campus, the executive director of Finance and Operations was asked to join the MIT Business Continuity Team. At the same time, operations staff continued critical on-site building management in support of gift operations, general building maintenance, and the MIT Facilities staff. In collaboration with the MITAA and ORD Tech Support Teams, FO facilitated the distribution of computer equipment for staff who were now working from home.

Also, in FY2020, the FO team:

- Engaged the MIT Environmental Health and Safety Office to conduct a thorough survey of Building W98, including an indoor air quality survey; the results of the inspections and testing showed the overall building condition as good, and that air quality met or exceeded the benchmarks for acceptable air quality
- Continued its traditional work in support of Institute priorities, with senior members of the team working with staff from the Vice President of Finance Office and the Recording Secretary's Office on quarterly updates of the comprehensive Campaign Cost and Gifts Forecasting dashboard
- Participated in the annual Educational Advisory Board Advancement Benchmarking Initiative

- Oversaw all contracting and financial management of the FY2020 Campaign roadshows
- Coordinated the collection of data and questionnaires from all advancement offices across the Institute on behalf of the MIT Tax and Global Operations Office in preparation for filing the 2019 IRS Tax Form 990

Participated in the annual Voluntary Support of Education survey managed through the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education

## **Human Resources and Strategic Talent Management**

The Office of Human Resources and Strategic Talent Management (HR/STM) was reconfigured this year as one team, members of which assist the senior teams of both the MIT Alumni Association and Office of Resource Development to attract quality talent, ensure their strategic engagement, and guide their performance and professional development in support of MIT's advancement goals.

The HR/STM team supports the work of all program areas within ORD and MITAA relative to talent management, including: staffing and retention, employee engagement, performance management, employee relations, diversity and inclusion, professional development for management and staff, compensation, and rewards and recognition. In addition, HR/STM facilitates all organizational changes within ORD and MITAA and drives the effort to create a comprehensive talent management strategy for the Campaign and beyond.

In FY2020, the HR/STM team:

- Implemented the Gallup Q12 Employee Engagement survey; the survey gives every employee the opportunity to share information that helps the Association understand and improve commitment to the organization and its goals, and enables each unit to identify areas of focus to improve levels of engagement and our work environment
- Offered an LBGTQ+ Diversity Dialogues presentation and initiated planning for Unconscious Bias Workshops to be held in FY2021
- Hired and conducted onboarding presentations for 20 staff members, managed seven transitions to other positions within MITAA, and offboarded 11 staff to positions either internal or external to MIT

**Whitney T. Espich**  
**Chief Executive Officer, MIT Alumni Association**