MIT has added “Gender Identity” to its Nondiscrimination Policy

Text of the MIT Nondiscrimination Policy
The Massachusetts Institute of Technology is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in education and employment. The Institute does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, veteran status, ancestry, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, employment policies, scholarship and loan programs, and other Institute administered programs and activities, but may favor US citizens or residents in admissions and financial aid.*

Why did MIT make this addition to the Nondiscrimination Policy?
MIT has added this language to reaffirm its enduring commitment to maintaining an environment of respect for all members of the MIT community. It is against MIT’s policy to discriminate against anyone on the basis of their gender identity.

UNDERSTANDING GENDER IDENTITY: USEFUL TERMS TO UNDERSTAND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Gender Identity</th>
<th>Gender Expression</th>
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<tr>
<td>The common, but imperfect, sorting of people as male or female, usually based on anatomy and/or chromosomes.</td>
<td>A person’s internal self-awareness of being either male or female, masculine or feminine, or something in-between.</td>
<td>The external behaviors and characteristics (i.e. dress, mannerisms, social interactions, speech patterns, etc.) that a person displays in order to indicate their gender identity.</td>
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<td>Conforming examples: males, females</td>
<td>Gender is the collection of traits, behaviors, and characteristics that are culturally associated with maleness or femaleness.</td>
<td>Conforming examples: sports as masculine, nurturing as feminine, blue as a boy’s color, pink as a girl’s color</td>
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<td>Non-conforming examples: intersexed people, people with varying chromosomal makeup (XX-X-males, XY-Y-females, XX Y-people), “hermaphrodites”</td>
<td>Gender traits considered masculine or feminine can differ from culture to culture or in different historical periods.</td>
<td>Non-conforming examples: women’s rap music, men's high fashion</td>
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</table>

Everyone has a gender identity and a gender expression. Most people experience their gender identity as conforming to their physical sex. That is, most people who are born with female bodies also have a female gender identity (i.e. an internal sense that “I am a woman”), and most people who are born with male bodies have a male gender identity (i.e. an internal sense that “I am a man”).

Some individuals experience their gender identity not as conforming to their physical sex (i.e. a person who is born female but does not have the internal sense that they are a woman, or a person who is born male who does not have the internal sense that they are a man). These individuals are sometimes referred to as “transgendered” people. Such people’s gender expression may vary from traditional expectations of sex and gender in order to effectively indicate their gender identity. Individuals with non-traditional gender identities may:

- change their use of pronouns (i.e. from “she” to “he” or vice-versa)
- change their physical appearance and/or manner of dress
- legally change their name and/or gender designation
- engage in a medical sex reassignment process

All people can have varying gender expressions that may or may not conform to societal expectations of gender or sex. A non-conforming gender expression can be as simple as behaving in ways that run counter to traditional beliefs about gender. It can include acting, speaking, or dressing in ways that don’t fit the conventional practices of gender in the prevailing culture, or that don’t fit the accepted manners of presenting gender in certain work or social situations.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

MIT Staff and Faculty
Human Resources Office: x3-1594

Anyone in the MIT Community
lbgt@mit: x3-5440
Ombuds office: x3-5921

Support for MIT Students
Counseling & Support Services: x3-4861

Trans Issues Group at MIT
http://web.mit.edu/trans
trans-info@mit.edu

The Trans Issues Group is a group of MIT staff, faculty, and students (trans people and allies) who are working to explore and assess the areas of MIT policy and community life where trans concerns may be better addressed. The Group also advocates for improvements as needed in those areas.

Community Support
A group of MIT community members who identify as transgendered are forming a group. If you are interested in participating, please contact John Southard, Professor Emeritus, at 508-339-0615 or southardjb@aol.com.

For more information: web.mit.edu/lbgt/genderid/