

## Institute Community and Equity Office

Created by MIT President L. Rafael Reif in 2013, the [Institute Community and Equity Office \(ICEO\)](#) has a mission to convene the MIT community around issues of community, equity, inclusion, and diversity; to serve as a focal point for organizing related activities and conversations at MIT; and to work as hands-on practitioners to disseminate best practices and inspire awareness and enthusiasm to help all members of the community flourish.

### Leadership

In March 2020, John Dozier was appointed MIT's second Institute Community and Equity Officer.

In October 2020, the executive director of MIT MindHandHeart (MHH), Maryanne Kirkbride, was appointed deputy institute community and equity officer. MHH's community-based programming and its Department Support Program and Innovation Fund grant program have become integral to the ICEO's ability to connect with and have an impact on the campus community while simultaneously strengthening our social fabric and well-being.

### Institute Service

Members of the ICEO leadership serve on numerous committees, including:

- DEI@MIT Strategic Action Plan Steering Team (co-chairs)
- COVID Response Team: Community Continuity Group (co-chairs)
  - Oversee the Pulse Survey process, assess the results and report to the community about needed upgrades. Three surveys were conducted to shape decisions in the areas of childcare support, IT/home office support, and communications.
- Task Force 2021: Community and Culture Workstream (co-chair)
- Committee on Race and Diversity (co-chair)
- Ad hoc Committee on the Arts, Culture, and DEI at MIT (co-chair)
- Graduate Housing Extensions Committee
- Council on Family and Work
- Community Service Fund
- MITAC Advisory Committee
- Committee on Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response
- Ad hoc Committee on Holidays

- COVID Response Team: Legal, Ethics, and Equity Group
- The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Subcommittee
- COVID Monitoring Team
- NASEM Implementation Team, Leadership and Engagement co-chair
- MIT Values Committee
- Committee on Discipline, including panels for sexual misconduct
- CSMPR Subcommittee on the environment for LGBTQ+ community members (co-chair)

ICEO leadership also helped coordinate the creation of new assistant dean positions dedicated to diversity, equity, and inclusion in each of MIT's schools and the College of Computing, and they actively participated in the hiring for all of these positions. ICEO leaders continue to partner with other departments, labs, and centers, as well as research and administrative units, as additional diversity-related positions are created around the Institute. They are also actively involved in onboarding new diversity-related staff at all levels, and they are working to create a sense of community among this new cohort at the Institute.

## Activities

### MIT Five-year Strategic Action Plan for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Co-led by ICEO leadership and Associate Provost Tim Jamison, the development of a new Strategic Action Plan (SAP) for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion was a major focus of work for the office in academic year 2021 (AY2021). In the fall, the presidentially appointed Committee on Race and Diversity was temporarily repurposed to serve as the steering team for the development of the SAP. A first draft of the plan was released to the community in March. Feedback on this draft was solicited through a variety of outreach efforts, including dozens of community engagement sessions organized by the ICEO. Consolidation of this feedback continues, and a final draft of the SAP will be released in AY2022.

In parallel with the development of the SAP, the ICEO designed and coordinated the collection of data on programs, committees, and other activities related to diversity, equity, and inclusion across the Institute.

### Community Events and Programs

This year, the ICEO served as a central convening point in the wake of numerous national social crises. For example, they led the development, planning, and execution of a community vigil in response to the murder of George Floyd in May and offered several opportunities for engagement after the rash of anti-Asian American violence in the spring. The office will continue to develop and implement a process for a more consistent response to future events that are external of MIT but can have a dramatic effect on the sense of security and well-being of members of our MIT community.

The ICEO also served as a co-convener of many non-crisis events and expanded its role as point of coordination among other diversity related groups at the Institute. The ICEO:

- Increased the profile, visibility, and membership of Employee Resource Groups, in collaboration with the Vice President of Human Resources.
- Brought numerous high-profile speakers to campus to address pressing social concerns or to expand conversations around the issues faced by specific identity-based groups; this was achieved through partnerships with DAPER, MIT Reads, the Native American Student Association, IPAC, and other faculty, staff, and student organizations.
- Co-organized the Day of Dialogue event, a day-long conference to discuss race and racism in August 2020, and extended its execution with five installments in a Community Dialogues series.
- Created the Infinite Conversation Series, a regular series of engagements with the MIT campus about social and cultural issues, especially as they relate and apply to marginalized members of our community.

### **Department Support Program**

A programming element of MHH, the Department Support Program (DSP) provides faculty, staff, and students with data, tools, and support to measurably enhance the academic climates in their departments, labs, and centers (DLCs). The DSP works individually with DLCs to understand each one's unique cultural norms and practices; it also works with leadership and members of the community to enhance their academic and professional cultures.

Engagements between the DSP and academic departments are summarized below:

- Worked with the dean's offices, school councils, and department leaders to establish frameworks and staffing models for unifying resources on diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Worked individually with various departments to support the creation of new diversity professional positions within their units, then participated in the hiring and onboarding processes for each new role
- Assisted in training for various departments, including content on difficult conversations and optimizing the graduate student-research advisor relationship
- Reviewed feedback from students, staff, and faculty regarding climate in specific DLCs; provided support for noted areas of concern
- Co-facilitated many workshops focused on DEI topics
- Supported the creation of new models, tips, and resources for training peer mentors; co-facilitated modules in peer mentor training

- Consulted with department leaders around data use and potential next steps in responding to community demands and both defining and meeting department goals
- Provided guidance and information related to all-gender bathrooms
- Increased access to the ICEO and associate provost by creating bi-monthly office hours, typically attended by 7–10 department heads or faculty diversity chairs
- Created a Slack channel to be used by department leaders as a space to communicate with one another outside of DEI Office Hours regarding both general and DEI-related challenges and ideas

This list does not reflect the entirety of DSP's engagement or each department's DEI-related activities.

### **Training**

Prompted by demand from across campus and emerging themes in the SAP, this year staff from the ICEO and MHH initiated planning and development of a DEI Training Initiative for the Institute. Using a well-established theoretical foundation, a process was designed to enable the training and coordination of employees in various roles across the Institute to facilitate DEI-related programs that ensure baseline learning objectives are met. The first phase of the ICEO DEI Training Initiative was launched in April 2021.

The ICEO conducted 13 implicit bias training workshops in different academic and administrative units, a specialized workshop on the role of implicit bias in faculty searches, and sponsored Hollaback training for more than 300 participants at the Institute. The office also partnered with the Office of Government and Community Affairs and the Kendall Square Association to sponsor the participation of more than 40 MIT employees in the Inclusion Drives Innovation DEI Training Program. These employees will function as a cohort and work closely with new diversity professional staff across the Institute to advance key DEI concepts at MIT.

### **Innovation Fund Grant Program**

The MindHandHeart Community Innovation Fund seeks to leverage the creativity and problem-solving skills of MIT students, staff, and faculty to strengthen the fabric of the MIT community. The fund supports a wide array of projects that increase awareness about mental health, build communities of support, promote life skills, foster resiliency, and advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial justice.

This year, the Innovation Fund adapted so as to be responsive to community needs during the pandemic. It ran a summer session, reducing barriers to applicants and [supporting a record number of 77 projects](#).

### **MLK Scholars**

The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Visiting Scholar and Professor Program was established to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by increasing the presence of minority scholars at MIT. MLK Scholars enrich the intellectual life of the Institute

with their participation in research and academic programs, and they enhance their scholarship through intellectual interactions with MIT peers. In AY2021, the ICEO received 17 nominations and hosted eight MLK Visiting Scholars.

### **Advocacy**

The ICEO frequently serves in an advocacy role for diversity issues broadly, and for traditionally marginalized communities at the Institute. In AY2021, the ICEO:

- Worked with students and space-planning administrators and committees to provide on-campus space for MIT's Indigenous students.
- Supported and enabled the Institute's formal recognition of Indigenous Peoples' Day.
- Worked with the provost and deans to conceptualize and develop the structure for school/college and departmental diversity officers and their respective position descriptions.
- Created a structure and provided onboarding and on-going support for school and departmental diversity officers.

### **Communications**

To support the completion of the Strategic Plan and further the objectives of the office, the ICEO created its first formal communications role in AY2021. In collaboration with communication staff from MHH, the office broadened its connections with communications leadership at MIT and continued to work closely with staff around the Institute.

ICEO communications activities for AY2021 include:

- Drafting of the SAP, the development of resources to enable its distribution across campus, and the curation of all feedback either directly submitted or collected through community engagement sessions
- Support on Institute-wide messaging concerning major public events or crises
- Support in the coordination and procurement of communication resources related to diversity in other parts of campus
- The development of new communication resources for the ICEO (newsletter, website, etc.)
- Convening of various groups of communications staff to further the objectives of the ICEO and to develop new communication tools for the SAP

MHH communications activities for AY2021 include:

- The creation and dissemination of a variety of community-oriented resources: a "welcome back" toolkit for department managers (in partnership with Human Resources and others); a blog series to promote resilience in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic with first-person student examples; a social media presence to promote a positive narrative regarding respect, inclusion, wellbeing

and resilience; MIT News stories on key Innovation Fund and MindHandHeart efforts; and others

- A variety of community engagement activities, including the development of the Community Quilt project working with Residential Life and other campus partners, support for the Asian Student Community conversation, the creation of the MIT Reflects program in partnership with the Chaplains and others, development of MITCoin (an app-based initiative that allows community members to donate money to charity when they see another MIT community member doing something for others), and more; the anticipated full launch will occur in winter 2021

**John Dozier**  
Institute Community and Equity Officer