

Institute Events

The mission of [Institute Events](#) is to meet the information needs of the MIT community, campus visitors, and the public; to orchestrate and advise on issues of protocol; to distribute knowledge and best practices in event planning and coordination; to promote community within MIT and hospitality to campus guests; and to support conferences and direct events that sustain MIT's global leadership in education, research, and innovation. In academic year 2021, Institute Events comprised the Events and Information Center, the Community Services Office, and MIT Conference Services. Members of Conference Services, Community Services, and Institute Events staff either worked remotely during the Covid-19 pandemic or maintained a hybrid schedule, visiting their offices on the seventh floor of Building E19 or the Events and Information Center in Room 7-121.

From the start of AY2021, the schedule and scope of Institute Events activities were shifted due to the Covid-19 pandemic, although the department supported an array of mission-driven events and programs that were conceived or reconceived for an online format. Institute Events staff continued to contribute to other pandemic response work, including serving on working groups and disseminating information to the community, especially among event planners, Events Calendar users, and those whose events were recorded in the Event Registration system.

Institute Events staff included Gayle Gallagher, executive director for Institute Events and protocol; Ted Johnson, managing director; Rebecca Tyler, manager, events and communications; Malcolm Jones, operations coordinator, Institute Events and Information Center; Lee Corbett, senior administrative and financial assistant; Kristina Kastrinelis, events and communications assistant; Kimberly Nelson, senior administrative assistant and scheduler, Samberg Conference Center; and Judith Zinker, administrative assistant I.

Community and Special Events

Institute Events was involved in or directly responsible for public online events and programs that included the following:

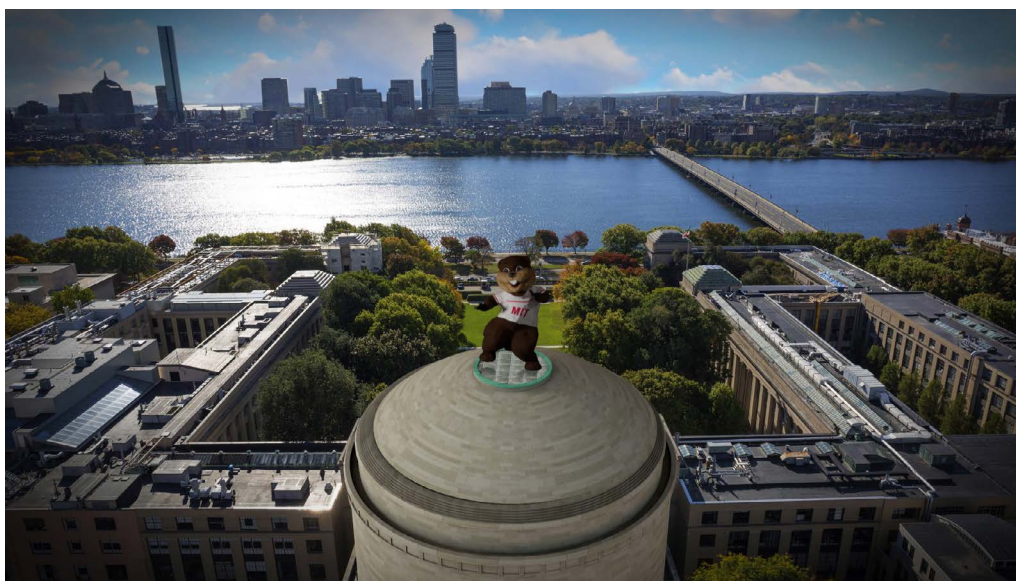
- Online Event Planning Workshop with MIT Video Production (MVP) and MIT Audiovisual Services (AV)
- President's Welcome Convocation for Undergraduates
- MIT Reflects: Moments of Remembrance and Hope
- Killian Lecture by atmospheric chemist Professor Susan Solomon, "The Antarctic Ozone Hole: A Global Success Story of Science and Policy"
- Compton Lecture by author and New York Times columnist Professor Kwame Anthony Appiah, "One Way to Think About Racism"
- Infinite Mile Awards for the Offices of the President, Corporation, and Executive Vice President and Treasurer
- MIT Online Commencement 2021

In a shift from tradition, the President's Convocation, held during the First-Year Orientation period, expanded its reach to welcome all undergraduates and their families. President L. Rafael Reif opened the program, followed by remarks from Chancellor Cynthia Barnhart SM '86 PhD '88 and Danielle Geathers '22, president of the MIT Undergraduate Association. Provost Martin Schmidt SM '83 PhD '88 led a panel discussion with three MIT alumni faculty members: Caitlin T. Mueller '07 SM '14 PhD '14, associate professor, Building Technology Program, Architecture; Kripa K. Varanasi SM '02 PhD '04, professor, Mechanical Engineering; and Dina Katabi SM '99 PhD '03, Andrew & Erna Viterbi Professor, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. John Dozier, Institute Community and Equity Officer, offered closing remarks, followed by a recorded performance of the School Song by the Chorallaries of MIT.

Institute Events contributed significantly to the planning of MIT Reflects: Moments of Remembrance and Hope, an online event hosted on March 10 by President Reif and the MIT Chaplains, marking the anniversary of the ramp down of operations at MIT and the embarkation of the community's journey through the Covid-19 pandemic era. MIT Reflects comprised prayers drawn from the diversity of the world's spiritual and ethical traditions to honor those who were lost, to recognize individuals' struggles, to reflect on found meaning, and to celebrate found strengths.

Following a welcome from President Reif, Reverend Thea Keith-Lucas, interim chaplain to the Institute, opened a program that included prayers and reflections by the MIT Chaplains; a candle lighting ceremony carried out by 11 students in remote locations; a solo violin performance by Natalie Lin Douglas, assistant professor, Music and Theater Arts Section; a solo flute performance by Sara Simpson, graduate student, Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences; and *Alive*, a poem written and read by Maisha M. Prome '21, Department of Biological Engineering. The half-hour webcast program, which was watched by more than 500 community members, was followed by breakout room discussions facilitated by the Chaplains and members of MIT's Student Support Services team.

Commencement 2021



Tim the Beaver performed a celebratory dance atop the Great Dome at MIT Commencement 2021. Digital avatar made possible by the team in the MIT.nano Immersion Lab. Image: Agoos D-zines.

On February 4, President Reif announced that due to the pandemic and the dispersal of the MIT community, the 2021 Commencement Exercises would take place online for the second time. In consultation with the Commencement Transition Team members, chaired by James M. Poterba, Mitsui Professor of Economics, Institute Events led the creation and execution of MIT's second online Commencement, which took place on Friday, June 4. Access to the online program was open to any viewer on any device with an Internet connection, with no log-in required.

There were three parts to the celebration: a pre-program show, the Online Commencement Celebration Program and Degree Conferral, and the Graduate Recognition portion. The pre-program was produced by MVP and hosted by graduating seniors Dylan Sleeper '21 and Annie Yun '21. Community-created video content was presented during this hour, including retrospectives, reflections, and greetings from alumni, faculty, and graduating students. Viewers also were invited to enjoy the virtual photo booth, accessible via the Commencement website, and the pack of viewing party downloads offered by the MIT Alumni Association.

During the celebration program, digital diplomas were awarded during a program watched by 28,000 people, with another 26,600 viewing via Facebook and LinkedIn. The show opened with the world premiere of "The Diary of a Pandemic," composed by Jamshied Sharifi '83. The piece was conducted by Frederick E. Harris Jr. and performed by the MIT Wind Ensemble; MIT Symphony Orchestra; MIT Festival Jazz Ensemble; MIT Concert Choir; Rambax MIT; MIT Vocal Jazz Ensemble; and community singers and students from five MIT *a cappella* ensembles (the Chorallaries of MIT, MIT Logarithms, MIT Syncopasian, MIT Asymptotes, and MIT Resonance.) The text was based on poetry by MIT students, led by Erica Funkhouser, poet and lecturer in MIT Comparative Media Studies and Writing, who compiled and edited the poems.

Diane B. Greene SM '79, chair of the MIT Corporation, offered a welcome to the online Commencement; her remarks were followed by the invocation from Reverend Keith-Lucas and the Commencement address by Bryan Stevenson, founder and executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative. Salutes from Madeleine Sutherland, president of the Graduate Student Council, and Kofi Blake '21, president of the senior class, followed a retrospective video produced by MVP, titled "The Class of 2021 Looks Back." Greetings from Palmer Station, Antarctica, offered by Daniel Lowenstein, research assistant and PhD student in the MIT-WHOI Joint Program in Oceanography/Chemical Oceanography, preceded President Reif's charge to the graduates and the conferring of degrees. Sangeeta N. Bhatia SM '93 PhD '97, the John J. and Dorothy Wilson Professor of Engineering, offered a salute from the faculty. Charlene C. Kabcenell '79, president of the MIT Alumni Association welcomed the Class of 2021. The Chorallaries of MIT closed the program by leading the community in singing the School Song and Take Me Back to Tech.

The hour following the online Commencement Celebration Program and Degree Conferral was devoted to the presentation of graduates' names. The graduates' recognition was divided into eight cohorts: all undergraduates were presented together alphabetically by last name, with advanced degree recipients presented by School or College alphabetically by last name within each department or course. Videos of

the reading of names opened with congratulations from Chancellor Barnhart for the undergraduates. For the advanced degree recipients, there were greetings from Deans Hashim Sarkis, School of Architecture and Planning; Daniel Huttenlocher SM '84 PhD '88, Schwarzman College of Computing; Melissa Nobles, School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences; David C. Schmittlein, Sloan School of Management; and Nergis Mavalvala PhD '97, School of Science. Maria T. Zuber, Vice President for Research, offered congratulations to the advanced degree recipients of the MIT-WHOI Joint Program. In addition, graduates were able to search for their names and share an individual recognition slide with family and friends via NameCoach, with whom Institute Events and the Registrar's Office worked to offer the service. The graduate recognition site will be available to the Class of 2021 through Autumn 2021, while the recognition videos are part of the permanent collection of Commencement video.

On April 15, the policy for events, gatherings, and campus spaces was updated and released to the MIT community due to the easing of Covid-19 pandemic restrictions. These updated terms allowed for two kinds of in-person opportunities for graduating students:

- Photographs on Killian Court, where students could take a photo with a diploma on a specially created photo platform in front of the columns of Building 10
- Small gatherings organized by DLCs in tents on Eastman Court, Hockfield Court, Kresge Oval, and Saxon Court

Institute Events moved quickly to facilitate these activities, organizing the tents, the photo platform setting, and the usage guidelines. All opportunities were required to be brief, lasting a maximum of one hour, to accommodate as many departments and groups as possible. Communications emphasized that the new, in-person opportunities did not replace the online Commencement Celebration Program and Degree Conferral. Organizers were reminded that Commencement festivities must be accessible to all graduates (many of whom were not in the Cambridge area or able to participate in these pop-up activities) and to continue with plans for online departmental events, along with encouragement to graduates to celebrate Commencement Day on June 4. In total, there were 22 groups that scheduled photo sessions on Killian Court, which accounted for the participation of 1,437 students. Reservations for the in-person gatherings totaled 19 groups, which accounted for 1,165 students.

Event Planners Group

Institute Events convenes the MIT Event Planners, an affinity group for MIT staff comprising 652 members of the Slack workspace and 581 mailing list members. The Event Planners members have formal event planning responsibilities, supervise others who do, or wish to follow topics in this area. Over AY2021, participation in the new Slack workspace became the primary activity, with the mailing list now used mainly to reinforce formal announcements. Conversation within Slack covers a wide range of event-related topics, such as contracts, catering, and event registration. Topical areas available to members include online-hybrid-events, a channel shared with the Campus Communicators group, with whom there is topical overlap.

In July 2020, Institute Events coordinated a special online workshop, Online Event Planning with MIT Video Productions and MIT Audiovisual Services, which introduced viewers to the online event support services offered by those internal providers. The 1-hour session included how to evaluate the audience's needs, the questions one should ask service providers, direction on how and when to place orders, planning for post-production, and Q&A. The workshop was recorded and the video made available in the Slack workspace.

Hybrid Meeting Research

In anticipation of meeting needs for the next academic year, the Office of the Corporation tasked Institute Events with forming a technical project team to explore hybrid meeting formats for in-person Executive Committee, Corporation, CEO Advisory Board, and Visiting Committee meetings. Ted Johnson and Kathryn Liede led the technical project team, which included Malcolm Jones, Kimberly Nelson, and Rebecca Tyler from Institute Events, along with Patrick Curtis from IT Client Services, Clayton Hainsworth from MVP, and Paul Shay and Christopher Way from AV. This work led to a set of best practices for hybrid meetings that could be used Institute-wide: a portable Zoom-based solution was developed, with AV acquiring the DICENTIS Bosch Camera Control Software, along with several Sony HD cameras, microphones, laptops, and monitors for their newly developed Zoom Room client packages.

Events and Information Center

The MIT Events and Information Center closed its campus office in March of 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic: there are no visitor numbers, publication distributions, or Commencement ticket counts to report. Institute Events continues to manage the scheduling of special spaces (DuPont Court, Eastman Court, Killian Court, Lobby 7, North Corridor, Lowell Court, and Saxon Court) using the electronic Enduracode system. The department coordinates with the Koch Institute on the scheduling of Hockfield Court. The Bush Room was closed for the whole of the academic year.

Reservations for the panel poster displays in the Infinite Corridor was suspended for the entirety of the academic year. Institute Events dedicated that display space to messaging from MIT Medical, Facilities, and MIT Now, making critical public health information visible to those who were on campus.

Institute Events staff continue to administer the MIT events calendar, work that includes adding new users, troubleshooting and responding to user requests and questions, and selecting events to highlight on the calendar homepage's feature carousel. Although the on-campus event moratorium continued during AY2021, 3,416 MIT community members listed 2,358 online events. Events and Information Center staff continue to work with colleagues from Communications Initiatives and Information Systems & Technology (IS&T) to stay abreast of upgrades to the Localist platform and to communicate with calendar users about system upgrades and best practices.

Samberg Conference Center

Although closed to client bookings during FY2021, the Samberg Conference Center played an integral operational role during the pandemic. Restaurant Associates used the Center during the fall semester to stage staff safety training sessions, as well as to store newly required food service materials (such as plexiglass walls and pipe and drapes). The center's kitchen provided a contingency plan for positive cases in the Sloan Kitchen and was immediately transitioned into the commissary kitchen for the Sloan Café on at least two occasions.

During the spring semester, the center transformed into the home base for the Dining Services Spring Program, a newly implemented program for 1,000 students at four campus residence hall locations. Restaurant Associates conducted socially distanced staff safety training sessions for more than 130 associates throughout the month of January. From February through May, a series of five, multiday, Executive MBA academic programs (with varying occupancies of 80–200 students) occurred at the center. During this same time period, 100 students retrieved pre-packaged food items and ate at socially distanced tables Mondays through Fridays.

In June, the Center hosted two multi-day Sloan Fellows academic programs, with 60 students enrolled in each, as well as a combined Sloan Fellows/EMBA academic program for 200 students. As MIT event restrictions eased in early June, Restaurant Associates initiated new food service models including alcohol service, as well as reception-style hot options (served behind plexiglass).

Community Services Office

The Community Services Office is home to the MIT Activities Committee (MITAC), Community Giving at MIT, the Quarter Century Club (QCC), and the Association of MIT Retirees. These programs aim to optimize the work/life experience for faculty, staff, students, and retirees by providing opportunities to engage in social, educational, and cultural activities that strengthen the connection between MIT and the members of its community. During AY2021, the Community Services Office staff again provided vital support to Institute Events, assisting with the online Commencement program and graduate activities on Killian Court, along with other events and programs organized by Institute Events.

MIT Activities Committee

In an extraordinary year severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, MITAC continued to provide valuable services and opportunities for community engagement, highlighted by these achievements:

- The development of custom, innovative virtual opportunities to connect, entertain, and engage the MIT community to fill the void of closed venues. The MITAC team collaborated with several MIT departments—Endicott House, Women's League, Spouses & Partners, MIT Libraries/Distinctive Collections, MIT Museum, Glass Lab—customers, and committee members to develop a total of 61 custom virtual events, attended by more than 3,000 community members.

- The MIT News Office produced a [video highlighting MITAC's virtual programming](#) and success in connecting and engaging the MIT community during the pandemic. MITAC staff, customers, and vendors, along with footage of the virtual talks were featured. The video was spotlighted on the MIT homepage with more than 8,200 views on YouTube.
- The MITAC team received the Office of the President's 2021 Infinite Mile Award for Community Building.
- Sales of cultural and recreational events generated \$81,161 in total revenue (an 81% decrease from FY2020) with 7,306 tickets sold online. Sales were significantly impacted by full and intermittent vendor closures, as well as limited capacities and reservation requirements. After Massachusetts Covid-19 pandemic restrictions were lifted on May 29, vendors reopened with increased capacity limits and reservation ticketing and MITAC sales increased substantially.
- MITAC served 1,947 unique customers who enjoyed substantial savings, estimated at \$60,960 on tickets purchased.
- Since the MITAC ticket offices at the Stata Center and Lincoln Laboratory remained closed throughout FY2021, 100% of orders were made online. MITAC quickly implemented an expedient order fulfillment process, shipping tickets to customer homes.
- Responding to new and varied ticketing methods implemented by several popular vendors (i.e., New England Aquarium, Museum of Science, Boston Red Sox) MITAC also implemented e-ticketing, tickets via mobile apps, and digital discount codes.
- The website and digital digests continued to expand MITAC's reach. In FY2021, there was a total of 43,847 website viewing sessions from 24,122 users, with 168,127 page views, along with more than 9,200 subscribers to MITAC's digital digest. The digests and website served as an enjoyable and consistent connection to customers during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The creation of a new MITAC YouTube Channel, archiving past virtual talks, with 3,660 views in FY2021 (4,275 views since its inception).
- The creation of a growing catalogue of more than 200 virtual opportunities hosted by vendors and other cultural and educational outlets.
- A popular digital community pet gallery with nearly 4,900 views.
- The program continues to have an impact beyond MIT: MITAC's partnership with arts, sports, recreational, and cultural institutions strengthens those entities to the benefit of the New England region. MIT's vital partnership and support of vendors continued through the pandemic.

MITAC benefits from the participation of a program committee and a presidentially appointed advisory council. The program committee was led in 2020–2021 by conveners Shirley Entzminger, Department of Mathematics, and Alicia LaDuke and Maria

Nicholson, Lincoln Laboratory. The program committee recognized the passing of long-time and one of MITAC's original committee members, Lincoln Laboratory retiree Karen Shaw. Karen's insight, guidance, and recommendations contributed to many successful MITAC events over the years.

The advisory council provides guidance to MITAC on Institute priorities, policies, business practices, long-range planning, and the administration of the employee benefit program, with a priority to increase MITAC's customer base and to achieve broader awareness about MITAC services. In FY2021, the advisory council welcomed new chair Jesse Kroll, professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Chemical Engineering. Clifton G. Fonstad Jr., Vitesse Professor Emeritus of Electrical Engineering, stepped down as chair after serving in this role since the council's formation in 2010. Professor Fonstad will continue to serve on the council. His thoughtful leadership guided the council and MITAC through significant and successful initiatives, including:

- The opening of MITAC's renovated ticket office at the Stata Center
- The launch of a new ticketing system and website with online sales
- Expanded customer-base and services
- MITAC's programming and business operations through the pandemic

MITAC's inventory system was acquired by another e-commerce company in FY2020 and its platform is increasingly unable to provide sufficient support of MITAC's business operations. MITAC is exploring potential ticketing systems with technical guidance from Harry Iliopoulos, IS&T project manager, and Minerva Tirado, senior strategic sourcing analyst from the Office of the Vice President for Finance.

Community Giving

Community Giving at MIT is a charitable giving program that facilitates donations made by MIT employees and retirees to the MIT Community Service Fund (CSF) and other health and human service agencies, including the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley.

The FY2021 campaign raised \$495,694 (25% increase), including \$71,926 for the CSF. This year also saw a 13% increase in employee and retiree donors (652 total contributors), driven in part by continuing and additional donations to support Human Resource's MIT Staff Emergency Hardship Fund (\$40,059 from 38 donors); the MIT Covid-19 Neighborhood Response Fund; agencies directly responding to Covid-19; and nonprofits working toward racial equality.

Bevin P. Engelward, professor in BE, continued her dynamic and committed leadership of the presidentially appointed Community Giving steering committee. Significant initiatives undertaken in FY2021 include:

- The MIT Covid-19 Neighborhood Response Fund, which was established as a joint effort with MIT's Office of Government and Community Relations (OGCR) and the MIT Community Service Board chair to address the pressing needs

of Cambridge neighbors, continued to receive generous support in FY2021. The fund received \$85,339 in donations by 264 contributors made via the Community Giving at MIT and the Giving to MIT portals. The fund has raised a total of \$122,753 from 394 donors since its inception in April 2021. The fund has disbursed a total of \$90,000, representing grants of \$15,000 to six Cambridge nonprofit partners addressing homelessness and food insecurity amplified by the pandemic. Recipient organizations were: Cambridge Community Center, CASPAR, East End House, Food for Free, Just-A-Start, and the Margaret Fuller House. Additional donations are projected in FY2022.

- With enthusiastic support from Suzanne Glassburn, vice president and secretary of the Corporation, Engelward and Jared Curhan, Gordon Kaufman Professor of Management and chair of the MIT Community Service Fund, convened a group of experienced MIT communications professionals to recommend strategies to position the CSF as the signature program of a new focused giving campaign. Ink Design, a graphic design outfit, and 43,000 Feet, a communications firm, were engaged to develop visual design and brand messaging, respectively, for this new CSF-focused campaign.
- The program continued its collaborative efforts with OGCR to organize volunteer initiatives, collections, and fundraisers to benefit Cambridge nonprofits and the CSF.
- The program served as a central resource to departments, department ambassadors, and student groups seeking to mobilize their support of the CSF, Cambridge nonprofits, Covid-19 Neighborhood Fund, MIT Staff Emergency Hardship Fund, nonprofits that work toward racial equality, and those that respond to natural disasters.
- Traci Swartz serves on the MIT Staff Emergency Hardship Fund review committee, the CSF board of trustees (ex officio), Margaret Fuller House's development committee, and CASPAR's shelter advisory committee.

Quarter Century Club

The Quarter Century Club (QCC) is composed of 4,463 members, 139 of whom were inducted in FY2021. The club's induction luncheon and three annual member events were cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. With direction from the board of directors, the club instituted two significant initiatives for the betterment of its membership. First, faculty and staff are now invited to join the club shortly following the 25-year service milestone and may select a recognition gift. Previously, new members were notified annually of their eligibility. Anthony Farrell administers the monthly vetting process and welcome notification to new members. The second initiative expanded eligibility to active QCC members for access to the William R. Dickson Retiree Education Fund. The Dickson Fund was formerly available only to retired QCC members. This expanded benefit received an immediate and positive response with an influx of new applicants. Overall, the fund received a solid number of applications, despite limited in-person class opportunities. Thirty-two unique applicants (19 retirees, three semiretired, and 10 active employees), including 19 new applicants, were approved for grants. A total of \$8,167 was awarded in grants. Retiree Yvonne Gittens

is the president of the QCC and leads a 17-member board of directors. The recording secretary's position has remained open since 2019, when Nancy Murphy Crosby stepped down from the board upon relocating to Florida.

Association of MIT Retirees

The Association of MIT Retirees continued its organization of membership, educational, and social programming for the benefit of its 750 registered members. Although no in-person events or travel activities were held this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the association aimed to engage members in a variety of ways:

- Association members frequently and enthusiastically attended MITAC's rich array of virtual programming: the organization expresses gratitude to MITAC for hosting these enjoyable opportunities.
- The Nita Regnier Memoir Writing Group of 10 members held monthly workshops via Zoom. The group published its first volume of "Selected Writings" accompanied by artwork and photographs provided by the writers. The publication was received with great acclaim by association members. To debut the publication, the association hosted a well-attended virtual event featuring the writers reading their stories; this video resides on MITAC's YouTube station. Two of Nita Regnier's daughters attended the reading. The group is facilitated by Daphne Strassmann, a writing professor and memoirist. Anthony Farrell oversees the memoir group, its workshops and events, and is the primary editor of its publications.
- A printed membership directory with a comprehensive MIT resource guide was published. Original artwork by the late Betty Bolivar, who retired from the MIT Community Services Office in 2008, graces the cover.
- A new website with exciting features to enhance membership—an online membership directory, membership renewal, and event registration—was launched. Anthony Farrell was responsible for several features of the website, including technical aspects of the online directory and the payment portal.
- The website, membership directory, and memoir publication were uniquely designed by graphic designer Victor Park.

The Undergraduate Scholarship Fund, established by the association's leadership in 2006, raised \$11,716 in FY2021 from 103 unique donors. The fund awards an annual scholarship to an MIT undergraduate student, with first preference for students who are direct descendants or family members of retired MIT employees. Fourteen scholarships have been awarded since 2006, with \$63,756 awarded in cumulative scholarships and \$157,632 raised by 503 unique donors since inception. The association is a member of the informal Boston Area College and University Retiree Associations and the Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education. Co-chair Joseph Collins continued his strong leadership of 12 volunteer advisory committee members. With sadness, we acknowledge the passing of former committee members Carol Robinson, MIT Libraries, and E. Mathilde Wood, Leaders for Manufacturing, who were active and valuable contributors that organized interesting seminars and travel excursions.

The Community Services Office members included Ted Johnson, managing director, Institute Events; Traci Swartz, manager, Community Services Office; Diane Betz Tavitian, senior program and events associate; Anthony Farrell '13, program and events associate; Jodi Schwedelson, events and program assistant; and Edith “Phoophie” Chavez '19, events and program assistant.

The office missed the valuable support of MIT retiree Virginia “Jeannie” Lauricella this year and hopes to resume working together in FY2022. The office acknowledges the significant MIT volunteerism of Diane Betz Tavitian, who continues her service with the Women’s League English Partner Program and Student Mentoring Program. In addition, Tavitian was enlisted to provide guidance to MindHandHeart to reestablish MIT Connect for which she also volunteered.

MIT Conference Services

MIT Conference Services (MITCS) provides logistical coordination and registration services to conferences, meetings, educational programming, and other events sponsored by MIT departments, faculty, and staff. MITCS also manages on-campus housing reservations for individual conference attendees, MIT summer programs, and youth residential camps.

It is well known that the events industry, world-wide, was one of the worst-affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. At the start of FY2021, with no definitive end to the pandemic in sight, the prohibition of all forms of in-person gatherings continued and 33 programs slated to be managed by MITCS on campus were cancelled, postponed, or reinvented in a virtual format. As a result, significant revenue losses were sustained.

A number of postponed programs were large-scale, international conferences that had been in the planning stages for several years. A formidable amount of staff effort was devoted to renegotiating vendor contracts; identifying and rescheduling campus and external meeting spaces and event venues; and negotiating refunds or roll-overs of advanced deposits. MITCS is grateful to colleagues in VPF, specifically in Strategic Sourcing and Contracts, for their invaluable support and advice throughout the process, which resulted in significant mitigation of financial losses for the programs involved.

MITCS staff put many hours into researching and testing virtual event software and became adept at managing Zoom meetings and webinars. A significant amount of effort was also given to analyzing and revamping internal procedures and processes to ensure continued efficient and effective operations in the remote work environment. Staff participated in a variety of training workshops on pandemic-related safety and budgeting to prepare for possible post-pandemic scenarios. Financial administration backup was provided to the Office of the General Counsel to cover the leave of absence of an administrator.

In FY2021, the office provided logistics and/or registration support to five virtual programs that yielded 2,092 participants. These included the *Integrated Continuous Bio Processing Webinar*, sponsored by the Department of Chemical Engineering; the *International Semantic Web Conference*, sponsored by the Computer Science and Artificial

Intelligence Lab; the *MLK Virtual Celebration Luncheon*; the *MacVicar Day Virtual Celebration*; and *Virtual EurekaFest*, a Lemelson-MIT Program initiative.

Conference Services staff members during AY2021 included Cathi Levine, director; Eva Cabone, senior conference and events planner; Caroline Livingston, events registration associate; and Darlene McGurl, senior financial assistant.

Gayle M. Gallagher
Executive Director for Institute Events and Protocol