

## **Student Support Services**

Student Support Services is comprised of Counseling and Support Services and Religious Life at MIT.

### **Counseling and Support Services**

#### **Summary Statement**

Counseling and Support Services (CSS) devoted considerable effort to serving students who were in crisis and need during 2003–2004. It continued to integrate its efforts effectively with other Institute services, most notably with MIT Medical’s Mental Health Service. Medical leave policies were reviewed, joint staff meetings increased, and select training sessions were shared in order to strengthen and maintain the coordination of shared interests. CSS also worked closely with the Committee on Academic Performance (CAP), providing critical support and information to its members and academic departments.

#### **Highlights of the Year**

As always, a substantial percentage of MIT students made use of CSS. Many had to cope with serious financial and housing needs. Personal issues and medical triage needs continued to be significant reasons for contacts as well. The service also noted a discernible increase in the frequency of scheduled meetings with concerned parents, perhaps indicative of the challenges and demands that many students and their families faced this year.

CSS coordinates with CAP on student support services: CSS helps coordinate relevant student information from Mental Health psychiatrists, CSS deans, and Disability Services.

Processes for medical leaves for undergraduates were documented and disseminated, and forms were developed. CSS worked closely with the Mental Health Service on this project.

CSS strengthened communications and the value derived from fundamental working relationships through stronger coordination with senior associate dean Bob Randolph at the Students At Risk meeting. CSS also strengthened connections to the Mental Health Service at the Deans and Psychiatrists meeting, as well as at biweekly meetings with the associate chief of the Mental Health Service.

In addition, CSS and Mental Health conducted collaborative professional trainings, held alternately in CSS and Mental Health, with expert presenters and staff attending from both offices. For example, a session on Asperger’s Syndrome was held at CSS in order to develop a consistent base of knowledge to benefit students within the system.

The support group for students returning from medical leave was co-led by a Mental Health psychiatrist and the CSS dean, and was hosted by CSS. This highly successful trial support group will now be offered every semester. Emphasis will be placed on academic, social, and personal readjustment issues for students.

CSS collaborated with the Office of Student Discipline to develop disciplinary procedures for sexual misconduct.

With guidance from the Dean's Office, CSS developed an instrument for quantifying student contacts and assessing services.

CSS staff met with parents of incoming students during Parents' Orientation and participated on the Health and Safety Panel. Staff also attended CAP meetings. CSS stepped up communication with Student Financial Services (SFS) regarding loans, financial holds, and issues of financial aid. The office also consulted periodically with the International Student Office (ISO) about troubled students. CSS collaborated with ISO dean to request funding from SFS. The office met with staff from the Academic Resource Center (ARC) to review readmission procedures. CSS staff also chaired the Awards Committee and Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee. The staff also cochaired the Mental Health Task Force Implementation Committee. CSS staff served on the Dean for Student Life Task Force on the Dormitory System and the Campus Committee on Race Relations.

The CSS facilitated first-year student orientation workshops on race and ethnicity as well as on sexual assault after the Katie Koestner presentation. Staff spoke at the Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics advisors' orientation. Staff went on to speak to the undergraduate administrators group about services and helping students in distress. Furthermore, the staff was asked by the ARC to present with Alan Siegel to first-year student advisors. CSS addressed Interphase students about MIT and support services. CSS Staff cofacilitated a support/discussion group for LGBT and questioning students during the spring 2004 academic term.

Staff visited with the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity house and described support services for students facing academic problems. They followed up with seven members before, during, and after CAP meetings.

Throughout the year, the CSS staff met with concerned parents, guardians, and their children in an effort to develop constructive plans and/or solutions for personal, medical, and administrative issues.

The CSS assistant dean was the primary supervisor for Nightline, working with student coordinators to address recruitment needs to increase membership on the service. Programming for women students included but was not limited to Women's Freshmen Orientation, Women of Vision: MIT Women Making a Difference at MIT and in the World, and Women's Health Concerns.

CSS staff oversaw programming for Asian and Asian American students. Programs included but were not limited to the Asian Women’s Lunch, dinner with Asian faculty, Kirk Kolenbrander’s freshman advising seminar, and association with and support for Grains of Rice.

### **New Initiatives**

New initiatives include the following:

- Work with an eating disorder group comprised of MIT Medical personnel to discuss students who have eating disorders, ways to manage their care, and issues that arise in the MIT community
- Sponsor lunches for CSS deans, housemasters, Student Life Programs staff, and Dean Danny Trujillo, to improve communication, clarify resources and processes, and discuss student situations in living groups
- Participate in BASICS training to enhance skills and knowledge regarding alcohol issues for college students
- Work with deans and staff from the Graduate Students Office on the graduate medical leave policy to enhance consistency of policies and procedures for undergraduates and graduate students (share forms, policies, and procedures developed by CSS for undergraduate students)

In addition, CSS plans to hire and train a new administrative assistant who will assume certain critical administrative support responsibilities currently handled by James Collins. This person will collaborate with Denise Meehan and complement the support structure for the CSS deans and the coordinator of support and services for women students. The new staff member will also become familiar with student in-take, counseling issues, and mental health policies and procedures. Additionally, the person will be addressing academic policy questions and interacting with faculty, parents, medical professionals, administrators, campus police, and other relevant parties. This person will also need to be familiar with MIT information and financial systems to provide added support to the shared services organization within DSL.

### **Trends In Participation**

#### **Participation during AY2004**

<b>Students</b>	<b>4th Qtr<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>3rd Qtr</b>	<b>2nd Qtr</b>	<b>1st Qtr</b>	<b>Total</b>
Undergraduate	376	313	404	197	868 (21% of undergrads)
Graduate	18	28	22	17	63 (1% of grads)
<b>Total</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>931</b>

**Contacts**

Undergraduate	696	538	734	316	2,284 (avg. 2.6 contacts/student)
Graduate	48	74	50	28	200 (avg. 3.2 contacts/student)
<b>Total</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>784</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>2,484</b>

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<sup>a</sup> Through June 20

During AY2004, 93 withdrawals, 32 leaves of absence, and 115 readmissions were processed.

**Staffing Changes**

James Collins was promoted to assistant dean, and Jackie Simonis was promoted to codirector of CS.

**Jackie Simonis, Codirector, CSS**

**Arnold Henderson, Jr, Codirector, CSS**

*More information about Counseling and Support Services can be found on the web at <http://web.mit.edu/counsel/wwwl>.*

**Religious Life at MIT****Summary**

The MIT Board of Chaplains and associated groups serve a significant portion of the MIT community each year through our organized programs, religious services, general counseling, and overall presence on the campus. Some of the many examples of our work and impact include the following:

- Twenty-four religious services each week on the campus
- Formal counseling for students, staff, and faculty
- Informal counseling on life issues in ILGs
- Forums for groups of faculty and staff
- English classes for foreign students and spouses
- Serving as freshmen advisors and pre-orientation program leaders
- Providing support after deaths of students

- Serving on MIT committees and interest groups (LGBT Issues Group, Committee on the Use of Humans as Experimental Subjects, Planning Committee for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Activities, HIS Program, Independent Activities Period Policy Committee)
- Providing counsel at the MIT infirmary
- Resource for the ROTC program
- Opportunities for community service, socializing, and learning
- Creating communities of fellowship and support

### **Highlights of the Year**

The MIT Chaplaincy put together an exhibit at the MIT Wellness Fair, hosted a Day of Prayer and Support for members of the armed services (June, co-sponsored with ROTC), facilitated the Annual Alumni Reunion Memorial Service, participated in bi-monthly meetings at which we networked, and collaborated with campus partners (MIT Partners, MIT Careers Office, Campus Activities Complex, and Office of Academic Services/Orientation).

### **Individual Chaplaincies**

- Abrahamic Faith graduate student weekly seminar (Hillel, Lutheran Episcopal Ministry [LEM], and Muslim Students Association)
- Faith in the Workplace series (Baptist Student Organization)
- Mandala Project (Buddhist)
- Peter Kreeft of Boston College talk at *Lord of the Rings* event (Chi Alpha)
- Dinner at Six faculty-student monthly series (Hillel)
- Kosher dining—opening of new campus dining program (Hillel with MIT Office of Dining)
- Latke-Hamentashen Debate featuring six MIT professors (Hillel)
- 40th anniversary of Technology and Culture Celebration (Episcopal)
- Living in Two Communities faculty discussion (LEM with Dean for Student Life)
- Establishment of a Faith and Science ministerial intern (Lutheran)
- ARCADE Event of the Year for Mardi Gras Program (Tech Catholic Community)
- Passion of the Christ discussion (Baptist, Hillel, and InterVarsity Christian Fellowship)
- Study in cooperation with MIT Facilities and Capital Projects for current use and future facilities for MIT Religious Life

MIT Campus Crusade for Christ brought John Beckett, president of R.W. Beckett Corp and author of *Loving Mondays*, to speak at our weekly meeting. Mr. Beckett also gave a large donation to our ministry. The Campus Crusade for Christ grew from four Life Groups to eleven. These Life Groups embody our mission most fully—they are places where students share struggles, encourage each other in their calling and gifting, and where people can explore the Christian faith.

Students and staff of the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship were involved in world-mission efforts, including Kevin Ford leading a project for MBA students to Xiamen,

China, and Christy Sherman staffing a project in Thailand. Furthermore, 43 students attended the triennial Urban World Missions Conference over Christmas break, and a number of students participated in urban or international projects. In addition, the Sloan group sponsored a series of seminars taught by Tom Phillips, CEO-emeritus of Raytheon.

The Graduate Christian Fellowship (GFC) successfully participated in the Purpose Driven Life campaign for Lent. The GCF also cosponsored a lecture by philosopher Peter Kreeft on *The Lord of the Rings*. A leader of the faculty fellowship was commissioned to deliver a Templeton Lecture on faith and science at Baylor University (and practiced it with GCF). More than 60 students attended week-long leadership and planning retreats at the close of the academic year.

The Muslim Chaplaincy (Muslim Students Association) participated in the now annual Ramadan@MIT series, which continued into its third consecutive year. It once again involved a series of dinners, student-prepared talks, and interfaith discussions aimed at fostering mutual interaction and learning. This year's sessions were held on October 29, 2003 (jointly sponsored by the Sidney and Pacific Graduate Residence Cultural Committee), November 4 and 21, 2003 (jointly sponsored by Ashdown House) for students, interfaith night, and faculty night respectively.

The MSA once again hosted daily Iftar (breaking of the fast) followed by free dinner in the prayer room, followed by special congregational Tarawih prayers, on most nights during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

In the fall, the MSA participated in an interfaith MSA/Hillel community service event at the Greater Boston Food Bank. Approximately 20 students participated, and it was a great success. One of the Hillel members created a website for the event, <http://www.mit.edu/~gremio/gbfb/>.

The MSA's spring dinner drew a large turnout, of both Muslims and non-Muslims, in the MIT community, many of whom commented that they enjoyed it immensely for its entertainment and educational value.

A major highlight of the year was the Islamic Contribution to Civilization lecture, organized on the initiative of Dean Robert Randolph, with funding from the MIT Saudi Club. Nationally renowned Muslim speaker Hamza Yusuf, who was an advisor to President Bush after 9/11, came to MIT to present a talk on Islam's contribution to the world civilization in mathematics, science, art, philosophy, politics, and other disciplines. The Wong Auditorium was packed for the event.

### **New Initiatives**

Interfaith textual discussions included grassroots efforts by students of MSA, LEM, and Hillel to create a forum for the study of traditional and modern topics, based on primary sources of religious knowledge. This created an opportunity to establish an honest dialogue between the Abrahamic faiths, by building familiarity with different texts and the people trying to follow them. They met weekly during the spring 2004 semester.

MIT Campus Crusade for Christ has plans for developing leaders to facilitate enough Life Groups to serve the needs of students in every living area on campus. Additionally, the MIT Campus Crusade for Christ has plans for launching Alpha, a 12-week introductory course about the Christian faith, this fall.

### **Staffing Changes**

- Hillel new hire, program director (Katya Myer, September 2003–June 2004)
- Hillel new hire, administrator (Kate Adelstein, September 2003)
- Hillel: increase in chaplain's hours, 20 hours per week (Rabbi Ben Lanckton, effective August 2003)
- Addition of Faith/Science Lutheran intern, 5–10 hours per week (Sarah Fredericks)
- Addition of part-time Episcopal intern (Nick Godfrey)
- Buddhist associate chaplain appointed visiting scholar in residence at Simmons Hall
- Mike Bost has replaced George Hinman as the campus crusade for Christ staff representative at MIT.
- Mary Thompson was assigned to work with the Graduate Christian Fellowship.
- New volunteers assisted United Christian Fellowship and Black Christian Fellowship.
- Kevin Ford, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, moved to the edge of campus to be more accessible to students.

For information about the MIT Chaplaincy, contact Miriam Rosenblum, chair, MIT Board of Chaplains.

**Robert M. Randolph**  
**Senior Associate Dean, Student Support Services**

*More information about the Office of the Senior Associate Dean for Student Life can be found on the web at [http://web.mit.edu/dsl/religious\\_life.html](http://web.mit.edu/dsl/religious_life.html) and <http://web.mit.edu/resolution/>.*