

## **Office of Government and Community Relations**

The Office of Government and Community Relations (OGCR) fosters interaction and understanding between MIT and its neighbors, as well as local and state government. The office also supports the mission of the MIT Washington Office, reinforcing the efforts of the president, faculty, and administrators in their contacts with the federal government and several national higher education associations. The principal focus of OGCR is the MIT/Cambridge relationship. The office promotes understanding among Cambridge elected officials, neighborhood organizations, businesses, residents, and MIT. The office endeavors to develop constructive working relationships, nurture partnership efforts, and collaborate on matters of mutual concern. OGCR staff engage in a variety of ongoing projects and respond to dozens of community and governmental inquiries and requests.

### **Institute Internal Activities**

OGCR provided other Institute offices with analysis and strategic guidance on Cambridge political issues. Staff worked extensively with the Department of Facilities to prepare for the permitting process for the new graduate student dormitory. This work entailed providing general political and strategic assistance with neighborhood interaction issues as well as organizing a community meeting about the dormitory for Cambridge residents.

In addition, OGCR staff served on several Institute committees, such as the Communications Operating Group, the Information Group, the Administrative Council, and the 2006 MITES Selection Committee. Staff also supported Institute events, including Commencement activities, and prepared a briefing for the staff of the MIT News Office about the function and operations of OGCR.

### **Local Government Relations**

OGCR provided background and guidance on various licensing, permitting, zoning, safety, and transportation issues in Boston, Cambridge, and other towns. Staff met with representatives of the City of Cambridge's Inspectional Services Department, Department of Public Works, and Community Development Department on matters of mutual concern to the Institute and the city. For example, staff engaged in ongoing discussions with the city about land use and development. In addition, staff prepared for Boston Licensing Board and Cambridge License Commission regulatory hearings that involved the Institute. OGCR provided data on student residences to the City of Boston in accordance with the University Accountability Ordinance passed by the Boston City Council.

Staff prepared for an emergency hearing of the Cambridge City Council on the subject of the safety of MIT's Nuclear Reactor Laboratory. At the hearing, called by the city in response to a sensational story on ABC News, representatives of the Institute successfully assured the Cambridge community of the reactor's security. The city's cooperation with the Institute and desire to see the issue addressed quickly prevented this situation from leading to major public safety concerns.

OGCR provided background information for and scheduled several introductory meetings between local government officials and Institute senior officers and staff. These officials included Cambridge city manager Robert W. Healy, the mayors of Cambridge and Boston, Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney, and speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives Salvatore DiMasi.

OGCR staff led the effort to prepare the Institute's annual Town-Gown Report. Staff compiled data from several MIT offices and planned the presentation made to the Cambridge Planning Board.

Office staff worked with the Cambridge Election Commission to coordinate the use of MIT facilities as a polling place for the November 2005 municipal election.

### **Federal Government Relations**

OGCR staff continued to represent MIT on several committees of national associations focusing on community service, work-study financial aid, and other educational topics. The office worked with the local staff of the Massachusetts congressional delegation to include Congress members in Institute activities and respond to their queries.

OGCR provided background material and other assistance for President Susan Hockfield's trips to Washington. OGCR staff also aided the MIT Washington Office with preparations for the annual Congressional Staff Seminar. Office staff continue to help in planning a regional summit cosponsored by the Washington-based Council on Competitiveness and the Massachusetts Business Roundtable; the summit will be hosted by President Hockfield and MIT.

Office staff organized a tour of MIT's facilities by the members of the National League of Cities. OGCR also set up a meeting between President Hockfield and former Virginia governor Mark R. Warner.

### **Community Relations**

Office staff accommodated dozens of community-based facility use requests such as hosting, for the 12th year, the Cambridge Community Chorus's performance of Handel's *Messiah* and providing a venue for the mayor's senior citizens' lunch. OGCR continued its practice of making donations to neighborhood programs and institutions, including Tutoring Plus, Summerbridge Cambridge, Cambridge School Volunteers, the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House, and Just A Start. Staff represented MIT on more than 20 nonprofit boards and committees and were active in the Rotary Club of Cambridge, providing speakers from the Institute and planning events for this social service organization.

OGCR staff encouraged members of the MIT community to participate in Cambridge events. This year, President Hockfield gave the keynote address at the annual meeting of the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce. She also spoke at a sold-out session of the Boston Chamber of Commerce's Life Sciences Forum. OGCR brought Institute staff to attend various events at both chambers and elsewhere in Cambridge. Office staff welcomed city officials to the campus for events such as the dedication of the Brain

and Cognitive Sciences Complex in December. OGCR staff invited members of the Cambridge community to special Institute activities, including the Martin Luther King, Jr., breakfast in February and the Energy Forum in May.

In June the office hosted the 14th annual Cambridge First Day celebration, honoring six Cambridge-based nonprofit organizations working to bridge the digital divide in our community. Among the speakers at the event were MIT interim executive vice president Sherwin Greenblatt, Cambridge mayor Kenneth E. Reeves, and city council member Henrietta Davis. With the assistance of Cambridge Community Television and MIT's Academic Media Production Services, the event was webcast live from the Mezzanine Lounge.

### **Schools**

The office worked closely with the Cambridge Public Schools, the MIT Public Service Center, the MIT Museum, the Edgerton Center, and others to carry out a wide variety of educational programs and initiatives on behalf of Cambridge schoolchildren. OGCR managed MIT's hosting of the Massachusetts State Science Fair and assisted in the planning of the Elementary School Science Expo. Office staff coordinated the Keypals program, which pairs middle school students with MIT staff for email exchanges and visits to campus.

### **Business**

Office staff served on the boards of both the Cambridge and Greater Boston Chambers of Commerce as well as on various committees of these organizations. The office worked closely with members of the Central Square Business Association, the City of Cambridge Community Development Department, and the Department of Public Works to organize the second annual "Central Square Clean Up" in May. Members of the community were encouraged to take part in activities to clean up Central Square, such as picking up litter and removing stickers from lampposts.

### **Community Service Fund**

The office oversaw the 38-year-old Community Service Fund (CSF) in its mission to support the efforts of MIT volunteers in the community. The 2005 Community Giving Campaign—managed by the Community Services Office—again yielded great results for CSF. The annual sale of the plants from MIT's Commencement ceremony in June brought together volunteers from across the community to help raise money for CSF. OGCR managed the disbursement of more than \$120,000 in CSF grants to more than 30 local nonprofit organizations and student projects.

### **Sarah Gallop and Paul Parravano Codirectors**

*More information about the Office of Government and Community Relations can be found at <http://web.mit.edu/govt-relations/www/>.*