

## MIT Washington Office

The MIT Washington Office was established within the Office of the President during the spring and summer of 1991. The director heads the office and reports to the president. The staff includes Jason Van Wey, assistant director, and Helen Haislmaier, administrative assistant. John C. Crowley, vice president for federal relations, retired on January 31, 2006, after serving MIT since he opened the office on August 12, 1991.

### Mission

The mission of the Washington Office is to support the advocacy activities of the president in Washington and to represent the Institute in Washington as one of the nation's premier research universities. The office contributes to a steady flow of information between MIT and the federal government. Staff members gather and disseminate information concerning government activities and actions to the MIT community on a daily basis. The staff also makes the university's talent and research knowledge available to federal officials, facilitating the sharing of these resources with Congress, the executive branch, and other national organizations. The office maintains liaison with the offices of the Massachusetts congressional delegation and other congressional offices.

### Advocacy Coalitions and Working Groups

The director and assistant director are engaged in the activities of the major organizations and coalitions that work in support of the federal investment in university research and education, including the following:

- The Science Coalition
- The Council on Competitiveness (COC)
- The Association of American Universities (AAU)
- The AAU Council on Federal Relations (CFR)
- The National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC)
- The NASULGC Council on Government Affairs (CGA)
- The Council on Government Relations (COGR)
- The Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF)
- The Coalition for National Security Research (CNSR)
- The Energy Sciences Coalition (ESC)
- Coalition for Plasma Science (CSP)
- Fusion Energy Sciences Day
- The Science, Engineering and Technology Working Group (SET)
- Space Grant Day

The office annually engages MIT faculty and students as advocates with members of Congress and their staffs. As part of the SET working group, we brought more than 20 MIT students to Washington to visit the Massachusetts congressional delegation. In addition, a number of MIT faculty testified before Congress with support and assistance from the MIT Washington Office, including testimony before the Senate Appropriations, Senate Commerce and Science, House Science, and House Energy Committees.

Also, in cooperation with the Woodrow Wilson Center, the office organized a policy working group of 30 Washington-based governmental and organization policy officials that meets monthly to discuss and work on innovation policy issues.

### **Legislative Initiatives**

The office continues to collaborate with colleagues at MIT and in national organizations to respond to an ongoing series of policy proposals designed to strengthen the partnership between research universities and the federal government. These activities continue to span issues related to the flow of foreign students and scholars into the United States as well as matters related to the conduct and management of federally sponsored research. Of note during the past year has been the daily engagement of the Institute's leadership and the Washington Office with the higher education community in the issues of support for the physical sciences and engineering, the general competitiveness of the US research and development infrastructure, and export control policy.

The office has spent significant time contributing to three areas:

- Furthering the innovation and competitiveness agenda, including major authorizing and appropriations legislative proposals from the Bush administration, Senate, and House to increase federal research and development (R&D) spending and support for science, mathematics, and engineering education
- Supporting MIT's energy initiative, including outreach in Washington and contributing to the May 3 campus-wide energy forum
- Developing an MIT evaluation process for a national security technology strategy to maintain and enhance MIT's historic national defense research role

Significant contributions to the work of national organizations and the work of the office continue to be made by the vice president for research, the associate provost, the senior counsel, the director of the office of sponsored research, and the international scholars and international students offices. Working collaboratively as a team, MIT officials continue to pursue critical national policy and legislative outcomes in a wide range of policy areas, from overall agency R&D appropriations to student aid funding and international student visas.

## **MIT Lincoln Laboratory, Plasma Science and Fusion Center, Bates Linear Accelerator Center**

MIT Lincoln Laboratory, the Plasma Science and Fusion Center, and Bates Linear Accelerator Center are among MIT's largest research entities. In terms of federal research support, they are also among the most vulnerable to abrupt shifts in funding priorities. The office continued to accompany the associate provost and Lincoln Laboratory senior staff on visits to key congressional offices. The objectives were to brief key staff on current activities and accomplishments of the laboratory and, at the end of the congressional cycle, to express appreciation for the continued support of key members and staff.

## **MIT Congressional Staff Seminar on Science and Technology**

In 1993, with the financial support of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, MIT began an annual seminar for senior congressional staff on science and technology issues. Each year, the president invites more than 200 staff leaders of key committees, government departments, and related policy groups to attend an intensive two-day seminar with senior MIT faculty and presenters from industry and other universities. In 1993, the first attendees established the format, which in recent years has been extended to include senior Executive Branch and relevant government department staff. Participants suggest topics for future seminars. Professors Eugene B. Skolnikoff, Claude R. Canizares, and Stephen Ansolabehere are codirectors of the program. From April 19 to April 21, 2006, 32 senior congressional staff and senior career staff of the Executive Office of the President attended the 12th seminar: Meeting the Global Energy Challenge. Professor Ahmed F. Ghoniem led the planning committee, aided by Professors Ernest J. Moniz and Richard K. Lester. The Washington Office again identified invitees, made travel arrangements, and served as program staff throughout the seminar.

## **Outreach by Senior MIT Officials to Congress and the Executive Branch**

The vice president and director continued to accompany the president and the associate provost and the vice president for research on regular visits to senior officials of executive branch agencies, members of Congress, and their staffs.

**William B. Bonvillian**  
Director

*More information about MIT's Washington Office can be found online at <http://web.mit.edu/dc/index.html>.*