

Council for the Arts

Fiscal year 2006 was one of highs and lows for the Council for the Arts at MIT, as we had our best fundraising year to date but also suffered the loss of many long-time, beloved Council Members. We experienced a rather drastic change as well, as Alan Brody stepped down after serving 10 years as associate provost for the arts. Former dean of humanities, arts, and social sciences Philip Khoury was chosen as his successor. However, the title and scope of the position were altered; while Khoury will serve as associate provost, his responsibilities will not be confined to the arts at MIT. In March 2006, Council director Susan Cohen received an MIT Excellence Award for “Bringing Out the Best: Leading Others Through Change.” In May 2006, Cohen gave a presentation on the Council of the Arts to the Women’s League in the Emma Rogers Room.



Provost Rafael Reif congratulates Susan Cohen, director of the Council for the Arts as she receives an MIT Excellence Award, for “Bringing Out the Best: Leading Others Through Change” in March 2006. Photo by Graham Ramsay.

Council Standing Committees

Annual Meeting (Ann Allen, chair). The 33rd Annual Meeting began on the morning of October 27, 2005, with a tour of the List Visual Arts Center (LVAC) exhibition *Christian Jankowski: Everything Fell Together*. After a buffet lunch (during which we were joined by artist Mark di Suvero, who was installing a sculpture outside the Stata Center), Council members and guests visited the Center for Advanced Visual Studies and the MIT Visual Arts Program for presentations by the staff and graduate students of the respective programs. Following an afternoon break, the Council reconvened at the Ritz Carlton Hotel for an elegant dinner at which the Gyorgy Kepes Fellowship Prize was presented, with much affection, to Professor Ellen T. Harris.

October 28, began with the business meeting in the Bartos Theater, which featured remarks from both President Susan Hockfield and Provost Rafael Reif. After Steve Memishian brought the assembled up to date on fundraising, grants highlights, and expenditures, Kay Stratton and Leo Beranek presented their reminiscences on the founding of the Council. After a break, Kim Mancuso and Laura Harrington offered a presentation on their theater collaboration, *N (Bonaparte)*. Alan Brody finished this portion of the meeting with his “State of the Arts” address, during which he astounded all present with the announcement that he was stepping down as associate provost for the arts on June 30, 2006, to return to teaching.

Before we headed off to the MIT Museum for the annual meeting luncheon, we were surprised and delighted to be joined by a parading MIT–New Orleans hybrid brass band accompanied by some of the famed “Wild Magnolias” and Tim the MIT Beaver. After this splendid treat, we got on the mini-coaches with our Mardi Gras beads and raised spirits.

Arts Scholars Committee (Brit d’Arbeloff, chair). FY2006 marked the first time it was necessary to reject several individuals applying to the Art Scholars program as a result of the high number of applicants. This occurrence was embraced by the committee as signaling the popularity and relevance of the program among MIT students. The Arts Scholars program has had its ups and downs since its founding almost 10 years ago, but all involved are confident that it will continue to strengthen and flourish in the future.



CAMIT founding member Kay Stratton with members of Wild Magnolias and Tim the Beaver. Photo by Donna Coveney.

Communications Committee (Pepi Weis, chair). Three issues of *Council Currents* have been published since last year’s Report to the President: the special Dallas bumper issue, a “catch-up” issue in November 2005, and the March 2006 issue.

Development Committee (Anne Street ’69, chair). A total of \$374,952 was raised from 74 Council members (an average of \$5,066), along with \$18,900 from nonmember donors. The grand total raised for FY2006 was \$393,852.



Anne Blomstrom, Ina Gordon, Alan Brody, and Joan Rudy at the Council for the Arts’ Annual Meeting. Photo by Bruce Blomstrom.

Grants Program Committee (Martin N. Rosen ’62, chair). A total of \$103,401 in the form of 47 grants and 39 Director’s Grants was awarded to students, staff, and faculty. Highlights included support for the Dramashop tour of England, the Ed Cohen Memorial Concert, a project called “Buscycle” in which a self-sustaining vehicle is pedaled by 15 people, and an “action-painting” event featuring the MIT Tae Kwon Do Club.

Membership Committee (Bernard G. Palitz ’47, chair). As of this writing (July 14, 2006), Council membership stands at 102, with five ex officio members and 97 regular members. This was indeed a sad year for the Council, as longtime, much-loved members Armand Bartos ’35, Leonard Bezark ’49, Ina Gordon, and Jeanne Wasserman passed away.

The following new members have joined the Council since last year's Report to the President: Gus Kayafas '69, Laird Malamed '89, Susan Poduska, Lore Harp McGovern, Rhea Graffman Cohen, and Anne Alden. Mike Rechten '70 and Patricia Chute have resigned. The following members' terms were not extended: Felice Kincannon, Darian Hendricks '89, Harvey Kram '42, and Eleanore Kram.

Affiliated Committees

List Visual Arts Center Advisory Board (Jennifer Frutchy, chair). LVAC continues to provide the MIT community and the entire Boston area with the highest caliber contemporary art exhibitions. The LVAC staff also oversees the Percent-for-Art Program, in which a percentage of the budget for any new building or renovation on campus is allocated to the purchase or commission of a work of art. The Council allocates \$20,000 annually to LVAC, to be expended at the discretion of the director. This allocation will be increased to \$30,000 for FY2007.

MIT Museum Advisory Board (David Ellis, chair). The hiring of John Durant (who is also an adjunct faculty member in Science, Technology, and Society Program) heralds yet another phase of growth and sophistication for the MIT Museum. Durant's indefatigability bodes well for the future of the somewhat forgotten institution. His plans to establish the entrance and at least one exhibition hall on the Massachusetts Avenue level were greeted with enthusiasm by the MIT administration and donors alike. In addition, an April 2007 Cambridge-wide science festival is already in the planning stages. The Council allocates \$30,000 annually to the MIT Museum, to be used (if possible) to support the operation of the Compton Gallery and the Friday After Thanksgiving Chain Reaction event.

Special Programs

The Council provides an annual allocation of \$7,500 to the Artists Behind the Desk program, which organizes concerts, readings, performances, and a visual arts exhibition by staff members. Barbara Hughey '89 serves as the Council's representative at Artists Behind the Desk meetings. The Council also allocates \$20,000 to Student & Artist-in-Residence Programs and \$12,500 to the Office of Arts Communication. In FY2006, the Council decided to allocate \$20,000 annually to the Student Art Association. Also in 2006, a special one-time sum of \$25,000, part of the \$40,000 bequest the Council received from the estate of Leo Beckwith '35, was awarded to the Student Art Association's photography studio.

Since 1980, the Council has underwritten MIT's enrollment in the University Membership Program offered by the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. This program provides free admission and discount benefits to all MIT undergraduate and graduate students as well as 10-day passes for the use of MIT faculty and staff.

The Council for the Arts also sponsors a student membership program with the Photographic Resource Center (PRC) at Boston University. The PRC provides a range of programs, including exhibitions by national and international photographers and educational programs. MIT undergraduates and graduate students have unlimited free access to the PRC galleries and library and member discounts on admission to lectures,

workshops, and other special events. They are also able to enter their work into the annual juried Members' Exhibition.

In 2006, the Council established an institutional membership with the Harvard Art Museums in which all MIT graduate and undergraduate students are granted free admission to the Fogg, Busch-Reisinger, and Sackler museums and the Agnes Mongan Center for the Study of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs.

The free-ticket program with the Boston Symphony Orchestra continued this year. With their student ID, MIT students can obtain free admittance to some 24 concerts per year. Similar programs have been established with other Boston-area orchestras, including the contemporary music ensembles Collage New Music and the Boston Modern Orchestra Project.

The successful Student Performing Arts Excursions Series continued, offering free tickets to MIT students for performing arts events such as *La Traviata* by the Boston Lyric Opera, the American Repertory Theater's productions of *Carmen* and *The Keening*, a performance by hip hop choreographer and dancer Rennie Harris, Boston Baroque's *Agrippina*, and the Huntington Theater's *The Hopper Collection*.

The Gyorgy Kepes Fellowship Prize was presented at the Annual Meeting dinner at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Boston to Professor Ellen T. Harris. The Eugene McDermott Award will be presented in autumn 2006.

At the Institute Awards Convocation on May 9, associate provost for the arts Alan Brody presented the Laya and Jerome B. Wiesner Student Art Awards to architecture graduate student Oliver Lutz for visual art, media arts and sciences graduate student Laura Nichols for visual art, Amanda Frye '06 (physics) for arts administration, and electrical engineering and computer science graduate student Ole Mattis Nielsen for music. The Louis Sudler Prize was presented to Adam Miller '06 (physics and theater) for his accomplishments in theater arts. Each award winner received \$1,250.

The first-prize winner of the Harold and Arlene Schnitzer Prize, now overseen by the Council for the Arts at MIT, was Lira Nikolovska, a doctoral student in the Department of Architecture's Design and Computation Program. Second prize went to architecture graduate student Oliver Lutz and third prize to architecture graduate student Azra Aksamija. Honorable mentions went to mechanical engineering graduate student Jeffrey Dahmus Rene Chen '07 (materials science).

The Council also serves as the administrator of the Wiesner Student Art Gallery in the Stratton Student Center.

Susan R. Cohen
Director

More information about the Council for the Arts can be found at <http://web.mit.edu/arts/about/office/council/index.html>.