

Program in Media Arts and Sciences

Graduate Program

A total of 130 students, 75 master's candidates and 55 doctoral candidates, were enrolled in the Program in Media Arts and Sciences (MAS) graduate program during the 2005–2006 academic year. The MAS graduate student community included 16 women, 4 individuals from underrepresented minority groups, and 52 foreign students.

During the year, 43 advanced degrees were awarded (23 master's degrees and 20 doctorates). MAS received 340 applications to the graduate program and offered admission to 59 new students (including 15 women). Fifty-one students (including 12 women) accepted.

In addition to supervising graduate students, MAS faculty and research staff collectively advised and supported 15 graduate students from other MIT departments and programs, including the departments of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, Architecture, Chemistry, Physics, Mechanical Engineering, and Materials Science and Engineering, as well as the Biological Engineering Division and the Sloan School of Management.

MAS offered 33 graduate courses during the 2005–2006 year.

Undergraduate Program

Students from the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) continued to represent the largest undergraduate presence at the Media Lab. More than 200 undergraduates from across the Institute participated in a wide variety of research projects, with many of these students pursuing their undergraduate theses with MAS faculty supervision. In addition, MAS offered five undergraduate subjects, and four MAS faculty/staff conducted freshman seminars or served as freshman advisors.

Now in its seventh year, the MAS alternative freshman-year program enrolled 12 students in 2005–2006. These students participated in weekly Media Lab tutorial/laboratory sessions connected with two core freshman subjects, pursued Media Lab UROP projects and took two MAS undergraduate subjects on design and research (one of which has now been approved to satisfy part of the undergraduate communication requirement). We view this program as a first step toward establishing a greater MAS presence in undergraduate education. It has also turned out to be a successful “feeder” program for graduate students: this year's graduate admittances included three former freshman-year program participants.

Faculty and Staff

New Appointments

Frank Moss, who joined the MIT Media Lab as director on February 1, was appointed professor of the practice of media arts and sciences and holds the Jerome B. Wiesner chair in media technology. In these positions, he will oversee the Media Lab's growth and expansion as it pursues new directions in research and enhances its associated academic programs.

Promotions

Chris Csikszentmihályi, Judith Donath, and Hugh Herr were all promoted to associate professor without tenure (from assistant professor). Mitchel Resnick was promoted to full professor (from associate professor with tenure). MAS had no tenure cases this year.

In Memory

Pushpinder Singh, a postdoctoral researcher who had accepted an MAS faculty position effective September 2007, passed away unexpectedly in March. Singh received his SB, MEng, and PhD degrees from MIT's Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science and conducted his graduate research on commonsense computing at the Media Lab, working with Marvin Minsky. He was a well-liked, highly respected colleague who will be missed by the entire MIT community.

Faculty Honors and Awards

Neil Gershenfeld was recognized by his alma mater, Swarthmore College, with an honorary degree.

Hugh Herr, NEC career development professor, won *Popular Mechanics* magazine's first annual Breakthrough Leadership Award for his work in developing next-generation prosthetic devices.

Hiroshi Ishii, http://www.media.mit.edu/people/bio_ishii.html, was one of six individuals named to CHI Academy, <http://www.sigchi.org/documents/awards/#Academy>, an honorary group of individuals who have made extensive contributions to the study of human-computer interactions. Selection was based on cumulative contributions to the field, influence on the work of others, and development of new research directions.

Tod Machover was appointed visiting professor of composition at London's Royal Academy of Music.

John Maeda, http://www.media.mit.edu/people/bio_maeda.html, received the Raymond Loewy Foundation's Lucky Strike Designer Award. This prestigious international award recognizes the lifetime achievements of an individual whose work in design has helped to improve the social and cultural conditions of everyday life.

Adjunct professor David P. Reed, http://www.media.mit.edu/people/bio_dpreed.html, was one of three individuals awarded the IP3 Award by Public Knowledge, a public interest advocacy and education organization. In selecting Reed, Public Knowledge cited his seminal work on the end-to-end principle as the basis of internet architecture.

Mitchel Resnick, http://www.media.mit.edu/people/bio_mres.html, was named one of the Daring Dozen by *Edutopia*, a publication of the George Lucas Educational Foundation. The 12 educators honored were credited with “reshaping the future of education.” In naming Resnick, the foundation recognized his dedication to bringing the creative learning of kindergarten to students of all ages; his group’s development of the programmable Cricket (a robotic kit designed for teens); and his role in establishing the Computer Clubhouse network of after-school centers for young people from low-income communities.

Student and Postdoctorate Awards

Nathan Eagle, <http://web.media.mit.edu/~nathan/>, a postdoctoral researcher working with Toshiba professor Alex “Sandy” Pentland, was one of several researchers honored as Nokia Champions. This new award was created by Nokia to recognize “the best and brightest among individual mobile application developers.”

Peter Gorniak, <http://web.media.mit.edu/~pgorniak/>, a recent PhD recipient, and Deb Roy, http://www.media.mit.edu/people/bio_dkroy.html, AT&T career development professor, received an outstanding paper award from the International Conference on Multimodal Interfaces for their paper “Probabilistic Grounding of Situated Speech Using Plan Recognition and Reference Resolution.”

New Books

Henry Lieberman, Fabio Paternò, and Volker Wulf, editors, *End-User Development* (Human-Computer Interaction Series), Springer Publishing Company, 2006.

William J. Mitchell, *Placing Words: Symbols, Space, and the City*, MIT Press, 2005.

Mitchel Resnick
Program Head
LEGO Papert Professor of Learning Research

More information on the Program in Media Arts and Sciences can be found at <http://www.media.mit.edu/mas/>.