

## Chancellor

The mission of the Office of the Chancellor is to enhance and support student life and learning and to advance other initiatives that support MIT's mission. This report highlights selected initiatives in which the chancellor has been involved and summarizes the high points in the work of the offices that report to the chancellor. Many of the issues mentioned in this report are detailed in the reports of constituent units: the Office of the Dean for Graduate Students, the Office of the Dean for Student Life (DSL), and the Office of the Dean for Undergraduate Education (DUE). A comprehensive report of the work of these offices can be found in their respective reports to the president.

The spirit of the year has been captured in the strong and deep response of the MIT community to Hurricane Katrina, which occurred at the beginning of the academic year. The best of MIT was evident in our responses:

- We hosted a dozen undergraduate and graduate students who were displaced by the storm.
- We organized numerous forums at which experts in various fields engaged students and other members of the campus community and the public on issues the storm raised, including infrastructure, regional history, and climate change.
- Faculty experts in fields as disparate as urban design, logistics, building technology, and history created projects and consulted or engaged directly in other ways. Some of these engagements were developed in connection with institutions and colleagues in the Gulf Coast area.
- Students invented ways to model the ecosystems and assess the social fabric. They designed new technologies and social interventions to address problems and challenges that surfaced in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. In some cases, this was done for real “clients” in the affected area.

The efforts energized student life and passion for service. It gave a focus to academic exercises and reinforced commitment to our mission. By the end of the school year, there were plans for additional activities in 2006–2007.

### Highlights in Undergraduate Education

Dean for undergraduate education Daniel L. Hastings committed the staff and stakeholders to a strategic planning exercise to develop a stronger role in undergraduate education. This assessment, prompted in part by the DUE Search Advisory Committee that recommended a stronger role for the office, would include a stronger connection with faculty and faculty committees. It also recommended that DUE prepare to support recommendations that were likely to flow from the Task Force on the Undergraduate Educational Commons.

DUE developed new and sharper statements of its vision and mission.

*Vision*

We aspire to be the best in the world in shaping strategic partnerships and creating synergies to integrate learning and life at a research university.

*Mission*

We enroll, educate, and inspire some of the world's brightest students with a passion for learning and sense of self so they become the next generation of creative thinkers and leaders in a global society.

We lead by promoting the excellence of a science and technology-centric education, ensuring access and opportunity without regard to financial resources, upholding rigorous academic standards, advancing innovation, developing mentoring relationships, strengthening respect for diversity, and serving as a catalyst for learning, exploration, and discovery.

In its strategic planning process, DUE developed a set of themes that would capture the activities critical to advancing both its mission and objectives. It concluded that the focus should be to:

- Catalyze the Undergraduate Commons (to be voted on by the Faculty)
- Champion information technology for the provision of information to the students and faculty
- Develop a holistic student experience
- Provide global educational opportunities that enable students to appreciate and learn from other cultures
- Advance from teaching to learning in our classrooms
- Champion and increase diversity in graduate school by encouraging excellence in leadership among underrepresented minority students

The plan was organized around reconfiguring the DUE units to match the mission and objectives of the office. The dean initiated two other changes: first, the development of new collaborations reinforced goals for a holistic student experience; next, the creation of a nexus of office teams brought a richer array of talent to the DUE offices. While many of the constituent offices were not changed, their missions were refocused and more closely integrated. In the process, two new functions emerged: an office of faculty support and an office to support international education.

Remnants of functions in the Office of the Vice President for Information Services and Technology were combined with DUE to build a new unit to support information technology and student information systems. The programs and staffing of the Office of Minority Education were revised or strengthened. Dean Hastings formed other groups to advance other issues, from advising and mentoring to teaching and learning assessment.

Dean Hastings and his staff succeeded in strengthening operations and more effectively configuring assets. The process also brought to light the need for major commitment to building stronger and more synergistic relationships between DUE and the faculty

committees, and with departments on such issues as advising and mentoring. By the end of the planning period, DUE had refocused and was stronger on its core mission and more prepared to support faculty in implementing the recommendations forthcoming in the task force report.

### **Highlights in Student Life**

The Division of Student Life serves students by providing programs and services ranging from housing and dining to counseling and residential life programs. The Office of the Dean for Student Life is responsible for the administration of student discipline and for athletics, recreation, and physical education. The dean also oversees the fraternities, sororities and independent living groups and the Public Service Center (PSC). DSL works closely with other offices, including DUE, the Graduate Students Office (GSO), and MIT Medical.

The division continued to make programmatic progress and to improve operational areas. Even as new programs were developed and implemented, it continued to improve operations, hire and train new staff, enhance facilities, and build stronger relations with faculty and students. This was all the more difficult to accomplish in an environment of rapidly increasing costs for utilities.

DSL advanced several noteworthy endeavors this year. After some years of steady efforts, the most recent survey shows a marked increase in student satisfaction with campus services such as housing, dining, athletics, and social activities. Much work remains, especially in dining, even though the increase in student satisfaction has been substantial. These new indicators of student satisfaction elevate our rating among our peers and challenge us to make further improvements.

The dean for student life worked with a group of stakeholders to reach consensus on the residence hall building projects. The decision was made to build a residence hall for graduate students, designated as Building NW35 and located in the northwest sector of campus near other graduate residences. This new graduate residence will house more than 500 students in a building designed by William Rawn Associates. The Executive Committee of the Corporation approved the transfer of the Ashdown House name from Building W1 to Building NW35. When occupied, the new Ashdown and the other graduate residence halls in the northwest area will be home to more than 1,700 graduate students. The project details and program evolved with the full engagement of all stakeholders: current Ashdown residents, residents of the other graduate residence halls, and housemasters and staff from DSL and GSO. Dean for student life Larry Benedict and dean for graduate students Isaac Colbert cochaired the committee.

A major aim of the project is to transfer to the new building the spirit of the existing Ashdown community, its core traditions, and artifacts. The continuing challenge is to develop the social infrastructure to make the area effective as a graduate community. The group worked on the internal configurations and later will turn to planning the integration of graduate student life in the area. We are also committed to the renovation of Building W1 and its establishment as an undergraduate residence.

The Public Service Center, which supports our activities in service learning, is far more than a venue for campus volunteer work. The PSC took the lead in supporting a number of Katrina-related projects at MIT. The center encompasses an even larger set of activities that creates a project interface with the local community and acts as a resource for faculty, students, and staff. There is continued growth in the number of projects and the number of faculty who are involved in connecting service projects to courses, student passions, and community needs. The center supports global projects in collaboration with the Edgerton Center and other groups.

The Mental Health Service at MIT Medical continued its effort to improve services to students in connection with the report that the Mental Health Task Force made to the chancellor in 2001. The task force recommended significant increases in staffing, programs, and support for student mental health. The recommended staff changes have been made, and an approach that focuses on public health (e.g., evaluation and outreach) is in place. The current focus is on improving diagnostic mechanisms for identifying students at risk. These efforts, as well as improved coordination with other health and counseling providers and colleagues from peer institutions, bring stronger programs to support student development and student health.

### **Graduate Students Office**

The GSO, under the leadership of Dean Isaac M. Colbert, continued its collaboration with a variety of institute offices and student groups to foster graduate student life and services to support graduate students. The office also provided support for the Graduate Student Council and a host of student initiatives through graduate life grants. Housemasters in graduate residence halls organized to work with the dean on matters of special concern to graduate students. The dean's work (as cochair with Dean Larry Benedict) with the NW35 stakeholders group was a major effort. They worked with the project architects and staff from the Department of Facilities to develop a program for the new Ashdown House.

The dean for graduate students and his colleagues across the campus in the Collaborative Network have aligned the processes of each office so that each office in the collaborative reinforces the service enhancement goals we have for graduate students.

The GSO has responsibility for efforts to coordinate and advance minority graduate student recruiting. The office manages CONVERGE, a minority recruiting initiative formerly part of the Office of the Provost. Twenty-five undergraduate students were invited to visit MIT during the fall term, and four of the eligible 18 matriculated in graduate programs at MIT the following fall. The office also runs the MIT Summer Research Program, which provides a summer research opportunity for more than 50 students who spend six weeks at MIT working with faculty in labs and on research projects. Program enhancements resulting from a review led by Professor Paula T. Hammond made the program more rigorous and concentrated. We now expect to generate greater numbers of applicants to the graduate programs at MIT.

## Challenges in Student Life and Learning

The Office of the Chancellor is charged with oversight of areas related to student experience, both in learning and campus life. We have had considerable success in advancing student life and learning in the period since 1998, when President Charles M. Vest charged the office with this task. Still, there are areas for improvement and deeper engagement that represent a continuing challenge or that are areas of emerging concern, some of which are highlighted herein.

We are reviewing the needs of the areas of student life and learning that fall under the chancellor's purview. A host of enhancements is needed. The Task Force on the Undergraduate Educational Commons will make recommendations for undergraduate education soon, and we have a number of capital needs in the areas of renewal of facilities and equipment. We are assessing how to prepare to address these issues in the upcoming fundraising campaign that will be focused on students.

The search for a new head of the Department of Athletics, Physical Education, and Recreation began. The search represents an important opportunity to advance the three streams of our program engagement—athletics, physical education, and recreation. While we have upgraded our facilities and maintained strong programming, we now have to make improvements in financial operations, and we must chart strategic directions that add value to our mission.

Space and infrastructure emerged in a number of ways during the year. The dean for undergraduate education and the vice president for information services and technology began to address replacing the various information systems related to students, from registration and financial aid to services and programming. We also expanded the ongoing efforts to assess classroom space and future needs for teaching, especially since emerging modes of teaching (i.e., project-based work and technology-enabled teaching) will inform space requirements. We continue the classroom renewal project as part of the larger need to renovate buildings in the core of the campus.

Student diversity is a core value that we advance by constant attention to improvements we can make. New staffing, materials, and outreach resulted in both a larger pool and a higher yield of minority students. The details of our improvement are outlined in reports of the dean for undergraduate education and the dean for graduate students.

The chancellor serves as a member of the Campus Development Committee and cochairs with Corporation member James A. Champy the Campus Environs subcommittee. The subcommittee focuses on plans for development of the areas near the campus (e.g., Kendall Square, Massachusetts Avenue, and the Northwest Sector) and the integration of this planning with campus goals and plans. In all areas, the hope is to bring more activity that complements campus life and makes the area a better reflection of the campus community and our Cambridge neighbors.

## International Activities

The chancellor has an oversight role in connection with some of MIT's international initiatives. The 2005–2006 academic year was the sixth and final one of the MIT-Cambridge collaboration. We witnessed a strategic collaboration between two great institutions: more than 50 faculty members served as principal investigators in joint research, and 60 or more students per year participated in the exchange (30 from each institution). Other aspects of the collaboration included collaboration with industry, development of new programs and courses at both schools, and development of tools for assessing student learning. At the end of the year, we were looking for ways to continue the collaboration.

The chancellor was involved in MIT projects that emerged in Kuwait, Cyprus, and Portugal. All three projects were initiated by faculty and provided opportunities for them to collaborate with institutions on major topics that ranged from energy and water to the environment and institutional company-building.

**Phillip L. Clay**  
**Chancellor**

*More information about the Office of the Chancellor can be found at <http://web.mit.edu/chancellor/>.*