

Dean for Student Life

The Division of Student Life (DSL) at MIT had another extraordinary year, with visible signs of improvement and changes throughout the division. As in past years, collaborations abound, among our own staff as well as across departments at MIT. What stands out this year, however, is distinct strengthening of our ties with students. Collaboration between DSL staff and MIT students is at an all-time high. At MIT, perhaps uniquely, the administration is not viewed as the students' adversary but as a strong and loyal ally. Students are, with increasing frequency, bringing forward initiatives and ideas, asking for advice and support, and pursuing activities to benefit the entire student body now and for years to come. From outlining a student leadership development program to refining plans for new residences and community space across campus, students, as activists, are shaping student life and learning to lead in many ways.

Collaboration and communication with faculty have also increased, improving the work of DSL. This has led to new opportunities for faculty-student involvement, improved academic integrity processes and preferred practices, and enhanced DSL resources available for faculty and students.

New for-credit experiential classes have been offered to students, including 2.00B Solving Real Problems, a freshman engineering course provided in collaboration with the Public Service Center, and 4.510 Digital Design Fabrication, an architecture class taught by Professor Lawrence Sass in the Hobby Shop. This class provides students first-hand experience making models on the OMAX waterjet machine.

Many offices within DSL have also refined or added ways for faculty to become involved with students, including offering opportunities for faculty to circulate and engage in conversations with students during the MacGregor House community dinners. These dinners were designed to enhance community, and more than 100 students attended each week. In addition, 10 fraternities and sororities piloted successful faculty-student mentorship programs in their chapters, a new housemaster program was created in Edgerton House, and best practices were established for the development of future living-learning communities, from which International House has benefited already.

Alumni engagement in student life has also been on the rise. Alumni contributions include working to develop and implement an accreditation process for fraternities, sororities, and independent living groups (FSILGs), forming a new Latino alumni group (Latino/a Alumni of MIT), and speaking at lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender (LBGT) events. Alumni have been major contributors to the success of several new events for students this year, such as MIT Women's Professional Day, a student initiative at which alumnae shared their experiences, struggles, and successes as professionals and women. In addition, the Community Catalyst Leadership was inaugurated this year as a means to recognize junior leaders' contributions to the community and to encourage continued contributions as seniors and as alumni. Events include dinner at the president's house.

A major change for DSL this year was the reorganization of its offices and areas to strengthen and support its mission and the programs and services it provides to

students and the MIT community. The new organizational structure was intentionally and strategically defined to connect areas with similar missions and to facilitate stronger collaborations among the offices. This was also done for the purpose of positioning the work on behalf of our students in a way that allows us to tell the DSL story effectively so that donors and senior administrators support the future of student life in tangible ways.

The new organization includes these changes:

- The Office of Residential Life now encompasses Housing, Dining, Residence Life Programs, and FSILGs.
- The Office of Student Development was created to connect, under a core mission, the work of the Public Service Center, Student Leadership Development, Student Activities Office, and the Hobby Shop.
- The Office of Student Support was created to strengthen Student Support Services, Student Mediation and Community Standards, and Crisis Response.
- The DSL appointed MIT's first chaplain to the Institute to provide a champion and connection for MIT's chaplains and Religious Life.

The Department of Athletics, Physical Education, and Recreation (DAPER) and Community Development and Substance Abuse remained separate under the same configuration as in past years.

Already, this new organization and the connections it enables facilitated enhancements that strengthened the DSL's work in every corner of student life. Among these are a more efficient use of resources, new natural communication pathways, a clearer sense of accomplishments related to a mission that facilitates fundraising efforts, new programs already under development, enhanced service provided to students and the MIT community, a more creative approach to problem solving and program development, and a more direct connection between our work and our strategic objectives.

The work of DSL is always changing to meet the needs of the current student population and the rest of the MIT community, including alumni and parents, and its staff are continually seeking ways to improve the lives of students and to provide even more exceptional opportunities for students each year, with the goal of equaling the quality that is expected of an MIT education.

The work of DSL maintains a common direction across the division and throughout the years by remaining focused on the DSL mission and its strategic objectives, under which we can readily identify the major accomplishments of the year.

- **Strategic Objective 1: Enhance the range of opportunities for students to develop, test, and expand their leadership skills and integrate them with their intellectual skills**

Student Development, a newly formed office, worked with broad input from faculty, staff, and students to define and establish its mission and values in a way that emphasizes the students' whole development, including building self-confidence. Student Development helps maximize wellbeing and the development of skills for a

balanced life. This new area includes the Hobby Shop, the Public Service Center, the Student Activities Office, and Student Leadership Development.

The Student Leadership Development office was started this year and, with broad institutional input, developed a conceptual framework and defined a scope. This office's opportunities database website will eventually serve as the foundation for a more robust virtual leadership center.

The Public Service Center, in collaboration with the Edgerton Center, kicked off the International Development Initiative with the goal of enabling students to collaborate with innovators and entrepreneurs around the world on innovations and enterprises.

Students from the Public Service Center developed a set of solutions (both technical and incentive-based) to encourage people to complete the entire course of tuberculosis treatment in an effort to reduce the number of drug-resistant cases of tuberculosis worldwide. This project was part of the Yunus Challenge for Poverty Alleviation and recognized by infectious disease experts as having created truly workable solutions.

The Public Service Center more than doubled the number and dollar amount of grants given to support independent student projects, distributing \$50,000 (compared to a typical \$20,000 in past years).

Audio Visual Services participated in a collaborative effort, My TechTV, with the School of Engineering and Academic Media Production Services. My TechTV allowed 25 student teams to produce videos showcasing their work, research, creativity, and art, and helped students develop valuable communication skills.

Enterprise Services expanded services and used natural business opportunities to challenge and encourage students as business leaders and to improve business-related skills. Opportunities included negotiating with Endicott House conference services, recruiting sponsors (for the Kappa Alpha Theta KATwalk and Sports Car Auto Club), selecting vendors, and providing referrals for business needs. In addition, Enterprise Services teamed up with Conference Services to provide students and MIT community members with the heavily attended training session "How to Promote Your Event."

Use of Endicott House Conference space for leadership development activities doubled in FY2007 (2,000 students compared to 1,000 in FY2006).

- **Strategic Objective 2: Guarantee that life outside the classroom is as rewarding and educational as the rest of the MIT experience**

Religious Life, in collaboration with students, faculty, chaplains, and alumni, introduced the Veritas Forum at MIT to allow students to explore intersections of science, faith, and technology. Members of the entire MIT community were engaged by asking pressing questions that were answered by respected Institute voices during discussion.

The Public Service Center realigned its structure to enhance leadership development opportunities and the efficiency of the office through providing a core of student experts who can train and assist other students in accomplishing their goals and projects.

Residential Life staff enhanced community relations standards and residential community performance through the implementation of a values-based leadership program in the FSILGs. Program components included chapter retreats, the Women's Empowerment Leadership Program, the Greek Summit, and the Impact Institute. Student judicial committees (JudComms) were established in three residence halls (Random House, MacGregor, and Burton-Connor).

The Office of Student Mediation and Community Standards transferred responsibility and investment in upholding community standards to the student-led JudComm and FSILG systems.

DAPER approved an increased student fee, established a new faculty governance structure, and increased compensation for assistant coaches and athletic trainers after appropriate compensation and workload reviews. It also implemented the Rowing Advisory Committee recommendations, which improved the overall program for students and improved alumni relations and contributions.

Student Support Services increased its services and improved the seamlessness and comprehensiveness of its response to student issues while responding to cases of increasing complexity, including those that intersect with academic, psychiatric, conduct-related, and mental health issues, as well as multiple student deaths. Stronger partnerships among the Dean-on-Call Service, the Office of Student Mediation and Community Standards, MIT Medical, and others aided in more comprehensive and coherent practices to improve service to students and faculty.

Cultural Awareness and Diversity

The second annual Multicultural Conference incorporated academic components to strengthen the program, including presentations connecting academic work on issues of diversity with work that students are doing outside the classroom. Presenters included Professor Ceasar McDowell (Department of Urban Studies and Planning), graduate student Dulari Tahbaldar (Department of Urban Studies and Planning), and Nancy Murray, education director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts.

The Addir Fellowship, a year-long interfaith dialogue program sponsored by DSL, brought together thirty students of different faiths to engage and better understand each other in a stimulating environment.

Religious Life sent a group of six Muslim MIT students to the Middle East as part of the College Admissions Arab Mentorship Program. They traveled to six Middle Eastern countries to talk about American college admissions and to share their experiences of being Muslim at MIT.

DSL, in collaboration with the Graduate Students Office, added a full-time dedicated staff position for LBGT support, resources, and outreach.

Religious Life and the chaplain to the Institute orchestrated a number of events to bring together underrepresented student populations, including Muslim and Buddhist students. Events included a performance by El-Funoun, a 50-member Palestinian-

Muslim professional dance troupe, and a presentation in Simmons Hall by Robert Thurman, a leading American expert on Buddhism.

Energy Initiative

Campus Dining facilitated vendor relationships that allowed the student group Biodiesel@MIT to develop an energy solution that converts used cooking oil to biodiesel fuel for MIT's Tech shuttles. This student idea/initiative won the first-ever mtvU/GE ecomagination Challenge contest.

Endicott House entered into an agreement with Bon Appetit/Campus Dining to grow produce for their use, allowing MIT to draw upon internal sources of food.

Residential Life, in conjunction with students, inaugurated a contest among residence halls to raise awareness of energy conservation and encourage students to change energy use behaviors. The winning residence hall received a cash award that will be invested in that residence hall for future energy and environmental enhancements.

Honors and Recognition

Student Support Services was reviewed as a best practice example by Wonkwang University of Korea.

For the first time, a former IDEAS Competition winner was selected as MIT's 100K Entrepreneurship Competition winner. The team, Robopsy, includes two graduate students who helped design a machine that makes needle biopsies less invasive and less liable to lead to complications.

Two students, Ilan Moyer and Gregory Schroll, received the Luis de Florez Award for Creativity and Ingenuity from the Department of Mechanical Engineering for their work in the Hobby Shop.

Students and coaches from DAPER were recognized for excellence, receiving numerous awards and earning several championship titles. In addition to 33 All-America honors and seven Academic All-America honors, MIT won championships in pistol (national championship), men's tennis (New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference), men's cross country (NEWMAC), and men's track and field (NEWMAC). In addition, Julia Zimmerman was named the National Collegiate Gymnastics Association's national all-around champion, and Doria Holbrook was the NCAA Division III three-meter diving national champion.

Eleven MIT athletes received significant athletic conference awards for excellence in their sports. Nine MIT athletic coaches received significant awards for excellence, eight of whom were named coach of the year within their conferences.

- **Strategic Objective 3: Maintain the highest standards of health and safety for students and other members of the MIT community**

Student safety was enhanced through the initial deployment of online card readers on entry doors in Walker Memorial, the Religious Activities Center, and the Stratton

Student Center through a partnership among the Campus Activities Complex, the MIT Card Office, and MIT Campus Police.

Wellness

DAPER collaborated with MIT Medical to establish a campus-wide initiative for wellness. This initiative includes a relationship with the Tufts University Master of Public Health Program, through which three master's-level interns are assisting MIT with health and wellness initiatives and curriculum development.

The wellness course, Upgrade Your Health and Happiness, was created to help students address stress management, fitness, nutrition, and sleep issues.

Also this year, DAPER increased community involvement in wellness-based activities such as MIT Day Camp and the getfit@MIT Fitness Challenge (participation increased by 20 percent).

- **Strategic Objective 4: Strategically marshal DSL resources to support its mission**

Financial Resources/Fundraising

DAPER increased revenue generation through facility rentals, opening an Au Bon Pain in the Zesiger Center, and Pro Shop and Internet merchandise sales.

DSL enhanced fundraising efforts, resulting in receipt of \$2,996,902, of which \$1,629,542 was distributed to DAPER.

DSL established the first DAPER Office of Advancement and appointed its director, Candace Royer, senior associate dean for student life.

Physical Resources

Facility enhancements include:

- Groundbreaking for construction of the new graduate residence hall (NW35)
- Opening the new Building 10 Community Lounge
- Replacing windows in Tang Hall (W84), to conserve energy and improve heating
- Remodeling the Student Center Reading Room

New dining facilities include Dunkin' Donuts, Au Bon Pain, and Subway. The R&D Pub in the Stata Center was transitioned to be used as a secondary catering site during off-peak periods.

Communications

DSL formed two teams to enhance communications within DSL and beyond the Institute. The Strategic Positioning Team comprises leaders from across the division who thoroughly understand the mission of DSL and can articulate accomplishments from a

range of areas. The Communications Affinity Team is made up of a cross-section of DSL staff with strengths in communications and technology fields who can write, submit, and place stories identified by the Strategic Positioning Team to highlight division and student accomplishments to MIT, local, and national audiences.

Offices across the division have cultivated alumni relationships over the past year. Three stand out. DSL Communications submitted the first DSL annual report to alumni donors, as well as to visiting committee members and MIT leadership. The report highlights student life accomplishments and notable students. DAPER hosted numerous alumni gatherings, including a celebration of 100 years of MIT Golf, an event attended by more than 70 alumni and family members. And, the Hobby Shop initiated a communications strategy to reengage alumni and better position itself on campus; its new website encourages community sharing of ideas, and its debut newsletter, which reconnected with alumni, received a tremendously positive response.

Diversity Report

Within DSL, we make every effort to increase diversity among our staff. As a result, there has been a decrease in the overall percentage of white/non-Hispanic personnel (78 percent in 2004; 70 percent in 2006). The data do not reveal any other significant increases in minority or women personnel due to a large increase in staff members who choose not to self-identify. It is noteworthy that the percentages of both minorities and women have remained consistent in spite of growth in the division. The ratio of female to male faculty is equal, and the number of female administrative staff surpasses that of male administrative staff.

Community Citizenship

DSL staff donated toys built at the DSL holiday party with the assistance and advice of professional staff from the Hobby Shop. Toys went to three shelters for women and children and led to another volunteer project for students with *Extreme Makeover: Hometown Edition*, featured on WCVB-TV Channel 5.

Through the efforts of Campus Dining, which held a one-day event with its vendors and partners, the MIT community contributed \$1,800 for MIT Community Giving.

TechCASH used existing technology to expand its service, enabling student organizations to accept charitable donations for non-MIT fundraising initiatives. This year, more than \$25,000 was donated via TechCASH.

Larry Benedict
Dean for Student Life

More information on the Division of Student Life may be found at <http://web.mit.edu/dsl/>.