Chair of the Faculty

Faculty Policy Committee

The Faculty Policy Committee (FPC), chaired by Professor Steven R. Lerman, met with several committees during 2006–2007 to review processes and polices of the Institute. The committee met twice with both the president and the provost.

The committee made several changes to the *Rules and Regulations of the Faculty* in sections 1.71, 1.72, 1.73.1, and 1.73.5. While changes to section 1.73.5 were minor, the changes to the other sections were substantial. The FPC agreed to disband the Committee on Faculty-Administration (CFA), currently chaired by Professor Mary C. Fuller, and to fold the crucial elements of the CFA charge into that of the FPC. A formal vote on all changes went to the Faculty, which voted to approve all of the motions. Committee members discussed regularly the Report from the Task Force on the Undergraduate Educational Commons, and five Institute Faculty Meetings had this item on the agenda. The recommendations of this report will be a major agenda item for 2007–2008.

Professor Claude Canizares reviewed for the FPC the history of the Report to the Provost of the Ad Hoc Committee to Review Factors Delaying Resolution of a Research Misconduct Proceeding, dated May 18, 2006. The committee was to recommend such changes to *Policies and Procedures* as to mitigate such future misconduct.

There were several discussions during the year about global outreach and MIT's international engagements, with particular emphasis on faculty involvement in the selection of partnerships, choice of locations for engagements, and the structure of these endeavors. During one such discussion, Professor Subra Suresh provided a status update about the Singapore–MIT Alliance for Research Technology Center. The committee raised questions about the extent and nature of undergraduate involvement, the time commitment needed from faculty, and decision-making on the structure of international engagements.

In the fall of 2007, the FPC met with the chairs of the various academic deans' search committees to discuss the characteristics that each committee was looking for. Committee members offered their views on specific criteria they felt would best serve the deans, and the committee met with Professor Stephen C. Graves in the spring to discuss the search for the dean for graduate students.

A comprehensive discussion was led in October 2007 by William Van Schalkwyk about MIT preparedness for a potential Avian Influenza pandemic.

In the spring, Professors Akintunde Akinwande, Rafael Bras, and Wesley Harris discussed the recruitment and retention of minority faculty members with the FPC, including minority graduate student recruiting practices at peer institutions, and how these practices differ from those at MIT.

The committee met with Karl Koster, executive director of the Office of Corporate Relations, to receive an update on the Industrial Liaison Program (ILP). Since the

Committee on Corporate Relations was disbanded in 2002, the FPC assumed the responsibilities for the faculty governance system's oversight of the work of the ILP.

The committee held several roundtable discussions to outline possible agenda items for the 2007–2008 academic year. One important item is to ensure that the grievance process for faculty remains consistent and fair.

The faculty officers for 2007–2008 will be Professor Bish Sanyal as chair of the faculty, Professor Melissa Nobles as associate chair of the faculty, and Professor Bevin Engelward as secretary of the faculty.

Committee on the Undergraduate Program

In 2006–2007, the Committee on the Undergraduate Program (CUP) was involved through its chair, Professor Dennis Freeman, in facilitating faculty discussions of the recommendations of Task Force on the Undergraduate Educational Commons. These discussions included meetings with the faculty officers, School Councils, the departmental undergraduate officers, and others across the Institute. The recommendations—preliminary and final—were discussed at a number of committee meetings throughout the year. Based on the task force report, and taking into account feedback from the community, the committee plans to develop specific proposals that can be moved forward for a Faculty vote. This work will form the major part of the CUP's agenda in the coming academic year.

CAP End-of-Term Action Summary, 2006–2007

	Fall 2006		Spring 2007	
Year	Warnings	Required Withdrawals	Warnings	Required Withdrawals
Freshmen	56	0	36	7
Sophomores	50	5	34	11
Juniors	33	8	23	2
Seniors	39	3	20	4
Total	**178**	**16**	**113**	**33**

In advance of the task force report, the CUP met during the summer and fall of 2006 with faculty who had received funds from the d'Arbeloff Grant for Excellence in Education to develop project-based pilot subjects. The committee helped to formulate learning objectives for the pilots and to identify appropriate incentives for student participation. The CUP collaborated closely with its Subcommittee on the Communication Requirement (SOCR) to develop and license these pilots as experimental Communication Intensive (CI) subjects (see details below). Through the work of its chair, the CUP participated in activities associated with assessing the project-based subjects and their impact on the freshman experience.

The CUP also reviewed and modified two ongoing experiments: the SB program in Comparative Media Studies and the sophomore Exploratory Subject grading option. In

December, at the request of the Committee on Academic Performance, the CUP revised the terms of the sophomore Exploratory Subject experiment. The changes allow CAP members to consider a subject's Exploratory status in evaluating a student's academic performance and to accept petitions from students whose status changes as a result of converting an Exploratory Subject to Listener. The CUP charged a subcommittee to review the outcome of this experiment and make a recommendation regarding its permanence; this review is expected to close in early fall 2007.

In reviewing the experimental SB program in Comparative Media Studies, the committee looked at student interest and opinion, enrollment, program infrastructure, and sustainability. Based on these criteria, the CUP concluded that the SB program was a success, and that barring any substantial changes during the spring term, it would recommend that the program be made permanent. The CUP approved a change to the terms of the experiment so that the final review would occur during the fifth year of the experiment, rather than after the fifth year. The change precludes the possibility of an "orphan" year in which the program was neither permanent nor a CUP experiment.

In other work, the subcommittee involved with evaluating the Exploratory Subject experiment also reviewed the changes to freshman spring term grading that were implemented in 2002–2003. The subcommittee concluded that the change to A/B/C/No Record in the spring term had helped the transition of students from high school to MIT, and it will include this assessment in its final report.

The committee also provided input on planning for a new subject evaluation system and campus preparations for a possible flu pandemic. Through SOCR (see below), the CUP maintained its oversight of this General Institute Requirement.

Subcommittee on the Communication Requirement

During 2006–2007, the CUP's Subcommittee on the Communication Requirement was chaired by Professor Tania Baker and continued its oversight of the Communication Requirement. Beginning in the summer of 2006, SOCR worked closely with the CUP and other constituencies to articulate appropriate criteria for designating the project-based pilots as experimental communication-intensive (CI) subjects. The subcommittee solicited and reviewed proposals and designated these subjects as CI, worked with faculty to refine the communication-intensive content, and forwarded the proposed experiment to the CUP for final approval. Six subjects were licensed as experimental CI for spring 2007. Assessment data on these subjects and students' experiences will be reviewed early in fall 2007 to inform decisions regarding future experiments.

A primary focus of the SOCR during 2006–2007 was the ongoing 18-month assessment of the Communication Requirement, which launched in early 2006. Throughout the fall, the subcommittee oversaw analysis of data from spring 2006 surveys of student and faculty attitudes and experiences with the Communication Requirement. In December, SOCR conducted a third survey, this time of all undergraduates, regarding their fall CI subjects. At the same time, the subcommittee held two series of roundtable discussions to explore separately and in more depth the findings from the 2006 surveys. A final report on this assessment of the Communication Requirement is expected in fall 2007.

To complement the assessment activities, the SOCR charged a small working group of MIT faculty members to engage with outside experts in developing a pilot tool to gauge the impact of the requirement on students' communication skills. If the pilot is successful, work in this area may continue for several years.

SOCR considered a proposal for a study regarding the tools used to place incoming students in their first CI subjects. The subcommittee determined that prior to undertaking the proposed study, MIT must define in more detail the expectations regarding the skills sets of incoming freshmen and the learning objectives for the CI-HW (communication-intensive writing) and CI-H (communication-intensive humanities) subjects. This will be an important agenda item in 2007–2008 and will involve consultation with various constituencies, including instructors in the CI-HW and CI-H subjects and the Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences Overview Committee.

The CI-M (communication-intensive subjects in the major) working group continued its program of visiting departments to discuss how their CI-Ms are working. In 2006–2007, the working group visited Courses 1, 3, 4, 12, and the Literature section of Course 21. The working group also considered proposals for new and revised CI-M subjects.

SOCR members considered petitions from students seeking exemption to or adjustment of some aspect of the Communication Requirement. Petitions that demonstrated extenuating circumstances or compelling educational cause were approved.

Committee on Academic Performance

The Committee on Academic Performance (CAP), chaired by Professor von Fintel, reviewed 282 petitions this year. Last year's number was 339, and the average for the past five years is 342. A slight decline in the number of petitions occurred over the last five years. Of this year's petitions, 231 (81.9 percent) were approved, 39 (13.8 percent) denied, and 12 (4.3 percent) have not been resolved yet.

The CAP issued 291 warnings, slightly fewer than last year's 318. Students required to withdraw totaled 40. Last year's number was 51, and the average for the past five years is 43.6. Details of this year's actions are given below.

A pattern has emerged over the years: in the fall term, there are more warnings than in the spring term, and in the spring term, there is a higher number of required withdrawals. Further, and partially because there are considerable fewer required withdrawals than warnings, these numbers mean that there are consistently fewer total actions taken by CAP in the spring than in the fall.

There were relatively few policy issues to be dealt with this year. CAP negotiated with the CUP a small change to the terms of the Sophomore Exploratory Subject experiment. The committee requested a change to its charter in the *Rules and Regulations of the Faculty*, a change that was granted by the Faculty at one of its meetings. There are a number of outstanding issues for the next year, in particular, the issue of students taking courses while on financial hold, a situation is facilitated by the fact that CAP can grant a late registration petition.

CAP worked with the CUP on a revision of the terms of the Sophomore Exploratory Subject. The new policy allows CAP to consider the exploratory status of a subject in its end-of-term deliberations (the prohibition to do so was an unworkable part of the original specifications of the policy). The new language in the Academic Guide now reads as follows:

If a student changes an Exploratory subject to Listener, the Listener status is recorded on class lists, grade sheets, the student's internal grade report, and reports provided to departments and the Committee on Academic Performance (CAP). Listener subjects do not appear on the transcript.

The Exploratory status of subjects may be considered in the CAP end of term review. The CAP may also consider petitions to revoke a CAP action if a student's status is changed by a conversion of an Exploratory Subject to Listener.

The committee requested several changes to the *Rules and Regulations of the Faculty*, which were granted by a vote of the Faculty. The Office of Counseling and Support Services had to be changed to Student Support Services, and the fact that the office is led by two people needed to be reflected in the charter. The only substantial change was the addition of a representative of the Disabilities Services Office as an ex officio member of the committee. A representative from that office had already been a resource to the committee for several years, but it was time to recognize the importance of disability issues by elevating the representative's status to that of an ex officio member of CAP.

CAP spends a lot of time each semester reviewing the records of all undergraduate students, particularly those who are experiencing problems in their academic performance. Over the years, it has become clear that there are many reasons why students struggle at MIT, including health problems (physical and mental), family issues, relationship issues, culture shock, and others. What has also become clear is that a major indicator for a return to success is the quality of the advising that a student receives here at MIT. While we have several offices that are dedicated to helping students find a successful life balance, in many ways, a student's success stands and falls with the crucial role of the faculty advisor.

Too many faculty advisors limit their role in their advisees' progress to a perfunctory meeting on Registration Day. As a consequence, they do not perceive early warning signs that a student is headed for difficulties. Further, they are often not aware of the resources they and their advisees can and should call upon for help.

There are several steps that might improve the situation. There might be a regular orientation session for new (and old) faculty advisors. It may be time for tenure and promotion decisions to take into account a faculty member's quality of service as an advisor to undergraduate students. With several new School deans taking office, perhaps it is time to stress the importance of undergraduate advising in assessing the performance of faculty. CAP is committed to be part of an effort to improve undergraduate advising, but the success of such an improvement relies on a broader effort and commitment across the Institute.

The committee continues to be dismayed by the number of students on warning who made no attempt to seek any help at all from Student Support Services, Mental Health, Disabilities Services, or the Office of Minority Education, in spite of language in the warning letter that specifically recommends such assistance. In many cases, the same students sought little or no help from their academic advisors.

Hollis Lilly, the staff resource to the committee, presented a proposal to contact each student on academic warning (and their advisors) early on in the term to make students aware of resources available for helping them get back on track. The committee expects that this process, which will be piloted in the fall 2007 term, will increase the chances that students on warning will improve their performance significantly.

Committee on Curricula Actions 2006–2007

New subjects approved	91
Subjects reinstated	3
Subjects removed	80
Subjects renumbered	8
Subjects revised	300
Total	**482**

The committee should discuss the possibility of two uniform policies: one for late adds where there is clear documented evidence that a student attended and did all assignments from the very start, and the other for late drops where there is similar evidence that a student never attended or handed in any work. These cases take up a good deal of the committee's time and may not be treated consistently from meeting to meeting. (This item is a carry-over from last year's report, as it wasn't acted upon this year.)

MIT has had difficulty enforcing its rules concerning students on financial holds, that is, students who have not paid all their bills for previous terms. As reported in its 2004–2005 report, CAP worked with Student Financial Services, the registrar, and Student Support Services to establish the following policy:

CAP Policy on Financial Holds
No petitions for retroactive awarding of credit for students on financial hold will be entertained without the recommendation of a majority of a committee made up of the director of Student Financial Services, the registrar, and a director of the Office of Counseling and Support Services. Following such a recommendation, CAP will consider the merits of the petition. Students submitting these petitions must contact a counseling dean before CAP meets to consider the request. Except in extraordinary circumstances, CAP will not approve such petitions for terms ending more than one calendar year prior to the date of the petition.

This semester, CAP had to deal with a particularly difficult case of a student taking classes for two consecutive semesters while on financial hold. This demonstrated the need to revisit our current policies and try to strengthen our structures and procedures yet again. A working group during the summer will study this problem and make recommendations to CAP and other involved agencies.

The committee has discovered in its end-of-term meetings that the D grade is treated differently in various departments across the Institute. The definition of the grade in the Academic Guide is:

Minimally acceptable performance, demonstrating at least partial familiarity with the subject matter and some capacity to deal with relatively simple problems, but also demonstrating deficiencies serious enough to make it inadvisable to proceed further in the field without additional work.

Some departments require students with a D-level performance in certain prerequisite subjects within the departmental program to do additional work or to retake the prerequisite before proceeding with the follow-on subject. At the same time, D is designated as a passing grade in the Academic Guide. This situation leads to constant confusion in our end-of-term deliberations because some D grades can be considered as part acceptable progress towards a degree, while others should be considered at the same level as failing grades, since the student will have to retake the subject before s/he can proceed in the major.

An additional possible inconsistency is due to the fact that for freshmen, a D is a non-passing grade. We even have a number of students who failed to pass a freshmen subject (e.g. 8.02, 18.02) because of a D grade and then retook it after their freshman year, again received a D, and thereby passed it. It is unclear how this situation could be streamlined and normalized across the Institute, but the committee should explore the issue.

CAP now regularly encounters three Communication Requirement-related outcomes at the end of each term, as opposed to the traditional two:

> Unsatisfactory performance + CR-deficient = Warning (W)
>
> Satisfactory performance + CR-deficient = CR flag (C)
>
> Satisfactory performance + extremely CR-deficient = Warning (W)

There are at least two issues here that the committee should address. First, there is no distinction made on the MIT Student Information System term summaries between prior CAP votes of the C and the W variety. Several departments expressed frustration in attempting to decipher the "Prior Vote" column (although whether students have a C or a W in their past should be available to the department, since advisors receive copies of all CAP communication with their advisees). It remains to be seen whether a more informative format for the term summaries is feasible.

Second, the rationale for giving a warning to students who are seriously behind in the Communication Requirement needs to be clarified and better disseminated. Several students, advisors, and parents contact CAP at the end of each term, dismayed about receiving a sanction as serious as a warning. One student, for example, had a 5.0 GPA for the term, and a 4.5 overall, but was voted a warning because his status in the Communication Requirement was seriously behind. In consultation with the Subcommittee on the Communication Requirement (SOCR), CAP should revise the letters issued to students for each of the relevant categories so as to explain

the seriousness of the student's lack of progress towards a degree relative to the Communications Requirement. Of course, other measures may emerge as this topic is discussed by the committee, in cooperation with SOCR.

Committee on Curricula

The Committee on Curricula (COC) acts on proposals to create, revise, or cancel undergraduate subjects; to create, revise, or terminate undergraduate curricula; and on student petitions for second SB degrees and substitutions for the General Institute Requirements. During 2006–2007, the committee was chaired by Professor David Pesetsky. The voting members consisted of six faculty members, including the chair, and two (later three) of the designated four student members.

During the 2006–2007 academic year, COC acted on 482 undergraduate subjects, as summarized in the following table.

The committee reviewed and approved significant curricular changes in four majors:

> Course 4: new titles and numbers to add clarity to subject sequences
>
> Course 5: a new modular laboratory curriculum for chemistry majors
>
> Course 6: restructured curriculum to provide more depth and integration of content
>
> Course 20: updated enrollment management strategies and enhancements necessary for an expanding program

The changes in Courses 5 and 6 were particularly far-reaching. Discussions of these proposals often highlighted some of the difficulties we face in supporting innovative curricula in the majors within the context of MIT's highly structured curricular requirements and regulations.

COC also approved revised minors in Courses 4 (improved clarity in subject sequences), 15 (more flexibility in choosing electives), and 17 (restructured from a three-tier model to a two-tier model).

Other activities:

- The committee approved a major revision of the Committee on Curricula Guidelines, which had been developed over the summer by the chair in collaboration with outgoing associate registrar David Micus. This document serves as a guide not only for committee members, but also for faculty, staff, and students at MIT who bring requests and petitions to the committee.

- In October 2006, the committee welcomed new associate registrar Jo Flessner-Filzen, who serves as executive officer to the committee.

- Throughout the year, the committee discussed developments connected with the release of the Report of the Task Force on the Undergraduate Educational Commons.

- The committee began a discussion of the practice of scheduling evening examinations and how conflicts are handled.

- The committee began reviewing information collected about field trips, how they are publicized, and the financial impact of such activities. It was agreed that catalog descriptions for subjects that require (or strongly suggest) a significant field trip should include this information.

- The committee reviewed and approved new subject proposals funded by grants from the d'Arbeloff Fund for Excellence in Education, and also approved new study abroad proposals from Course 21F.

- The committee approved a proposal from Course 4 to establish an exchange program with Hong Kong University.

- The committee reviewed student petitions concerning the Restricted Electives in Science and Technology (REST) requirement and second SB degrees. The committee reaffirmed and clarified its written guidelines concerning REST petitions and affirmed current guidelines for assessing second SB petitions.

Committee on Discipline

Acting in accordance with its purpose of adjudicating cases of alleged student misconduct that are brought to its attention, the Committee on Discipline (COD) held sixteen hearings involving 26 students, with an additional two complaints involving three students that will not be heard by COD before year's end. The cases this year involved issues of academic misconduct, theft, arson, fraud, breaking and entering, assault and battery, alcohol policy violations, and unauthorized use of Institute funds. Two of the respondents were graduate students, and eight were female.

Where students were found responsible, sanctioning included letters to file, community service, educational and assessment assignments, probation or suspension for one semester or more, and one expulsion. Also, there were over 20 disciplinary warning letters forwarded to the Office of Student Mediation and Community Standards.

COD continues to be concerned with the number of academic dishonesty and plagiarism cases brought forward, and the number of issues that came forward due to confusion regarding hacking. The committee has begun to work with a number of stakeholders on a proposal for a hacking policy, and will work towards greater transparency in the judicial process in an effort to inform the community of the committee's work and the community's standards. In addition, COD will participate actively in current efforts underway to address the issue of academic integrity at MIT.

Members of COD received trainings this year conducted by the MIT Office of the General Counsel and the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center.

The committee will welcome four new faculty members to the committee next year, including a new chair and three new students.

Committee on Faculty-Administration

Following discussions among members and other stakeholders last year, it was concluded that this committee should be disbanded. Committee chair Professor Mary Fuller met with the Faculty Policy Committee in fall 2006 to discuss the potential dissolution of CFA, along with alternative channels for addressing issues that might have come to the committee in the past. A proposal to disband CFA was moved and voted on affirmatively, with little discussion, at successive Institute Faculty meetings this spring. Notes from discussions about the committee in 2005–2006 have been retained by the chair, should these be needed in the future.

Committee on Graduate Programs

This academic year, 2006–2007, marked the first for the newly established Committee on Graduate Programs (CGP), chaired by Professor Melissa Nobles. The committee focused on both immediate actions and on longer-term policy matters. Each will be discussed in turn. Immediate actions included reviews of two department graduate programs. At the December 13, 2006, meeting, Professor Stewart Myers (also a CGP member) presented a proposal for a new degree program, Master in Finance in the Sloan School of Management. The proposal was approved and sent to the FPC for their consideration. At the May 23, 2007, meeting, Professor Alan Grossman of the Biology Department presented a proposal for an interdepartmental graduate program in Microbiology, which was also approved. Because this is an existing degree, the CGP approved the program without forwarding the proposal to the FPC. Finally, at the February 28, 2007 meeting, the CGP considered a proposal for a Pass/D/Fail option, presented by the Graduate Curriculum Options committee of the Graduate Student Council. The CGP asked the students for more information and determined that the matter will be taken up again.

The CGP's charge includes attending not only to graduate program policies, but also to larger issues related to graduate student life and education. In keeping with this charge, the CGP judged the funding of graduate students to be of paramount importance. The second meeting of the committee, on October 25, 2006, was therefore dedicated to a discussion of the FOGS report with assistant provost Doug Pfeiffer and research analyst Mandy Smith, both of the Office of the Provost. The committee also met with Steve Dare, interim vice president for resource development, who discussed the Campaign for Students at the November 29 meeting. In addition, the CGP judged greater knowledge about research ethics and graduate student mental health to be important for its work, going forward. To that end, Professor Stephanie Bird (who formerly served as special assistant to the provost and vice president for research) discussed research ethics at the March 14 meeting and provided recommendations on how to better cultivate and propagate them. Dr. Alan Siegel, chief of mental health services at MIT, discussed, among other things, the ways in which unclear expectations and poor communication between graduate students and their faculty supervisors can create and/or exacerbate relatively minor mental health problems among some graduate students.

The faculty's goal in restructuring the Committee on Graduate School Programs and creating the Committee on Graduate Programs was to allow for more deliberate consideration of issues related to graduate education and student life across the Institute. It is the opinion of the outgoing chair that the CGP has well performed its delegated tasks and will continue to do so in the future.

Committee on the Library System

The major issues of concern to the Committee on the Library System (CLS) in 2006–2007 were scholarly communications/copyright and space/facilities. Other topics discussed were subscriptions to print and electronic journals, the image depository for teaching, developing simplified searching across library resources, and management of DSpace.

Discussion about scholarly communication took place at each of the three committee meetings. An amendment to publishers' copyright agreements was prepared, with the purpose of retaining more rights for authors. Efforts are ongoing to bring this amendment to the attention of faculty; it has been placed on the Libraries' website and presented at meetings with departments. Professor Brian Evans, the 2005–2006 CLS chair, drafted a Faculty resolution to promote open access that was discussed at an IAP event. Discussions of this issue with departments will continue, led by director of the Libraries Ann Wolpert and Ellen Duranceau. Ms. Duranceau is preparing summaries of issues related to copyright, as well as an evaluation of the policies regarding copyright for journals that are relevant for each department. CLS also considered that it might be effective for MIT to take the lead in acting on the behalf of its faculty in developing copyright revisions so that individual faculty members would not have to do this one at a time with each journal. To date there has been modest success in the acceptance of the amendment by publishers, but the amendment has not been widely used by faculty.

Ms. Wolpert presented findings related to a sorely needed expansion of library facilities. Walker Memorial, although in a favorable location, would need such extensive repair that it is not a feasible choice. Other possibilities for expansion are now under consideration. Also, it is hoped that a high-density storage facility may be built on campus. Fundraising for expansion and improvement of library facilities is now underway.

The continuing transition from print to electronic journal content was also discussed. The Libraries are beginning to subscribe to a backup electronic service to have assurance for archival electronic access should there be a problem with a publisher's website.

The committee reviewed the joint effort with Academic Computing to create a library of digital resources for use in teaching. DSpace is the platform for these images, and the Stellar teaching tools will bring them to the classroom.

The committee received an update about DSpace, which was developed jointly by the MIT Libraries and Hewlett Packard in 2001. DSpace has become a dominant digital depository and is used by more than 200 universities. The support and management of DSpace is currently being transferred from MIT to a non-profit foundation. The committee discussed how DSpace is being used and how it might be extended to provide additional services to faculty.

In response to a request from the Graduate Student Council and to feedback from the fall 2005 library survey, the Libraries are seeking streamlined ways to search the extensive resources available through the system. For example, a means to search across a number of databases is being planned; a beta version of such a search tool may be available by the fall 2007 semester.

CLS participated in the March meeting of the Libraries visiting committee by hosting a breakfast. This event provided an opportunity for more than two dozen faculty from a cross-section of Schools and departments to discuss Libraries resources and services with the visiting committee.

Committee on Student Life

The Committee on Student Life (CSL) underwent a significant turnover of membership this year, including its chairmanship. Not surprisingly, the fall semester was devoted to organizing a new agenda for the committee and to continuing the two main projects left unfinished by the previously constituted committee. These two projects, Project Interact and Reasonable Behavior @ MIT, have both been in gestation for quite a while, and both had hit significant roadblocks that held up completion. They are also now nearing completion at the close of this academic year.

Project Interact is a web-based interactive database system designed to link students to faculty and faculty to student groups on the basis of common interests, activities, hobbies, and research. The architecture for this website had originally been designed by Academic Media Production Services, a unit that has now been phased out, and in a programming language no longer supported by MIT. Although the site was nearly completed as of the end of 2005–2006, it became clear that if the site were to be supported over the long term, it would need to be completely reconfigured and given support in a new venue. Over the course of this past year, CSL has sought out information on how best to redesign the site, found a research student capable of doing the work, and commissioned him to carry it out. CSL also secured a new server for the site, located in the dean for student life's (DSL) office, and made arrangements for DSL staff to provide what should be minimal annual maintenance of the database. Activities spotlights will be updated more frequently. The committee updated the text of the site, and is currently in the process of finalizing the new links to student group information. Committee members hope to solicit faculty participation over the summer and have the site fully functional for the fall 2007 semester.

Reasonable Behavior @ MIT is another carry-over project from the previous CSL, and was substantially modified this year in order to meet needs of the community it intends to serve. This project comes out of discussions with students and faculty/staff who work closely with them, all of whom express concern about the plethora of harmful (but not technically harassing) statements heard around the Institute. This project designed eight postcard conversation pieces around different points of view about what constitutes reasonable speech. These postcards are going to form the basis of a toolkit to be distributed to housemasters, graduate resident tutors, orientation leaders, and so forth.

Accompanying the postcards will be some educational materials put together under the leadership of Maryanne Kirkbride of MIT Medical. Staff who work directly with students can then use the postcards and educational materials to jumpstart conversations in their dorms or elsewhere when issues of a similar nature arise. Members of CSL have met extensively this year with housemasters, undergraduate and graduate student focus groups, and with educational staff from MIT Medical in order to formulate the scenarios and to ascertain the most useful way to produce the materials. It

is the committee's hope that if the postcards do prove useful, a student group will take the project on in the future, perhaps even bringing this conversation to the community as a whole via features in *The Tech* or elsewhere.

Committee on Outside Professional Activities

The charge of the Committee on Outside Professional Activities (COPA), chaired by Professor Bruce Tidor, is to inform itself of potential conflicts of interest, to counsel the interested parties, to report periodically to the Faculty, and to recommend appropriate modifications of policies and procedures to the Faculty. As part of a review of its activities, this year the chair met with the vice president for research, the director of the Office of Sponsored Programs, school deans, both ombudspersons, previous chairs of COPA, and individual faculty to discuss the current policies and procedures, reporting activities, and the changing landscape of outside professional activities of the faculty. These discussions highlighted the very different opportunities and tensions existing among Schools, a common and deep concern for protecting the experience of students pursuing an educational program, the suggestion to formalize the notion of a conflict of commitment, potential ambiguity in current policies, and the role of international engagements in conflicts of interest.

Committee on Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid

The Committee on Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid (CUAFA), chaired by Professor Nigel H.M. Wilson, focused much of the first semester on the issue of how to reduce the negative aspects of a relatively high self-help level at MIT compared with some of our peers. Two strategies were considered and eventually proposed to Academic Council: lowering the self-help level, and introducing a program to guarantee some level of funding for all MIT undergraduates who receive MIT scholarships so they may participate in the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP). Consequently, there is an anticipated reduction in the level of self-help from $5500 to $5250, as well as the introduction of a "guaranteed UROP" program expected in the 2007–208 academic year. CUAFA views it as a continuing priority to keep downward pressure on the level of self-help and to bring it into the range of our peer universities. The committee also sees the desirability of expanding the guaranteed UROP funding program to apply to all MIT undergraduates eventually. This would highlight one of the most important and unique facets of MIT undergraduate education, and would provide more students the opportunity to benefit from the educational aspects of UROP while contributing to meeting their financial needs at the same time.

At the end of the academic year, CUAFA was involved in dealing with the fallout from the unexpected resignation of Marilee Jones as dean of admissions. CUAFA's objective has been to help make a smooth transition to whomever is selected to be the new leader of admissions at MIT through conducting a review of the existing MIT undergraduate admissions process and to prepare for the search for Ms. Jones's replacement. The objective is to retain the many positive characteristics of the existing admissions process while selecting a new leader who can garner the whole-hearted support of the MIT community and the admissions staff.

The Edgerton Award Selection Committee

The Edgerton Award Committee announced its award recipient at the April 2007 Institute Faculty Meeting. The award went to the Cecil and Ida Green Career Development Assistant Professor Nergis Mavalvala.

Professor Mavalvala is an experimental physicist working on LIGO (the Laser Interferometer Gravitational Wave Observatory), which is led by Caltech and MIT. LIGO uses Michelson interferometers to measure the tiny changes caused when gravitational waves produced in space pass through the earth. Unlike electromagnetic waves, gravitational waves interact very weakly with matter. Detecting them requires the ability to measure gravitational waves produced in other galaxies at a distance of tens to thousands of millions of light years. When the gravitational waves reach Earth they are extremely weak; thus, measurement is very difficult.

By applying her expertise in optics and electronics, Professor Mavalvala had an important role in helping LIGO to achieve the level of sensitivity required to make these measurements a reality. Professor Mavalvala is a leader in developing new technologies for the detectors to be used in the coming years, and she is a pioneer of new detector concepts for beating the standard limits of measurement set by quantum mechanics.

In addition, Professor Mavalvala led the way to developing two key technologies in quantum optics. Development of these technologies places her in a league of her own in the gravitational wave physics community. Her contributions are important not only for future gravitational wave detectors, but also for fundamental quantum measurement.

Professor Mavalvala is an outstanding teacher, and she consistently receives among the strongest teaching ratings in the physics department. She cares deeply about the people around her. For two years she has been a residence-based advisor at McCormick Hall and has also been a faculty advisor to the Women in Physics program, a professional and social support group for undergraduate and graduate women students.

Professor Mavalvala combines all the outstanding qualities that we treasure at MIT. She is a superb researcher and educator, and we are proud to have her on our faculty.

Killian Award Selection Committee

The 2007–2008 Killian Award Committee, chaired by Professor Anne Whiston Spirn, announced its nomination selection at the May 2007 Institute Faculty Meeting. The Killian Award went to Professor John Dower, a distinguished historian best known for his incisive studies of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Japan, and universally recognized as a preeminent authority on modern Japanese history.

His first book, *Empire and Aftermath: Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience, 1878–1954*, is considered one of the finest studies of a modern Japanese leader. Through the lens of a biographer, he renders a riveting portrait of the prime minister who is arguably most responsible for the birth of modern Japanese political institutions and foreign policy, at the same time unraveling the complex dynamic between Japanese domestic

politics and United States foreign policy. The book is informed throughout by a deep appreciation for Japan as a country with unique traditions, outlook, and culture.

Professor Dower's second book, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, explores the inflammatory rhetoric that helped fuel the war in the Pacific theater. His moving examples depict an atmosphere poisoned by racial stereotyping, and reveals how powerfully this atmosphere influenced military policy and nationalist sentiment on both sides. Widely read, the book moves beyond the particular experiences of Japanese and Americans to ponder the elemental, tragic urge of human beings to destroy each other and, ultimately, themselves.

In his monumental work, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in Wake of World War II*, Professor Dower probes the occupation of Japan in the postwar period, evoking day-to-day life with its mix of horror and determination to salvage something from the ashes. His depictions are complex, nuanced, and deeply insightful, illuminating how cataclysmic events reshaped society in America and Japan. This work so captivated the public that it won nine major awards, including the coveted National Book Award, the Bancroft Prize, and the Pulitzer Prize.

One of the distinguishing features of Professor Dower's scholarship is his imaginative use of visual evidence. He collaborated to design Visualizing Cultures, a website that presents visual material (photographs, paintings, prints) as equal in importance to written documents in historical scholarship. Available worldwide on MIT's OpenCourseWare, Visualizing Cultures introduces people to Japanese culture in innovative ways and it serves as a model for similar initiatives around the world.

A historian whose work has inspired colleagues and students not only in his own discipline but in other fields as well, Professor Dower forges connections among scholarship, public policy, and the lessons of history. He has challenged and influenced the minds and hearts of a broad public. His is a candid, outspoken, and critical voice drawing vital links between a nation's memory and the shape of foreign policy, from questions about the design for the Smithsonian's Enola Gay exhibit in 1995 to concerns about ongoing occupation of Iraq. In all his work, he brings deep cultural understanding to the major issues of the day, to controversial events both past and present. He tackles, in short, the most difficult questions underlying the human condition.

For his skill, courage, and resourcefulness in encouraging an inquiring public to reflect on these questions, our committee selects John W. Dower, Ford International Professor of History, for the 2007–2008 James R. Killian Faculty Achievement Award.

Steven R. Lerman, Chair of the Faculty
Lily U. Burns, Staff Associate