

Vice President for External Affairs

The Office of External Affairs (OEA) was established in May 2007, under the direction of a new vice president, to lead the coordination of MIT's communications with external constituencies. The vice president for external affairs serves as the senior adviser to the Institute's academic and administrative leadership on issues of public affairs and external communications.

The OEA brings together the News Office and the Office of Government and Community Relations in a single department in an effort to enhance coordination between the activities of the two offices and to leverage the synergies that are created to enhance MIT's presence and reputation across all key external constituencies, including the media, local and state elected officials, community groups, and the Massachusetts business community.

News Office

The MIT News Office has two primary responsibilities. First, the News Office is responsible for representing MIT in the media at the Institute level. This past year, the News Office continued to generate major coverage of MIT in the domestic and international press, successfully promoted several high-profile initiatives and events, and recorded an unprecedented number of page views on its website.

The News Office is also responsible for the production of *Tech Talk*, MIT's official in-house newspaper. *Tech Talk* is published 30 times weekly during the academic year and distributed at kiosks across campus.

Media Relations

Over the past year, MIT was featured in more than 3,500 newspaper, magazine, journal, and online articles, including more than 200 *Boston Globe* articles, 50 *New York Times* articles, and 35 *Washington Post* articles. The News Office issued approximately 900 news stories and press releases this past fiscal year.

The following are typical examples of the types of proactive stories the News Office works on in conjunction with MIT administration, faculty, and students, and the coverage these stories receive:

- "Material stops bleeding in seconds" (October 10, 2006): Rutledge Ellis-Behnke, research scientist in brain and cognitive sciences, collaborates with researchers at Hong Kong University to form a liquid that, when applied to wounds, forms a barrier gel that could revolutionize bleeding control. Coverage included the *New York Times*, Reuters, *Scientific American*, Forbes.com, United Press International, Fox News, *Toronto Star*, Voice of America, BBC, 14 Chinese newspapers, three English Hong Kong newspapers, eight Asian TV and radio stations, German radio, ScienCentral for release to ABC network affiliates nationwide, and *Rzeczpospolita*, a daily Polish newspaper.

- “Math research team maps E8” (March 18, 2007): An international team, including MIT mathematics professor David Vogan and math instructor Dan Ciubotaru, map one of the largest and most complicated structures in mathematics. Coverage included the *New York Times*, *Scientific American*, *Boston Globe*, BBC News, the *Independent*, and the *Register*.
- “Goodbye wires...” (June 7, 2007): Researchers from physics, electrical engineering and computer science, and the Institute for Soldier Nanotechnologies experimentally demonstrate a technique for wireless power transfer that could replace power cords for laptops, cellular phones, and more. Coverage included the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, Associated Press (AP), National Public Radio, *Boston Globe*, *Guardian*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Scientific American*, *Wired*, *Daily Telegraph*, and *Times of India*.
- “Team moves toward silent, eco-friendly plane” (November 6, 2006): MIT and Cambridge University researchers unveil the conceptual design for a silent, environmentally friendly passenger plane. Coverage included *Financial Times*, AP, *Boston Globe*, Reuters, and *Guardian*.
- “MIT-led panel backs ‘heat mining’ as key US energy source” (January 22, 2007): A comprehensive MIT-led study finds that mining the huge amounts of heat that reside as stored thermal energy in Earth’s hard rock crust could supply a substantial portion of the electricity the United States will need in the future. Coverage included the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, AP, MSNBC, Reuters, Wall Street Journal Online, *Scientific American*, CNET, *Science*, *Nature*, Voice of America, Marketplace, *New Scientist*, and *Boston Herald*.

In addition, the News Office placed an op-ed on energy by President Susan Hockfield in the *Boston Globe* in December 2006 and secured media coverage and interviews for Hockfield as a result of her participation at the 2007 World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

Special Projects and Initiatives

The News Office managed, developed, and implemented a public relations program in support of several high-level MIT initiatives and events, including:

- MIT’s new building program and the Media Lab groundbreaking
- The launch of the Web Science Research Initiative by the Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory and the World Wide Web Consortium
- The joint MIT/Microsoft conference Learning Without Barriers; Technology Without Borders
- Redesign and launch of the new MIT Energy Initiative website
- The publication of “The Future of Geothermal Energy,” a major MIT study

Issues Management

The News Office was also actively engaged in interfacing with the media on several highly visible and controversial issues, including the potential hiring of a female faculty member in neuroscience, the tenure case and hunger strike of an associate professor of biological engineering, and the resignation of the dean of admissions.

The News Office helped manage MIT's reputation in the media on a variety of other issues, including four student deaths, the debate and controversy connected with the Visualizing Cultures project (an interdisciplinary research project highlighted on the MIT home page), the fire at One Broadway in Cambridge, and the investigation conducted by the Department of Defense on research misconduct.

Website

The News Office website experienced a surge in hits over the past year. The total number of hits jumped more than 50 percent, from 2.9 million in May 2006 to 4.4 million page views in June 2007. Eighty-five percent of the visitors to the news site come from outside MIT, demonstrating the importance of the News Office website to external audiences.

Enhancements to the site included weekly audio podcasts (10,000 hits since January 2007), selected news clips of major MIT coverage, and expanded listings of MIT experts made available during breaking world or national news.

Tech Talk

News Office staff produced 30 issues of *Tech Talk* this year, featuring coverage of major developments in MIT's five schools. Some editions of the paper focused on specific themes, such as energy, cancer, the Media Lab H2.0 event, the Architecture, Race and Academe conference, and coverage of MIT students' international projects in the annual awards issue.

Office of Government and Community Relations

The Office of Government and Community Relations (OGCR) fosters interaction and understanding between MIT and its neighbors, as well as with local and state government. The office also supports the mission of the MIT Washington Office, reinforcing the efforts of the president, faculty, and administrators in their contact with the federal government and several national higher education associations.

The principal focus of OGCR is the MIT/Cambridge relationship. The office promotes understanding among Cambridge elected officials, neighborhood organizations, businesses, residents, and MIT. The office endeavors to develop constructive working relationships, nurture partnership efforts, and collaborate on matters of mutual concern. OGCR staff engage in a variety of ongoing projects and respond to dozens of community and governmental inquiries and requests.

Local Government Relations

OGCR provided background and guidance on various licensing, permitting, zoning, safety, and transportation issues in Boston, Cambridge, and other towns. Staff met with representatives of the City of Cambridge, particularly the Community Development Department and the Traffic, Transportation, and Parking Department, on matters of mutual concern to the Institute and the city. These matters include ongoing discussions on campus planning and development. Staff prepared for local regulatory hearings that involved the Institute at the Boston Licensing Board and the Cambridge License Commission. The office responded to requests for MIT representatives to serve on task

forces regarding current municipal topics. OGCR provided data on student residences to the City of Boston in accordance with the University Accountability Ordinance passed by the Boston City Council.

In July 2006, MIT hosted a forum on environmental issues for Massachusetts gubernatorial candidates. OGCR staff coordinated this forum, which included Democrats Deval Patrick and Chris Gabrieli, independent Christy Mihos, and Green-Rainbow Party candidate Grace Ross.

Staff also assisted in the Institute's hosting of the first Massachusetts Energy Summit in December. This event brought together representatives of the commonwealth's business, academic, government, and nonprofit sectors to share ideas about energy technology and policy. The event was coconvened by the governor's office and President Hockfield.

OGCR provided background information for and scheduled several meetings between Institute senior officers and staff and local government officials. These included Governor Deval Patrick, Cambridge mayor Kenneth E. Reeves, and former secretary of economic development Ranch Kimball.

OGCR staff led the effort to prepare the Institute's annual Town-Gown Report. Staff compiled data from several MIT offices and planned the presentation to the Cambridge Planning Board.

Office staff worked with the city's Election Commission to coordinate the use of MIT facilities as a polling place for four elections. OGCR also assisted with the city's search for a new police commissioner.

Federal Government Relations

OGCR staff helped to coordinate a Regional Innovation Summit in November, cosponsored by the Washington-based Council on Competitiveness and the Massachusetts Business Roundtable and hosted by President Hockfield at MIT. Staff also assisted in bringing Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) to campus to deliver the 2007 Compton Lecture in April.

The office provided background material and other assistance for President Hockfield's trips to Washington. OGCR staff also helped the MIT Washington Office prepare for the annual congressional staff seminar.

OGCR staff continued to represent MIT on several committees of national associations focusing on community service, work-study financial aid, and other educational topics. The office worked with the local staff of the Massachusetts congressional delegation to include Congress members in Institute activities and to respond to their queries. OGCR facilitated a meeting between the office of US Rep. Michael Capuano (D-Mass.) and staff from the International Scholars Office and International Students Office to discuss international student issues and occasional visa delays.

Community Relations

Office staff accommodated dozens of community-based facility-use requests, such as hosting the Cambridge Community Chorus's performance of the *Messiah* for the 13th year and providing a venue for the mayor's Senior Citizens' Lunch. OGCR continued its practice of making donations to neighborhood programs and institutions, including Tutoring Plus, Summerbridge Cambridge, Cambridge School Volunteers, the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House, and Just-A-Start. Staff represented MIT on more than 20 nonprofit boards and committees. Staff also continued to participate in a variety of hands-on community service activities throughout the year.

Office staff worked to integrate city officials into campus community gatherings, including the groundbreaking ceremonies for the Vassar streetscape west of Massachusetts Avenue and the Sloan School expansion. OGCR staff invited members of the Cambridge community to special Institute activities, including the Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast in February and Commencement in June. OGCR staff also contributed to the production and promotion of the first Cambridge Science Festival, presented in April by the MIT Museum. OGCR staff served on the planning committee for the groundbreaking ceremony for the Central Square Theater in May.

In June, the office hosted the 15th annual Cambridge First Day celebration, honoring five Cambridge-based organizations working to preserve and bring vitality to our community's heritage. Among the speakers at the event were MIT president Susan Hockfield, Cambridge mayor Kenneth E. Reeves, and Charles M. Sullivan, executive director of the Cambridge Historical Commission.

Schools

The office worked closely with the Cambridge Public Schools, the MIT Public Service Center, the MIT Museum, the Edgerton Center, and others to carry out a wide variety of educational programs and initiatives on behalf of Cambridge schoolchildren. OGCR managed MIT's hosting of the Massachusetts State Science Fair and assisted in the planning of the Elementary School Science Expo. Office staff coordinated the Keypals program, which pairs middle school students with MIT staff for email exchanges and visits to campus.

Business

Office staff served on the boards of both the Cambridge and Greater Boston Chambers of Commerce, as well as on various committees of these organizations. The office worked closely with members of the Central Square Business Association, the City of Cambridge Community Development Department, and the Department of Public Works to organize the third annual Central Square Clean Up in May. Members of the community were encouraged to take part in activities to clean up Central Square, such as picking up litter and removing stickers from lampposts.

Community Service Fund

The office oversaw the 39-year-old Community Service Fund (CSF) in its mission to support the efforts of MIT volunteers in the community. The 2006 Community Giving Campaign again yielded great results for CSF. The annual sale of the plants from MIT's Commencement ceremony in June brought together volunteers from across the community to help raise money for CSF. OGCR managed the disbursement of nearly \$110,000 in CSF grants to 35 local nonprofit organizations and student projects.

In addition to holding its semi-annual funding meetings, the CSF Board of Trustees met a third time this year to discuss issues of board policies and procedure. The trustees determined that the board should meet more frequently to consider proposals, and OGCR staff plan to implement the new schedule in the coming year.

Institute Internal Activities

OGCR provided other Institute offices with analysis and strategic guidance on Cambridge and commonwealth political issues. OGCR staff also served on several Institute committees, including the Communications Operating Group, the Information Group, and the Administrative Council. Staff also supported Institute events, including Commencement activities.

Deborah Loeb Bohren

Vice President for External Affairs

More information about the News Office can be found at <http://web.mit.edu/newsoffice/>.

More information about the Office of Government and Community Relations can be found at <http://web.mit.edu/govt-relations/www/>.