

## 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 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 contacts with the federal government and several national higher education associations.

The principal focus of OGCR is the relationship between MIT and the Cambridge and greater Boston communities. 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.

In May, OGCR welcomed new staff associate Anya Petroff, who comes to MIT from the office of the Massachusetts attorney general, where she served as a public affairs specialist and community outreach coordinator.

### Local Government Relations

OGCR staff developed and led MIT's political strategy in relation to a range of Cambridge issues this year. Working closely with Institute colleagues, members of the Office advanced MIT's preferences for the Urban Ring (a proposed bus rapid transit system), ensured that nanotechnology regulations were workable, and prepared for permit hearings and other interactions with city officials related to campus planning and development. Staff responded to dozens of requests from Cambridge, Boston, and state officials on issues ranging from safety to transportation to employment.

OGCR assisted with requests for MIT experts to help solve public policy dilemmas ranging from transportation to crime to green building. Office staff recruited a number of MIT faculty and staff whose expertise made them valuable members of various city task forces. OGCR staff worked closely with these representatives to develop MIT's political strategy to resolve or influence the matters at hand.

At the state level, Office staff worked collaboratively with internal and external colleagues to address many legislative initiatives this year. The affected policies included landlocked tidelands, several tax and payment in lieu of taxes matters, the treatment of steam distribution in the Energy Bill, boathouse and sailing pavilion permitting, and a proposed excise tax on university endowments.

This year provided a number of opportunities for the Institute to strengthen its relationship with Governor Deval Patrick. In September, in an effort led by OGCR in consultation with the governor's staff, President Hockfield hosted the governor at Gray House, along with a dozen other local university presidents and education committee chairs from the state legislature. In April, the Office worked with the governor's staff to host his economic development speech at the Sloan School of Management and, later that month, his Earth Day address on campus.

These events provided opportunities for OGCR staff to work in partnership with several cabinet secretaries, including Ian Bowles (Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs), Dan O’Connell (Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development), and Bernard Cohen (Executive Office of Transportation). Office staff also supported President Hockfield’s meetings with Attorney General Martha Coakley and Senate President Therese Murray.

### **Federal Government Relations**

OGCR staff coordinated several visits to MIT by federal officials invited by President Hockfield on her visits to Washington. Dr. John Niederhuber, director of the National Cancer Institute, NIH Deputy Director Alan Krensky, Congresswoman Niki Tsongas, and Senator Jeff Bingaman were among our guests on campus this year. Office staff arranged and facilitated these visits, which included roundtable discussions with faculty, students, and academic leadership as well as laboratory tours. OGCR staff also welcomed to the Institute congressional staff from the offices of Senator John Kerry, Senator Trent Lott, and Representative Michael Capuano. In planning these visits, OGCR staff consulted with the vice president for research and associate provost, school deans, and a variety of senior faculty who were engaged to participate.

The Office provided background material and other assistance for President Hockfield’s trips to Washington. These visits are not limited to Capitol Hill, but also extend to agency heads, cabinet secretaries, and leaders of associations. This year, OGCR staff supported President Hockfield’s meetings with the president of the National Association of Manufacturers, former governor of Michigan John Engler, leaders of the Council on Competitiveness, the Business Roundtable, and university groups such as the Association of American Universities, National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, and National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges.

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 respond to their queries.

### **Community Relations**

In April, OGCR hosted a Cambridge Area IV neighborhood community day at the MIT Museum. This was the result of the mayor’s request to invite the neighborhood to learn more about MIT and, in particular, to receive information about the work of our research nuclear reactor. A resulting City Council resolution authored by Mayor Denise Simmons congratulates MIT and OGCR for the impact and execution of this community initiative.

Office staff accommodated dozens of community-based facility use requests, providing a venue for the Cambridge Public Library’s “The Writing of Fantasy” lecture in December and hosting the approximately 1,000 attendees of the mayor’s Senior Citizens’ Lunch.

OGCR continued its practice of making donations to neighborhood programs and institutions, including the Cambridge Community Center, Cambridge School Volunteers, CASPAR, the Community Art Center, Just A Start, and the Margaret Fuller

Neighborhood House. During the course of the year, OGCR staff represented MIT at dozens of events and public meetings and on the boards and committees of various local nonprofits, including both the Cambridge and Greater Boston Chambers of Commerce.

Office staff worked to integrate city officials into campus community gatherings, including the ground-breaking ceremonies for the Sloan School expansion and the Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research, at which the mayor and city manager spoke. OGCR staff also contributed to the production and promotion of the Cambridge Science Festival, presented in April and May by the MIT Museum.

Office staff continued to respond to daily constituent inquiries, creating connections between MIT and the larger Cambridge community. Staff also responded to numerous media inquiries regarding issues related to government and community relations.

## **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. The Office collaborated with other Institute staff to contribute to the National Math and Science Initiative and its Massachusetts component. OGCR organized a major launch event for this program in June, at which President Hockfield spoke. OGCR managed MIT's hosting of the Massachusetts State Science Fair in May. Office staff coordinated the Keypals program, which pairs middle school students with MIT staff for email exchanges and visits to campus.

## **Community Service Fund**

The Office oversaw the 40 year-old Community Service Fund (CSF) in its mission to support the efforts of MIT volunteers in the community. In addition to the funds raised through the Institute's annual Community Giving campaign, CSF received the proceeds of several used and new book sales held on campus and at Lincoln Laboratory. The annual sale of the plants used at 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 \$70,000 in CSF grants to 15 local nonprofit organizations and student projects.

## **Institute-Internal Activities**

OGCR provided other Institute offices with analysis and strategic guidance on Cambridge and Commonwealth political issues. OGCR staff also continued to serve on several Institute committees, such as the Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast Planning Committee, Information Group, and Administrative Council. Staff also supported Institute events, including commencement activities.

### **Sarah Gallop and Paul Parravano Codirectors**

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