

Council for the Arts

The 2010–2011 academic year was one of reflection and projection as the Council for the Arts at MIT (CAMIT) looked to its past accomplishments for inspiration in planning its future. The council will celebrate its 40th year in 2012, and preparations for the occasion have already begun. In September 2011 the council will hold its first retreat, at which discussions of council governance, fundraising goals, and general institutional philosophy will be on the agenda.

Current Goals, Objectives, and Priorities

Our current goals, objectives, and priorities include recruiting the next generation of leaders and members, evaluating the existing council committee structure, and gauging the effectiveness of annual allocations. Other goals are regularizing our governance procedures and improving the CAMIT website.

Accomplishments/Administrative Initiatives

In 2011 the council enjoyed a fruitful year, with fundraising holding steady and the addition of an excellent new group of CAMIT members. Expenditures were kept low partly as a result of distributing meeting material electronically, thereby eliminating copying and postage costs.

The CAMIT constitution was brought up to date, and it is now a document that accurately reflects the current governance of the council; revised and updated policies also were put into place, especially regarding communications. Karen Arenson '70 was named chair of communications, with former chair Pepi Weis remaining as editor of *Council Currents*, which will now be published only after council trips. Arenson will work with the council director to craft e-newsletters that will be sent to the council membership at intervals throughout the year.

This year the email program Mailchimp was used for fundraising; selected CAMIT members received the solicitation letter online, with embedded links to the MIT giving page. This practice will continue in the future as fewer people use paper checks or the post to make contributions.

A complete record of all 1,406 CAMIT grants awarded since 1974 was compiled, providing valuable information about trends in grantmaking over the past 40 years and allowing sorts by arts discipline and recipient affiliation. Other demographics were gathered and charted, including council members' ages and geographic locations.

The CAMIT associate members program was initiated; all recipients of student art awards and Schnitzer Prizes since 2000 were invited to serve as associate members. The invitees were asked to reply to Marilyn Breslow, chair of the membership committee, to express their interest and describe the influence of the arts at MIT on their lives. Members of the 2011 class of associate members will be chosen by the executive committee. This category of membership seeks an annual contribution of \$25 for five years; members are invited to council events and asked to serve on committees. This

program is seen as a pipeline for bringing younger CAMIT members into the fold, and their presence will help current members keep up with contemporary trends in the arts. The associate members will be welcomed at a special reception prior to the annual meeting dinner in October 2011.

The CAMIT website is being developed with the help of web strategist Suzana Lisanti; one goal is to create a password-protected area for council members to connect with each other—a place where MIT arts-related events can be promoted and discussions of CAMIT issues can take place in a secure space. Also under development is a more robust grants environment where applications can be submitted and stored and supporting material can be uploaded. One of the ultimate goals is to create a virtual grants committee to evaluate the \$500-or-less director's grants (currently decided solely by the director) online; the committee members would be able to view the applications, discuss their merits with fellow council members, and make decisions in a virtual meeting room.

In 2011 the council provided support for numerous projects linked to the celebration of MIT's 150th anniversary in the form of grants, but also with a multi-composer commission that resulted in a spectacular performance at the Next Century Convocation at the Boston Convention Center in April 2011. MIT faculty members John Harbison, Peter Child, Mark Harvey, Keeril Makan, Elena Ruehr, and Charles Shadle were the contributors. The pieces were performed by the MIT Symphony Orchestra, the MIT Concert Choir and Chamber Chorus, the Jazz Choir and the Wind Ensemble, and the Festival Jazz Ensemble. Many people considered the music to be the highlight of the event.

Council Standing and Prize Committees

Grants Committee (Martin N. Rosen '62, Chair)

The CAMIT Grants Committee awarded 43 grants totaling \$105,706 and 26 director's grants totaling \$11,470 to many wonderful projects such as the Catalyst Collaborative at MIT's production of *Breaking the Code* at the Central Square Theater, and the transformation of a room in the Student Center into a giant "aquarium" where water molecules were represented by balloons. The highlight of the grants program this year, however, had to have been the numerous FAST (Festival of Art, Science and Technology) projects the committee supported, including such events as the London-based Lontano Ensemble's residency, Meejin Yoon's *Light Drift* installation, and Anna Kohler's updated version of the venerable theater piece *La Ronde*. The council provided more than \$30,000 to FAST projects.

Membership Committee (Marilyn Breslow, Chair)

The following individuals have joined the council since the last report: Gerald Appelstein '80, Marcel Botha '06, LeAnn Lindsey '94, Flora Major, Bradley Pitts '96, Rick Stone '76, and Alice Vlcek. Arnold "Jud" Judson '47 assumed the council membership of his wife June following her death in late 2010. Darryl Pomicter '68 resigned at the end of 2010.

The council director is gathering short biographies of the individual council members to be included on membership lists in the future.

Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts Committee (Peter Wender '71, Chair)

Planning has begun for the visit of 2012 McDermott Award winner Robert Lepage. Lepage will be at MIT during the week of April 23, 2012. A gala dinner is scheduled for April 26. The residency is being planned by Leila Kinney and Meg Rotzel.

Student Art Awards Committee (Claude Brenner '47, Chair)

This year's Sudler Prize recipient was vocalist Adrianna Tam '11 for excellence in music. The Laya and Jerome B. Wiesner Awards were presented to Dorian Dargan '11 for visual art, Akansha Kumar '11 for Indian dance, Jennifer Lai '11 for music performance, and Everett Lawson G (Course 4) for visual art.

Schnitzer Prize in the Visual Arts Committee (Peter Athens '52, Discussion Leader)

The recipients of the 2011 Harold and Arlene Schnitzer Prize in the Visual Arts were Sarah Elizabeth Witt G (MIT Program in Art, Culture and Technology [ACT]), first place; Otto Ng G (Architecture), second place; and Hannah Perner-Wilson G (Media Lab) and Sohin Hwang G (ACT), in a tie for third place. The prize amounts were as follows: first place, \$5,000; second place, \$2,500; and third place, \$2,000. Sadly, Harold Schnitzer '44, generous benefactor to MIT and champion of the arts, passed away in April 2011.

Special Programs

Gyorgy Kepes Fellowship Prize

The Gyorgy Kepes Fellowship Prize was awarded on May 4 to Jane Farver, retiring director of the List Visual Arts Center. The prize was presented by Juliet Kepes Stone and Brit d'Arbeloff at the end of the panel discussion for the List's exhibition *Juan Downey: Invisible Architect*.

Ticket/Membership Programs

Since 1980, the council has underwritten MIT's enrollment in the University Membership Program offered by Boston's Museum of Fine Arts. This program provides free admission and discount benefits to all MIT undergraduate and graduate students, as well as 10 day-passes for use by MIT faculty and staff. Nine of the day-passes are now distributed at the Hayden Library circulation desk. One pass is sent to Lincoln Laboratory for its staff.

The Boston Institute of Contemporary Art membership was renewed, and all MIT students, staff, and faculty are granted free admission with their MIT IDs. Discounts are also offered at the gift shop and café.

The student membership program with the Photographic Resource Center (PRC) at Boston University continued. MIT undergraduates and graduate students have free unlimited access to the PRC galleries and library and receive member discounts on admission to lectures, workshops, and other special events. They can also enter their work into the juried members' exhibition.

The council underwrote MIT's institutional membership at the Harvard Art Museums, allowing all MIT graduate and undergraduate students free admission.

The program with the Boston Symphony Orchestra continued this year. By obtaining a free College Card underwritten by the council, MIT students can gain free admittance to an average of 24 concerts per year. The council also provides 20 free tickets for MIT students to three concerts during the Boston Chamber Music Society's season. Similar arrangements provide 25 tickets to four of the Boston Modern Orchestra Project's concerts at Jordan Hall, along with 15 tickets to three of its Club Café concerts.

The Student Performing Arts Excursions Series continued. A total of \$15,547 was spent on tickets distributed at no cost to MIT students. Performances included *Cabaret* at the American Repertory Theater, the Tuvan throat singers Huun Huur Tu at the Somerville Theater, and the Boston Lyric Opera's production of *Tosca*.

Starting in September 2011, CAMIT will charge a \$5 fee for each student ticket in an effort to make the students use the program more effectively. In the past, many tickets were wasted by being left at the box office; the hope is that by having to pay even a nominal fee, the students will take the program more seriously. The payments will be made online with TechCASH.

Finances and Funding

The council raised a total of \$376,250 from 65 members, making the average gift \$5,788; \$17,695 was raised from 19 non-member donors. The grand total raised was \$393,945. Expenses for fiscal year 2011 totaled \$372,869.

Future Plans

Planning has begun for the council's 40th annual meeting, to be held October 25 and 26, 2012. As described above, the council retreat will help to chart CAMIT's future course.

Personnel Information

As part of the reorganization of the Office of the Arts staff structure, the oversight of CAMIT programs has become a more collaborative endeavor, with the director of the council assisted by Meg Rotzel (for the annual meeting, executive committee, and council trips) and Sam Magee (for the grants program, student art awards, and the Schnitzer Prize). The director also reports to and receives guidance from the executive director of arts initiatives, Leila Kinney. This restructuring has resulted in a more efficient and thoughtful method of operation.

Susan Cohen
Director

More information about the Council for the Arts can be found at <http://arts.mit.edu/about/council/>.