

Chancellor

The Office of the Chancellor was reestablished by MIT president Charles M. Vest in August 1998. The office was assigned a number of responsibilities associated with President Vest's goal of enhancing student life and the Institute's education program. The office was also responsible for oversight of some of the Institute's emerging international and industrial initiatives. Under the administration of president Susan Hockfield, beginning in 2005, the responsibilities of the office evolved while remaining centrally focused on student education and student life, including a leadership role in the capital campaign focused on students.

With the appointment of chancellor W. Eric L. Grimson in March 2011, President Hockfield refined the responsibilities of the Office of the Chancellor, captured by the phrase "all things students" — oversight responsibility for graduate and undergraduate education at MIT, student life, student activities, and student services.

Chancellor Grimson's initial primary focus was a "listening tour" — holding meetings with student groups, living groups, activity groups, faculty, staff, and others in order to gain a broad perspective on issues and opportunities related to student life, activities, and education. This outreach has continued during the most recent academic year through a range of venues, from monthly random gatherings of undergraduate and graduate students, to events in living groups, to a student leadership summit, and other interactions. The information gathered and distilled from this process forms the basis for new initiatives for the student experience in the future.

Initiatives Within the Chancellor's Office

While many of the activities of the Chancellor's office occur within the units of undergraduate education, graduate education, and student life, some specific activities were overseen directly by the chancellor. During the past year, major activities included those described below.

Review of Student Support Services

The MIT community was deeply affected by the deaths of three undergraduate students during the academic year. In the weeks immediately following these tragedies, the Division of Student Life (DSL), the Dean for Undergraduate Education (DUE), and the Dean for Graduate Education (ODGE) staff, as well as staff from other parts of the Institute, provided support and consolation to the families and to students and others in the MIT community coping with the impact of these deaths.

The chancellor also formed a Working Group on Student Support in November 2011. Composed of faculty, students, and administrators from across the Institute, the working group met over the fall and spring semesters to analyze the current support structure for graduate and undergraduate students, to discuss challenges that can lead students to feel isolated or overwhelmed, and to propose ways to strengthen the campus environment to support personal and academic success. This working group identified a range of opportunities and issues relevant to the topic of student

stress and to supporting student and community wellbeing. Some recommendations, such as additions to the freshman orientation program, revising the training and operating procedures of dormitory and independent living group support staff, improving communication strategies for distributing information about student support, and others, have been implemented as recommended by this group. Other recommendations, such as potential changes to faculty rules on examinations, accuracy of course workloads, and others, have been referred to the faculty governance system for further consideration. Some issues will require more detailed examination; it is hoped that this will occur during the coming academic year.

Launch of MITx and edX

In December 2012, provost Rafael Reif announced the launch of MITx, a new initiative in the integration of digital and online learning methodologies with residentially based educational experiences. This was followed in May with the launch of edX—a joint venture of Harvard University and MIT—whose focus is the development of an open source platform on which both global and local interactive educational experiences will be provided to learners. The edX platform will provide a base on which MIT faculty can develop and use enhanced digital technologies to support personalized learning experiences for students, including immediate feedback mechanisms, automated self-assessment tools, augmented video lecture experiences, and online discussion forums. Additionally, the global reach of edX subjects will offer a wealth of data on student learning — data that can be mined to inform research on learning and to guide refinements to on-campus and online teaching methods.

At the request of the provost, the chancellor temporarily assumed responsibility for coordinating activities within MIT on MITx and edX. The chancellor worked with department heads and individual faculty to set priorities on development of online tools, on development of online delivery of specific subjects, and on identifying and initiating research opportunities in online learning. The chancellor assembled a working group of faculty and students to provide advice on MITx priorities; he also created a separate advisory group of undergraduate and graduate students with a focus on articulating future opportunities for online educational tools, especially as they interact with the residentially based learning experience of MIT students. These efforts led to an articulation of criteria for determining priorities for the launching of global offerings of MIT subjects, including three MIT subjects in the past academic year and a planned set of additional subjects for the coming year. The Office of the Chancellor office also provided support for a range of experiments in online offerings within individual departments, the results of which are expected to lead to additional edX or MITx offerings in the coming academic year.

In addition to these initiatives, other aspects of student life and student education have been enhanced within the three subareas of the Chancellor's Office: undergraduate education, graduate education, and student life. The details of these efforts are contained in the reports by the individual deans. These are summarized, with highlights, below.

Division of Student Life

The Office of the Dean for Student Life saw several major initiatives completed in the past year. These are summarized below; descriptions of notable projects, services, and events for DSL from the 2011–2012 academic year are included in the separate DSL report.

Strategic Planning

The Division of Student Life continued to develop its strategic planning process—the first for the division since 2007. Throughout the process, over 200 students, staff, and faculty members have been engaged in a series of environmental scans and visioning exercises. More than 60 DSL staff members took part through a variety of teams and committees.

Working with the guidance of MIT Human Resources staff, DSL has revised its mission statement, defined its core values, and set its major strategic themes and initiatives. Several teams of DSL staff developed initiatives and activities for the division, based around these themes:

- Foster thriving communities
- Promote innovative technology
- Steward MIT resources
- Revitalize our facilities

The groups presented their findings at a June 2012 strategic planning retreat. Selected initiatives and activities will be implemented in the coming academic year.

DSL staff also contributed heavily this year in the creation of a Fraternity, Sorority, and Independent Living Group (FSILG) Strategic Plan, which will assist the FSILG community's leadership—students, alumni, and staff—to position the community over the next five years to meet the needs of future generations of MIT students. In addition, the plan considers a much longer time horizon with regard to maintenance and management of the 38 independently owned or managed residential properties.

Residence Hall Security Committee

The Residence Hall Security Committee, convened in December in response to several security-related incidents in the dormitories, submitted a report to summarize its findings and recommendations for improving security in the MIT housing system. The committee included housemasters, students, and MIT staff who worked collaboratively to establish a series of recommended policies, procedures, and technologies to enhance the security and safety of the residential community.

To gather information, the security committee toured four representative houses, reviewed written policies for residential staff, including desk workers, desk captains, house managers, and nightwatch staff, and analyzed current benchmarking data for peer and neighboring universities. The members also met with a broad array of stakeholders, from the director of housing, housemasters, and house managers to front-desk workers, dormitory officers and graduate resident tutors.

The report concluded that there is room for improvement in the residences' security, but that a one-size-fits-all solution would not work within MIT's distinctive housing system. Instead, the report called for further study with assistance from professional security consultants to help undergraduate and graduate communities identify house-specific security improvements throughout the system. Residential Life and Dining staff are currently working with security consultants to implement the recommendations made by the committee.

Review Committee on Orientation

In April 2012 the Review Committee on Orientation released its report. The committee spent the past year conducting a comprehensive study, concluding that orientation should be an ongoing process that intentionally extends throughout a student's first year at MIT, not simply a weeklong event held in August. The report also recommended that Residential Exploration and Selection should continue, but with a renewed focus that is better integrated with orientation.

Key recommendations that will be implemented for the Class of 2016 include adding a program that addresses academic integrity through a multi-pronged approach, including orientation, the First Year Experience program, and integrity-related material presented at the beginning of classes. International students will be able to participate in all freshman pre-orientation programs and international student orientation will be more fully integrated into the overall orientation program. City Days will be replaced with a community-service day that engages the full MIT community during the academic year, and the Tuesday evening event planned by the Student Life Orientation Programs and Experiences Committee will be replaced with dormitory-wide community building activities planned and/or overseen by the Dormitory Council.

Dean for Undergraduate Education

The Office of the Dean for Undergraduate Education saw several major initiatives completed in the past year. These are summarized below. Descriptions of notable projects, services, and events for DUE from the 2011–2012 academic year are included in the separate DUE report.

Strategic Planning

In AY2012, DUE completed the strategic planning review that began in spring 2011. The goal was to reconsider the 2006 DUE plan in light of changing circumstances and lay out refreshed directions that advance DUE's mission to "enroll, educate, and inspire some of the brightest students in the world with a passion for learning so they become the next

generation of creative thinkers and leaders in a global society.” The revised plan takes into account the addition to DUE of five units since 2007 and responds to changes in higher education, the nation as a whole, and at MIT.

Although the process reaffirmed many of the 2006 priorities, several new emphases and needs emerged or intensified. For example, input from the DUE Faculty Advisory Committee, the Visiting Committee, and students who took part in focus groups lent a sense of immediacy to efforts to improve undergraduate advising in ways that enable students to get to know faculty outside the classroom. Faculty and the Visiting Committee urged DUE to define and expand its role in educational technology and residential education initiatives. The advent of MITx and other developments in digital learning affirmed the creation of a new educational technology theme to support e-learning efforts under way at MIT.

The new DUE strategic plan includes a sharpened set of six strategic themes:

- Transforming learning through research, best practices, and innovations in pedagogy, curricular materials, and assessment
- Catalyzing the undergraduate educational commons: maintaining excellence, increasing innovation, improving communication
- Valuing and leveraging diversity, benefiting from a true meritocracy;
- Leveraging educational technology for educational effectiveness and change
- Empowering students to leverage their experiences and maximize their confidence to become creative, innovative, and global-ready leaders
- Evolving the student information system to support a dynamic educational experience for our faculty, students, and staff

Each crosscutting theme has goals and metrics on a five-year timescale that will enable DUE to focus its resources to enhance education at MIT most effectively. The past year’s planning process also entailed developing a new vision statement and a set of core values to which staff across the unit contributed.

Other Major Initiatives

The DUE staff also completed progress on several other important initiatives. These include new efforts to support underrepresented minority students in their academic and personal growth, strengthening the admissions process by examining factors that allow students to thrive at MIT, and strengthening the advising and mentoring system for undergraduate students.

Dean for Graduate Education

The Office of the Dean for Graduate Education also saw several major initiatives completed in the past year. These are summarized below; descriptions of notable projects, services, and events for ODGE from the 2011–2012 academic year are included in the separate ODGE report.

Implementing the ODGE Strategic Plan

The mission of ODGE is to support and serve individual graduate students, programs, and schools in order to make graduate education at MIT empowering, exciting, holistic, and transformative. Since fall 2011, the strategic plan of ODGE has been organized around five key themes: supporting educational innovation and excellence, competitiveness in graduate funding, administration and policy, diversity and climate, and the holistic graduate student experience.

Under educational innovation and excellence, ODGE is engaged in several initiatives, including dissertation boot camp, seminars on academic integrity and responsible conduct of research, support for interdisciplinary initiatives, and a recently formed committee on student entrepreneurship. ODGE has also been engaged in a joint study of teaching and learning spaces and in workshops on using technology in education. Under the theme of competitiveness in graduate funding, ODGE continues to serve as the central resource for administering graduate fellowships, including solicitation of new fellowship opportunities. Under the theme of diversity and climate, ODGE continues to innovate in programs to improve the climate of inclusion for all graduate students, through the CONVERGE preview weekend, the MIT Summer Research Program, and the Graduate School Clinic. Finally, under theme of the holistic graduate student experience, ODGE has continued to evolve a range of programs in mentorship, personal development, and support, as well as programs for fostering professional development through different student communities.

Other Efforts

The Office of the Chancellor continues to improve its efforts to engage and communicate with students. The office held a series of events—dinner, dessert and coffee times, and other events—at which randomly selected students were invited to join discussions with the chancellor and the deans. These events were so successful at enhancing communications between students and administration that they will continue during the coming year. In addition, a range of new communication tools, including newsletters, electronic postings, and blogs, are being rolled out and will be refined to provide diverse channels of communication between students and administration. Of particular note is the launch of the “MIT Together” campaign, an integrated website that coordinates information for students, faculty, staff, and families about student support services, and that aims to build a stronger sense of community within the MIT environment.

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