

Office of Government and Community Relations

MIT has a unique commitment to its host city and cares deeply about the community of which it is proud to be a member. Housed in the Office of the President, the [Office of Government and Community Relations](#) (OGCR) serves as a liaison to the city of Cambridge and coordinates a wide variety of programs and outreach efforts that benefit the local community. From supporting nonprofit organizations to participating in neighborhood dialogue around public policy matters, MIT strives to be actively engaged in the city's vibrant community life. OGCR is available as a resource to the Institute community for matters related to government or the community of Cambridge. It is also a resource to MIT's neighbors who need guidance in their interactions with the Institute.

In addition to its work in the state and local community, the office supports the mission of the MIT Washington Office. OGCR reinforces the efforts of the president, faculty, and administrators in their contacts with the federal government and several national higher education associations. The office is a communications link, a catalyst for action, and a resource for both MIT and the external community that is committed to promoting productive collaboration in all of its public interactions.

Community Relations

Support of Nonprofit Organizations

OGCR is charged with managing the Institute's relationships with local nonprofit organizations. The office supports Cambridge nonprofits through donations of money, hands-on assistance, use of MIT facilities, and engagement on nonprofit boards and committees.

Through monetary donations, the office funded approximately 50 nonprofit organizations in the broader Cambridge area. Donations were earmarked for a diverse range of activities such as community events, programming, and operating expenses. This year MIT helped the Community Art Center purchase a new van to provide transportation for its after-school program. In addition to monetary support, the office dedicated resources to community fundraisers and drives. For example, office staff organized an Institute-wide winter clothing drive to benefit the CASPAR Emergency Service Center, resulting in the donation of over 500 pounds of clothing. Staff continued their hands-on service activities such as delivering Thanksgiving meals to Cambridge residents and coordinating the annual ringing of the Salvation Army bell on the steps of 77 Massachusetts Avenue.

OGCR made "in-kind" contributions by donating or subsidizing the use of MIT facilities for nonprofit events. The office continued its work with the Campus Activities Complex, the Office of the Registrar, and MIT Athletics to provide space for over 25 events throughout AY2013. These events brought visibility to the MIT campus and fostered good relations between the institute and its neighbors. This year the East End House hosted its "Cooking for a Cause" gala at the MIT Media Laboratory, an event that drew more than 600 residents to the campus.

Finally, OGCR continued to enhance MIT's participation in the community. In AY2013, OGCR staff represented the Institute at dozens of external community events and served on the boards of many different groups such as CASPAR and the Cambridge YMCA.

Civic Engagement

OGCR is responsible for managing the Institute's relationships with Cambridge and Boston civic organizations. This past year, OGCR staff represented MIT on the boards and committees of the Boston Chamber of Commerce, the Central Square Business Association, the Cambridge Combined Business Association, the East Cambridge Business Association, the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce, and the Kendall Square Association.

Educational Initiatives

The inauguration of MIT president Rafael Reif in September 2012 brought a new focus on online learning and MIT's EdX program. In response, there has been growing interest from Cambridge Public Schools on how to use the new digital learning platform. OGCR collaborated with the city of Cambridge, Cambridge Public Schools, and the EdX senior leadership to discuss a plan for appropriate supplemental EdX options for Cambridge high school students.

OGCR continued to champion MIT's commitment to STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education for all middle and high school students. In 2013, OGCR staff and professor Kim Vandiver, director of the MIT Edgerton Center, joined a STEM-themed roundtable discussion with Cambridge mayor Henrietta Davis and Cambridge Public Schools. The roundtable provided MIT with an opportunity to survey and revise a catalog of MIT-based educational offerings and to increase awareness of the educational programs provided by the Institute.

As always, OGCR continued to support local educational nonprofits, celebrate academic achievement, and collaborate with MIT's numerous educational outreach programs.

Local Government and Neighborhood Relations

Maintaining productive and open communications with city officials and governmental bodies is an essential part of the work of OGCR. Office staff continued to provide critical information through the compilation of the annual "Town Gown Report" and presentation to the Planning Board. In addition, the office coordinated MIT's preparation for public hearings before various governmental boards on a broad range of topics such as the Kendall Square Initiative, economic development, building projects, and campus safety.

This year, the Kendall Square Initiative reached an important milestone when its rezoning petition was approved by the Cambridge City Council. A favorable vote was recorded after three years of collaboration involving more than 100 meetings in the Cambridge and MIT communities, a city-designated comprehensive urban planning study of Kendall Square, 14 committee meetings, and three meetings of the Cambridge

City Council. This achievement was recognized by the Office of the President, and Sarah Gallop was presented an Infinite Mile Award for her dedication to the project.

The office also worked closely with the city of Cambridge to create a new agreement related to environmental sustainability in Cambridge. In May 2013, the Compact for a Sustainable Future was signed by President Reif, Harvard president Drew Faust, Mayor Davis, and Akamai CEO Tom Leighton. The compact seeks to leverage the different organizations' core skills and competencies in research, best practices, and governance to generate new solutions for environmental sustainability.

OGCR once again worked with the city of Cambridge to host a number of on-campus events. In March, OGCR organized a daylong visit to MIT for the city's University Relations Committee. The meeting provided an opportunity for conversation about MIT's activities in Cambridge and supported a dialogue about the future of MIT's presence in Kendall Square.

Lastly, OGCR continued to represent MIT on a wide variety of city planning and advisory committees including the Central Square Advisory Committee, which concluded its charge and presented its findings this year.

State Government Relations

Office staff worked with internal and external colleagues to manage MIT's response to state legislative initiatives. A sampling of these matters includes environmental and energy policy, tax exemptions for universities, and public disclosure of police reports. OGCR partnered with senior MIT leadership, peer institutions, and the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Massachusetts to provide feedback on legislative considerations.

Federal Relations

OGCR continues to work closely with the Washington office to support President Reif in interactions with federal officials and to further MIT's mission at the federal level. This year, OGCR assisted President Reif with his introductions to key members of Congress, congressional staff, and administration agency heads.

OGCR continued to respond to information requests and calls for assistance from various federal representatives. Requests for university statistics, constituent inquiries, and visa-related issues provide an opportunity for productive interaction and relationship building with federal officials.

Communications

This year, OGCR launched a community newsletter to inform community partners about events, volunteer programs, and projects. The office also maintained regular communications with the Institute's abutting neighborhoods of Cambridgeport, East Cambridge, Wellington-Harrington, and Area IV regarding MIT projects and initiatives. For example, the office provided monthly updates to Area IV residents

on the construction at 610 Main Street and to Cambridgeport residents regarding the construction at 130 Brookline Street and 17 Tudor Street.

Office staff responded to numerous media inquiries regarding Kendall Square, PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes), MIT's nuclear reactor, building projects, and other "Town Gown" issues. OGCR staff collaborated with the MIT News Office to produce 16 articles on the Kendall Square Initiative, as well as other pieces related to Hubway, the Cambridge Historical Society Preservation Awards, and the aforementioned Cambridge sustainability compact.

Internal MIT Relations

OGCR staff supported the work of several Institute committees and groups such as the Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast planning committee, Community Giving at MIT, the Information Group, and the Communications Operations Group. OGCR staff provided these committees and other Institute offices with strategic political advice and guidance. Staff also provided support to Institute-wide efforts including President Reif's inauguration, Officer Collier's memorial, and commencement activities.

OGCR was proud to be part of the campus healing process after MIT officer Sean Collier was killed in the line of duty. OGCR staff coordinated with MIT News, MIT Communication Production Services, and various offices around the campus to organize a "human chain" along Vassar Street from the MIT Police building (W89) to the Stata Center (Building 32). The event included hundreds of MIT community members and created a healing "flash mob" during the statewide moment of silence.

Community Service Fund

The Community Service Fund continued to develop with its new structure and leadership. The board's faculty chair facilitated two productive meetings and disbursed more than \$50,000 to local nonprofit organizations and student-led community service initiatives.

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