

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 a proud member. From supporting nonprofit organizations to participating in neighborhood dialogue around public policy matters, MIT actively engages in the city's vibrant community life.

The Office of Government and Community Relations (OGCR), housed in the President's Office, serves as a liaison to the city of Cambridge and coordinates a wide variety of programs and outreach efforts that benefit the local community. OGCR assists the Institute community with matters related to Cambridge city government and the Cambridge community, and it assists MIT's neighbors in their interactions with the Institute.

OGCR 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. OGCR is at once 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 Nonprofits

OGCR is charged with managing the Institute's relationships with local nonprofit organizations. The office supports Cambridge nonprofits through financial contributions, engagement in neighborhood activities, use of MIT facilities, and participation on boards and committees.

Through monetary donations, OGCR funded approximately 50 nonprofit organizations in the broader Cambridge area. Donations were earmarked for the provision of direct services through the support of programming and community events. For example, MIT helped launch a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) afterschool program at the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House this year. In addition to monetary support, OGCR dedicated organizational resources to community fundraisers and drives. OGCR staff participated in service activities such as delivering Thanksgiving meals to Cambridge residents and coordinating a clothing drive for the CASPAR homeless shelter.

OGCR made in-kind contributions by donating or subsidizing the use of MIT facilities for nonprofit events. Working with the Campus Activities Complex, the Office of the Registrar, and MIT Athletics, OGCR was able to provide space for more than 25 nonprofit events throughout 2013 and 2014. Staff also provided logistical support for these events, such as coordinating the use of audiovisual, catering, and parking services. These events brought visibility to the MIT campus and fostered good relations between the Institute and its neighbors.

Finally, OGCR continues to participate actively in the community. Staff represented the Institute at dozens of external community events and served on the boards of various groups, including Tutoring Plus and Cambridge School Volunteers. Staff also donated their time and talents to organizing community events, including Area IV Community Pride Day and the Central Square Business Association's Taste of Cambridge.

Many nonprofit organizations in Cambridge are now facing a myriad of challenges, including the need for stable funding, and OGCR is looking for new and creative ways to support nonprofits during this particularly difficult time. For example, OGCR staff members have made key connections between local nonprofits and the MIT Public Service Center to increase volunteer activity. This challenge, of great importance, will shape OGCR's work over the next few years.

Civic Engagement

OGCR is responsible for managing the Institute's relationship 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

Over the past year, the city of Cambridge has sharpened its focus on developing science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) opportunities for people of all ages to promote economic mobility and address structural inequality. To this end, OGCR has worked with colleagues from departments, laboratories, and centers (DLCs) across campus, including the Public Service Center, the Edgerton Center, and the MIT Museum, to marshal resources toward a fruitful collaboration with the city. OGCR staff will also serve on the city's STEAM Committee and will continue to engage all partners across campus.

MIT's decentralized structure has given DLCs freedom to innovate educational outreach programs using their unique expertise and resources. Responding to the city's increased interest in how MIT can help improve K-12 educational outcomes in Cambridge, OGCR is working with a number of entities to better understand existing programs. For example, OGCR is working with the Public Service Center and other outreach representatives across campus on a community engagement evaluation to catalogue how MIT resources are used in our community. It is our hope that a thorough inventory will give Cambridge residents more information about resources available and increase engagement between MIT and the broader community.

OGCR continues to use its connections to link the Institute with Cambridge students. This year, OGCR was especially proud to be involved in Lab4Energy, an educational program sponsored jointly by the MIT Energy Initiative (MITEI) and Eni, an Italian energy corporation. OGCR worked with Cambridge Public Schools (CPS) to identify two talented students to join the Lab4Energy program, then worked with MITEI and Eni to celebrate their achievements with a reception attended by local state legislators, the

vice mayor and other elected city leaders, the CPS superintendent, and members of the Cambridge School Committee.

Local Government and Neighborhood Relations

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

This year, OGCR coordinated numerous neighborhood relations events to interface with residents and celebrate new community spaces. First, in conjunction with the restoration of 130 Brookline/17 Tudor Street in Cambridgeport, OGCR assisted with the planning of an open house to introduce neighbors to the building, meet tenants, and discuss plans for the space. OGCR then planned an Open Space Celebration to publicly announce MIT's donation of two vacant parcels in Cambridgeport to the city. Last, OGCR worked with MIT Investment Management Corporation (MITIMCO) to invite neighbors to discuss plans for the beautification of MIT-owned property at 12 Emily Street. This informal neighborhood dinner event featured a short presentation about MIT's objectives for the property and invited residents' feedback on the proposed design.

Kendall Square is a hotspot of activity, and OGCR is working on behalf of the Institute to liaise with businesses, community members, and city officials. OGCR continued to support the MIT-led Kendall Square Initiative as several internal processes were carried out regarding graduate student housing and planning for East Campus. This support included internal and external communications, updates to city officials, and interactive meetings for the MIT and Cambridge communities. OGCR also managed MIT's involvement in groundbreaking and openings around Kendall Square, including groundbreaking events for LabCentral and Millennium Pharmaceuticals and grand openings for LabCentral and Pfizer.

State Government Relations

OGCR staff worked with internal and external colleagues to manage MIT's response to state legislative initiatives. A sampling of these matters includes taxation, land use, PILOT, tax-exempt status, and the Grand Junction path. 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 five trips to Washington, DC, to discuss MIT's interests in online learning, advanced manufacturing, and the importance of avoiding planned federal sequestration.

OGCR is dedicated to MIT's efforts to promote federal research funding. OGCR has worked with the Boston Chamber of Commerce to revive a 10-year-old coalition, composed of 60 chambers of commerce, to promote the economic benefits of this funding for universities. Additionally, OGCR worked with the Massachusetts Governor's Office and the Secretary for Economic Development to bring attention to the historical context and importance of university research funding.

Staff 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 opportunities for productive interaction and relationship building with federal officials.

Communications

This year, OGCR continued to grow the subscription to its Community Newsletter, which informs community partners about events, volunteer programs, and projects. OGCR 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, OGCR 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.

OGCR staff responded to numerous media inquiries regarding Kendall Square, PILOT, MIT's nuclear reactor, building projects, student housing, and other town-gown related issues. OGCR staff collaborated with the MIT News Office to produce numerous articles related to the Kendall Square Initiative, the East Campus planning study, and the graduate student housing study process.

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, the Information Group, the Communications Operations Group, and the Infinite Mile selection committee. Additionally, OGCR staff worked with the executive vice president to create a Cambridge Land Use Committee to discuss all aspects of property use in the city of Cambridge. OGCR staff provided these committees and other Institute offices with strategic political advice and guidance.

While the staff of OGCR were saddened by the passing of former president Charles Vest, OGCR co-director Sarah Gallop was honored to speak on behalf of the MIT staff at his Celebration of Life.

Community Service Fund

The Community Service Fund (CSF) underwent significant transformation in the last year. The CSF was rebranded, and it adopted a new website to interface with its supporting community, accept grant application submissions, support trustee decision making, and store all official records of the CSF's board. This significant undertaking

transformed the way the CSF does business and increased its visibility—application rates have doubled under the new submission process. OGCR continues to work with the Public Service Center and Community Giving to strengthen the CSF.

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