

Dean for Graduate Education

The [Office of the Dean for Graduate Education](#) (ODGE) is an Institute-wide support and referral office for the graduate community at MIT that advocates broadly for graduate education. MIT maintains a decentralized graduate educational structure, and thus ODGE works collaboratively across the Institute with numerous administrative offices, schools and academic departments, individual faculty and students, and various committees. ODGE works with other units in the areas of diversity, personal support, community building, collating and disseminating best practices, Institute-wide data collection and analysis, endowed and external fellowships, graduate admissions administration, immigration and international student advising, professional development, policies and procedures, and academic performance. ODGE comprises the Office of the Dean for Graduate Education Headquarters, the [International Students Office](#) (ISO), and the [Graduate Student Council](#) (GSC).

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. We envision a graduate community of scholars whose members are ever more intellectually and socially engaged, valued, interactive, and rapidly connected to resources, information, each other, the Institute, the nation, and the world. ODGE's strategic plan, [From Imagination to Impact: Empowering graduate students to create the future](#) (2011–2016), is 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.

Office of the Dean for Graduate Education Headquarters

Leveraging the efforts of a small office with a headcount of 14, ODGE Headquarters accomplishes its goals by working collaboratively with other units. This entails key partnerships with the Office of the Dean for Undergraduate Education, the Division of Student Life (DSL), the Office of Resource Development, the Alumni Association, the Office of the Provost, the Ombuds Office, MIT Medical, the Office of Institutional Research, and MIT's academic departments and schools.

The dean for graduate education leads ODGE in its mission and areas of responsibility, providing a voice on behalf of the graduate community to the senior administration. In addition, the office provides centralized services to the student body with regard to personal support and advising, diversity recruitment and retention, policy administration, student status changes, financial support, recruitment efforts, professional development, and various programs to support the graduate community.

International Students Office

The mission of ISO is to assist international students at MIT in fulfilling their academic goals by providing services and support programs that help them adjust to a new academic and cultural environment, maintain their legal status in the United States, and promote their (and their dependents') interaction with and integration into the MIT community at large. In addition, the staff of nine interfaces with all MIT offices, advocating for awareness in the community of issues relevant to MIT's international student population.

Graduate Student Council

The GSC exists to enhance the overall graduate experience by promoting the general welfare of the graduate student body across all five schools, creating new programs and initiatives to provide opportunities for growth and interaction, and communicating with the MIT administration and faculty on behalf of graduate students. These goals are accomplished through a structure consisting of elected student representatives, standing committees, and officers. The Graduate Student Council is supported by two ODGE support staff employees.

Theme One: Supporting Educational Innovation and Excellence

As the primary administrative office for MIT's decentralized graduate enterprise, ODGE strives to support innovation and excellence in graduate education and foster information exchange and best practices among graduate programs. The future of graduate education has evolved beyond the generation of frontier knowledge to include an understanding of new knowledge in a broader context and the development of skills with which to apply new knowledge for the benefit of humanity. ODGE contributes to these challenges through working on various committees, supporting new educational initiatives, and highlighting graduate students' accomplishments.

ODGE maintains membership on and supports various Institute and ad hoc committees such as the Committee on Graduate Programs (CGP) and the Graduate Academic Performance Group (a subcommittee of CGP), which is chaired by the dean. In addition, ODGE maintains the Graduate Policies and Procedures on behalf of the CGP and sponsors monthly roundtables of the graduate administrators from each department and program. Dean Christine Ortiz serves on the Committee on Research and Information of the Council for Graduate Schools.

The Graduate Student Council's Academics, Research, and Careers Committee (ARC) provides substantial programming for MIT graduate students in the area of educational excellence; these efforts are described fully below under Theme Five: Holistic Graduate Student Experience.

Support for Interdisciplinary Initiatives

MIT students have a constant hunger for learning about their peers' research and for interdisciplinary interactions. Through the Graduate Student Life Grants (described under Theme Five below) and other requests for funding, ODGE has been pleased to support initiatives that foster connections and exchanges of ideas across departments, including:

- The MIT-China Innovation and Entrepreneurship Forum (MIT-CHIEF), a conference and high-profile platform for intellectual exchange to foster deeper and broader collaborations between China and the United States in technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Topics included "Robotics and Artificial Intelligence," "Innovations in Education," "Space Tech and Business," "Start-up Development," "Early-stage Investment and Incubators," and "Healthcare Technologies."

- The Public Service Center–led MIT IDEAS Global Challenge, an annual invention and entrepreneurship competition that awards up to \$10,000 per team for innovative service projects that positively impact underserved communities. Interdisciplinary teams, composed of students and community partners, tackle problems in areas such as clean water, energy, and the environment.
- The MIT-Imperial College London Global Fellows Program, an intensive workshop for PhD students designed to help them develop the professional skills required to create and sustain successful international and interdisciplinary research collaborations.
- MIT TechLink, a networking organization that fosters cross-disciplinary collaboration among MIT's graduate student communities.
- The Committee for Scholarly Interactions, run by officers of the Sidney Pacific graduate residence. This committee is charged with “the promotion and facilitation of scholarly, cross-departmental, and intellectual interactions among members.” Traditionally, this responsibility has been fulfilled through the MIT Presidential Fellows/Sidney Pacific Lecture Series, which consists of a total of five lectures in the spring and fall, with funding from the Society of Presidential Fellows. The interactive lectures, followed by more intimate discussions, are intended to showcase high-profile speakers from a wide variety of backgrounds and fields of expertise. They help enhance a sense of graduate community and facilitate nontraditional interactions between faculty and graduate students, as well as unique interaction opportunities among the graduate students themselves. This past year speakers included Susan Solomon (“A Brief History of How We Learned to Love Environmental Challenges, and Why We Will Again”), Bill Aulet (“Innovation and Entrepreneurship”), Donald Sadoway (“Electrochemical Pathways Towards Sustainability”), and Tenley Albright (“From Olympic Figure Skating to Tackling Healthcare Issues”).
- MIT Connect, started by graduate students Mohammad Ghassemi, David Hayden, and Tuka Al-Hanai. The goal of this program is to build a stronger graduate campus community by using a matching algorithm to pair graduate students for fully paid, platonic, one-on-one lunches once a week. The program, which was piloted in the spring, was met with incredible enthusiasm from the graduate community, attracting over 80 graduate student participants in less than 24 hours following its announcement. Many of the participating students reported making lasting friendships with others across campus. The program will be entering its second phase in the fall semester with improvements to its matching algorithm.
- LGBTQ & Ally Community Dinners, a series of bimonthly dinners for LGBTQ and allied graduate students.
- MIT Waste Alliance, which sponsors seminars, tours, and student research poster sessions on environmentally sustainable waste management.
- Startup in America, a panel and reception organized by the GSC's Legislative Action Subcommittee to connect aspiring international student entrepreneurs with interested alumni.

- Women’s Mentorship Program, focusing on female undergraduate and graduate students.
- MIT Water Night, a showcase for students doing research in water-related fields.

In addition to supporting these initiatives, ODGE supports Institute-wide collaborations. At any institution, the graduate experience can sometimes be isolating. The GSC continues to strive for increased engagement of graduate students across the campus and among departments, labs, and centers. A striking theme of President Rafael Reif’s inaugural speech was the concept of “one MIT,” which has become an emblematic phrase for the recent expansion of trans-campus initiatives and events hosted by ODGE, the GSC, Sloan, and many smaller student groups. In order to fund and support student-devised plans to bring together graduate students from the five MIT schools, a strategic plan was formulated over the past academic year by the GSC General Council; the approved council resolution created the GSC OneMIT Board. In summer 2015 the funding guidelines for the GSC OneMIT Board will be established, and the board will begin soliciting funding applications.

Initiatives for Innovation in Graduate Education

As graduate education evolves beyond frontier knowledge generation to include an understanding of new knowledge in a broader context and the development of broader “skills of the mind” (*artes animi*), ODGE has set as a goal developing a group of online modules to address this need. MITGradx: Artes Animi will provide graduate students with education in these professional development skills through the MITx learning environment. The modules will address the needs of MIT residential graduate students as well as graduate students worldwide who enroll in massive open online courses (MOOCs).

The first course will focus on 21st-century graduate communications, and ODGE staff began advancing plans this academic year. The learning objectives include:

- Understanding research and literature on the foundational and conceptual principles of communications
- Demonstrating effective written, oral, and digital communication of knowledge to a range of audiences with context and clarity
- Proficiency in a variety of state-of-the-art mechanisms of knowledge dissemination

An innovative suite of modules as envisioned by subject matter experts includes a fundamental scientific/theoretical underpinning and imparts the principles and insights of graduate-level communication in writing, publishing, speaking, designing visuals, and multimedia. This instruction will be complemented by engagement with case studies and interactive tools, including a “living textbook” of discipline-specific material. We have begun advertising a position for a one-year full-time curriculum developer to support this work.

Support for Innovative Courses

The ODGE co-sponsored edX physics course 8.EFTx Effective Field Theory, based on the long-running residential MIT class 8.851 Strong Interactions: Effective Field Theories of QCD, is one of the most advanced courses hosted on edX. The course serves a community of noncredit distance learners who would not otherwise have the opportunity to take a course of this nature, as well as MIT students offered the opportunity to receive graduate course credit (in 8.S851). Unlike students in undergraduate online courses, the targeted advanced graduate learners are less interested in earning a grade and more focused on guided and interactive learning, with an eye to facilitating research for their graduate degrees.

The online course was developed and taught by Professor Iain Stewart in 2014, together with a course team of teaching assistants and others. The course, the first Physics Department online advanced graduate class, consists of 15 mostly independent chapters, with 96 video lectures, many short-answer discussion problems, 19 problem sets, and an end-of-term video presentation project. Also included are an online discussion forum, lecture notes, course readings, a syllabus and calendar, and other resources. Design challenges included reinventing long answer calculation problems into 19 equivalently challenging computer gradable problems. This required innovative use of the edX platform and pushed the platform for the creation of LaTeX-to-drag-and-drop-style problems. The extensive effort that went into creating these problems was repaid by their success as educational tools and significant appreciation from students. Students were also offered, in the context of the end-of-term video project, the opportunity to research and present to their peers a related topic not covered in the course (this presentation was worth 50% of their grade). These 30-minute presentations were video recorded by students and uploaded into the course to facilitate peer learning and enable active grading by five of their peers.

The [course materials](#) continue to serve as a free open resource to the community, and the videos can be accessed and the problem sets solved in the same manner as when the course was running. The design of this system within edX is likely to influence the development of video projects in future online graduate courses.

Highlighting Graduate Student Accomplishments

ODGE has increased the number of stories on its news site about student accomplishments, including recent graduate student publications, students who have won fellowships and awards, students who have started companies, and students who are giving back to the community. These news items totaled more than 90 over the last year. Students' accomplishments were also highlighted during Graduate-Professional Student Appreciation Week in April (see Theme Five).

With the help of two Graduate Community Fellows, original stories were also submitted to MIT Campus News to provide greater visibility and circulation. In addition, the ODGE news site includes items on the accomplishments of alumni of our MIT Summer Research Program (MSRP) as well as alumni of our Hugh Hampton Young Fellowship. ODGE also once again facilitated a process allowing departments to nominate noteworthy graduate students for consideration as subjects of MIT News Office profile stories; 10 students were selected for full coverage.

Support for Sharing Best Practices

ODGE supports a monthly Graduate Administrators Roundtable luncheon, which covered a wide variety of topics in 2014–2015:

- In a joint meeting with undergraduate administrators, Chancellor Cynthia Barnhart discussed priorities for AY2015.
- Tasha Coppett, assistant director of off-campus and graduate housing, and Jennifer Hapgood-White, associate director of residential life and dining, spoke on housing allocation, clarification of housing policies, and spring housing tours.
- David O'Brien, senior associate director for customer service, and Dwayne Daughtry, counselor for customer service, provided Student Financial Services updates and an overview of student accounts.
- Francesco Bellei, vice president of the Graduate Student Council, and Libby Mahaffy, assistant director for conflict resolution, talked about the Resources for Easing Friction and Stress (REFS) program.
- Robert Cummings, ODGE senior administrative assistant, and Dorothy Curtis, a research scientist in the Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (CSAIL), described the GradApply platform.
- Heather Konar, ODGE communications officer, and Elizabeth Hicks, executive director of Student Financial Services, discussed I-9 procedures.
- Heather Konar spoke on best practices in communications with students.
- Tasha Coppett and Jennifer Hapgood-White provided updates on graduate housing for 2015–2016.
- MIT ombudspersons Toni Robinson and Judi Segall offered an overview of the Ombuds Office.
- Emily Cheng, ISO technical support specialist and advisor, and Carlene Green-Paul, ISO admissions coordinator, spoke on deconstructing the immigration process.
- Jason McKnight, ODGE assistant dean; Sarah Rankin, Institute Title IX coordinator; Kate McCarthy, director of the Violence Prevention and Response Program; and Amanda Hankins, Violence Prevention and Response Program education and prevention specialist, provided an update on Title IX.
- Keiko Tanaka, ODGE administrative officer; Janet Sahlstrom of Information Services and Technology (IS&T); and Darren Scartissi, HR/Payroll assistant manager, discussed graduate student aid and payroll.

Theme Two: Competitiveness in Graduate Funding

ODGE has responsibility for administering external, endowed, diversity, and MIT presidential fellowships (the latter in collaboration with the Office of the Provost). Fellowships are attractive because they allow students to concentrate on their research and education and to select the research areas they are most passionate about. This intellectual freedom and support is a critical component in recruiting the brightest,

most diverse students from around the world. ODGE has also begun to promote financial literacy among graduate students, along with participating in reviewing the graduate student cost of living survey and setting graduate stipend guidelines.

Fellowships

ODGE worked closely with department administrators to identify best practices in fellowship administration. A first draft of these practices has been completed and will be disseminated back to the departments over the summer for their feedback. This collected information has already been used to streamline existing internal processes, has produced content for presentations to departments, and will facilitate modifications of the ODGE fellowship website over the summer. Identifying new fellowship opportunities and improving the dissemination of these and existing opportunities to students and administrators through a wider array of communication avenues have also continued to be priorities. Ninety-two fellowship opportunities were sent to the graduate community and approximately 10 opportunities were added to the ODGE fellowship website. The manager of graduate fellowships undertook the following activities this year:

- Hosted an information session on fellowship promotion and acquisition best practices for graduate and financial administrators in the School of Science
- Participated in a fellowships panel for the Harvard-MIT Health Sciences and Technology Program
- Hosted an information session for two National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) initiatives: Graduate Research Opportunities Worldwide and the Graduate Research Internship Program
- Hosted an information session for the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program–Graduate Research Opportunities Worldwide (GROW) program in association with United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- Spoke with international students associated with the MIT Summer Research Program
- Made a presentation to students in the Amgen-UROP (Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program) Scholars Program
- Attended the annual conference of the National Consortium for Graduate Degrees for Minorities in Science and Engineering in San Diego

Increases were observed in external fellowships promoted and administered by ODGE, including NSF Graduate Research Fellowships, Hertz Foundation Fellowships, National Defense Science and Engineering Graduate (NDSEG) Fellowships, and Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) International Graduate Fellowships.

In FY2015, ODGE administered 696 internal and external graduate fellowships, for a total of \$38.1 million. While the total number of fellowship recipients decreased from FY2014, the total dollar amount awarded remained at the same level.

International

ODGE has continued to increase efforts to promote the endowed fellowship of the Arab Republic of Egypt through advertisements, networking with currently supported fellows, direct contacts with universities in Egypt, and hosting of webinars. The manager of graduate fellowships again hosted a webinar with students from the American University in Cairo that attracted more than 200 participants. MIT's Egyptian Student Association also collaborated on recruitment opportunities, posting marketing materials on its Facebook page that were shared over 300 times. In 2014–2015, there continued to be seven Egypt endowed fellowships; in 2015–2016, ODGE has committed to a total of 10 Egyptian fellows, the first time the total yearly allotment of fellows has been reached since the fellowship's creation in 2012. ODGE also worked closely with the MIT-Brazil Program to establish the Lemann Education Fellowship, which provided three fellowships this year to students from Brazil or students who intend to do research in Brazil. Among external fellowships, the Howard Hughes Medical Institute had nine international PhD fellows during FY2015; these fellowships resulted from a faculty review and support process for nominees followed by ODGE nominations. This total is up from six in FY2014 and is the largest number of HHMI fellows to date. MIT awarded Chinese Scholarship Council fellowships to two students (a PhD student from the Department of Nuclear Science and Engineering and a master's degree student from the Department of Architecture) in 2014–2015. The Vietnam Education Foundation awarded a fellowship to a PhD student in mechanical engineering.

Internal

MIT Presidential Fellowship awards were given to 111 fellows, with a total disbursement amount of \$8.1 million (more information on the program can be found in the Office of the Provost report to the president). ODGE competitive internal fellowships provided \$2.47 million in support to 41 students representing 26 departments and programs from all five schools. Efforts to increase the visibility of the Hugh Hampton Young Memorial Fund internal competitive fellowship continued in FY2015. The selection committee was particularly pleased with this year's pool of candidates. ODGE has added 11 news stories since FY2014 highlighting former and current fellows. We have committed to a total of seven Hugh Hampton Young Fellows for the 2015–2016 year.

In FY2015, ODGE provided fellowship support totaling \$2.7 million to 69 students from 27 departments and programs with the goal of enhancing diversity in all five schools.

External

During FY2015, ODGE processed 458 external competitive fellowships that offered a total amount of roughly \$23 million. Although the number of GRFP tenure fellows decreased from 356 in FY2014 to 308 in FY2015, there was an increase in the overall number of GRFP fellows (both tenure and reserve), from 436 to 476. Hertz Fellowship awardees increased to 27 in FY2015 from 25 in FY2014, and NDSEG Fellowships increased from 79 to 84.

Fellowships earned via ODGE nomination include two Dolores Zohrab Liebmann Fund Fellowships, one Intel Corporate U.S. PhD Fellowship, an honorable mention award

for the Regeneron Prize for Creative Innovation (\$5,000), and a Schmidt-MacArthur Fellowship for the Circular Economy (\$22,300 each for student and advisor). In addition, two MIT graduate students were nominated and selected to attend the 2015 Lindau Nobel Laureate meeting, and one graduate student was selected to attend the National Research Foundation of Singapore Global Young Scientists Summit.

This year the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation invited approximately 35 universities, including MIT, to apply for a Sloan Minority PhD Program grant to establish a “university center of exemplary mentoring” (UCEM). The purpose of the Sloan minority program is to help diversify the PhD-degree-holding workforce in the United States by increasing the recruitment, retention, and graduation of underrepresented minority doctoral students in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields. MIT was one of the three universities awarded the grant (see Theme Four for a full description).

Financial Literacy

One of ODGE’s strategic priorities for FY2015 was to identify avenues to promote graduate students’ financial literacy. As part of this process, ODGE and the MIT Federal Credit Union cosponsored an agreement with iGrad, a one-stop online financial literacy platform that will be open to the entire MIT community, including graduate and undergraduate students, employees, and alumni. ODGE has been working closely with various campus partners such as Student Financial Services to roll out this platform over the summer. ODGE will also be hiring a Graduate Community Fellow who will work closely with the manager of graduate fellowships to support the launch of iGrad and promote financial literacy among graduate students.

Tax Workshops for MIT Students and International Scholars

The Office of the Vice President for Finance, in collaboration with PricewaterhouseCoopers, ODGE, the International Students Office, and the International Coordinating Committee, organized tax workshops for MIT students and international scholars. The purpose of these workshops, which took place on April 1, 2015, at the Broad Institute Auditorium, was to provide general guidance on the process of filing 2014 US and Massachusetts tax returns. They were not intended to provide individual tax advice.

For many years, ISO has provided an annually updated tax-filing software program, Glacier Tax Prep, to all international students at filing time. While this software continues to be highly valued by our international students, the tax workshops served as an important resource for many who still had unanswered and specific questions. The workshops were a huge success, as evidenced in the number of attendees.

Cost of Living

For over a decade, ODGE and the Office of the Vice President for Research have cosponsored the stipend recommendation process carried out by the GSC Housing and Community Affairs Committee (HCA). The HCA has worked with the Institutional Research section of the Office of the Provost to carry out a detailed graduate student

cost-of-living analysis every four years. These data have allowed for a deeper understanding of the financial environment facing graduate students and have been taken into account in a variety of decision-making processes (e.g., graduate stipends, family programs).

The guiding principle behind the GSC stipend recommendation is to maintain an adequate standard of living for all graduate students, accounting for annual increases in average fixed expenditures and inflation. Aggregate non-housing inflation is determined using regional Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation rates for non-housing expenditures (e.g., food, transportation, utilities, medical care). Housing inflation is estimated using data from the MIT Off-Campus Housing Office and the Cambridge Community Development Department on average rent levels in the micro-regions of Cambridge and Somerville, where most graduate students reside. The GSC stipend recommendations come with the explicit understanding that future funding source availability must also be taken into consideration, along with equity in terms of faculty, staff, and postdoc wage increases and MIT's ability to compete for top talent with peer institutions.

This year, an advisory committee on graduate stipends was formed to build on this work through the formation of a broad-based group of stakeholders (graduate students, faculty, and staff) whose charge was to analyze all of the additional factors related to graduate stipends. The factors analyzed included cost of living, peer competitiveness, cost of research assistants, and community equity issues. The membership included two co-chairs (one graduate student nominated by the GSC and one faculty member nominated by the dean for graduate education and the vice president for research), two HCA graduate student co-chairs, a representative nominated by the vice president for research, a representative nominated by the executive vice president and the vice president for finance, and two additional faculty representatives nominated by the dean for graduate education and the vice president for research.

The committee met three times and formulated a consensus stipend recommendation supported by all of the group's stakeholder representatives. Estimated baseline expense increases, based on CPI and cost-of-living survey data, were 2.25% and 2.84% for on-campus and off-campus students, respectively. Off-campus housing prices continue to increase more quickly than on-campus prices; average housing cost increases were estimated as 3.50% and 4.47% for on- and off-campus students, respectively.

Theme Three: Administration and Policy

This year, ODGE made strides on the strategic priorities we defined for 2014–2015 with feedback from our collaborators. Specific areas of focus included a major review of the Graduate Policies and Procedures, team building and communications, and advancing ODGE digital activities. We experienced a number of staffing and space changes over the past year.

Staffing Changes

Sadly, ISO Director and Associate Dean Danielle Guichard-Ashbrook passed away in early November. Assistant Director Maria Brennan took on the role of acting director in

October 2014. On April 17, a memorial service in honor of Dean Guichard-Ashbrook was held on campus to celebrate her life with her family, friends, and colleagues.

Robert Cummings joined ODGE in July to fill the new position of senior administrative assistant for graduate and special student admissions. He had previously been a graduate program assistant in the Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences, where he managed graduate applications using GradApply, provided support to the graduate admissions committees and prospective students, and maintained student records and admission databases.

Sasha Susman started in October as administrative and program associate for diversity initiatives, filling in the role previously held by Amanda Stoll. After graduating from college with a major in Spanish, she spent three years in Mexico working for nongovernmental organizations. She also worked as Spanish interpreter.

Eboney Hearn, the new assistant dean for diversity initiatives, started in September 2014. She had previously been program director of diversity initiatives at the Broad Institute. She is a former MIT undergraduate who began her connection with ODGE during her Broad Institute years.

Julie Kukharenko started as financial assistant in January 2015 after the former financial assistant, Idalia Cuevas, transferred to another department. Julie had worked at the Photographic Resource Center for the preceding three years as membership, finance, and operations manager and interim finance director. Julie brings a wide range of experience and skills in nonprofit finance and operations.

The search for a new ISO director/associate dean began in January. Three top candidates were interviewed in early June, and a new hire will be announced in July.

Space Changes

In January 2014, ISO and a couple of the offices that occupied Building 12 were given the opportunity to move to renovated space in Building E39 in Kendall Square. The actual move took place in late October. As a result of increased square footage, we were able to increase the reception/waiting area to accommodate more student traffic and provide a private office for each administrative staff member. In addition, the new office in E39 brought all of the ISO staff together in one place. Many students found the proximity of the new office to the Kendall T station convenient.

Due to the reassignment of ODGE's office space in Building 9 to the new programs in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning (DUSP), the staff currently in Building 9 will relocate to the office suite in Building 35 adjacent to Room 35-332, where several ODGE staff members have offices. The renovation will take place this summer, and the move is expected in the fall.

Staff Professional Development

As part of our strategic plan, ODGE continued to focus on the professional development of the staff. We took advantage of professional development programs offered on

campus as well as online programs (i.e., webinars) and invited speakers at all-staff meetings to talk on topics related to ODGE business. Talks at all-staff meetings included a presentation by Heather Beem, a PhD candidate in mechanical engineering, on her projects with MIT's D-Lab; a follow-up on Professor Renee Richardson Gosline's Diversity Summit keynote lecture; a presentation and Q&A on the MIT Sexual Assault Survey by Kate McCarthy, director of Violence Prevention and Response; and a presentation on MIT campus development projects by Richard Amster, director of campus construction.

We had an all-day ODGE staff retreat on March 20. The topic of the retreat, facilitated by Dave Czeniuk from Edgework Consulting, was distributed leadership and work-life rhythm. The central goal was for staff members to succeed in a climate of shared purpose, teamwork, and respect and maintain a work-life balance.

A member of the ISO staff presented on visiting student issues at the NAFSA Bi-Regional Conference in Albany, NY, in October. Another staff member presented on updates in student advising issues at the NAFSA Regional Eastern Massachusetts Roundtable update sessions in Boston in June. An ISO staffer also took over convening the Third Thursday group, which is composed of international student advisors from the smaller institutions in the Boston area; participants bring their questions for discussion and suggested solutions. Finally, as part of ongoing professional development, the dean and staff members serve throughout the year on the following committees:

- Advisory Board to the Office of Multicultural Programs in the Division of Student Life
- Commencement Committee
- Committee on Discipline
- Committee on Graduate Programs
- Committee on Race and Diversity
- Department of Athletics, Physical Education, and Recreation Advisory Board
- Faculty Advisory Committee for the MIT Office of Minority Education
- Graduate Academic Performance Group
- International Advisory Committee
- Risk Management Council
- MIT 2016
- Student and Affiliates Health Insurance Advisory Committee
- Student Systems Steering Committee
- Enrollment Management Group
- Title IX Working Group

Rewards and Recognition

The ODGE rewards and recognition program (Spot Awards) is now in its third year. A total of 60 awards have been given since the start of FY2015. The nominator shares the intent of recognition with the nominee's manager and presents the award. Spot Award recipients are recognized at monthly all-staff meetings. Every quarter we draw a name from the pool of nominators and give a Spot Award to the lucky nominator. The goal is to encourage staff members to appreciate excellent work and thoughtful acts of others by nominating them for the ODGE Spot Award.

Assistant ISO director Maria Brennan received an MIT Excellence Award in the Serving the Client category. Maria's job is to ensure that all MIT international students (over 3,500 students from 90 countries) comply with US immigration requirements. Maria is the primary go-to person for advice on immigration policy, visa applications, travel restrictions, work requirements, and countless other issues that arise in the life of an international student. Both staff and students have written in passionate support of her nomination for this award.

International student advisor Sylvia Hiestand won a 2015 Infinite Mile Award. Sylvia stands out at MIT as an exemplary, committed, knowledgeable, approachable, and caring individual. In the face of immigration regulations, Sylvia demonstrates an ability to combine compliance with the law with the use of discretion when possible to ensure that students achieve academic excellence and advance their personal goals. Widely recognized for her expertise and knowledge, Sylvia is an active contributor and voice in the field of international student advising.

Government Compliance

ISO is responsible for and ensures the Institute's compliance with the regulations of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of State (DOS) governing international students. In AY2015, there were many changes in student visa regulations. New DOS regulations governing both international student advisors and J-1 students went into effect in January 2015, with additional rulings becoming effective in May. The J-1 Exchange Visitor Program now requires that the English language skills of admitted students planning to enter the United States be assessed prior to an immigration document being issued. The program also requires that international student advisors undergo a criminal background check before being hired. Furthermore, current ISO advisors are required to undergo similar checks every four years. In addition, all entering J-1 students and their spouses must receive pre-arrival material and must complete specific orientation activities upon their arrival; also, cross-cultural activities and programming must be made available to them during their time on campus. MIT's J-1 Exchange Visitor Program was granted redesignation approval from the Department of State in September 2014.

In July 2014, we submitted an application for recertification of MIT's F-1 Program. We received multiple visits in 2014 from special agents representing DHS with various inquiries, and we responded to an April 2015 request for MIT's evidence of "licensure or exemption from the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education." Emily Cheng and Sylvia Hiestand were instrumental in submitting all of the documents successfully; we were granted recertification in May 2015.

International Student Services

ISO introduced daily sessions on the procedures for applying for off-campus work permission to avoid delays in obtaining an individual appointment with an advisor. These sessions proved quite successful. The procedures for applying for work permission are becoming more detailed, with multiple deadlines involved. Since the government approval process takes up to three months, we ensured that documents were completed accurately and in keeping with deadlines.

The established walk-in service for our international students is growing in popularity, especially with the ISO move to E39-278 in Kendall Square. This program allows immediate access to ISO immigration and advising services. In addition, the ISO receptionist can provide resources to students when ISO advisor appointment schedules are fully booked during the busiest periods of the year.

To accommodate international students' Social Security number (SSN) application process, we invite up to four representatives from the Social Security Administration in Cambridge to campus for two days at the beginning of the year to accept application forms. The ISO staff prescreens hundreds of student SSN applications to facilitate the process. As with many formal government application processes, this can be cumbersome and very detailed oriented.

Digital Systems

SUNAPSIS

SUNAPSIS, ISO's digitized case management system, allows us to keep records, issue immigration documents more efficiently and accurately for our growing international student population (currently at 3,625, with 626 dependents), and help our international students with immigration compliance. Led by Emily Cheng, SUNAPSIS 3.2.0 was deployed on June 30, 2015, in order to implement the new SEVIS 6.21 name and address standards required to issue I-20 and DS-2019 forms to students. This release will also require a newly designed I-20 to be reprinted for all F-1 students to allow them to apply for benefits such as Social Security numbers, driver's licenses, and visa renewals. This year, we successfully completed the digitization of our orientation information intake process to allow advisors to more efficiently conduct in-person orientation sessions.

Improving Graduate Admissions

AY2014 marked the last year of a planned three-year transition to a centralized, electronic graduate admissions platform, GradApply, developed by the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. This three-year transition was carried out under budget and on time. Thirty-two graduate programs used GradApply during the final (2013–2014) admissions cycle, corresponding to 15,692 applications and 55,597 letters of recommendation. Sloan graduate programs used three different applications: six degree programs used the ApplyYourself external vendor (7,172 applications), the Systems Design and Management program used the Admittor external vendor (324 applications), and the Supply Chain Management program used the CollegeNet external vendor (289 applications).

During AY2015, a total of 23,756 applications were received by graduate programs and 3,272 applicants (14%) were admitted; 2,162 applicants (66%) plan to enroll for the upcoming year.

The GradApply developers, Professor Frans Kaashoek, Professor Robert Morris, and Dr. Dorothy Curtis, continue to improve the system, accommodate requests, and support the needs of departments and graduate programs. Examples of enhancements to GradApply made during the last cycle include the ability to communicate with applicants using tags, an increased ability to customize application questions, and an improved user interface. Also, IS&T enhanced the functionality of Grade20, the central admissions system. The communication issues between GradApply and Grade20 have largely been resolved by IS&T improving its application upload error rate from 20% in AY2014 to 5% in AY2015; in addition, new matching criteria have been created, and GradApply coding discrepancies (e.g., missing information on ethnicity) have been addressed.

With GradApply integrated into the graduate admissions landscape at MIT, the work of the Committee on Graduate Admissions (CGA) to oversee the transition is now complete. Hence, a newly formed graduate admissions team was convened by the dean for graduate education during fall 2014 as a standing committee whose charge is to assess, integrate, and coordinate graduate admissions platforms, processes, and procedures at MIT. As of July 7, 2014, a full-time-equivalent position (senior administrative assistant, graduate and special student admissions) in the Admissions Office was transferred to ODGE and taken up by Robert Cummings. The job description for this position was rewritten with an increased focus on serving as a liaison among the GradApply team, the Sloan admissions team, IS&T (Grade20), departments, and graduate programs; conducting and disseminating Institute-wide data analyses and surveys in collaboration with the Office of Institutional Research; and supporting discussions on policies and procedures related to graduate admissions. The senior administrative assistant provided individual training consultations with new administrative staff throughout the fall semester on use of graduate admissions systems, presented an overview of graduate admissions at a roundtable of graduate administrators in October, and carried out a more specialized GradApply training and Q&A session with graduate administrators in December. In addition, the senior administrative assistant staffs the graduate admissions team and has been instrumental in communicating and testing new features developed by IS&T, the most noteworthy being Slate, the new Sloan admissions platform.

A major advancement during the 2014–2015 admissions cycle involved the Sloan School of Management's transition to the new Slate admissions platform. The transition sought to improve connections among Sloan internal systems, Grade20, and Institute programs. As a result, many new streamlined methods of transferring applications and reporting errors have been established. Examples of improvements include automated transfers of applications, user-friendly error report summaries, and repeated updates to Grade20 after submission of an application. These new features have significantly reduced the amount of time needed to process applications. Future projects will seek to merge the GradApply loading procedures with the new loading procedures used in the Slate system, which will further improve efficiency.

In order to provide feedback on the admissions process and understand the need for future projects, a survey was sent out to graduate administrators and faculty admissions chairs in October 2014, and 29 departments and graduate programs responded. The large majority of survey respondents report that their admissions processes proceeded very smoothly last year, and numerous respondents commented on the responsiveness of the graduate admissions team, particularly in terms of time-sensitive technical requests. Although some technical issues did occur (e.g., mistaken email notifications or difficulty adapting to changes in the layout format), the overall response was overwhelmingly positive. All of the user departments have attained an excellent level of stability in adapting GradApply, and each year the graduate admissions team continues to enhance and streamline the admissions process. The most useful improvements to GradApply were cited as the use of bulk selection options, which reduce administrative time, and the inclusion of additional customization options, improving the user interface experience for faculty reviewers. Another key improvement was the integration of MIT ID numbers into the GradApply application, which enabled departments to reduce their reliance on Grade20 and receive all relevant information through GradApply. Respondents also cited the new test score matching module in Grade20 as useful. In addition, many respondents stated that linking official GRE (Graduate Record Examination) and TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) scores directly from Grade20 to GradApply proved beneficial, as test scores can now be verified within the application rather than through the external Grade20 website.

While no major structural changes were recommended overall to the graduate admissions system, the survey respondents recommended a number of areas of enhancements. Similar to the 2013 CGA report, numerous respondents recommended increasing GradApply documentation, and three departments suggested continuing to improve the aesthetics of the user interface. In addition, departments and programs would like to see better integration of IELTS (International English Language Testing System) test scores into Grade20 and continued improvements in matching official GRE and TOEFL test scores to applications. One area often cited by departments and programs was further reducing the two- to three-day processing time for applications to upload from GradApply into Grade20. Lastly, the most frequently requested feature was providing a streamlined method for administrators to enter admissions decisions and replies in one location that would connect to all relevant systems.

The results of the survey were taken into consideration, and it was decided that incorporating department decisions into Slate and GradApply application transfers would be the most beneficial improvement during the current admissions cycle. IS&T, in conjunction with Sloan, was able to connect department decisions between the Slate application system and Grade20, further streamlining communications. Efforts to provide the same connection with GradApply are currently under way and will be completed in time for the next admissions cycle. Improvements in test score connections and processing of MIT ID numbers are currently under consideration by IS&T.

Graduate Student Council Advocacy for Graduate Students

The GSC strives to be a fierce advocate for graduate student interests in all areas in which it can have an effect. There are two broad areas in which the GSC has been able

to advocate for MIT graduate students: on-campus advocacy, in which the GSC works closely with members of the MIT administration, and outward advocacy focused on bringing pertinent graduate student issues to the attention of legislators and executives at the local, state, and national levels. The primary on-campus advocacy topics in 2014–2015 included long-term graduate housing planning, graduate cost-of-living analysis and stipend recommendations, transportation options, and student privacy. Local, state, and national advocacy focused on increased funding for graduate students, open data policies, graduate student debt, and visa/citizenship options for international advanced-degree holders looking to start US-based companies.

Graduate Housing

As a follow-up to the report produced by the 2014 Graduate Housing Taskforce, the Graduate Student Council has further investigated the current status and potential future plans regarding on-campus and Institute-owned housing for graduate students. The findings of the GSC and its committees indicate that by prioritizing graduate housing concerns, the Institute could find significant co-benefits in the evolving housing landscape for undergraduates, postdocs, and faculty (especially with respect to attracting junior faculty members).

The investigation resulted in other models that have been and could be pursued to significantly address graduate student housing needs. These models can be implemented in conjunction with the building of new on-campus multipurpose, dormitory-style units as addressed in the 2014 provost-commissioned Clay Housing Report. Additional models included but were not limited to conversion of held land, private-sector leasing, and federally supported grants.

Two major planning efforts that will affect the future of graduate student housing at MIT are under way. One is the development of the eastern part of the campus, an effort shepherded by the East Campus Steering Committee. The outlined plan is the closure and demolition of Eastgate (Building E55) and the construction of a new graduate residence. The second planning effort, which is at an earlier stage, will look at the western section of the campus.

Regardless of the method used to create additional housing options for graduate students, the GSC believes that the options outlined in the Clay Housing Report should be aggressively pursued by the Institute in order to continue to attract and retain the most talented graduate students possible.

Transportation

The GSC was active in addressing transportation challenges faced by students who do not live near regular transportation options. In partnership with the Undergraduate Association, the GSC continues to support the Costco/Target Shuttle. In addition, the design methodology developed to create and optimize the Somerville Shuttle route was viewed as successful by all stakeholders. Changes were made this year to the Saferide Boston West/East Shuttle.

Student Privacy

Students' personal information has been posted in the MIT directory since the paper era. The directory previously included, when applicable, each student's name, course, year, email address, MIT office address and telephone number, permanent home address, and term address and phone number. MIT students could submit a request for repression to the registrar if they did not want certain parts of this information displayed, but the process was often time consuming and cumbersome. Results from a survey on student privacy indicated strong concern around listing personal information and the potential for misuse of this information. The GSC worked with the Committee on Student Information Policy to change privacy policies such that the Institute privately retains the personal information of all students and requires students to give explicit permission for listing of permanent home addresses, term phone numbers, and term addresses.

Graduate Student Council Budgeting and Programming

The GSC empowers students to take ownership of their student life experiences and professional development while at MIT; this agency allows students to hone interpersonal and leadership skills that are often difficult to develop wholly within their respective departments, labs, and research centers. Recent programs have enabled the GSC to provide additional financial support and logistical tools to graduate student groups and members of the graduate student body. The increased ability of the GSC to support MIT graduate students has come from major financial improvements, including the GSC budget "rescope process," enhanced predictions of revenues from intermittent and variable funding sources, and record-high Fall Career Fair profits.

Career Fair

Since 1999, the MIT Fall Career Fair has been organized by three "partner organizations": graduating undergraduate seniors, the Society of Women Engineers, and the GSC. The GSC's share of the Career Fair profits accounts for a significant portion of the council's budget; these proceeds go directly back to current graduate students in the form of GSC initiatives and funding opportunities for student organizations.

Between 2012 and 2014, the Fall Career Fair expanded in terms of providing job opportunities to students and delivering much-needed funding to student groups. Due to the increased success of the fair over the past few years, the three-year average of past proceeds used by the GSC to estimate future inflows has proven to be conservative; the 2014 GSC revenue share, originally projected to be \$318,872, ended up at approximately \$408,000.

Budget Rescope

At the midpoint of the 2015 fiscal year, the GSC General Council initiated a "rescope" process by which the extra income from a particularly effective Career Fair was redistributed according to the emerging needs of the graduate student body. Surplus funds were allocated according to the following principles: the surplus is owned by the entire MIT graduate student body—not the GSC—and ideas should be solicited by the entire student body; the decision-making and allocation process should be fully transparent; and initiatives should create the maximum impact for the greatest number of students.

In general, considerations focused on how best to expand underfunded programs and explore new funding opportunities, with an emphasis on the long-term sustainability of new programs. Funding ideas were drawn from General Council meetings, responses to email solicitations, communications with the MIT administration, and previous unfunded proposals. The Executive Committee reviewed the ideas and approved the initial rescoped budget proposal. Final allocation decisions were made by the General Council in accordance with GSC bylaws.

The final rescoped budget increased support for the GSC Funding Board (which allocates funding directly to student groups whose memberships contain a majority of graduate students) and created a new initiatives fund and line item. In the future, the GSC budget rescope process will continue to be invaluable in responding to new and emerging needs of graduate students in the middle of the fiscal year.

Social Media

Under the leadership of the GSC secretary, the council laid the groundwork for a greatly improved website with support for mobile web browsers. The GSC's online presence includes a Facebook page, a Twitter account, an Instagram page, and an email list of weekly events ("the Anno"). The council's social media accounts all experienced increased traffic in the past year. *The Graduate*, a newsletter written by graduate students, was discontinued so that we could focus on more targeted methods of delivering timely news to MIT graduate students. The Anno still maintains a readership rate of around 30% to 50%. Depending on the intended audience, the GSC continues to work with *The Tech*, the MIT News Office, *The Faculty Newsletter*, and the MIT Alumni Association as communication resources.

Muddy Charles Pub

The GSC worked closely with MIT Dining to improve the Muddy Charles Pub. Organizers of event series at the Muddy featuring food have successfully worked to achieve two goals: engagement of the patrons and promotion of responsible drinking behaviors. One such series is Muddy Mondays, in which cultural groups sponsor activities and the Muddy Charles matches group contributions in a five-to-one ratio. Numerous capital improvements to the space have also been initiated, including renovating the floors, repainting the walls, changing the curtains, and replacing and/or adding wall outlets, sound proofing, wall lights, ceiling fans, and multipurpose TVs.

Graduate Student Council Internal Structure and Operations

The overall internal structure of the GSC remains mostly unchanged. An ad hoc presidential task force was convened to review and, if necessary, redraft the council's governing documents. Although the GSC constitution remains unchanged, several improvements and clarifications have been made to the bylaws.

Outside of General Council meetings, much of the work done by the GSC is tasked to the four executive officers and the co-chairs of the GSC committees. In addition, numerous subcommittees carry out specific tasks. GSC subcommittees include Graduate

Women at MIT (GWAMIT), Legislative Action, Grad Gala, Ski Trip, Arts, Coffee Hour, Grad Rat, Housing, Transportation, Families, Off-Campus, and Sustainability.

The GSC also focused on working closely with the MIT administration on a number of key Institute committees. There were a large number of applicants for the Nominations Board, the GSC clearinghouse for graduate student applications to Institute committees; in many cases, the board was able to comply with a directive from the chair of the faculty recommending more graduate students than available spots in order to offer flexibility to committee chairs in determining their committees' composition.

Legislative Outreach

The GSC Legislative Action Subcommittee was very active this year, drafting a new legislative platform for the GSC that enumerates the positions of the council on issues pertaining to graduate students at the local, state, and federal levels. The new platform addressed student rights, diversity in graduate programs, higher education funding, research and development funding, international student issues, and promotion of science in the public sphere. The GSC took part in two trips to Washington, DC, as part of the National Association of Graduate and Professional Students' Legislative Action Days program. During these trips, the GSC advocated for domestic renewal of visas, open data policies, and citizenship pathways for advanced-degree graduates looking to start companies in the United States upon graduation. Outreach activities in Washington included visits with the offices of US senators and members of the House of Representatives. The GSC continued its engagement with the MIT Washington Office and has initiated the possibility of collaboration on future visits. Finally, and most significantly, the GSC empowered the Legislative Action Subcommittee to publish op-ed articles consistent with the legislative platform passed by the GSC General Council.

Theme Four: Diversity and Climate

MIT continually strives to advance a culture of diversity and inclusion and to ensure that MIT's graduate student population reflects the diverse talent of our nation. MIT's students come from a wide variety of backgrounds and countries. In AY2015, 3,625 international students (both graduate and undergraduate) were enrolled, a 14% increase from the 3,171 students enrolled in AY2014. The number of countries with enrolled students remained the same, at 115. There was a slight decrease from last year in the number of student spouses and children. The number of exchange students rose from 57 to 65, and the number of visiting students increased from 674 to 799.

ODGE serves as a catalyst for attracting a more diverse domestic graduate student body and provides students with various forms of support to help them be academically successful. ODGE's recruitment and retention efforts and initiatives focus on underrepresented minority students (i.e., African American, Native American, and Hispanic students). In addition, we have programs that support women, first-generation college students, and students from small colleges. Through ISO, we also implement programming to support a positive climate for MIT's international students.

Underrepresented Minority Efforts

Over the past decade, we have made a number of strides towards increasing the percentage of underrepresented minority graduate students at MIT. The number of applications to graduate school from underrepresented minority students has increased steadily, totaling 1,384 in 2014. This increase in applications has led to a corresponding rise in the total number of underrepresented minority graduate students enrolled in our graduate programs. In 2014, 309 underrepresented students were admitted across the Institute, and 193 chose to attend MIT (a 63% yield). This past academic year, a total of 535 underrepresented students were enrolled, representing 14% of domestic graduate students (a 6.5% increase over last year and an increase of 76% since 2005). In order to support departments in their efforts to recruit the best candidates, in FY2015 ODGE provided fellowship support totaling \$2.7 million to 69 students from 20 departments and programs whose goal was to enhance diversity in all five schools.

Our continuing strategy consists of two parts: partnering with academic departments to improve the quality of recruiting and mentoring and developing programs operated by our office to support diversity at MIT. Continuing on this course allows us to build on our work and evaluate its success.

A key mechanism for recruiting applicants from underserved and underrepresented groups and for engaging departments and programs is the MIT Summer Research Program. ODGE plays a critical role in organizing MIT's presence at national recruiting conferences such as those of the National Society of Black Engineers, the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science, the American Indian Science and Engineering Society, and the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers. In preparation for these conferences, we train students and staff to represent the Institute as a whole, in addition to specific academic departments. A proven mechanism for retention is the Power Lunch series, a monthly series of luncheon seminars designed to promote the academic, professional, and personal development of graduate students from underrepresented groups.

The newest addition to the portfolio of recruitment and retention mechanisms is a scholarship opportunity supported by ODGE and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. This winter ODGE, in collaboration with four departments in the School of Engineering, secured an \$840,000 competitive grant from the Sloan Foundation for a university center of exemplary mentoring. This will allow MIT to provide \$40,000 scholarships to underrepresented minority graduate students over the next three years. We expect to support 36 doctoral scholars. MIT is now one of eight institutions in the nation with a UCEM, and the center will be an attractive incentive for prospective students thinking about matriculating to MIT.

The MIT UCEM will focus on the recruitment, retention, and academic success of underrepresented minority doctoral students in four School of Engineering departments: Biological Engineering, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, Chemical Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering.

The center will be coordinated and governed by principal investigator Christine Ortiz, dean for graduate education and the Morris Cohen Professor of Materials Science and Engineering; Leslie A. Kolodziejewski, professor and graduate officer of electrical engineering and computer science; David Hardt, professor and graduate officer of mechanical engineering; Patrick Doyle, professor and graduate officer of chemical engineering; Forest White, professor and graduate officer of biological engineering; and Eboney Hearn, assistant dean for diversity initiatives. In addition, the team will leverage Institute-wide efforts focused on community, equity, inclusion, and diversity through Edmund Bertschinger, physics professor and the Institute's community and equity officer, and Blanche Staton, senior associate dean for graduate education.

The MIT UCEM will carry out strategic and customized recruitment strategies tailored to the four participating departments as well as structured programs that address key barriers to retention and educational success; these programs will focus on academic support, mentoring, and personal and professional development opportunities. The nomination process for incoming and current doctoral scholars is under way. We expect to support our first group of scholars this coming fall with \$40,000 scholarships.

The opportunity to create a UCEM at MIT will help us attract top talent. In addition, we will adapt what we learn about best practices in recruitment, retention, and climate, as well as the academic success of underrepresented minority students in these four departments, to the greater MIT community to benefit all graduate students.

MIT Summer Research Program

The [MIT Summer Research Program](#) continues to be MIT's largest summer research program. It serves as a recruitment tool for underrepresented minority students to MIT, affording the hosting research labs the benefit of increased diversity during the summer while increasing awareness of and access to graduate education for participating students and serving as a national pipeline for talent.

MSRP's mission is to promote the value of graduate education, to improve the research enterprise through increased diversity, and to prepare and recruit the best and brightest for graduate education at MIT. Since its inception, MSRP has seen more than 90% of program participants go on to pursue advanced degrees at institutions of higher learning. For AY2016, MIT departments admitted 12 former MSRP interns, 11 of whom accepted the offer and will begin their program in September.

In 2015, 40 interns conducted research in nine different departments. Ten new labs hosted MSRP students, joining the more than 280 faculty members who have been key to the program's success since it began. In addition to serving as research mentors, these professors participate in intern selection, match interns with projects, and counsel students on their academic opportunities.

Grad Catalyst

The Grad Catalyst is a workshop that teaches underclassmen at minority-serving institutions how to plan their undergraduate trajectories so that they will be strong graduate school candidates come senior year. The Catalyst's interactive format allows

session participants to engage with MIT graduate students. Session topics include tools for applying to graduate school, tips on obtaining funding, advice on selecting a school and advisor, and a host of other key information. In addition to helping students individually, the Grad Catalyst develops and strengthens relationships with minority-serving institutions, thereby increasing MIT's underrepresented minority applicant pool.

We continue to work on the online tool that will accompany the Catalyst sessions. In fact, we have conducted two rounds of beta testing and will conduct a third round this summer. This online tool will give us greater information about the types of students using our service and provide users with the ability to keep track of their goals and progress. Although the complexity of the online resource has slowed its development, we aim to launch the online tool during the fall 2015 recruitment season.

The Grad Catalyst is an effective method for community building among the underrepresented minority graduate students at MIT. Each year, the Graduate Community Fellows who coordinate the program lead a training session that prepares graduate students to host Catalyst sessions. The Catalyst follows an apprentice model in which trained graduate students help novice presenters learn how to host a session. This structure helps us incorporate various student perspectives in developing our materials.

Getting Ready for Advanced Degrees Lab

The National Consortium for Graduate Degrees for Minorities in Engineering and Science hosts the Getting Ready for Advanced Degrees (GRAD) Lab, a one-day event that provides underrepresented students with detailed information about the benefits of the research enterprise and how to apply to graduate programs and fellowships. In October 2014, ODGE supported MIT's participation in the GRAD Lab. Approximately 100 student participants heard from a range of speakers, including current graduate students, faculty, senior industry managers, and senior academic administrators. Sessions included presentations on topics that ranged from being successful in graduate school to understanding the fellowship application process.

Committed to Caring

In spring 2014, ODGE created and launched the [Committed to Caring](#) campaign. We invited graduate students to nominate MIT faculty members who should be recognized as being "committed to caring." The overall purposes of this campaign are to recognize and celebrate examples of positive character in our community and to reinforce the kind of behavior that can serve as a gold standard for everyone. Honorees will be featured on the ODGE website as well as on posters that highlight their caring actions. In AY2015, faculty members Brent Ryan and Hae-Seung "Harry" Lee were recognized in addition to the inaugural June 2014 honorees. Due to understaffing, the original schedule was not maintained, but the groundwork has been laid to resume honoring two faculty members each month beginning in September 2015.

Community and Equity

The position of Institute community and equity officer was created in AY2014. One of the first actions of the officer was to conduct research for a comprehensive report on the

state of the MIT community. By number, graduate students represent the largest single demographic in the Institute community. The GSC worked with the community and equity officer to develop the report, address concerns of graduate students, and engage faculty members. A brief editorial was written for the faculty newsletter on the findings of the report pertaining to graduate students; this piece highlighted the need for uniform medical, health, and wellness resources across the MIT community.

International Climate Efforts

International Orientation

International freshman orientation (IFO) continues to be one of the highlights of our services. While only 10% of the undergraduates at MIT in AY2015 were international, these students often require ISO advice and services at a disproportionate rate relative to their graduate counterparts. IFO activities have been further enhanced to ensure extra support for incoming international undergraduates. International undergraduate orientation is a combination of welcoming and fun activities to assist our students in assimilating into a new environment, essential information on student well-being, Institute information, and critical guidelines necessary for all international students upon their arrival. In AY2015, there was an added presentation by global education and career development staff outlining potential global opportunities through MIT partnerships abroad.

Sylvia Hiestand from ISO organized the popular “USA 101” session, offering a presentation on the important topic of cultural shock and the stages of adjustment to a new cultural environment. Continuing last year’s success, the student coordinators and mentors held a scavenger hunt and a dinner-and-movie night, among many other social, bonding, and welcoming activities. These activities offer a refreshing complement to the more serious issues addressed in IFO, such as immigration regulations, academic integrity, and sexual harassment.

Student mentors also organized airport pickups starting the week before IFO and were present to meet every international freshman who had asked to be picked up. Overall, IFO offered international students a very warm welcome to campus.

Cultural and Cross-Cultural Events

In AY2015, ISO held a festive event for the beginning of the 2015 Lunar New Year celebrated in various parts of Asia. A special effort was made to order authentic Asian cuisine, much to the delight of our students. Over 200 students and staff attended. Celebrations and recognition of foreign festive occasions and national holidays always seem to be appreciated by our students.

ISO held a two-week open house during the annual winter holiday period with hot apple cider and cookies as part of the menu. Our students always appreciate this event during the cold months and during their exam period.

In May, ISO provided a special breakfast event for all international undergraduate students just before their exam period. In addition to a tasty breakfast, this

unprecedented event offered an immediate opportunity for signing of immigration documents. Over 200 international undergraduate students attended, and all of the ISO staff was present to facilitate this immigration service.

Kailath International Student Fund

The Kailath International Student Fund, established in 2002 by a generous endowment from Professor George Verghese and Dr. Ann Kailath, provides support for specialized ISO programming that would not otherwise be possible. In AY2015, Kailath funds supported, among many other events, the two-week ISO holiday open house just mentioned and a festive ISO graduation day open house for our graduating international students and their family members attending Commencement.

Support for Global Initiatives

ISO continues to support all international students in current and new global initiatives being unveiled at the Institute, including exchange programs such as the Pretoria-MIT Exchange, the Imperial College Exchange, the Oxford University Exchange Program, and the Delft Exchange. We serve all Partner Programs initiatives, including the Sabanci University Program, the Lisbon MBA Summer immersion Program, and the MIT Global Founders' Skill Accelerator Program. We also support collaborations such as the Skoltech Initiative and the MIT and Masdar Institute Cooperative Program. Oxford University and Imperial College summer exchange programs are now taking place in addition to the traditional fall program.

Working Group on International Student Support

In AY2014 ODGE convened and chaired the Institute-wide Working Group on International Student Support, which focused on understanding the climate for international students and their evolving needs, the resources available and their current organizational structure, and best practices for creating a welcoming climate and ensuring cultural sensitivity. The working group's report, submitted in July 2014, included nine recommendations to ease issues related to cultural acclimation and mitigate resulting escalation of negative impacts such as anxiety, isolation, stress, depression, academic problems, and crisis situations:

- Publicize dedicated resources for international students, ensure culturally sensitive perspectives, and facilitate communications between international students of the same country
- Review and improve international student participation in co-curricular and extracurricular activities
- Update the mission of ISO and create a staff position dedicated to cultural acclimation and climate programming for international students
- Enhance orientation with specific international content, develop a first-year international student "reorientation" process, and offer dedicated residential support for first-year international undergraduates
- Reduce perceived barriers to student support resources that are specific to international students

- Explore opportunities to provide more educational and learning-based activities for spouses of international students
- Increase faculty and staff members' cultural sensitivity and awareness of the experiences unique to international students
- Facilitate interactions and coordination among international student groups
- Enhance the financial literacy of incoming international graduate students and establish and disseminate best practices in financial support for international students

The working group suggests that there be pilot programs and assessment plans for all of these recommendations. The group's report was distributed to the community, and a comment period ensued during the past academic year; the recommendations are planned for implementation during 2015–2016.

Participating in the National Conversation

Dean Ortiz contributed to various pipeline efforts by speaking about academic career paths at several conferences and workshops, including the Rising Stars workshop for top early-career women in civil environmental engineering and related fields and the WISE Inspirations Network & Women in STEM Symposium at Stanford University. Also, she discussed the contributions of graduate women to the Institute's climate of excellence at the MIT Graduate Women of Excellence reception.

Theme Five: Holistic Graduate Student Experience

Personal support, access to resources, work-life balance, and community are vital to the academic, professional, and personal success of our graduate students. Furthermore, in addition to creating original knowledge at the frontiers of each field, today's graduate students also need the ability to recognize what this new knowledge means in a broader context, and they must possess a more extensive skill set to act on it for the benefit of humanity. Therefore, professional and personal development is needed to prepare graduate students for a range of career paths.

Orientation and Mentorship

Each year, the GSC Orientation Committee organizes the largest fully student-run graduate student orientation in the country. The 2014 orientation built on the successes of recent years, and survey data indicate a high level of satisfaction with this year's program. Spanning a period of three weeks, the orientation consisted of more than 60 events offering incoming students an opportunity to become acclimated to MIT, understand the support resources available, make friends, and have fun in a brand new city. In order to further advance the goal of President Reif to have all students come together as "One MIT," the 2014 orientation began with a highly successful Institute-wide barbecue for all incoming first-year students. Other marquee events included informational sessions (Grad School 101 and Grad School 102); the presidential address, in which President Reif welcomed the incoming class and participated in answering questions submitted on Twitter; a Boston Harbor dance party cruise; a family carnival for graduate students with children; an international student mixer; and GSC-funded dorm

events. The orientation team increased its operating budget by securing the sponsorship of MIT-based businesses such as Grad Rat, the MIT Coop, and the MIT Federal Credit Union. The MIT Coop provided T-shirts to all incoming students, and the Credit Union sponsored the distribution of thumb drives preloaded with a calendar of orientation events and crucial information from Institute offices.

MIT is legally mandated to provide immigration information to all new students and to verify that they are in appropriate legal status. Required orientation programming for all incoming foreign national students ensures that we fulfill this important regulatory responsibility on behalf of the Institute. In collaboration with the Registrar's Office and the MIT Card Office, incoming international students are permitted to register and receive an MIT ID only after they have attended an immigration information session as part of orientation. To accommodate international graduate students who arrive at the Institute throughout the summer, ISO increased the frequency of these information sessions to twice daily during August 2014 so that students could have more immediate access to Institute facilities and participate in MIT community life within a short time of their arrival on campus. ISO held more than 60 immigration information sessions for graduate students throughout the year (not including the visiting student immigration information sessions held weekly throughout the year).

In conjunction with the MIT Police, ISO continues to sponsor a presentation for newly arrived students on topics such as safety issues and legal issues other than immigration regulations. The J-1 Exchange Visitor Program mandates that all J-1 students be informed of federal, state, and immigration rules pertaining to them, and there is a new emphasis on information such as procedures for emergency assistance, transportation, and Institute rules and regulations. This requirement is met by the combination of our orientation and the presentation made by the MIT Police. The MIT Police reassure the Institute's international students that the police are there to protect and advise them on safety issues. The safety of our students is of critical concern, and international students are vulnerable if it is their first time abroad. The MIT Police remind our students that self-defense classes are available to them on campus. ISO's role in the event is to describe immigration implications when laws and rules are violated.

Personal Support and Advising

Personal support and advising staff adopted a new name in 2014–2015: graduate personal support. Some students had reported feeling intimidated by being referred to “the Office of the Dean,” believing it sounded formal and disciplinarian. By contrast, the friendly-sounding “graduate personal support” resonated with the majority of students approached. The name change was propagated throughout ODGE materials, partner offices, and official publications to refer to the support services provided by Deans Blanche Staton and Jason McKnight and the administrative support provided by Patricia Glidden.

There was an increased need for services for graduate students requesting approval of general petitions; there were 722 such petitions in AY2015, up from 694 the previous year. Since some of these documents are multi-function petitions, however, they represent more than 814 actions. Issues covered in these petitions included doctoral thesis non-residency status, childbirth accommodations, and medical leaves.

In response to both national and institutional imperatives to enhance awareness of services in the areas of campus sexual assault and misconduct and the health and well-being of students and the campus community, ODGE senior staff have collaborated with the chancellor's Prevention and Education Task Force to make a number of practical recommendations, including establishing a new violence prevention and response staff position at Community Wellness at MIT Medical.

Student advising is at the core of ISO's responsibility to MIT's international students and their accompanying dependents. ISO is the only office on campus with immigration expertise in student regulations. On behalf of MIT, ISO has legal responsibility, and therefore immigration advising responsibility, for most of the Institute's international students and their dependents for as long as three years after graduation. In AY2015, ISO staff supported students in approximately 8,000 one-on-one appointments and 3,000 telephone appointments.

Students come to ISO seeking advice about personal issues such as cultural adjustment, academic concerns, and worries about family issues and political tensions in their home countries. ISO serves as a safe, comforting, and culturally sensitive resource. Because interaction with ISO begins long before actual arrival in the United States and at MIT, ISO is well known to international students and very often one of the first offices they come to with personal concerns. ISO remains well poised in this regard to refer students to the many other advising and counseling resources across the campus.

Resources

The addition of a Graduate Community Fellow allowed the graduate personal support staff to launch two new initiatives connecting graduate students to resources: the Graduate Student Resource Fair and MIT GradLink. The Graduate Community Fellow provided new insights into programming initiatives and was able to share in the execution of identified initiatives.

The Graduate Student Resource Fair was a component of Graduate-Professional Student Appreciation Week (described below). Sixteen resources that were identified as often overlooked and that could improve the wellness of graduate students were selected for the fair. More than 150 students attended the event, which was held along Student Street in the Stata Center. In a post-event follow-up survey, 87% of student respondents were able to identify at least one new resource as a result of the fair. ODGE plans to expand the event in the upcoming year by increasing the number of resources available and beginning to market the fair at an earlier date.

Another initiative launched by ODGE was MIT GradLink, a social media presence that connects graduate students to wellness resources. Events, deadlines, and services that affect graduate student wellness were highlighted through three social media outlets: Facebook, Google+, and Twitter. The Graduate Community Fellow, the communications officer, and the assistant dean for graduate personal support managed the effort. A soft launch of the program was conducted in the spring in consultation and collaboration with a variety of offices on campus. ODGE plans to highlight the program during graduate student orientation and other events over the course of the upcoming academic year.

In addition to the specific initiatives just described, ODGE senior staff, primarily those in the area of graduate personal support, participated in meetings with department faculty, including department heads, to discuss and offer information and advice on managing student personal crises; training for and working with MIT's newly formed behavioral assessment and response team, an internal threat assessment team of high-level administrators in relevant offices across the Institute; the evolving development of the Institute's Risk Council, which will advise the Office of Risk Management; providing feedback to the team responsible for crafting the Mental Health Campaign; assisting in the creation and revision of protocols for intervention in cases of student crises; and sharing ideas and suggestions for identifying and instituting new systems to more effectively serve both graduate and undergraduate students as the Institute seeks to aggressively promote the health and well-being of all students.

In a year marked by tragedies, confusion, and crises, ODGE staff members, especially those in the student personal support realm, were front and center providing support to students, faculty, administrators, and other staff in the residences, the departments, and off campus. Team members made themselves available at all times of the day and night and on weekends. Serving the MIT community was paramount.

Graduate-Professional Student Appreciation Week

For the first time, ODGE created programming to celebrate Graduate-Professional Student Appreciation Week. The overall goal was to show appreciation for graduate and professional students on campus while connecting them to resources that could assist them in their overall well-being and experience at MIT. Appreciation week components are described below.

Community Gatherings

On April 6 and April 10, ODGE Headquarters hosted events for graduate and professional students at which light refreshments were served. Although the events had no structure, front office staff welcomed students to the office and engaged them in brief conversations. Roughly 60 students attended the event on April 6 and roughly 65 on April 10. Post-event interviews indicated that both staff and students enjoyed the experience.

Space to Share

On April 7 and 8, spaces were created in Lobby 10 and on Vest Student Street, respectively, for students to vent their frustrations and express their joys related to their MIT experience. As a way to anonymously share how they feel, students were invited to place post-it notes on tables under headings labeled sources of stress and sources of joy. The tables also had some giveaways in the form of information, chocolate, and buttons. Approximately 60 students stopped by on the first day of the event and approximately 70 on the second day. Student participants stated that they found the activity fun and that they preferred to focus on the joys of their experience as opposed to the stress.

Stress Panel

On April 8, a panel of students moderated by Zan Barry from Community Wellness at MIT Medical discussed how they handle stress. Around 20 students attended the event

and remained after for food and conversation. Feedback on the event was positive, and one student attendee planned to follow up with one of the panelists for further guidance on the situation that was causing her stress.

Resource Fair

On April 9, representatives of various resources across campus that serve graduate students offered conversation, giveaways, and information at tables on Vest Student Street in an effort to advertise their services. Over 150 students attended the resource fair, and a follow-up survey indicated that, overall, the event was a success.

Social Media

We asked students to use “#GradLove” when posting to social media about the week. Specifically, they were asked to post to MIT GradLink social media outlets about what at MIT brings them joy. The campaign was promoted through buttons and word of mouth. There were a total of 24 MIT-specific posts on Twitter using the hashtag.

Title IX

ODGE continued to support the Institute in achieving compliance with Title IX and the Campus SaVE Act. This past year, ODGE managed the launch of the Haven program from EverFi, the same program used by undergraduates. Haven is an online module that covers all topics of sexual misconduct outlined in the Campus SaVE Act and includes additional guidance offered through federal regulation. All departments were asked to participate in garnering student participation. Fifty-seven percent of all incoming graduate students completed the online module. With attention to lessons learned over the past year, ODGE will work in partnership with the Title IX office and Violence Prevention and Response in the upcoming year to expand programming opportunities beyond the online module and to increase compliance among incoming graduate students.

ODGE continued to support efforts around prevention of sexual misconduct through the active involvement of ODGE senior staff in the chancellor’s Education and Prevention Task Force, the Committee on Discipline’s review of sexual misconduct policies and procedures, and the hiring of a new staff member in Violence Prevention and Response focused on graduate students.

Graduate Student Life Grants

The [Graduate Student Life Grants](#) program is a request-for-proposal process that invites graduate students and others in the MIT community to submit creative ideas for funding. The key criterion is that each proposal offer concrete ideas for enhancing the community life of graduate students. The grants are one of the few sources on campus that will fund the proposal of an individual without requiring affiliation with a student group or department. While most projects run one to two years, seven proposals have earned some level of ongoing funding, and many others have become an ongoing part of the Institute through other funding sources.

Of the 25 new proposals submitted in AY2015, 15 were funded. In addition, five renewal proposals were awarded a second round of funding. Since the program's inception in 2002, 216 unique projects have been supported.

Graduate Community Fellows

Graduate Community Fellows work on projects and assignments that enhance the graduate community in unique ways. Each fellow reports to a staff member in ODGE or a partner organization and focuses on a specific project. The typical appointment period is the nine-month academic year, and fellows work an average of 10 hours each week in return for a monthly stipend. This year the fellow who previously reported to the Committee on Race and Diversity reported to the Institute Community and Equity Office, and a second fellow joined the first in this work. The program also added new positions in the areas of graduate student support (reporting to ODGE graduate personal support staff), conflict resolution (reporting to the Office of Student Citizenship), and language conversation exchange (reporting to Spouses&Partners@MIT), for a total of 20 fellows.

Fellows continued to affect the graduate community by conducting vital work in the area of programs for women, including the Path of Professorship workshop; diversity initiatives such as Grad Catalyst; the Addir Fellows program, holding in-dorm interfaith dialogues; the Graduate Student Life Grants program, highlighting graduate student accomplishments; and graduate student orientation.

Institute-Wide Resources for Easing Friction and Stress

The groundwork for the Institute-Wide Resources for Easing Friction and Stress (iREFS) program was laid last year and continued to completion this year. The goal of this peer-to-peer program is to help graduate students address topics, issues, and problems that may arise in their everyday lives. The idea was started in a few departments (such as Chemistry and Electrical Engineering and Computer Science) and has grown to become successful as a student-run resource in a total of 10 departments. In response to comments from students who saw the success of these department-specific programs, the GSC worked to create a similar program that graduate students could utilize regardless of their department. Graduate students who are interested in facilitating sessions associated with iREFS receive training from current program members, and many go on to take the highly valuable conflict management class offered by the Office of Student Citizenship.

Support for Graduate Women

Path of Professorship

On November 14 and 15, 2014, ODGE convened its ninth workshop for graduate and postdoctoral women who aspire to academic careers as professors at the Microsoft New England Research and Design Center.

A total of 41 graduate and 21 postdoctoral women participated. Additionally, we hosted three graduate women from the University of Massachusetts Amherst through the aegis of the STEM Diversity Institute.

Twenty-nine women served as presenters and content experts: two nonfaculty professionals, 15 faculty members from other institutions, and 12 MIT faculty. The diversity of speakers, the opportunities to hear inspiring personal stories, and the chance to network with colleagues are often cited as being favorite elements of the workshop. Participants also find one-on-one conversations with faculty to be invaluable, and they have expressed a desire for more time for these sorts of interactions. This aspect of the workshop has been emphasized in communications with speakers in order to encourage their participation at the reception and during lunch and breaks. As a result, more faculty have begun to attend the evening reception and the lunch session.

This year's reception speaker was Chancellor Cynthia Barnhart, and the participants, as well as faculty guests from other institutions, were thrilled to have the chance to speak with her, hear from her, and ask questions. One student said, "Chancellor Barnhart's comments on being an academic and a mother meant a lot to me."

One new initiative was introduced in 2014, based on feedback from panelists and students in 2013. As part of the Saturday lunch, tables were designated with topics, and students and faculty interested in a particular topic were invited to sit at that table for a small-group discussion. Topics included finding a good postdoc and applying for faculty positions. Post-event participant feedback clearly indicated that the small-group discussions were among the most useful segments of the workshop.

It is noteworthy that, with each passing year, more and more workshop alumni are in faculty positions, and at least two have been presenters in each of the past three years. It is exciting to look forward to including more alumni on panels in the future. One alumna from 2013 recently wrote:

Thank you again for the opportunity to participate in this wonderful workshop, which transformed my goals for finding a faculty position from a hazy notion to a concrete plan. Please let me know how I can contribute to the workshop in the future so that I can share my own perspectives (and there are so many!) of the job search process with future applicants.

Participant feedback scores for all workshop sessions fell between 4 and 5 on a 1 to 5 scale (with 5 being the highest rating). Some participants asked that the same speakers for several of the sessions be brought back next year.

Workshop participants expressed their experience with comments such as the following:

"Just loved every speaker—they all contributed with valuable information. I don't think any topic covered was irrelevant. I wouldn't change anything from these sessions."

"I really liked that the speakers shared their difficulties with us. They showed great honesty and assured me that the path to professorship is difficult, but with great moments. I now have a better understanding of what to expect in my future and what to do to reach my goals."

"I'd say it was AMAZING in a lot of ways. It clarified a lot of doubts and questions I had. I'm very happy to have attended it!!! Thanks so much!"

The office has been fortunate to have established a collegial relationship with the Microsoft New England Research and Development Center, which has generously provided space for several events, including the workshop. Thanks to the center's generosity and the efforts of the workshop planning team to minimize speaker travel expenses by relying heavily on local faculty, the expenses for the workshop have remained stable, with a very slight decrease this year as compared with 2013 and previous years.

The workshop would not have been possible without the devoted attention, consistent and hard work, and collaborative spirit of the four postdoctoral fellows and three graduate students (including two Graduate Community Fellows) who co-led the planning team. Participating on the team and contributing to the development of the workshop represented a unique opportunity to advance their own leadership skills.

Reading Group for Graduate Women

ODGE continues to offer a reading group that provides graduate women with a unique opportunity to build community. The group, which consists of 15 to 20 women, meets monthly to build friendships and share experiences and advice while reviewing a designated book of the month. At six-month intervals, the women vote on new books, including a selection of both fiction and nonfiction works. Some themes and patterns of their choices have been general business management, corporate culture, economics, world and US culture, sociology, war, medicine, health, and psychology.

The group brings together in fellowship women of several races, ethnicities, and countries. Some are not native English speakers and relish the opportunity to practice English in a nonjudgmental and supportive environment. One graduate woman described the group as follows:

It brings graduate women together from different parts of the university and gives them an opportunity to discuss non-academic topics in a structured but relaxed setting. It exposes them to new ideas outside of those they are exposed to at home or in class/lab. It provides them an incentive to read for pleasure, not just work.

The reading group has become a valuable part of the educational and personal growth experience for many graduate women over the years.

Graduate Women of Excellence

The Graduate Women of Excellence event seeks to recognize female graduate students who have made significant contributions to the MIT community and the world at large. Students must be nominated by someone in the MIT community. Nominations are evaluated by a panel of graduate women, and final selections are made. On April 23, 2015, a reception was held to recognize the honorees and celebrate their accomplishments.

Over the course of three weeks in late February and early March, nominations were gathered from all levels of the MIT community. Undergraduates (often in a UROP capacity), graduate students, administrators, and professors all nominated students. A large portion of the nominations came from the nominees' peers, with a significant number coming from faculty. Graduate students often nominated someone in their research group, program, or student organization.

There were a total of 201 nominations for 94 graduate women. The nominees, as well as the chosen honorees, represented 24 departments and programs.

Nominations were evaluated on the basis of how well they addressed the following criteria:

- The nominee is a leader among her peers.
- She is dedicated to serving the MIT community to improve the graduate student experience.
- She provides thoughtful and constructive advice.
- She is a catalyst for change when challenges arise.

Four of the women's groups on campus that focus on enhancing the MIT experience for graduate women were honored:

- Graduate Women at MIT
- Mechanical Engineering Graduate Association of Women
- Women in Chemistry
- MIT Energy Club

The honorees were informed of their selection via email and invited to the reception. Also invited were the nominators and the panel of scorers; the president, the provost, and the chancellor; the vice president for research; the deans of the five schools; and the deans for graduate and undergraduate education.

The honorees, who were diverse across several dimensions including race, ethnicity, country of origin, academic and research focus, and career interests, were required to submit a poster describing their journey to MIT, their current work, how they have overcome challenges, their future plans, and advice they have for other students. The graduate women's groups were also required to submit a poster about their group's history, mission, current work, and future plans.

The reception was held on April 23 at the Microsoft New England Research and Development Center in Kendall Square. Dean Staton and Dean Ortiz were featured speakers. Only three of the 51 honorees were unable to attend the reception, and each of the four graduate women's groups sent at least two representatives. In all, there were approximately 200 attendees. During the evening, quotations from nominators of the honorees along with honoree photos were displayed on monitors.

Although many honorees did not mention specific career plans, five noted plans to go into academia. Another four said they wanted to continue teaching or engage in science education. Five women noted their desire to work at the intersection of science/technology and policy, and three mentioned specific plans to go into industry. Many women noted their desire to serve as a mentor to other women.

When remarking on the challenges they faced, many women noted how difficult it was to manage their time and choose activities that, in addition to being enjoyable,

were beneficial to them professionally and personally. Honorees also mentioned the challenges rooted in uncertainty and the lack of specific milestones in the PhD process, as well the lack of recognition or celebration of success. Finally, some of the honorees mentioned the challenge of not feeling connected or feeling isolated, especially during their early years as a graduate student.

When offering advice to others, many honorees recommended getting involved in activities outside of research while at MIT. They believed that such opportunities helped them grow both professionally and personally by allowing them to gain new skills and meet new people. Additionally, they stressed the importance of finding the right advisor, lab, and project. They felt that the environment they worked in was a contributing factor in their success. They also recommended trying new things and not turning down opportunities. Finally, many of the honorees noted the importance of having fun during graduate school.

Graduate Student Council Support

The GSC continues its history of strong support for graduate women at MIT, including providing additional funding for programming organized by GWAMIT. Graduate Women at MIT planned events such as the Orientation Women's Welcome Lunch, the Leadership Conference, and the spring Empowerment Conference.

Professional Development

ODGE has proactively sought to provide high-quality professional development activities for graduate students. This includes targeted support for local events such as the GWAMIT leadership and empowerment conferences and the MIT-CHIEF Entrepreneurship Conference, as well as prestigious international conferences and workshops. Examples of workshops include the MIT-Imperial Transferable Skills Conference, the American Association for the Advancement of Science Case Workshop, and the Personal Branding Workshop organized by the Black Graduate Student Association. Additional support was targeted for seminar series in various areas and for MIT's first-ever Mini Maker Faire.

Graduate Student Council Programs

The GSC Academic, Research, and Careers Committee led numerous events aimed at supporting students in their academic and research work at MIT and helping them prepare for future careers. ARC's activities included two Dissertation Boot Camps in collaboration with the MIT Libraries. The boot camps provided quiet areas and snacks for students over a two-week period to allow them to make significant uninterrupted progress on their dissertations. Graduate Women at MIT continued to be active in expanding the Orientation Women's Welcome Lunch, the Leadership Conference, and the spring Empowerment Conference.

In order to continue to support the professional development of MIT graduate students, ARC continued to add elements to its professional development series. Events over the course of the year included panel discussions on identifying and landing postdoctoral positions, publishing in peer-reviewed journals, managing one's

online social media presence, and making connections between research advances and entrepreneurial opportunities. Most of the events in the series reported attendance of approximately 100 students.

In addition to expanding its professional development series, ARC refined two popular long-term series: the Faculty Dinner Series and Pitch Your PhD. The Faculty Dinner Series brings together small groups of students (approximately 10 to 12) to have dinner with a distinguished member of the MIT faculty to talk about life and career. Pitch Your PhD is a large event aimed at encouraging PhD students to learn how to communicate their doctoral work to a non-expert or general audience. Participants are given five minutes to explain their doctoral work to an audience of non-experts and then are provided feedback on how to improve their presentation.

Professional Development Video Portal

The ODGE [Professional Development Video Portal](#) gives students open access to a comprehensive video library of professional and personal development content. This year ODGE added 11 new videos to the portal, as well as links to numerous other videos.

MIT-Imperial Global Fellows Summer Program

In June 2015, ODGE and the dean for undergraduate education cosponsored a fifth MIT-Imperial Global Fellows Program, an intensive four-day workshop focusing on an introduction to the importance and development of transferable skills. The workshop was organized by the MIT Global Education and Career Development Office (GECD) and Imperial College London. The program, which accepted 20 PhD students from Imperial College London and nine from MIT, was hosted by MIT in Dover, MA. Students attended workshop sessions on collaboration, teamwork, communication, presentation skills, creativity, and different models of graduate education. Through the plenary sessions, the small-group collaborative exercises, and time for feedback and reflection, participants developed the professional skills required to launch and manage a successful research career, with an emphasis on creating and sustaining successful international research collaborations. Responses to a post-course survey showed that 89% of participants would recommend the program to another student; in addition, all of the respondents reported improved teamwork abilities, and 67% reported improved communication skills.

International Programs

International Freshman Mentor Program

The International Freshman Mentor Program, currently in its 18th year, is a mainstay of freshman international orientation. This program matches incoming international freshmen with international upperclassmen long before their arrival in the United States. Strong bonds develop between student and mentor, beginning with email correspondence while the student is still at home and continuing with airport pick-up and yearlong

mentor-organized activities. The mentor program is staffed and organized entirely by volunteer students, who bring tremendous enthusiasm and creativity to the program.

Host to International Students Program

The Host to International Students Program has remained vital in providing new students with supportive emotional and social ties to MIT community members and their families. More than 200 students and MIT community members participated in AY2015. With limited resources in terms of both funding and staff time, the program currently is available only to international undergraduate students.

Child Care for Graduate Students

With the support of ODGE, the MIT Work-Life Center, and the provost, the GSC helped initiate a pilot program to provide backup child care for graduate student families. In 2014, the program was evaluated as a success, and it was adopted as a permanent line in the ODGE budget.

This year, the Families Subcommittee of the Housing and Community Affairs Committee recommended development of a need-based family grant for graduate students struggling to make financial ends meet for their family. ODGE, Chancellor Eric Grimson, and the provost are exploring funding options.

ODGE Support for Student Group Activities

ODGE contributes financial support for many student group activities. Substantial annual funding is provided to Assisting Recurring Cultural and Diversity Events (ARCADE), which in turn funds many individual events, and to the Sidney-Pacific/Ashdown brunch series. Other annual funding supports orientation activities such as Grad School 101, international student orientation, and the India preorientation program. Additional support this year went to the family groups at Eastgate and Westgate and to activities such as Sexual Assault Awareness Month, a Black Women's Alliance fall retreat, the Multicultural Festival, and Persian Cultural Night.

ODGE-sponsored activities include the student-led Science Policy Initiative's Science Policy Bootcamp, which introduces graduate students in science and engineering to the nuts and bolts of science policy, and Congressional Visits Day. On Congressional Visits Day, graduate students discuss with their representatives the importance of the nation's investment in science, engineering, and technology to promoting long-term innovation and prosperity. They also discuss the local and national effects of these programs and their significance to students and researchers working on federally funded research projects. ODGE continued to support events such as the MIT-CHIEF Conference and the MIT-Imperial Transferrable Skills Conference. ODGE is also committed to supporting professional development programs for graduate students organized by GECD and contributes to the Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies membership.

The GSC plays a major role in enhancing graduate student life at MIT through the operations of its Funding Board, which is charged with distributing student fees to student groups in a fair, democratic, and transparent manner. This year the GSC

Funding Board dispersed \$112,541 in ODGE student life fees and \$152,959 in Career Fair proceeds, for an overall total of \$265,500. Despite an increase in student life fees assessed to a growing graduate student population, the absolute funding the GSC derives from these fees has remained nearly the same.

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