

Office of the Vice President

Mission

The Office of the Vice President was established in January 2013, with the appointment of Professor Claude R. Canizares. His tenure as vice president ends on June 30, 2015. His successor, Professor Richard Lester, will start as associate provost for international activities on July 1, 2015.

The office helps to establish, monitor, and coordinate Institute-level engagements and creates and reviews policies and practices for global interactions. The vice president actively oversees, among other programs, the Singapore-MIT Alliance for Research and Technology (SMART), the MIT Skoltech Initiative, the MIT-Singapore University of Technology and Design Collaboration (SUTD), and the MIT and Masdar Institute Cooperative Program. The office provides strategic and organizational leadership and works closely with the International Advisory Committee (co-chaired by the vice president and Associate Provost Philip Khoury) and the International Coordinating Committee. It serves as the primary liaison to high-level delegations from international governments, universities, and funding agencies. It also maintains communication with the U.S. Department of State and other federal entities.

Personnel

Effective August 7, 2014, Amy Sargent replaced Gail Monahan as senior administrative assistant to support Vice President Canizares and Director of International Affairs Bernd Widdig.

Activities

Strategic Thrusts

The office worked with the International Advisory Committee and others to explore potential engagements in major regions of the world, including China, India, Africa, and Latin America. Faculty were recruited to form ad hoc regional working groups, and several specific engagements were pursued in each of the regions. The office also began seeking potential relationships with selected peer technical universities in Europe, Latin America, and Asia.

On October 31, 2014, MIT president Rafael Reif signed a major agreement for a collaboration with Tecnológico de Monterrey in the area of nanotechnology. In addition, the office initiated an agreement with Shanghai Tech to host a small number of its students as undergraduate special students and is in the process of establishing a strategic seed fund with Imperial College London to initiative collaborative research.

Visiting Delegations

The office serves as a central resource and helps triage international requests for visits. Over the past year, the office hosted and organized visits for 58 international delegations, including five heads of state.

International Advisory Committee

The office organizes the meetings of the International Advisory Committee (currently 23 members) that take place monthly during the two semesters. During the reporting year, the committee met seven times. A total of 20 presentations about new and ongoing international projects were discussed.

International Coordinating Committee

In bimonthly meetings with key members of the International Coordinating Committee, Vice President Canizares, Associate Provost Khoury, and Director Widdig review new international projects that are in different stages of exploration or negotiation, address specific issues related to contract terms and conditions, and discuss policies and procedures. About 30 new projects were discussed during the reporting year.

New Global MIT Website

Director Widdig worked with the design firm Sametz Blackstone to develop a comprehensive new website that provides information on MIT's international engagements in education, research, and service and the international dimension of the MIT community. The site was launched in June 2015.

MIT Engagements in Singapore

SMART continues to thrive in terms of both research and innovation. Three of the five interdisciplinary research groups (IRGs) have been renewed for second five-year terms, and the Future Urban Mobility IRG has submitted its renewal proposal. The Innovation Center has also been renewed. A pilot program was introduced this year to encourage new faculty to engage with SMART in novel ways. In addition, preliminary discussions on MIT's future engagement with SUTD have begun.

Restructuring of the Office's Relationship with Skoltech

Throughout the past year, Vice President Canizares led discussions around the framework for a set of scaled-down collaborative activities between MIT and Skoltech after February 2016.

Agreement with the Central Bank of Malaysia

Vice President Canizares was involved in the negotiations between MIT and the Central Bank of Malaysia to establish the Asia School of Business, a new business school in Kuala Lumpur. On April 8, 2015, President Reif and Zeti Akhtar Azi, governor of the Central Bank of Malaysia, signed a 10-year collaboration agreement.

Potential Collaboration with the City of Ningbo, China

On September 24, 2014, a high-level delegation from the city of Ningbo visited MIT. Since this visit, MIT has been engaged in discussions to possibly establish a global supply chain and logistics excellence center in Ningbo. The center would be part of an international network falling under MIT's Center for Transportation and Logistics. Also as a result of the visit, two companies from Ningbo have become members of the Industrial Liaison Program.

Discussions Regarding a Physical Presence for MIT in Hong Kong

Throughout the past year, Vice President Canizares and Director Widdig met with different stakeholders across the Institute to discuss the feasibility of a physical presence for MIT in Hong Kong. In May, Provost Martin Schmidt met with the chief executive of Hong Kong, CY Leung, who invited MIT to play a significant role in helping improve and broaden Hong Kong's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Assessment Trip to Mongolia

In October 2014, after an earlier high-level visit by representatives from Mongolia and an official invitation from the Mongolian Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture, Director Widdig and a team of four MIT colleagues undertook a weeklong fact-finding and assessment trip to Mongolia. The team met with different stakeholders in education, science, the corporate sector, and the government. The team issued a report to the Mongolian government and submitted a proposal for collaborative activities. The proposal is currently under consideration at the Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture.

Claude Canizares
Vice President