

Office of Government and Community Relations

MIT cares deeply about its host city, Cambridge. From supporting nonprofit organizations to participating in neighborhood dialogue around public policy matters, MIT actively engages in the city's vibrant community life.

The [Office of Government and Community Relations](#) (OGCR), housed in the Office of the Executive Vice President and Treasurer, serves as a liaison to the city of Cambridge and coordinates a wide variety of programs and outreach efforts that benefit the local community. OGCR is available as a resource to the Institute community for matters related to local and state government or the community of Cambridge. It is also a resource to neighbors of MIT who need guidance in their interactions with the Institute.

OGCR also supports the mission of the MIT Washington Office, reinforcing the efforts of MIT's president, faculty, and administrators in their contacts with the federal government and several national higher-education associations. OGCR is at once a communications link, a catalyst for action, and a resource for both MIT and the external community as it works to promote productive collaboration in all of its public interactions.

Community Relations

Support of Nonprofits

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

Through monetary donations, OGCR funded approximately 50 nonprofit organizations in the broader Cambridge area. Donations were earmarked for a diverse range of activities, such as community events, programming, and operating expenses. This year, MIT made a significant contribution to the Cambridge Community Foundation to further its work in supporting Cambridge nonprofits. In addition to this monetary support, OGCR dedicated resources to community fundraisers and drives, and staff continued their hands-on service activities, including delivering Thanksgiving meals to Cambridge residents and coordinating the annual ringing of the Salvation Army bell on the steps of 77 Massachusetts Avenue.

OGCR made in-kind contributions by donating or subsidizing the use of MIT facilities for nonprofit events. It continued its work with the Campus Activities Complex, the Office of the Registrar, and the Department of Athletics, Physical Education, and Recreation to provide space for more than 40 events throughout 2014–2015, bringing visibility to the MIT campus and fostering good relations between the Institute and its neighbors.

Last, OGCR continued to enhance MIT participation in the community. In 2014, OGCR staff represented the Institute at dozens of external community events and served on the boards of many different groups, including CASPAR and Tutoring Plus.

Civic Engagement

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

Educational Initiatives

Over the past year, the city of Cambridge has greatly increased its interest in developing STEM opportunities for Cambridge residents of all ages. To this end, OGCR has worked with colleagues from departments, labs, and centers across campus, including the Public Service Center, the Edgerton Center, and the MIT Museum, to marshal MIT resources toward a fruitful collaboration with the city. OGCR continues to work with the city's steering committee for this initiative and will engage all partners across campus to shape and support its work.

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

Local Government and Neighborhood Relations

Maintaining productive and open communications with Cambridge officials and governmental bodies is an essential part of OGCR's work. OGCR staff continued to provide critical information through the compilation and presentation of the annual Town Gown Report to the Cambridge Planning Board. OGCR also coordinated MIT's preparation for public hearings before various governmental boards on a broad range of topics, including Kendall Square, building projects, sustainability, linkage fees, master planning, Planning Board reform, the innovation ecosystem, and the Cambridge business community.

This year, OGCR coordinated numerous neighborhood-relations events to interface with residents and celebrate new community spaces. For example, OGCR worked with MITIMCo to invite neighbors to celebrate a Community Art Center mural commissioned for the construction site at 610 Main Street.

Kendall Square is a hotspot of activity, and OGCR is working on behalf of the Institute to liaise with businesses, community members, and city officials as development progresses. OGCR continued to support the MIT-led Kendall Square Initiative as it prepared to submit an Article 19 design review application to the city of Cambridge. This support included internal and external communications for the initiative, updates to city officials, and interactive meetings for the MIT and Cambridge communities.

State Government Relations

During the administration of Governor Deval Patrick (2007–2015), MIT worked with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to foster new opportunities for economic development. To continue this trajectory with the administration of Governor Charles Baker, who took office in January 2015, OGCR worked to make key introductions and support ongoing dialogue to ease the transition following the 2014 elections. For example, OGCR played a key role in arranging meetings with the Commonwealth's new secretary for economic development to continue an initiative, begun during the Patrick administration, to apply for U.S. Department of Defense funding to support a regional advanced manufacturing institute. Introductions proved successful, as meetings over the course of 2014 and 2015 led to the assembly of a committee made up of university, industry, and state government partners, and an agreement of cost sharing to support the regional advanced manufacturing institute.

OGCR staff worked with internal and external colleagues to manage MIT's response to state legislative initiatives regarding taxation, land use, PILOT (payment in lieu of tax), tax-exempt status, and transportation. OGCR partnered with senior MIT leadership, peer institutions, and the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Massachusetts to provide feedback on legislative considerations.

Federal Relations

OGCR continues to work closely with the MIT Washington Office to support President Reif in interactions with federal officials and to further MIT's mission at the federal level. This year, OGCR assisted President Reif with multiple trips to Washington, DC, to discuss MIT's interests in online learning, advanced manufacturing, and the importance of federal research funding.

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

Communications

This year, OGCR continued to grow the subscription to its community newsletter, which informs community partners about events, volunteer programs, and projects. OGCR also maintained regular communications with the Institute's abutting neighborhoods of Cambridgeport, East Cambridge, Wellington-Harrington, and Area IV regarding MIT projects and initiatives. For example, OGCR provided monthly updates to Area IV residents on the construction at 610 Main Street.

OGCR staff responded to numerous media inquiries regarding Kendall Square, PILOT, taxes, MIT's reactor, building projects, student housing, and other Town Gown issues.

Internal MIT Relations

OGCR staff supported the work of several Institute committees and groups, such as the Martin Luther King, Jr., Breakfast planning committee, Community Giving, Information Group, Communications Operations Group, and MIT2016 steering committee.

OGCR staff also collaborated extensively with MITIMCo, the Department of Facilities, the Division of Student Life, and the Office of the Executive Vice President and Treasurer on a range of policy matters to develop consensus around MIT's position and approach. Staff provided strategic political guidance to offices and departments advancing Cambridge-based projects.

Community Service Fund

OGCR continues to work with the Public Service Center and Community Giving to transform the Community Service Fund.

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