

Office of Government and Community Relations

MIT has a unique commitment to its host city and cares deeply about the community to which it belongs. Housed in the Office of the Executive Vice President and Treasurer, the [Office of Government and Community Relations](#) (OGCR) serves as a liaison to the city of Cambridge and coordinates a wide variety of outreach efforts that benefit the local community. From supporting nonprofit organizations to participating in neighborhood dialogue around public policy matters, MIT strives to be actively engaged in the vibrant civic life of Cambridge. In addition to its work in local communities, the office is a liaison to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and supports the mission of the MIT Washington Office by reinforcing the efforts of the president, faculty, and administrators in their contacts with government officials and policy organizations.

The office is available to the Institute community as a resource for matters related to government or the community of Cambridge. It is also available as a resource to MIT's neighbors who need guidance in their interactions with the Institute. OGCR is a communications link, a catalyst for action, and a resource for both MIT and the external community and is committed to promoting productive collaboration in all of its public interactions.

Community Relations

Support of Nonprofits

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

Through direct donations, the office interacted with approximately 50 nonprofit organizations in the broader Cambridge area in academic year 2016. Monetary contributions supported a diverse range of activities, including community events, programming, and operating expenses. For example, MIT made a significant contribution in 2015 to Transition House to support the renovation of its Cambridge shelter for survivors of domestic violence. OGCR also makes in-kind contributions by donating or subsidizing the use of MIT facilities for nonprofit events. The office continued its work with the Campus Activities Complex, MIT Media Lab, Office of the Registrar, and MIT Athletics to provide space for 37 events in academic year 2016. These events brought visibility to MIT and fostered positive relations between the Institute and its neighbors.

In addition to direct support for nonprofits, OGCR staff dedicated time and effort to partner organizations. OGCR employees continued their hands-on service activities, such as delivering Thanksgiving meals to Cambridge residents and coordinating the annual ringing of the Salvation Army bell on the steps of 77 Massachusetts Avenue. OGCR staff also coordinated MIT representation on local boards and committees. In 2015, OGCR staff and other MIT affiliates represented the Institute at dozens of external community events and served on the boards of many different organizations, including the Kendall Community Group and CASPAR.

Civic Engagement

OGCR is responsible for managing the Institute's relationship with civic organizations in Cambridge and Boston. 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 Business Coalition, the Cambridge Combined Business Association, the East Cambridge Business Association, the Kendall Square Association, and the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce. The office's continued engagement in Kendall Square led to the election of OGCR co-director Sarah Gallop as president of the Kendall Square Association.

Educational Initiatives

Over the past few years, the city of Cambridge has placed an increased focus on developing educational opportunities for its residents in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). In pursuit of this shared goal, OGCR continues to engage all partners across campus to support STEM education initiatives, including the MIT Museum, the Edgerton Center, the Office of Digital Learning (ODL), and the Public Service Center. As always, OGCR continued to support local educational nonprofits, recognize academic achievement by hosting graduation and award ceremonies on campus, and collaborate with MIT's numerous educational outreach programs.

This year, OGCR collaborated with the Office of Congressman Joseph Kennedy III, the Massachusetts STEM Advisory Council, and ODL to hold a symposium to discuss new methods for enhancing science education at the middle- and high-school levels and how best to utilize the internet for this purpose. The event, dubbed Scaling STEM, featured 25 exhibits from MIT contributors and a panel discussion by MIT faculty. It was well attended, with more than 350 educators, policymakers, and community members participating.

Local Government and Neighborhood Relations

Maintaining productive and open communications with city of Cambridge officials and governmental bodies is an essential part of the work of OGCR. Office staff continued to provide critical information through the compilation of the annual Town Gown Report and its presentation to the Planning Board. In addition, the office coordinated MIT's preparation for public hearings before various governmental boards on a broad range of topics, such as the Kendall Square Initiative, academic building projects, sustainability, inclusionary housing, lighting regulations, the innovation ecosystem, sexual assault prevention, and the business community's role in the city.

OGCR continued to provide political guidance for the Kendall Square Initiative through the Article 19 process. 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

In recent years, MIT's relationship with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has fostered new opportunities for economic development and federal government funding of regional projects. In 2016, OGCR worked with members of the governor's cabinet to secure a commitment to cost-sharing to create a manufacturing innovation institute (MII) in Massachusetts. These constructive discussions were an important component of the application's success, which resulted in a \$75 million federal grant. This grant, combined with contributions from other government, university, and industry partners, will fund the MIT-led Advanced Functional Fabrics of America Manufacturing Innovation Institute, which is to be based in Cambridge.

The office partnered with the Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General, MIT's Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, and Harvard's Berkman Center for Internet and Society to host a high-level discussion of cybersecurity. The event explored pressing security concerns through panel discussions with leading faculty and thought-provoking audience participation. At this gathering of important stakeholders in the region, important legal and business questions were raised and extensively examined. The success of the conference elevated the conversation and is expected to lead to the creation of sound public policy for cybersecurity in Massachusetts.

Office staff worked with internal and external colleagues to manage MIT's response to Commonwealth legislative initiatives—for example, taxation, housing, storm water discharge, and prevention of sexual violence. OGCR continued to partner 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 MIT's Washington office to support President Reif in interactions with federal officials and to further MIT's mission at the federal level. This year, OCGR assisted President Reif with multiple trips to Washington, D.C., to discuss MIT's interests in online learning, advanced manufacturing, and the importance of federal research funding. Additionally, OGCR hosted a variety of visits from federal officials, including Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, Representative and MIT alumnus Thomas Massie (R-KY), Congressman Roger Williams (R-TX), eight congressional visits to the Plasma Fusion Center, and an event featuring Representative Joseph Kennedy.

Communications

OGCR continued to see growth in the subscription base of its Community Newsletter, which is used to inform community partners about events, volunteer programs, and projects. The office also maintained regular communications with the Institute's abutting neighborhoods of Cambridgeport, East Cambridge, Wellington-Harrington, and the Port regarding MIT projects and initiatives. For example, the office has recently concluded the program of monthly updates to Port residents on the two-year construction process at 610 Main Street.

Office staff also responded to numerous media inquiries regarding Kendall Square, MIT's payment in lieu of taxes, taxes, MIT's reactor, building projects, student housing, and other town gown-related issues.

Internal MIT Relations

OGCR staff served on several Institute committees and groups, such as the Martin Luther King, Jr., Breakfast Planning Committee, the Transportation Committee, Community Giving, the Information Group, the Communications Operations Group, the Mind+Hand+Heart Initiative, and the MIT2016 Committee.

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

Community Service Fund

The office managed the Community Service Fund (CSF) application and disbursement process, which awarded grants to almost 20 local nonprofit organizations and student projects at work in the local community. One example is Prospect Hill Academy (PHA) Thrive, which was awarded a grant to distribute food to economically disadvantaged students during school vacations. In its mission to support the efforts of MIT volunteers in the community, CSF received generous support from funds raised through the annual Community Giving at MIT campaign, on which OGCR staff collaborated. CSF also collected the proceeds from several fundraising events, including used book sales held on campus and at Lincoln Laboratory. These activities brought together volunteers from across the Institute who dedicated their time to aid the broader community.

MIT2016

Commemorating the Institute's 1916 move from Boston to Cambridge provided MIT with a unique opportunity to celebrate its host city and to deepen community engagement. OGCR was comprehensively involved in planning the MIT2016 program and played a transformative role in a number of projects, including the following:

- Staff facilitated the Graduate Student Council's collaboration with the city of Cambridge for a Serve-a-thon, an event that invited members of the MIT community to examine municipal challenges and propose innovative solutions.
- OGCR assisted with the selection of volunteer sites for the Priscilla King Gray Public Service Center's CityDays events.
- Staff worked with Community Giving to identify local nonprofits that would benefit from cross-campus supply drives and assisted with coordination of donation deliveries.
- OGCR coordinated and staffed the Cambridge Connections tent at the MIT Open House, highlighting departments at the Institute that collaborate with the city. The tent featured booths from the Kendall Square Initiative, the Cambridge

Science Festival, the MIT Office of Campus Planning, the MIT Office of Admissions, and K–12 educational outreach programs.

- Office staff curated and produced *Voices of Cambridge*, a collection of 26 interviews with diverse Cambridge stakeholders about the relationship between MIT and Cambridge.
- OGCR recruited and briefed eight Cambridge public officials for participation in MIT's Infinite Interviews and documentaries. A co-director was also interviewed and included in the documentaries.
- OGCR published its first MIT in Cambridge Report, an infographic-style publication that highlights the community impact of MIT.
- Staff participated in a National Public Radio news story about the reading of graduates' names before MIT's 100th commencement in Cambridge.

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