

## **Program in Media Arts and Sciences**

### **Graduate Program**

A total of 174 students—94 master’s degree candidates and 80 doctoral candidates—were enrolled in the [Media Arts and Sciences \(MAS\)](#) graduate program during academic year 2017. The MAS graduate student community included 62 women, 77 foreign students, and 17 students from underrepresented minority groups. During the year, 57 advanced degrees were awarded (43 master’s degrees and 14 doctorates). MAS received 886 applications to the graduate program and offered admission to 61 new students (including 27 women), a 6% admission rate. Of those admitted, 51 students (including 23 women) enrolled, an 83% yield.

In addition to supervising MAS graduate students, MAS faculty and research staff collectively advised and supported more than 52 graduate students from other departments, including Biological Engineering, Physics, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, Mechanical Engineering, Civil and Environmental Engineering, the Engineering Systems Division, and the program in Computation for Design and Optimization. Faculty also supervised students from the Harvard-MIT Division of Health Sciences and Technology.

MAS offered 30 graduate courses during academic year 2017.

### **Diversity and Inclusion**

#### **Recruitment**

The MIT Summer Research Program brings undergraduate students from across the US to conduct research at MIT for nine weeks over the summer. Interns learn about applying to and succeeding in graduate school. In the summer of 2016, the Media Lab hosted more Summer Research Program interns than ever before; nine interns worked in eight different research groups at the lab.

#### **Students Offering Support Program and Open House Travel Grants**

MAS continues to organize Students Offering Support (SOS), an important resource that pairs applicants with current students who provide feedback on the applicant’s statement of purpose or his or her portfolio. Because each research group is looking for different skills and weighs each part of the application differently, this individualized attention goes a long way in helping applicants understand what their group of interest is looking for. In AY2017, MAS had the highest number of graduate student volunteers since the program began.

The MAS Open House is a great way for prospective students to learn more about the Media Lab, meet with faculty and graduate students, and determine if this is the best program for them.

## **Students Offering Support and Travel Grant Statistics**

In academic year 2017, there were 23 graduate student SOS volunteers across 16 research groups. Six percent of SOS participants were admitted; 10% of travel grant awardees were admitted.

## **Media Arts and Sciences and Media Lab Climate**

On September 9, 2016, the MAS Diversity Committee hosted the No Permission, No Apology Conference. More than 250 attendees participated in this daylong event, which featured 25 guest speakers leading workshops on a range of topics. The conference strove to provide opportunities to develop the professional and personal skills that can help women navigate spaces that were not created with women in mind. It was also a chance for men to understand better how to foster inclusiveness, bridge divides, and serve as effective allies. MAS partnered with three other institutions—Spelman College, the University of Maryland Baltimore County, and Wellesley College—to bring 49 prospective women students to the conference. Megan Smith kicked off the event with a keynote speech describing her own professional journey and emphasizing the need for organizations to grapple with implicit bias in order to secure greater innovation. Breakout sessions throughout the day were led by women in various science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) roles, including Noramay Cadena, founder of Latinas in STEM and co-founder and managing director of Make in LA; Caroline Sindors, user researcher at IBM; Shaundra Daily, associate professor at the University of Florida; Francesco Escoto, founder and chief executive officer of Startups for Social Impact, and many others. These sessions covered many topics, including startup challenges, imposter syndrome, and the experiences of women in academia. There was also an afternoon panel discussion on Designing for Other (Than Straight, Rich, White Men) that featured four women who design for specific populations. Comedian Aparna Nancharla closed out the event.

## **Women's Lunches**

These monthly lunches continue to be a space in which female students connect and build community. Each session features a dynamic speaker who addresses some aspect of professional or personal development. This year, MAS opened up the lunches to include female postdoctoral associates.

## **Diversity Series**

The MAS Diversity Series brings the Media Lab community together to develop skills and explore ideas of diversity and social justice through presentations and discussions.

## **Diversity Committee**

The MIT Diversity Committee, comprising students, staff, and faculty, meets once a month to discuss recruitment and retention efforts to increase the racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of the MAS program. These meetings consist of brainstorming sessions, recruitment and admissions updates, and presentations by individuals who are working to improve diversity through programming at the Media Lab and in the larger MIT community.

## Undergraduate Program

The Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) continued to represent the largest undergraduate presence in MAS and the Media Lab. More than 200 undergraduates from across the Institute participated in a wide variety of UROP research projects at the Media Lab, and many students pursued their undergraduate theses and advanced undergraduate projects under MAS faculty supervision. In addition, the MAS program offered five undergraduate subjects.

MAS also has an alternative freshman-year program, now in its 17th year. The students in the program participate in weekly Media Lab tutorial and laboratory sessions connected with two core freshman subjects, pursue Media Lab UROP projects, and take two MAS undergraduate subjects on design and research. One of the design and research subjects satisfies part of the undergraduate Communication Requirement as well as the arts portion of the Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences Distribution Requirement. For academic year 2017, MAS had 69 applicants to the program; 24 students were admitted, 62% of whom were women, 29% of whom were members of underrepresented minority groups, and 12% of whom were international students.

## Faculty and Staff

### New Appointments

Fadel Adib was appointed assistant professor of Media Arts and Sciences on November 1, 2016. He received his PhD from the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science and is leading the Signal Kinetics Research Group.

Canan Dagdeviren was appointed assistant professor of Media Arts and Sciences on January 16, 2017. Canan was previously a Harvard Junior Fellow; she currently heads the Conformable Decoders research group.

Joi Ito was appointed as Professor of the Practice on July 1, 2016. He is also the director of the Media Lab.

Ethan Zuckerman was appointed associate professor of the practice. He currently leads the Center for Civic Media.

### In Memoriam

Seymour Papert (1928–2016), a founding Media Lab faculty member, educational-technology visionary, and pioneer of constructivist learning, passed away on Sunday, July 31, 2016.

Edith Ackerman (1946–2016), a beloved former faculty member, passed away on December 24, 2016.

### Selected Honors and Awards

Jean-François Bonnefon, Azim Shariff, and Iyad Rahwan published a paper, “The Social Dilemma of Autonomous Vehicles” in *Science* in June 2016.

Joi Ito received the IRI Medal from the Industrial Research Institute in May 2017.

Neri Oxman received the Committed to Caring Award from the Office of the Dean for Graduate Education.

Neri Oxman's "Silk Pavilion, A Video Installation," appeared in *Momentum Biennial for Contemporary Art: Alienation*, curated by Ilari Laamanen and others, in Moss, Norway, June to September 2017.

A documentary about Tod Machover's *Symphony in D* received the Emmy Award for Best Cultural Documentary in 2017.

Ramesh Raskar received the 2016 \$500,000 Lemelson-MIT prize.

Kevin Esvelt was recognized as one of *Nature's* 10 People Who Mattered This Year for his calls for public discussion about the potential effects of the gene drive technique from the earliest stages of the research.

Pattie Maes and Sandy Pentland were named in *Science and Engineering's* list of the 100 most influential scholars in 2016.

### **New Books**

Joseph Paradiso published "Our Extended Sensoria: How Humans Will Connect With the Internet of Things" in *The Next Step: Exponential Life*, Open Minded Collection, Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria (BBVA) Press, 2016, pp. 47–75.

Joi Ito and Jeff Howe published *Whiplash*, Grand Central Publishing, 2016.

**Pattie Maes**  
**Academic Head**