

Institute Community and Equity Officer

The [Institute Community and Equity Officer \(ICEO\)](#) devotes attention to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion across the MIT community, including students, postdoctoral researchers, staff, faculty, and the extended community of alumni and friends of MIT. The ICEO mission is to advance a respectful and caring community that embraces diversity and empowers everyone to learn and do their best at MIT.

FY2017 began with a painful national outbreak in early July of violence between police and black people, including the police killing of unarmed men in Minnesota and Baton Rouge, LA, and the murder of several police officers in Dallas, TX. In response to this shock and its impact on many at MIT, on July 10 MIT's homepage was turned black, accompanied by the simple phrase "We Mourn" and a [message from President Rafael Reif](#) that was also sent by email to community members and alumni.

Three days later, MIT held a [community dialogue](#) in response to the tragedies. More than 600 people attended. The lunchtime event included appeals for racial healing by staff members and the ICEO, but a majority of the time was dedicated to facilitated conversations in groups of 10 people seated at more than 60 tables throughout the Student Center. Participant feedback on index cards was overwhelmingly positive. The event inspired many groups, including the Black Alumni of MIT who, in May 2017, organized a Hackathon, "Hacking Discrimination," based on ideas and connections made at the community dialogue event. The Sloan School of Management held a follow-up community dialogue in August 2016.

One of the Black Students' Union (BSU) [recommendations](#) presented in 2014 was an expanded diversity orientation for freshman that would include small-group discussions. The first such discussions were held at the end of August 2015 with help from 30 trained facilitators, including several faculty and members of the Academic Council as well as staff from across the Institute. Another BSU recommendation had been to increase mental health support for students of color; several clinicians were hired and a new [chief of Mental Health and Counseling](#), Karen Singleton, started in January 2017.

During FY2017, the ICEO community dialogues were organized in partnership with other groups on campus, for example the MIT Libraries (October 2016 and March 2017) and the Employee Resource Groups (January 2017). Given the increase in racial and political polarization occurring nationally, these events focused on creating spaces where participants could share divergent views in a setting of mutual respect consistent with the ICEO mission. In addition, the ICEO hosted a panel discussion featuring diverse political views of the January 2017 national Women's March as part of a major one-day symposium organized by the MIT community on April 18, 2017—the Day of Engagement/Day of Action.

Progress was made on several further recommendations made by students and by the ICEO in 2015. The BSU called for a formal statement from each department head or major lab director affirming MIT's commitment to students' health and to diversity

and inclusion. This recommendation is similar (but more specific) to the ICEO recommendation for an MIT Compact—a brief statement of what we aspire to as a community and what we expect of one another as MIT community members. The BSU recommendation proved more effective in that it engaged MIT's various units. Following encouragement from Provost Martin Schmidt, all of MIT's academic departments had produced [statements](#) in response to the BSU recommendation by June 2017. Many non-academic units are following their example. As a result, the goal of the MIT Compact is being met through a gradual process accommodating the differences in culture of different units.

The second major ICEO recommendation—and one particularly promoted by the Black Graduate Student Association—was to hold unconscious bias workshops. In the fall, Provost Schmidt convened a faculty committee to assess different approaches and to provide a recommendation for training that could be offered to all faculty. Several models were considered, including the University of Wisconsin-Madison workshop experienced the previous year by the Academic Council, as well as an interactive workshop developed at Google and implemented at Carnegie Mellon University. The committee saw defects in all these approaches. Despite these setbacks, several schools and departments at MIT hosted their own programs for faculty search committee chairs or members. Also, three workshops were given at MIT in the fall semester by representatives of Project Implicit, including one by Harvard University professor Mahzarin Banaji, co-developer of the Implicit Association Test, which was delivered to more than 200 people.

The third major ICEO recommendation was to develop a community and equity data dashboard. Progress has been made on this recommendation with the MIT Office of Institutional Research presenting a public [diversity dashboard](#) of MIT demographics. Several of the BSU recommendations focused on adding new questions to the Student Quality of Life Survey as well as other surveys. Student leaders collaborated with the Office of Institutional Research and the Chancellor's Office, resulting in a new set of questions added to the surveys this year. Survey results are [publicly accessible](#).

The ICEO and other groups have analyzed the new data from the Faculty and Staff Quality of Life Survey (spring 2016) and the Student Quality of Life Survey (spring 2017). Among the major findings are overall improvement in satisfaction. The [surveys show](#) significant gender differences in the experience of faculty and other groups, revealing the potential for such survey data to inform change when broadly implemented in the community and equity dashboard. The analysis also showed significant variation across departments and other work units, as highlighted in the ICEO report.

Another major recommendation of the ICEO report was for MIT to participate in the Leading for Change Higher Education Diversity Consortium, a [collaboration of higher education institutions](#) in Massachusetts and New England committed to identifying student and employee diversity best practices through uniform and transparent use of data, institutional benchmarks, and reflective practice. During FY2017, MIT contributed in two ways to this collaboration. First, MIT hosted the data of all consortium members

collected over the past two years in order to provide a baseline of diversity data, including publicly accessible student graduation rates. Second, MIT contributed to the consortium annual conference, held in March 2017. During the conference, Vice President Kolenbrander and undergraduate BSU leaders Rasheed Auguste and Alberto Hernandez shared the process that led to the BSU recommendations and the Academic Council Working Group on Inclusion. Also, Senior Associate Dean for Student Life Judith Robinson and Title IX Director Sarah Rankin discussed MIT's preparation of a new mechanism for handling reports of campus racial or other bias incidents.

The broad MIT community contributed to many diversity and inclusion events in FY2017. Alumna Dr. Aprille Ericsson-Jackson '86 of the NASA Goddard Spaceflight Center was the Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Luncheon speaker in February 2017. There were more than 400 people in attendance. The MIT Libraries and the Women's and Gender Studies (WGS) Program also contributed to events throughout the year. The MIT Reads program, initiated by the Libraries and supported by the Committee on Race and Diversity, brought diversity and inclusion reading groups together with authors such as Ken Liu and Janet Mock. The Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics, WGS, and the Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies arranged a private screening at MIT of the movie *Hidden Figures* and brought the book's author, Margot Lee Shetterly, to speak on campus in March 2017. The same month, a staff group organized a workshop on white privilege. A total of 96 events were featured in the [diversity events calendar](#). This level of community passion for diversity, equity, and inclusion is new to MIT.

Additional evidence of MIT community engagement comes from the establishment of a new committee on community and the addition of a diversity officer in the Undergraduate Association (modeled after the ICEO), a diversity subcommittee on the Graduate Student Council, and the appointment of several new positions related to diversity and inclusion throughout MIT. The MIT diversity website maintains an [up-to-date listing](#) of such positions and offices.

In FY2017 MIT hosted six Martin Luther King Visiting Professors and Scholars:

- Professor Kishonna Gray (Eastern Kentucky University), hosted by the Program in Women's and Gender Studies and the Comparative Media Studies/Writing Section
- Professor Ryan Hynd (University of Pennsylvania), hosted by the Math Department
- Professor Ryan Preston-Roedder (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), hosted by the Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
- Mayor Kenneth Reeves, hosted by the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
- Professor Steven Richardson (Howard University), hosted by the Department of Chemistry
- Professor Jacquelyn Taylor (Yale University), hosted by the Department of Biology

Each visiting professor or scholar gave a public presentation and built a lively community on campus. Kishonna Gray organized a symposium in March 2017, "Diversifying Barbie and Mortal Kombat: 20 years later." Ken Reeves organized a symposium in April 2016, "The Spirit of Detroit: 1950 to 2050."

Additional ICEO activities during FY2017 include the following:

- Provided unconscious bias training for search chairs in the School of Engineering
- Advised several department heads, school deans, and other leaders on matters of diversity and inclusion
- Advised the Committee on Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response
- Co-sponsored, with the Office of Multicultural Programs and others, the fifth annual Multicultural Awards Banquet in May 2017
- Co-sponsored, with the Office of Minority Education, a program on "Males of Color/Success in Higher Education" in October 2016
- Spoke at meetings of several professional societies and other meetings on topics of undergraduate student diversity, graduate education, faculty diversity, and resolving the problem of abrasive conduct in higher education
- Sponsored the travel of several MIT staff members to attend national conferences and trainings on topics of diversity, inclusion, and the facilitation of intergroup dialogues

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