

Office of Government and Community Relations

MIT has a unique commitment to its host city and cares deeply about the community of which it is proud to be a member. Housed in the Executive Vice President and Treasurer's Office, 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 the city. In addition to its work with local communities, the office is a liaison to the Commonwealth 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 as a resource to the Institute community for matters related to government or the community of Cambridge. It is also a resource to MIT's neighbors who seek 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.

Support of Nonprofits

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

Through direct donations, the office interacted with approximately 85 nonprofit organizations in the broader Cambridge area. Monetary contributions supported a diverse range of activities including community events, K-12 programming, and disaster relief. For example, MIT made a significant contribution to the Mayor's Fire Relief Fund to assist 125 neighbors displaced by a 10-alarm fire in East Cambridge. 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, the Registrar's Office, and MIT Athletics to provide space for 50 events in AY2017. These events brought visibility to MIT and fostered positive relations between the Institute and its neighbors.

In addition to tangible support, office staff worked with area nonprofits to further their missions directly. Partnering with colleagues in the Office of Sustainability, the Facilities Department, and MIT Campus Dining, OGCR staff worked to launch a food rescue pilot with Food For Free to benefit local families. The pilot focused on rescuing weekly leftover food prepared at Maseeh Hall for distribution to pantries and soup kitchens. Following the success of the food rescue work at Maseeh Hall, the effort is projected to expand to other locations on campus next year. Additionally, OGCR staff worked with the Community Art Center to create a community-based public art project for the scrim surrounding the Kendall Square Initiative construction site.

In 2016, the City of Cambridge established a Community Benefits Advisory Council and appointed OGCR staff to serve on the board. Through this work, the office hopes to facilitate increased coordination among Cambridge nonprofits.

Civic Engagement

OGCR is responsible for managing the Institute's relationship with Cambridge and Boston civic organizations. This past year, OGCR staff represented MIT on the boards and committees of the Boston Chamber of Commerce; Central Square Business Association; Cambridge Business Coalition; Cambridge Combined Business Association; East Cambridge Business Association; Kendall Square Association; and Cambridge Chamber of Commerce. The office's continued engagement in Kendall Square has deepened with Co-Director Sarah Gallop's presidency of the Kendall Square Association.

Educational Initiatives

Over the last few years, the City of Cambridge has placed an increased focus on developing science, technology, engineering, art, and math education opportunities for its residents. In pursuit of this shared goal, MIT announced the creation of a K-12 outreach administrator position as part of the [MIT2016](#) celebration. With this new position, staff had an opportunity to discuss operational needs and opportunities for collaboration with the MIT Edgerton Center and the MIT Office of Digital Learning to boost K-12 outcomes. The office plans to onboard the new K-12 outreach administrator in September 2017 and integrate the position into the overall town gown relationship.

Local Government and Neighborhood Relations

Maintaining productive and open communications with city 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 to the City of Cambridge](#) and [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.

In January 2017, MIT signed an agreement with the federal government to [redevelop](#) the Volpe parcel in Kendall Square. The agreement requires that MIT build a new facility for the Volpe Center and allows the Institute to develop the remainder of the parcel into a mixed-use district that will benefit MIT's mission and the broader Cambridge community. OGCR staff have been heavily involved in planning and outreach work during the rezoning process and will continue to provide support for advancing MIT's vision for a reimagined Volpe parcel.

OGCR continued to provide political guidance for the Kendall Square Initiative through the buildings' design review processes. This support included internal and external communications for the initiative, updates to city officials, participation in hearings, and interactive meetings with the MIT and Cambridge communities.

State Government Relations

OGCR continues to forge relationships with Governor Charlie Baker's administration and has increasingly connected members of his cabinet to research and policy activity around campus. For example, OGCR staff introduced the Massachusetts energy and environment secretary (EES) Matthew Beaton to the leadership of the [MIT Energy Initiative](#) to discuss their "Future of" studies. Positive developments from those meetings led to additional partnerships between the EES and the Vice President for Research Office's plan for [Climate Action](#).

Industry, academia, and government leaders joined together to celebrate the grand opening of the [Advanced Functional Fabrics of America \(AFFOA\)](#) manufacturing institute in 2017. AFFOA was created in 2016 with over \$300 million in funding from federal and state governments and from academic and corporate partners, to help foster the creation of revolutionary new developments in fabric and fiber-based products. Headquartered on MIT's campus, the public-private partnership represents months of collaborative work between OGCR staff, MIT leadership, and the Commonwealth to boost economic development opportunities in the state.

Office staff worked with internal and external colleagues to manage MIT's response to state legislative initiatives. A sampling of these matters include 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 the Washington Office to support President Rafael Reif in interactions with federal officials and to further MIT's mission at the federal level. The inauguration of a new administration in 2017 created an opportunity to forge relationships with governmental leaders who influence public policy important to MIT. Working with the Washington Office, internal communications groups, the Association of American Universities, and the wider MIT network, OGCR has been heavily involved in establishing connections for future collaboration.

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 with indirect costs. Additionally, OGCR hosted governmental officials on campus for tours and events. For example, OGCR coordinated a roundtable discussion on the future of work, featuring the outgoing Secretary of State John Kerry, MIT faculty, experts, and industry leaders. The successful event raised interesting questions about the future of our economy and connected thought leaders and researchers to explore those topics more deeply.

In February 2017, the Trump administration issued an executive order banning travel to the United States by citizens from selected countries. Working with a number of local congressional, state, and city leaders, OGCR helped MIT facilitate the successful return of affected international students to campus for the spring semester.

Communications

OGCR continued to grow the subscription to 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.

Office staff responded to numerous media inquiries regarding Kendall Square, the Volpe project, property taxes, 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, Transportation Committee, Community Giving, Information Group, and the Communications Operations Group. Additionally, OGCR staff have begun providing regular detailed updates to the Office of the Executive Vice President to better inform senior leaders of OGCR's work.

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

Community Service Fund (CSF)

In 2016, the Community Service Fund (CSF) welcomed Helen Elaine Lee as its new faculty chair. Under her leadership, OGCR staff managed the CSF application and disbursement process, which awarded grants to almost 20 local nonprofit organizations and student projects. OGCR staff continue to work closely with Community Giving to raise funds and bring awareness local nonprofits in need of support.

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