

Office of Major Agreements

The Office of Major Agreements (OMA) was established in 2007. The office reports to MIT's Office of the Executive Vice President and Treasurer (EVPT), and supports the MIT community in several ways. Among them are:

- assisting in the development of new international collaborations and programs, particularly with financial and business aspects;
- coordinating problem-solving efforts related to policies, processes, and procedures that affect implementation of international programs;
- leading efforts to facilitate international operations—for example, through the international safety and security resource, and coordinating the establishment and operations of new MIT international entities;
- supporting the Office of the Associate Provost for International Activities; and
- staffing and supporting the work of the International Coordinating Committee (ICC).

Accomplishments and Initiatives

OMA's focus over the past year was on organizational tools, strategic planning, and safety and security. The office's principal activities are described below.

Organizational Tools for International Operations

As a key component of an organizational toolkit to help MIT faculty, students, and administrators pursue international goals and activities, OMA helped launch and is now making operational MIT International (MITI), a wholly owned nonprofit subsidiary of MIT. MIT International supports MIT's international activities by facilitating human resource needs related to working abroad, allowing separation of investment activities from education and research activities in foreign jurisdictions, mitigating tax risks, and easing regulatory compliance.

The first meeting of the MIT International board of trustees was held in March 2018. OMA is chairing a multi-departmental team that is working, in close collaboration with the associate provost for international activities and the deputy executive vice president, to make the new entity operational. Discussions at the first board meeting and following activities centered on human resources and employment principles and policies, bringing MIT entities outside the US under the MIT International umbrella, start-up business and operational issues, and refining and implementing a range of core operating mechanisms.

International Strategic Planning

In May 2017, at the conclusion of a two-year strategic planning exercise on MIT's international activities, the associate provost for international activities issued A Global Strategy for MIT. OMA's support of the associate provost's work continues through the implementation phase strengthening MIT's capacity for international engagement and impact. OMA's focus during the implementation phase includes:

- leading the Global Classroom project, involving the vice chancellor, the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, and the MIT International Science and Technology Initiatives Program;
- assisting in the development of a China strategy and early engagement of the MIT community in connection with the November 2018 MIT China Summit;
- supporting the new program to create region-specific platforms (e.g., in Africa and Latin America) for cultivating, facilitating, and coordinating faculty and Institute-level collaborations in targeted countries and regions;
- facilitating and supporting reconstitution of the International Advisory Committee; and
- planning and tracking overall implementation of the strategic plan.

International Safety and Security

The international safety and security function within OMA leads the development and implementation of MIT's international travel emergency preparedness strategy, training, policies, procedures, and response plans. This function also serves as a central resource to support the needs of students, faculty, and staff while traveling or working abroad on behalf of MIT. During the reporting period, highlights of the staff's work include:

- managing and responding to 182 incidents abroad involving MIT travelers;
- continuing to work with Information Systems & Technology and key user groups to conduct pilot programs and enhance the MIT Travel Registry Program, with community-wide rollout planned for early 2019; and
- further refining the high-risk travel policy and procedures, including the addition of several new tools to enhance both preparedness and response.

As of July 1, 2018, as part of a coordinated and comprehensive approach to public safety management at MIT, the international safety and security function, along with the Office of Emergency Management, will report to the director of Campus Services and the chief of MIT Police.

International Coordinating Committee

International Coordinating Committee (ICC) was created in 2012 in response to the rapid growth in volume and complexity of international activities at MIT and the subsequent administrative and operational challenges. The committee is co-chaired by the directors of the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) and OMA, and comprises two working groups—one on negotiation of international agreements and one on policies and procedures relating to international programs.

The overall goal of ICC is to strengthen and coordinate the business support for international activities provided by MIT's administrative and academic areas. During the reporting period, accomplishments of the committee include:

- assisting in the negotiation and pre-award administrative support for approximately 30 new international collaborations and projects, working closely with principal investigators and MIT's departments, laboratories, and centers (DLCs) and flagging issues for senior administration;
- modifying and improving the ICC website content on cultural resources and international safety and security, as well as enhancing design and ease-of-use;
- managing the International People Placement process, designed to provide a single point of contact assistance to MIT DLC's needing to post or hire employees outside the US—including more than 30 inquiries or cases related to more than 20 countries;
- concluding a cultural training project to empower and enable faculty, students, and staff who are doing international work, working closely with Human Resources and MIT International Science and Technology Initiatives (MISTI); and
- sponsoring and organizing—as part of an ongoing series of information sessions for the MIT community on topics related to international program operations—a workshop on travel abroad. The workshop included seven domain experts from across MIT covering multiple facets of international travel: health, safety, student travel, technology, export controls, money matters, and environmental health and safety. A full list of archived information sessions, and the videos or slide decks associated with them, can be found on the ICC website.

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