

Institute Events

The mission of [Institute Events](#) is to meet the information needs of the MIT community, campus visitors, and the public; to orchestrate and advise on issues of protocol; to distribute knowledge and best practices in event planning and coordination; to promote community within MIT and hospitality to campus guests; and to support conferences and direct events that sustain MIT's global leadership in education, research, and innovation. In AY2019, Institute Events comprised the Events and Information Center, the Community Services Office, and MIT Conference Services. The offices of Conference Services, Community Services, and several Institute Events staff are located on the seventh floor of Building E19; the Events and Information Center continues to welcome campus visitors at its location in 7-121.

The schedule and scope of Institute Events activities remained steady throughout AY2019, with the department supporting an array of mission-driven events and programs. Of note, the work surrounding commencement preparations increased significantly as the hooding ceremony became the investiture of doctoral hoods and degree conferral. This graduation event for PhDs and ScDs added diploma distribution to that of doctoral hoods and moved outdoors to Killian Court from the Johnson Athletics Center Ice Rink.

In addition to the events described below, the work of Institute Events includes numerous activities on behalf of the president and other senior officers.

Institute Events staff included Gayle Gallagher, executive director for Institute Events and protocol; Ted Johnson, managing director; Joseph Coen, manager, Events and Information Center; Rebecca Tyler, manager, events and communications; Lee Corbett, senior administrative and financial assistant; Kimberly Nelson, senior administrative assistant and scheduler, Samberg Conference Center; Rachael Weiner, promoted from events and communications assistant to events and communications associate; and Judith Zinker, administrative assistant. Malcolm L. Jones '10 remained a key member of the team throughout the year, officially joining the department in May.

Community and special events

During 2018–2019, Institute Events was involved in or directly responsible for public events, visits, and programs that included the following:

- President Reif's convocation for incoming first-year students and their families
- Sexual Harassment of Women—A Consensus Study Report of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine: A panel discussion hosted at MIT
- Community celebration for Professor Ed Bertschinger, Institute community and equity officer
- Installation of the Chaplain to the Institute, Kirstin C. Boswell-Ford
- Nobel Prize announcement preparation support

- Compton lecture by *New York Times* journalist Tom Friedman
- MIT.nano opening ceremonies
- American Academy of Arts and Sciences: The Force for Science meeting and dinner at MIT
- Explorers Club at MIT: Lowell Thomas Awards presentations
- Black Alumni of MIT capstone and Black Students' Union's 50th anniversary celebration
- Winterfest, an end-of-term community social
- Reception to honor R. Gregory Morgan, senior vice president and chairman of the Corporation
- Launch of the MIT Stephen A. Schwarzman College of Computing
- Compton lecture by soprano Renée Fleming
- Reception to honor Kirk Kolenbrander, vice president
- Event Planners Group spring meeting
- Killian lecture by Professor Gerald Fink
- Community forums with the MIT Stephen A. Schwarzman College of Computing working groups
- OneWorld @ MIT Infinite Talent Show and Food Festival
- MIT presidential CEO advisory board meeting
- Retirement reception for Alyce Johnson, Institute community and equity officer (interim)

Institute Events provided significant logistical and operational event support for two milestone celebratory events this academic year: the opening of the MIT.nano building in October and the launch of the MIT Stephen A. Schwarzman College of Computing in February. The opening celebration for the MIT Schwarzman College of Computing comprised three days of events February 26–28, including a student exposition along Charles M. Vest Student Street in the Stata Center, an academic symposium in Kresge Auditorium, and an all-day panel and celebration event that spanned Kresge Auditorium and a large Kresge Oval tent. Institute Events oversaw logistics and operations for the February 28 celebration in conjunction with Conference Services, who managed registration for more than 1,500 attendees. Institute Events was also pivotal in organizing the student exposition on the first day, when more than 40 student teams demonstrated their research to the MIT community and the public.

In May 2019, the OneWorld @ MIT event returned, this year as a daytime occasion for all ages. Given the popularity and success of the inclusive and internationally themed stage show performance in 2017, the 2019 event included an MIT community talent show

followed by a food festival featuring cuisines from around the world. The OneWorld @ MIT planning committee, led by Professor Raul Radovitsky and comprising MIT students and staff, met throughout the spring semester to plan the May 11 event.

Commencement

Given the growth of commencement in both ceremony length and guest attendance (due to increasing numbers of degree candidates), commencement festivities in AY2019 took a different shape from those in recent history. Commencement was split into two separate ceremonies: the investiture of doctoral hoods and degree conferral for PhDs and ScDs on Thursday, June 6, and the commencement exercises for bachelor's and master's candidates on Friday, June 7. During this transition year, doctoral candidates were invited to march in the procession and attend Friday's commencement.

At the investiture of doctoral hoods and degree conferral ceremony, 533 doctoral degree recipients received their diplomas and academic hoods. Chancellor Cynthia Barnhart presided over the ceremony and MIT welcomed guest speaker Squire Booker PhD '94, Evan Pugh Professor of chemistry and of biochemistry and molecular biology and Eberly Family Distinguished Chair in science at Pennsylvania State University. Michael Bloomberg, philanthropist, entrepreneur, and three-term mayor of New York City, addressed more than 2,900 degree recipients and approximately 11,000 family members, alumni, and guests as speaker at Friday's commencement ceremony. The live webcast of commencement via the MIT commencement website attracted 14,992 unique viewers, with an additional 22,741 unique viewers via MIT's Facebook page and another 130,304 total views via LinkedIn Live.

Event Planners Spring Meeting

On March 14, Institute Events organized a spring meeting and lunch for MIT event planners. The three co-chairs of the Working Green Committee presented to the group on topics relating to sustainable event practices. Gourmet Catering, one of MIT's preferred catering vendors, hosted the lunch and educated attendees about their choices in sustainable planning.

Projects

In AY2019, the Commencement Committee convened more frequently than usual—eight total meetings spanning two semesters—to continue the discussions necessary to make a recommendation to MIT senior leadership regarding the future of commencement exercises. The committee deliberated a number of options, all of which offered varying degrees of reduction to the ceremony length and the number of people in Killian Court at any one time. Chancellor Cynthia Barnhart proposed to the committee an experimental solution for 2019: Doctoral candidates would receive their diplomas at an enhanced hooding ceremony in Killian Court and not at commencement, thus creating two standalone ceremonies. This approach did help to reduce the number of people on Killian Court at commencement and shortened the ceremony's length by approximately 30 minutes. The 2019 experiment was deemed generally successful; deliberations continue regarding a more permanent solution.

Institute Events continued its community education and outreach efforts in AY2019 with a new workshop topic called Meeting and Event Planning 101. This introductory-level class was held four times (January, February, April, and June), gathering 70 MIT staff members from a variety of the Institute's departments, labs, and centers. The workshop highlighted 11 topics related to event planning (e.g., selecting a venue and date, audience management, audiovisual and video, and speaker preparations) and focused on specific areas that new planners or planners new to MIT might overlook. These small-group sessions also offered participants a chance to dialogue with one another and to share their own solutions to issues related to event planning and management.

In addition, Institute Events coordinated with Human Resources to migrate the workshop series to the ATLAS training center. Beginning with the January 2019 session, staff taking a class with Institute Events received credit for doing so.

In regards to community outreach, Institute Events took strides this year to update membership of the Event Planners Group. This affinity group, composed of MIT staff members who have event planning responsibilities, has been convened by the department for many years, offering access to a listserv and the opportunity to attend periodic meetings with event planning colleagues. Institute Events audited the group's membership for addresses of former Institute employees and worked with Institutional Research to obtain data on current staff who could be invited to join the group, refining the list and growing it by 17% to a total of 496 members. As of June 2019, a greater number of staff with relevant job duties, as well as many who may have gone unnoticed before this year's outreach, now receive announcements from Institute Events, invitations to workshops and professional gatherings, and communications related to meeting and event planning at MIT.

Institute Events also began planning for an official scheduling system to track space use requests for Lobby 7, Killian Court, Saxon Court, and Eastman Court; it will be implemented July 1, 2019.

Events and Information Center

Beyond serving as an information and welcome point for visitors, the Events and Information Center plays an important role as a central information source for the MIT community. Over the past year, the staff assisted with the registration of 2,087 employee events (of the total 3,631 Atlas-registered events that were held both by departments and by student groups). In comparing AY2019 numbers to those of previous years, the total number of student event registrations have been increasing (3,299 in 2017 to 3,308 in 2018 to 3,631 in 2019) while employee/department event registrations have remained consistent at around the 2,000 mark. The overall increase in completed event registrations is likely due to Atlas enhancements implemented in September as a result of Division of Student Life (DSL) focus groups, which included a new and improved form. In addition, DSL hosted student information sessions on the event registration process, which may have contributed to the uptick in overall event registration numbers.

In addition, some events must be registered via hard-copy paper forms. This is because they are either external or of a personal nature, meaning there is no internal cost object

number to enter on the electronic form. The paper event registration forms totaled 47. Of those, 26 were for weddings and the other 21 were for non-wedding events (galas, bar/bat mitzvahs, memorial services, thesis defense celebrations, rehearsal dinners, graduation parties, and so on.)

Staff assisted with 189 reservations for infinite panel poster displays in the corridor. In addition to answering and redirecting thousands of telephone and in-person inquiries, Events and Information Center staff distributed 78,706 pamphlets, brochures, maps, guides, and other material (which include 40 different publications, plus commencement tickets). Institute Events maintained responsibility for scheduling requests for event space in the Samberg Conference Center and booked 548 events (both single and multi-day) that took place there in AY2019. Staff also continued to oversee scheduling of the Bush Room, managing 199 reservations between January 2019 and June 2019 (with combined estimated attendance of 6,832) for that space. Use of the Bush Room was affected by the Building 10 window replacement project, which kept the room offline for some months.

The Events and Information Center continues to administer the MIT events calendar, work that includes adding new users, troubleshooting, responding to user requests and questions, and selecting events to highlight on the calendar homepage's feature carousel. By the close of AY2019, more than 9,000 users had registered to use the calendar since the calendar's July 2017 inception. Additionally, more than 4,000 events were created in AY2019. Events and Information Center staff continue to work with colleagues from Communications Initiatives and Information Systems and Technology to stay abreast of upgrades to the Localist platform and to communicate with calendar users about system upgrades and best practices.

Community Services Office

The Community Services Office is home to the MIT Activities Committee (MITAC), Community Giving at MIT, the Quarter Century Club (QCC), and the Association of MIT Retirees. These programs aim to optimize the work/life experience for faculty, staff, students, and retirees by providing opportunities to engage in social, educational, and cultural activities that strengthen the connection between MIT and the members of its community. During AY2019, the Community Services Office staff again provided vital support to Institute Events, assisting with the investiture of doctoral hoods and degree conferral and the commencement exercises, along with many other events and programs organized by the department.

MITAC had a strong year, highlighted by these achievements:

- The program's more than 150 cultural and recreational events generated \$641,000 in total revenue (an 8% decrease from FY2018, attributable to a lower volume of high-priced sports, theater, and movie tickets sold); 35,855 tickets were sold on campus, at Lincoln Laboratory, and online. In its first year, online sales accounted for 34% of total sales. Moreover, the program has an impact beyond MIT: MITAC's partnership with arts, sports, recreational, and cultural institutions strengthens those entities to the benefit of the New England region.

- MITAC served 5,007 unique customers (an 8% decrease) who enjoyed substantial savings, estimated at nearly \$381,000 on tickets purchased (a 3% increase).
- The website and digital digests, launched last year, continue to expand their reach. The website receives an average of 2,800 visits per month and the digital digest has 9,900 subscribers.
- Strong vendor partnerships resulted in the procurement of highly desirable tickets, including a limited number of “Hamilton” tickets, which were sold via lottery (developed by Information Systems and Technology); Celtics playoff tickets (242 sold); and the Liverpool vs. Sevilla soccer game at Fenway Park (100 sold).
- MITAC broadened its outreach efforts through department visits, employee and student fairs, and marketing collateral, in addition to expanding its services to employees in remote locations, such as at Haystack Observatory.

MITAC benefits from the participation of a program committee and a presidentially appointed advisory council. The program committee was led in 2018–2019 by conveners Shirley Entzminger (Mathematics Department) and Alicia LaDuke and Maria Nicholson (Lincoln Laboratory). Chaired by Professor Clifton G. Fonstad, Jr. (Electrical Engineering and Computer Science Department), the advisory council provides guidance to MITAC on Institute priorities, policies, business practices, long-range planning, and the administration of the employee benefit program. The council’s priority is to increase MITAC’s customer base and to achieve broader awareness about MITAC services.

Community Giving at MIT is a charitable giving program that facilitates donations made by MIT employees and retirees to the MIT Community Service Fund and other health and human service agencies, including the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley. The FY2019 campaign raised \$331,000 (a 5% decrease). Despite a decrease of 7% in employee and retiree donors (totaling 462), 104 employees who had not donated the year before chose to donate in FY2019 and 263 donors continued their annual support through the sustainer program.

Professor Bevin P. Engelward (Department of Biological Engineering) continued her leadership of the presidentially appointed Community Giving steering committee.

Significant initiatives undertaken in FY2019 include the following:

- Professor Engelward and the steering committee continued strategizing regarding two key objectives: positioning the MIT Community Service Fund (CSF) as the signature program of a focused giving campaign, and collaborating more closely with the CSF board of trustees around fundraising, communications, and grant allocations.
- The program continued its collaborative efforts with MIT’s Office of Government and Community Relations to organize volunteer initiatives, collections, and fundraisers to benefit Cambridge nonprofits and the MIT Community Service Fund. Highlighting these efforts, department ambassadors raised \$3,095 for the Cambridge Family and Children’s Service holiday fund.

- The program provided logistical support to Lincoln Lab's Walk to End Alzheimer's Team, marking its 10th anniversary of participation. The team walked in honor of the late Paul Gray, MIT president emeritus. Team POGO (so named for Dr. Gray's MIT email handle, remembered with affection by team members) raised more than \$34,330.
- Department ambassadors continued to volunteer at the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House and to raise funds for expenses associated with the van and its programs. Traci Swartz, Community Giving at MIT program manager, was invited to join the organization's development committee.

The Quarter Century Club is composed of 4,342 active members, 81 of whom were inducted in the spring of 2019. Retiree Yvonne Gittens is the president of the QCC and leads the board of directors. The club organizes three annual member events and the induction luncheon, which honors new members and recognizes 50-year achievers. This year's induction keynote speaker was Nobel Laureate and Professor Emeritus Rainer Weiss '55 PhD '62.

The William R. Dickson Retiree Education Fund continues to receive a solid number of applications. In FY2019, 27 unique applicants, including six new applicants, were awarded \$12,423 in grants.

Significant QCC initiatives undertaken in FY2019 include the following:

- Continued technical collaboration with Human Resources to develop a new system to notify employees of their eligibility to join the club. As a result, and beginning in early FY2020, faculty and staff will be notified on a monthly, rather than annual, basis when they reach their 25-year milestone.
- The board drafted updates to the club's bylaws and constitution to reflect membership eligibility criteria and the club's mission; these will be brought to a vote in FY2020.
- Staff worked to launch a new digital invitation system and website, which offers online event registration and payment for guest attendance.
- Recruitment efforts began for three open board positions, to be filled early in FY2020.

The Association of MIT Retirees continued its organization of membership, travel, educational, and social programming for the benefit of its 1,000 registered members. Nancy Alusow and Joseph Collins served as co-chairs of the volunteer advisory committee.

Celebrating its 25th anniversary, the association's annual spring luncheon at Endicott House featured Nobel Laureate and Institute Professor Phillip Sharp. Also, the retirees' memoir group, established in 2011, received an official name in honor of its founder: the "Nita Regnier Memoir Writing Group." Nita passed away shortly after this dedication was announced. Daphne Strassmann, a professional writer with GrubStreet Boston, among other institutions, now leads the writing group, currently comprising 10 association members.

The Undergraduate Scholarship Fund, established by the association's leadership in 2006, raised \$12,874 in FY2019, the most money raised through member donations since the fund's inception. The fund awards an annual scholarship to an MIT undergraduate student, with first preference for students who are direct descendants or family members of retired MIT employees. Twelve scholarships have been awarded since 2006, with \$45,920 awarded in cumulative scholarships and \$139,933 raised by 445 unique donors since inception. The association is a member of the Boston Area College and University Retiree Associations and the Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education.

The Community Services Office members in FY2019 included Ted Johnson, managing director, Institute Events; Traci Swartz, manager, Community Services Office; Diane Betz Tavitian, promoted to senior program and events associate; and Anthony Farrell '13, promoted to program and events associate. The office welcomed two new staff members: Malcolm L. Jones '10, longtime member of the Institute Events team, joined the group in May 2019 as program and operations associate, followed in June by Jodi J. Schwedelson—formerly of Global Arts Live, one of MITAC's vendors—as events and program assistant. Departing staff members were administrative assistant Michael Philbrick, who joined the Office of the MIT Vice President for Finance as merchant services associate, and Linda Olson, events planning assistant, who retired after 40 years of distinguished service to MIT, both on campus and at Lincoln Lab.

Community Services was assisted in the summer of 2018 by intern Yusef Chisholm as part of MIT's Cambridge Youth Summer Employment Program. Yusef, a 2018 graduate of the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, matriculated to Bucknell University in fall 2018, returning to MIT in June 2019 for another summer with Institute Events. The office again acknowledges the valuable support of MIT retiree Virginia (Jeannie) Lauricella, who marked her 50th anniversary at MIT this year, and the significant MIT volunteerism of Diane Tavitian, who continues her service with the Women's League English Partner Program.

MIT Conference Services

MIT Conference Services (MITCS) provides logistical coordination and registration services to conferences, meetings, educational programming, and other events sponsored by MIT departments, faculty, and staff. In FY2019, the office supported 44 programs that yielded more than 18,000 participants. During the academic year, MITCS also coordinated 68 presentations for recruiting organizations under the auspices of the MIT Career Development Center. In addition, the office served as the central booking point for the residence hall reservations of 259 conference attendees and 383 youth group participants, all housed on campus during the months of June through August.

MITCS supported recurring events that included the MIT Sloan School of Management's CIO Symposium, the Deshpande Center's IdeaStream conference, the Industrial Liaison Program's research and development conference, and the Lemelson-MIT Program's EurekaFest. Support was provided to Institute-wide events including the MIT Stephen A. Schwarzman College celebration, the MLK celebration luncheon, the MacVicar Day Symposium, the executive vice president and treasurer annual poster session, and the Open Space Programming Winter Family Day.

MITCS collaborated with many departments, centers, and labs on special events and professional international conferences both on and off campus, including the Annual International Association for Shell and Spatial Structures Symposium, sponsored by the Department of Architecture; the XVIII World Economic History Congress, sponsored by MIT's History Section; the MIT–Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution Joint Program 50th Anniversary Symposium and dinner; the Special Program for Urban and Regional Studies 50th Anniversary conference; the Operations Research Center 65th Anniversary Conference; the Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics Apollo 50+50 celebration; and the Center for Real Estate's MIT World Real Estate Forum.

Coordination services were again provided to outside summer youth activities, including the Sutton Trust US Programme; Education Unlimited summer programs; the iDTech Camp and Programming Academy; the International Baccalaureate Summer Program, offered by Oxford Study Courses; and National Geographic Student Expeditions.

Conference Services staff members during academic year 2018–2019 included Cathi Levine, director; Eva Cabone, events coordinator; Caroline Livingston, events registration associate; Darlene McGurl, senior financial assistant; Meghan Westcott, senior events associate; and MIT retiree Virginia Lauricella, temporary senior event staff.

Gayle M. Gallagher
Executive Director for Institute Events and Protocol