

## **Chancellor for Academic Advancement**

President L. Rafael Reif created the position of Chancellor for Academic Advancement in October 2013, naming Professor Eric Grimson to the post. This ad hoc position supports MIT's ongoing capital campaign, with primary responsibilities including serving as liaison to link the campaign (including potential donors) with faculty and students, gathering information on departmental and school needs and goals, providing strategic advice to the president and other senior leadership on campaign priorities and efforts, and especially in interacting extensively with potential donors, both nationally and globally.

### **Activities within the Chancellor for Academic Advancement's Office**

Since the official launch of the Campaign in May 2016, the chancellor has continued to work closely with the deans of the academic schools and of the MIT Stephen A. Schwarzman College of Computing, Student Life deans, the chancellor and the provost, the chairman of the MIT Corporation, and department heads to coordinate department, school, and Institute needs and aspirations with Campaign priorities and activities. The chancellor has engaged with departments and with individual faculty, gathering information to be used in discussions with prospective donors, and arranging for contact between individual faculty and donors as appropriate. The chancellor works closely with Resource Development staff on these topics, often serving as a conduit between faculty and development staff, and between potential donors and development staff and faculty members.

As identified priorities and needs for the Campaign have evolved, ranging from capital projects, to scholarships and fellowships, faculty support, new initiatives, and emerging research opportunities, the chancellor has worked with development staff and others to create strategic plans for fund raising. These include plans for specific projects, as well as strategies for cultivating specific critical donors.

Since a primary objective of the position is to engage the Institute with prospective donors—alumni, parents, and others unaffiliated with MIT but who share the Institute's vision—the majority of the chancellor's time has been spent in meeting with such prospects, both on campus and during trips to their home regions.

In the eight months prior to the Institute's pandemic-related travel ban, the chancellor travelled extensively to represent the president and the Institute to alumni groups, to individual alumni/alumnae, to parents and to other friends of the Institute. Travel over the past year included visits to Abu Dhabi; Atlanta, GA; Austin, TX; Beijing; Cairo; Chicago; Dalian, China; Davos; Denver, CO; Detroit, MI; Dubai; Hong Kong; Ithaca, NY; Kuala Lumpur; London; Los Angeles; Miami; Minneapolis, MN; New York; Orange County, CA; Orlando, FL; Saint Louis, MS; San Diego, CA; San Francisco; Shanghai; Sharjah, United Arab Emirates; Shenzhen; Singapore; Taipei; Westchester County, NY; and within the greater Boston area.

When travel restrictions were put in place on March 5, 2020 the chancellor necessarily was forced to rethink the way his office engaged with prospects, and he pivoted to telephone calls and telepresence meetings.

Prior to the curtailment of travel, the chancellor held 164 in-person meetings with donors, including 62 visits with highly rated prospects. He also participated in 10 Resource Development and Alumni Association events. These totals are comparable to prior years' results through the third quarter of the year.

As telepresence gained in acceptance, the chancellor began to engage with alumni and friends virtually. In the last quarter of the year, he held 41 personal, real-time video visits, presented three webinars reaching 80 lead fundraising volunteers (the Corporation Development Committee and Parents Leadership Council, as well as a number of Corporation members), facilitated a stewardship meeting online between a donor and a dozen of the fellows they support, and hosted a half-day virtual campus visit with the senior staff of a leading foundation.

Expectations for next year's activities are tempered by uncertainties about the duration of the pandemic as well as the extent of its devastating economic consequences on donor enthusiasm. Where appropriate, the chancellor will engage in campaign capstone gift conversations with principal donors, initiate contacts with new unaffiliated individuals, make solicitations of alumni who have not yet participated in the campaign, and cultivate prospective donors to the Schwarzman College of Computing.

**W. Eric L. Grimson**  
**Chancellor for Academic Advancement**  
**Bernard Gordon Professor of Medical Engineering**  
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