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July 17, 2006

Prof. Lotte Bailyn  
Room E52-502

Prof. Terry Knight  
Room 10-432M

Prof. Joanne Stubbe  
Room 18-598

Prof. Sally Haslanger  
Room 32-D926

Prof. Barbara Liskov  
Room 32-G942

Prof. JoAnne Yates  
Room E52-544

Prof. Nancy Hopkins  
Room E17-341

Prof. Paola Rizzoli  
Room 54-1416

Prof. Maria Zuber  
Room 54-918

Prof. Nancy Kanwisher  
Room 46-4133

Prof. Leigh Royden  
Room 54-826

Dear Colleagues:

Thank you for your letter concerning the issues raised by events surrounding the recruitment of Dr. Alla Karpova to the MIT faculty. You wisely point out the importance of protecting MIT's reputation as an institution that upholds the highest standards of academic fairness, and you have recommended correcting a situation within the MIT neuroscience community that threatens ongoing disruption of the collegiality of our academic enterprise.

First, as an institution of higher learning, we are unwaveringly committed to supporting and developing the careers of junior colleagues. We have reached out to Dr. Karpova to emphasize MIT's high standards of collegiality and to apologize for any misunderstanding during the recruitment process that might have made her question MIT's commitment to young faculty and their access to Institute resources.

Second, ongoing tensions among MIT's neuroscience entities have raised the issue of how to encourage productive work among members of our neuroscience and biological science communities, without regard to the specific entity in which an individual holds an appointment. This issue has broad significance because the most important intellectual challenges of our time call for interdisciplinary approaches. The ability to work across center, departmental and school boundaries will increasingly determine MIT's success in its mission of research, teaching and service. While MIT has pioneered cross-disciplinary approaches, we must, as an institution, continually foster structures, policies and practices that will advance work across academic and research units. I have asked the Provost to convene an *ad hoc* committee to look into the current

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situation, to review the structure of MIT's neuroscience entities, and to make recommendations for how these entities can work together and make faculty appointments more productively.

Finally, while your letter does not explicitly allege that gender played a role in this case, and the issues appear to be driven by the relationships among different research activities at MIT, the question of gender-based discrimination has been raised by some. Whether or not it played a role in this particular case, let me state here that gender-based or other discriminatory behavior conflicts in the deepest way with our commitment to a values-based, meritocratic institution and will not be tolerated.

While I have replied to those who signed your letter to me, this issue has engaged a broad set of our faculty, and so I encourage you to share my response with those who you think might find it helpful.

With my thanks for the positive and productive way that you have brought these issues forward,

Sincerely,



Susan Hockfield

SH/lsp

cc: Robert Desimone  
Christopher Kaiser  
L. Rafael Reif  
Robert J. Silbey  
Mriganka Sur  
Susumu Tonegawa