

## **Institute Community and Equity Office**

The Institute Community and Equity Office (ICEO) advances all aspects of MIT to make the Institute an even greater magnet for excellence. By deeply owning our values and interrogating their connections, by holding up both honest critique of ideas and unwavering respect for those who offer critique, MIT creates the conditions where every individual can achieve to the limit of their potential—and where every individual has an unshakable sense that they belong at MIT.

### **Overview: ICEO and MindHandHeart**

The acronym ICEO can refer to either the Office or to Institute Community and Equity Officer; MindHandHeart (MHH) is a program within the ICEO, and its activities are covered in this report. The ICEO/MHH are MIT's home for amplifying MIT's sense of community based on the Institute's shared values of excellence and curiosity, openness and respect, belonging and community. By inspiring meaningful conversations, building skills, and supporting new initiatives, the ICEO/MHH convenes and collaborates with students, staff, faculty, and postdocs on programs, projects, and initiatives that cross disciplines, departments, and identities.

ICEO/MHH staff work most frequently with MIT's many academic units, Human Resources, Institutional Research, and the Office of the Dean for Student Life. These partnerships allow us to provide essential programming and lead internal consultations with leaders and community groups to put evidence-based practices for equity and inclusion into use and advance related MIT research.

### **Institute Service**

Members of the ICEO staff serve on and convene numerous committees, including:

- Bias Response Team (IDHR)
- All-in Campus Voting Coalition (Gov & Community Relations)
- Arts producers/coordinators working (MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology)
- Committee on Race and Diversity (co-chair, convening)
- Task Force 2021 Community and Culture workstream
- Indigenous Working Group (co-chair)
- Gender Identity Initiative (co-chair, steering team)
- Council on Family and Work
- Community Service Fund
- MITAC Advisory Committee
- Committee on Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response
- Ad Hoc Committee on Holidays

- Protests & Demonstrations Group
- The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Committee
- NASEM Implementation Team, Leadership and Engagement co-chair
- MIT Values Committee (implementation co-chair)
- Committee on Discipline, including panels for sexual misconduct
- CSMPR Subcommittee on the environment for LGBTQ+ community members (co-chair)
- Campus Inclusive Restrooms Study (co-chair, sponsor)
- Racism Research Fund
- Working Group on Reimagining Public Safety
- Health Promotion Working Group

## Activities

### Strategic Action Plan for Belonging, Achievement, and Composition

MIT's Strategic Plan for Belonging, Achievement, and Composition was released September 1, 2022. The culmination of two years of community consultation, the plan provides the Institute with a recitation of its aspirations for community, as well as a framework for unit-level planning, coordination, and setting measurable goals for furthering MIT's mission to advance knowledge and educate students to serve the nation and the world in the 21st century.

The release of the Strategic Action Plan kicked off a "foundation year" in which MIT set a common understanding and shared language around its efforts to strengthen community. During the foundation year staff from the ICEO, along with those from a range of partner offices, worked with departments, labs, centers, and offices around the Institute to facilitate the creation of local plans.

### Martin Luther King Jr. Visiting Scholars

The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Visiting Scholar and Professor Program was established to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. MLK Scholars enrich the intellectual life of the Institute with their participation in research and academic programs, and they enhance their scholarship through intellectual interactions with MIT peers.

In AY2023, the program saw an increase in applications from new departments, with some putting their own funding toward hosting scholars. These scholars stay engaged with the main cohort and build networks around MIT to clear mutual benefit. Scholars this year are actively involved in projects and dialogues that strengthen MIT's commitment to excellence. Their classes are extremely well attended in all disciplines. Further engagement with the scholars and the community is emphasized by an increased attendance in each of their monthly presentations.

The AY2023 application cycle generated 18 nominations and nine scholars were selected to participate in this year's cohort. In April 2022, President Reif expanded support for the program and reserved a spot for a scholar of Native American studies.

### **Community Events and Programs**

The ICEO expanded its role as a point of coordination among other diversity related groups at the Institute. The ICEO:

- In collaboration with the VP of HR, increased the profile, visibility, and membership of Employee Resource Groups. Two Welcome wagon events were organized, one virtual and one in-person. Each event had over 50 attendees.
- Through partnerships with DAPER, MIT Reads, the Native American Student Association, MIT Sloan, MIT AAI, and other faculty, staff, and student organizations, brought numerous high-profile speakers to campus to address pressing social concerns or to expand conversations around the issues faced by specific identity-based groups.
- Supported and sponsored efforts in SHASS to attract and hire Indigenous faculty specializing in Indigenous scholarship.
- Co-facilitated workshops focused on DEI topics.
- ICEO implemented two types of grants program - ICEO grants and adhoc grants. 18 adhoc grants and eight ICEO grants were approved. Activities included community-building events, speaker series, and cultural performances.

The ICEO prides itself on creating programming that responds to the needs of the community. This year, workshops on using inclusive language, Jewish and Muslim perspectives, and an event with AAPI community members unpacking stereotypes. We also funded additional community building events that contributed to a sense of belonging and connectedness in a hybrid environment.

### **Racism Research Fund**

In July, 2020 MIT outlined steps it will take to address systemic problems regarding racial equity at the Institute. In spring 2022, the Provost established a \$1.2M pool for new research to pursue related goals. Dean of the School of Science Nergis Mavalvala and Dean of the School of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Agustin Rayo co-lead a selection committee tasked with generating the criteria for reviewing proposals that will then be selected for funding.

The initial round of successful proposals was announced to the MIT faculty in spring 2023. They represent schools and departments from across the Institute.

### **Training**

The ICEO created a formal position with a clear goal of coordinating training initiatives across the Institute. This position developed central guidelines that will better centralize the scope and outcomes of training and incorporate real-world, timely examples that will help contribute to a greater sense of community and belonging.

The training initiative, now known as Community Learning, established services and programs that are rooted in contemporary best practices. The initiative provided the MIT community with a variety of programming and events such as a fireside chat with leading scholars examining the efficacy of diversity programs and a workshop series on the art of inclusive dialogue and courageous conversations.

The training initiative led to consultations and training for more than a dozen DLCs. These consultations ranged from advising on the formulation of learning objectives to co-creating flipped classroom discussion experiences. Other workshops that were designed and facilitated were about topics such as mitigating bias in the admissions process, how to conduct more inclusive meetings, and understanding the fundamentals of power dynamics (as part of IDHR's preventing sexual harassment training).

Sustained Dialogue techniques and impartial facilitation practices informed plans for a fall 2023 launch of a multi-week inclusive facilitation workshop series and a monthly community dialogue series.

### **Campus Inclusive Restroom Study**

The ICEO and the Office of Campus Planning completed a study to outline an inclusive approach to MIT's 730 public, non-residential restrooms, which occupy more than 200,000 square feet of space across campus. The study engages stakeholders across the Institute, including diversity, equity, and inclusion staff, the All-Gender Restrooms Working Group, the Disability Employee Resource Group, Student Disability Services, and the Office of Religious, Spiritual and Ethical Life (ORSEL).

The results of the study include a campus restroom plan that considers the mix of men's, women's and all-gender multi-user restrooms across campus. The study also benchmarks peer institution precedents and best practices, defines a campus-wide restroom program, and prepares restroom design guidelines for minor retrofit, renovation and new construction.

### **MindHandHeart Activities**

#### **Innovation Fund Grant Program**

The MindHandHeart Community Innovation Fund seeks to leverage the creativity and problem-solving skills of MIT students, staff, and faculty to strengthen the fabric of the MIT community. The Fund supports a wide array of projects that increase awareness about mental health, build communities of support, promote life skills, foster resiliency, and advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial justice.

The fall 2022 cycle received 45 applications of which 14 were funded while the spring 2023 cycle received 26 applications of which 8 were funded. The projects range from a recycling lab, to a Veterans Day celebration, to a sexual assault prevention series, just to name a few.

## MIT Values Statement

The [MIT Values Statement](#) was released by the Institute in April 2022. In summer 2022 MindHandHeart implemented the first public installment of the statement through creating large banners and signage in Lobby 7 which were installed September 2022. These banners led to the development of the Values Style Guide which any department may access to promote the values within their DLC. MHH coordinated with key areas to ensure the Values statement is reflected on application pages, the Mind and Hand book, and about MIT pages. MHH began hosting monthly Values Workshops open to all MIT community members to discuss the values and how to implement them in your own role at MIT. MHH also coordinated with Human Resources on a workshop for managers on how to discuss the values with employees. In AY23 a committee of staff, faculty, and students was created to assist with further implementation through programming and engagement.

## Random Acts of Kindness Week

RAK is twofold as both a week-long program and a newly launched grant. RAK Week is a long-standing tradition that provides a chance each year for the community to express kindness and support for each other; it is a sustainable way to build community. Spring 2023 was the first RAK week since 2019 that was not under covid restrictions. MHH provided large scale events throughout the week such as an alpaca petting zoo, massages, and a 5k fun run. MHH encourages DLCs to host small events like grab and go snacks, meditation and mindfulness sessions, and giveaways. In Spring 2023 MHH wanted to extend kindness beyond just RAK Week and piloted the RAK Hack Mini grants. These are small grants of \$250 for small random acts of kindness to be completed within two weeks after receiving the funds to ensure small acts of kindness are happening continuously at MIT. The pilot was highly successful with twelve of the 20 grant requests funded and completed. Due to the success MHH has decided to make this a continuous grant for AY24.

## Pi Day

In spring 2023 MHH collaborated with the Office of the First Year to bring Pi Day back to campus in a post-covid era. MHH made this the feature event of Random Acts of Kindness week and promoted it to the undergraduate community as a celebration of the anniversary of their admission to MIT—the day they were told they belong at MIT. Despite the inclement weather outside of Lobby 13, in less than two hours senior administration handed out two thousand pies to undergraduates with celebratory activities such as pictures with Tim the Beaver, coloring pages, music, and sticker giveaways. Student reaction was highly positive with one student putting on social media that it was “...the best day of my life at MIT.”

## MITCoin

In fall of 2022 MHH launched MITCoin which was originally an Innovation Fund project proposed by a faculty member. MITCoin was an IOS and android application that enabled the community to send each other notes of encouragement and award “MITCoin” to the recipient. The launch included a marketing campaign with MITCoin giveaways, posters, and social media campaigns. At the end of the fall 2022 term those who received MITcoin were able to donate their MITcoin to the Community Service

Fund. While there was some participation in the use of MITcoin, MHH determined that the rate of return was not high enough to continue the project in spring of 2023 and thus disabled the application.

### **Leadership and Staff**

- Polina Vulf was hired as a program assistant for the ICEO in August 2022.
- Molly McInerney was hired as the inaugural assistant director of training for the ICEO in September 2022. (Her role was subsequently changed to be the assistant director of community learning.)
- Brandon Milardo was hired as assistant director for MindHandHeart in November 2022.
- John Dozier, MIT's second Institute and Community and Equity Officer, announced he was to step down to become president of Columbia College, a private liberal arts college in Columbia, South Carolina in April 2023.
- Dan Hastings SM '78, PhD '80, Cecil and Ida Green Education Professor of Aeronautics and Astronautics, was appointed interim ICEO and as interim associate provost for faculty advancement in July 2023.
- Maryanne Kirkbride, the inaugural director of MindHandHeart and Deputy ICEO, retired in June 2023.
- Tracie Jones-Barrett was appointed interim Deputy ICEO in June 2023. She served previously as the Assistant Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in MIT's School of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences.

**John Dozier**  
**Institute and Community and Equity Officer**