MIT School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences

Report to the President, Year Ended June 30, 2024, School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences

Intro

The School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (SHASS), the third-largest school at MIT (after Engineering and Science), employs a teaching faculty comparable in size to that of most liberal arts colleges and plays a number of important roles at MIT.

Among other functions, the school:

- Offers 20 undergraduate major programs and 30 undergraduate minor programs
- Engages undergraduate students and graduate students each year in Anthropology; Comparative Media Studies; Economics; Global Languages; History; Linguistics; Literature; Music; Philosophy; Political Science; Science, Technology, and Society (STS); Theater Arts; Women's and Gender Studies; and Writing
- Supports five doctoral programs: Economics, Linguistics, Philosophy, Political Science, and History, Anthropology, and Science, Technology, and Society (HASTS)
- Supports four master's programs: Data, Economics, and Design of Policy, the MIT Indigenous Language Initiative in MIT Linguistics, Political Science, and Science Writing.
- Provides subjects toward the undergraduate Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (HASS) requirement, an eight-class portion of the General Institute Requirement (GIR)
- Hosts more than 30 labs, centers, and programs, including the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), the Center for International Studies, and the Knight Science Journalism Program.
- Operates the MIT International Science and Technology Initiatives (MISTI), MIT's pioneering international education program, which matches students with internship, teaching, and research opportunities abroad.

Personnel

New faculty

SHASS welcomed 10 new faculty members:

- Isaiah Andrews PhD '14, professor in the Department of Economics.
- Joshua Bennett, professor in the MIT Literature Section and Distinguished Chair of the Humanities.

- Nathaniel Hendren PhD '12, professor in the Department of Economics.
- Crystal Lee PhD '22, assistant professor in computational media and design with a shared appointment in the MIT Schwarzman College of Computing, in the Institute for Data, Systems, and Society, and the MIT Comparative Media Studies/Writing Program.
- Eli Nelson, assistant professor in the Program on Science, Technology, and Society.
- Ashesh Rambachan, assistant professor in the Department of Economics.
- Nina Roussille, assistant professor in the Department of Economics.
- Jessica Ruffin, assistant professor in the Literature Section.
- Caitlin Talmadge PhD '11, associate professor the Department of Political Science.
- Miguel Zenón, assistant professor in the Music and Theater Arts Section.

Tenure

SHASS announced 11 members of its faculty were granted tenure:

- Isaiah Andrews PhD '14, professor in the Department of Economics.
- Joshua Bennett, professor in the MIT Literature Section and Distinguished Chair of the Humanities.
- Megan Black, associate professor in the MIT History Section.
- E.J. Green, associate professor in the Department of Linguistics and Philosophy and the Class of 1948 Career Development Chair.
- Nathaniel Hendren PhD '12, professor in the Department of Economics.
- Caley Horan, associate professor in the History Section.
- Robin Wolfe Scheffler, associate professor in the Program in Science, Technology, and Society.
- Frank Schilbach, associate professor in the Department of Economics.
- Caitlin Talmadge PhD '11, associate professor in the Department of Political Science.
- Leslie Tilley, associate professor in the Music and Theater Arts Section.

Leadership changes

SHASS announced several new leadership changes:

- Keeril Makan, Michael (1949) and Sonja Koerner Music Composition Professor, was named Associate Dean. Makan continued in his role as head of Music and Theater Arts during the 2023-24 academic year.
- Ford Professor of Economics Jonathan Gruber was named head of the Department of Economics
- Professor Malick Ghacham was named head of the History Section.
- Evan Lieberman, Total Professor of Political Science and Contemporary Africa, was named head of the Center for International Studies.

Honors and Awards

Undergraduate and Graduate students

2024 Burchard Scholars:

- Mustafa Al-Obaidi, junior, mechanical engineering
- Saul Balcarcel-Salazar, junior, physics
- Miguel Buitrago, sophomore, philosophy
- Julia Camacho, junior, urban studies and planning
- Kaelyn Dunnell, junior, literature
- Isabella Gandara, junior, biological engineering
- Renee Ge, junior, electrical engineering and computer science
- Graham Guite, sophomore, biological engineering
- Janka Hamori, junior, electrical engineering and computer science
- Vivian Hir, junior, electrical engineering and computer science
- Sashko Horokh, junior, mathematics
- Janvi Huria, junior, electrical engineering and computer science
- Emily Kang, junior, electrical engineering and computer science
- Kelly Kim, sophomore, literature
- Esther Kinyanjui, junior, electrical engineering and computer science
- Alice Le, junior, writing
- Rumi Lee, junior, electrical engineering and computer science
- Effaima Longe, junior, chemistry
- Tarang Lunawat, junior, electrical engineering and computer science
- Ariel McGee, sophomore, writing
- Leena Mehendale, sophomore, biological engineering
- Zev Moore, sophomore, management
- Franklin Nguyen, junior, electrical engineering and computer science
- Mishael Quraishi, junior, materials science and engineering
- Syd Robinson, junior, materials science and engineering
- James Rock, sophomore, political science
- Katie Spivakovsky, sophomore, biological engineering
- Mohamed Suufi, junior, electrical engineering and computer science
- Alex Tang, sophomore, biology
- Margaret Wang, junior, mathematics
- Ashley Williams, junior, electrical engineering and computer science
- Felicia Xiao, junior, physics
- Kaitlyn Yanna, junior, nuclear science and engineering
- Elizabeth Zhang, sophomore, electrical engineering and computer science

- Grace Zhang, junior, mathematics.

Envisioning the Future of Computing Prize

Robert Cunningham '23 was the inaugural winner of the Envisioning the Future of Computing Prize, offered jointly by the Social and Ethical Responsibilities of Computing (SERC), a cross-cutting initiative of the MIT Schwarzman College of Computing in collaboration with the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (SHASS).

2024 Fulbright Fellowships:

- Grace McMillan, a senior majoring in literature and mechanical engineering with a concentration in Russian language
- Ryan McTigue, a senior majoring in physics and mathematics, and a concentration in Spanish
- Keith Murray '22 graduated from MIT with a BS in computation and cognition and linguistics and philosophy
- Maaya Prasad '22 completed her undergraduate education at MIT with degrees in both electrical engineering and creative writing
- Olivia Rosenstein, a senior majoring in physics with a minor in French
- Vaibhavi Shah '21 earned a BS in biological engineering and in science, technology, and society at MIT
- Charvi Sharma, a senior studying computer science and molecular biology with a minor in theater arts.

2024 Marshall Scholars:

- Anushree Chaudhuri graduated in May 2024 with bachelor's degrees in urban studies and planning and economics and a master's in city planning
- Rupert Li is a concurrent senior and master's student at MIT. He graduated in May 2024 with a BS in mathematics, a BS in computer science, economics, and data science, and a minor in business analytics. He was also awarded an MEng in computer science, economics, and data science.

Faculty and staff

MIT Linguistics was ranked first in its subject area by 2023 QS World University Rankings; MIT Economics ranked second in its subject area.

Anthropology associate professor Bettina Stoetzer was named the 2024 recipient of the Levitan Prize in the Humanities for her project, "Unsettling Refuge: Disrupted Mobilities in Multispecies Worlds."

Two projects - the Global Mediations Lab led by Paul Roquet and the MIT Swahili Studies Initiative led by Per Urlaub - won inaugural Humanities Awards from SHASS. The pilot program was created to support humanities-focused, collaborative projects that can have a broad impact within SHASS or MIT, or have substantial impact on undergraduate education.

Associate Professor of Music Emily Richmond Pollock and Arthur and Ruth Sloan Professor of Political Science Andrea Campbell were named 2024 MacVicar Faculty Fellows.

Three SHASS instructors received Teaching with Digital Technology Awards: Economics professors Joshua Angrist and Nancy Rose, and CMS/W lecturer Michael Maune.

The following instructors were named 2024 Levitan Teaching Award recipients: Javier Barroso, lecturer, Global Languages; Sara Brown, professor, Theater Arts; Diana Henderson, professor, Literature; Chappell Lawson, professor, Political Science; Mariana San Martin, lecturer, Global Languages; Cheol Rin Park, lecturer, Global Languages; Charles Shadle, senior lecturer, Music.

Economics professors Nathaniel Hendren and Anna Mikusheva were elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Daron Acemoglu, Institute Professor and the Elizabeth and James Killian Professor of Economics, was the 2023 recipient of the WZB Berlin Social Science Center's A.SK Social Science Award.

MIT Music and Theater Arts Assistant Professor Miguel Zenon won a Grammy Award for Best Latin Jazz Album for his work on "El Arte Del Bolero Vol. 2." Zenon was also named a 2024 Doris Duke Artists Award Winner.

Irene Heim, professor emerita in MIT's Department of Linguistics and Philosophy, was named a co-recipient of the 2024 Rolf Schock Prize in Logic and Philosophy. Heim shares the award with Hans Kamp, a professor of formal logics and philosophy of language at the University of Stuttgart in Germany.

The following staff were named 2024 Infinite Mile Award recipients: Joseph Borkowski, Global Languages; Carolyn Carlson, Anthropology; Erin Graeber, J-PAL North America; Katherine Hoss, Political Science; Lauran Kerwin, CIS; Aprille Knox, J-PAL Global

New Initiatives and Programs

SHASS Programming Initiative Report

During the course of the 2023-24 year, a committee chaired by Associated Dean Keeril Makan was charged with exploring priorities for a humanities initiative in SHASS. After several months of research, surveying peer institutions, and gathering input from SHASS, the committee produced the SHASS Programming Initiative Report in May 2024.

The report included four short-term recommendations to the Dean:

- Create in an internal faculty fellows program
- Hire additional staff in the Dean's Office to support interdisciplinary programs
- Reassess funding categories for Dean's grants
- Create opportunities for the community to gather

There were additional longer-term recommendations made, as well:

- Create a proposal for an Institute-wide Humanities Center
- Assess space needs for SHASS
- Identify philanthropic and foundation support

Shaping the Future of Work

The MIT Shaping the Future of Work Initiative, co-directed by MIT professors Daron Acemoglu, David Autor, and Simon Johnson, celebrated its official launch in January. The new initiative's mission is to analyze the forces that are eroding job quality and labor market opportunities for non-college workers and identify innovative ways to move the economy onto a more equitable trajectory.

Global Diversity Lab

In June and July of 2023, the Global Diversity Lab (GDL) in the Department of Political Science hosted its first GDL Summer Research Program. Pathways@GDL is aimed at broadening the pipeline into U.S. political science PhD programs. Four current undergraduates from U.S. universities and two current master's students at African universities mixed research assistant work and their own independent research projects, professionalizing their presentation of research and exchanging information with each other and Department of Political Science faculty. We spoke with associate professors Noah Nathan and Ariel White, who coordinate the program.

Civil Discourse in the Classroom and Beyond

Civil Discourse in the Classroom and Beyond launched in the Fall of 2023. It includes a speaker series and curricular activities in MIT's Concourse program for first-year students. MIT philosophers Alex Byrne and Brad Skow from the Department of Linguistics and Philosophy lead the project, in close coordination with Anne McCants, professor of history and director of Concourse, and Linda Rabieh, a Concourse lecturer.

The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations provided a substantial grant to help fund the project. Promoting civil discourse on college campuses is an area of focus for AVDF — they sponsor related projects at many schools, including Duke University and Davidson College.

Economics predoctoral fellowship program

The MIT Department of Economics launched a new program that pairs faculty with predoctoral fellows. The new predoc program is made possible by an ongoing major fundraising initiative in the department. Once the program is fully launched, it will include up to 24 predocs working for economics faculty at MIT.

Global MIT At-Risk Fellows

The Global MIT At-Risk Fellows (GMAF) Program launched in the Fall of 2023. It is designed to enhance the educational and research experiences of Ukrainian university faculty and researchers by

introducing them to MIT campus methods and strategies in their areas of specialty. This pilot program focuses on Ukrainian scholars with current or recent affiliations at Ukrainian universities or the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. The applicants may currently be residing in Ukraine (with eligibility to leave the country) or be living outside the country since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Knight Science Journalism Program

The Knight Science Journalism (KSJ) Program at MIT announced a new fellowship program that will provide students from historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU) with training, mentorship, and early-career support to report on science, health, and environmental issues. The fellowship's inaugural cohort will consist of 10 highly accomplished journalism students representing Florida A&M University, Hampton University, Howard University, Morgan State University, and North Carolina A&T State University.

In addition, KSJ announced a new one-semester fellowship — the Fellowship for Advancing Science Journalism in Africa and the Middle East. The fellowship, developed through a generous gift from the global publishing company Springer Nature, was created in honor of the influential Egyptian science journalist Mohammed Yahia, who died last year at the age of 41.

Data, Economics, and Design of Policy master's program expands

MIT's Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) and Department of Economics announced an expansion of their jointly administered Master of Applied Science in Data, Economics, and Design of Policy (DEDP) program. This expansion adds a new public policy track to complement the existing international development track, opening up new avenues for student learning and research.

Designed to tackle poverty alleviation and other pressing policy challenges in the United States and other high-income countries, the curriculum of the new track spans a diverse set of issues, from domestic concerns like minimum wage and consumer welfare to global matters including trade, climate change, and immigration. Applications for the public policy track will open this fall, with the inaugural cohort set to arrive on MIT's campus in spring 2026.

Diversity

The MIT School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (SHASS) Diversity Predoctoral Fellowship program welcomed its 2023-24 class: Danah Alfailakawi, MIT Literature; Alessandra Jungs de Almeida, Program in Women's and Gender Studies; Amber Mackey, Department of Political Science; Somayeh Tohidi, MIT Philosophy; and Biyi Wen, MIT Comparative Media Studies/Writing.

Community engagement and events

The Dean's Office organized a new event in December 2023: Spring Ahead with SHASS. This was targeted to undergrads a way to give a preview of Spring 2024 subject offerings. Academic Administrator Chanh Phan coordinated with the UAAs to organize and facilitate the event.

In February 2024, the Dean's Office worked with UAAs to host a SHASS Trivia Night for students majoring in SHASS as a way to help build community.

In Fall 2023, the de Florez Fund for Humor hosted a performance by comedian Michelle Wolf.

In Spring 2024, the de Florez Fund for Humor hosted a performance by comedian Drew Lynch.

Development

In FY2023, new gifts and pledges to the School totaled $152,058,053.23.

Some highlights include: a $45M endowed gift from the Stanton Foundation to create the Center for Nuclear Security Policy in the Center for International Studies; an eight-figure expendable gift to support research in the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab, North America; several 7-figure gifts from individual donors in the Department of Economics, including two gifts to endow two faculty chairs; two seven-figure gifts from individual donors to help launch the MIT Human Insight Collaborative (MITHIC); and significant six-figure gifts to support programming in the Music and Theater Arts Section.

Statistics

Undergraduate Enrollment: 53

Graduate Enrollment: 302

Degrees Awarded:

- Bachelor's degrees: 20
- Master's degrees: 33
- Doctoral degrees: 54

Faculty

- Full professors: 120
- Associate professors with tenure: 40
- Associate professors without tenure: 10
- Assistant professors: 18

Agustín Rayo
Dean of the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences