



BEN KETTLE—THE TECH

MIT Schwarzman College of Computing Dean Daniel Huttenlocher and CSAIL Director Daniela Rus answer questions about computational ethics at the College of Computing community forum.

Questions answered at Feb. 12 College of Computing forum

*New college to focus on the social
and ethical duties of computing*

By Kristina Chen
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Over 100 MIT students, faculty, administrative staff, and researchers attended a Feb. 12 community forum on the organizational structure of the Stephen A. Schwarzman College of Computing.

Following updates from Daniel Huttenlocher PhD '88, dean of the college of computing, forum attendees asked questions to the college leadership team. The college leadership team is composed of Huttenlocher, David Kaiser, associate dean for social and ethical responsibilities of computing in the college, Julie Shah PhD '11, professor of aeronautics and astronautics, Asu Ozdaglar PhD '03, head of the EECS department, and Daniela Rus, director of CSAIL.

Huttenlocher said the college is “aimed at addressing the opportunities and challenges of the computing age.” He said computing has become “important in every discipline” and described the college’s role “in bringing multiple programs together ... which is not always easy in the academic environment where we tend to be departmentally organized.”

Huttenlocher said the three main focuses of the college are supporting growth in computing, facilitating computing collaboration across disciplines, and concentrating on social and ethical responsibilities of computing.

The College of Computing includes seven current units at the Institute: the EECS department, the

College, Page 2

MIT to support nonprofits that serve sexual abuse survivors

MIT will donate to BARCC, EVA Center, My Life My Choice, and Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts

By Ananya Gurumurthy

MIT will donate \$850,000, the amount MIT received from Jeffrey Epstein between 2002 and 2017, to four nonprofits supporting survivors of sexual abuse. MIT will donate to the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center (BARCC), the EVA Center, My Life My Choice, and the Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts.

The nonprofits were selected by the Committee on Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response.

Committee chair Leslie Kolodziejski, professor of electrical engineering, wrote in an email to *The Tech* that the organizations were chosen because they “directly impact victims of Epstein or sexual abuse survivors.” The organizations also address the original intent of MIT’s donation “to support victims

of sexual assault by offering support services and addressing sex trafficking,” Kolodziejski wrote.

Kolodziejski wrote that the committee considered both well-established organizations and “smaller burgeoning organizations” as long as the organization “considers both prevention and response.”

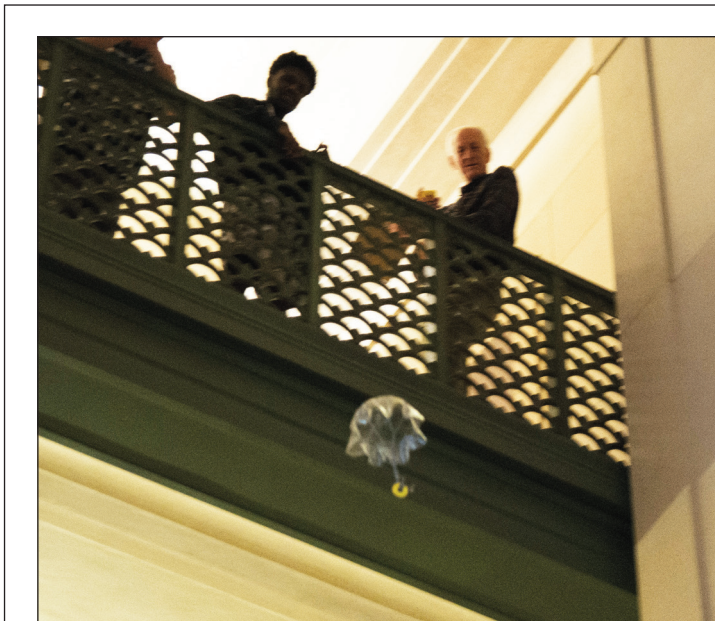
Gina Scaramella, BARCC executive director, wrote in an email to *The Tech* that BARCC’s mission is to “end sexual violence through healing and social change,” “provide survivors of sexual assault, harassment, and abuse with the support they need and deserve to heal,” and “advocate for systems change to prevent sexual violence.”

Kolodziejski wrote that the committee believes MIT’s \$850,000 donation will have “significant impact” to support the organizations’ “joint

mission to affect sex trafficking and to support victims and survivors of sexual assault.” The committee considers the donation “a large sum of money and strives to make wise decisions on the disbursement of the funds,” Kolodziejski wrote.

Scaramella wrote that although the donation “does not right Epstein’s crimes or change MIT’s past actions in relation to Epstein,” it will “have an impact in providing vital support to survivors.” In addition, that the donation comes “at the recommendation of MIT community members invested in addressing sexual violence is also very meaningful to us,” Scaramella wrote.

Kolodziejski wrote that the nonprofits “are local to MIT and work collaboratively, and in partnership with each other, to serve their communities.”



MAXWELL YUN—THE TECH

Students drop parachutes from Lobby 7 for 16.00 (Introduction to Aerospace Engineering and Design).

IN SHORT

UROP Direct Funding applications are due today.

The last day to add half-term subjects for the first half of the semester is this Friday.

2022 Ring Premiere is 7 p.m. Friday in Kresge Auditorium.

Valentine's Day is this Friday.

No class on Monday due to Presidents' Day, an Institute holiday. Classes next Tuesday will follow a Monday schedule.

Interested in joining *The Tech*? Stop by for dinner Sunday at 6 p.m. or email join@tech.mit.edu.

Send news and tips to news@tech.mit.edu.

MIT Physics suspends Seth Lloyd

Lloyd will no longer supervise new graduate students

By Richter Jordaan

Professor Peter Fisher, physics department head, has suspended mechanical engineering professor Seth Lloyd’s secondary appointment in physics.

The physics department is “working with MechE... to review the [Goodwin Procter] report and Prof. Lloyd’s actions and reach a permanent resolution,” Fisher wrote in an email to the physics community Feb. 4.

Fisher wrote that Lloyd “will no longer be able to supervise new graduate students, attend Departmental events or serve on Depart-

mental committees.” However, Lloyd will “continue to supervise students currently assigned to him [until] MechE, Physics and MIT reach a decision about his final state.”

Professor Evelyn Wang '00, mechanical engineering department head, wrote in an email to *The Tech* that “at President Reif’s request, I am working closely with departmental, School of Engineering, and Institute leadership to consider appropriate action regarding Professor Lloyd.”

“Having Seth suspended will mean that our quantum computing effort will shift to other faculty. The Department will work with QIS [Quantum Information Science]

faculty to help with this,” Fisher wrote.

President L. Rafael Reif placed Lloyd on administrative leave Jan. 10. Goodwin Procter’s report on MIT’s relationship with Jeffrey Epstein wrote that Lloyd “purposefully failed to inform MIT” that Epstein was the source of two \$60,000 donations and “knowingly facilitated Epstein’s plan to circumvent any possible MIT vetting process.”

In a Medium post Jan. 16, Lloyd denied breaking MIT protocol in accepting Epstein’s donations, writing that the “accusation that [he] hid Epstein’s identity from MIT” is “completely false.”

Simmons Heads of House reminisce

Heads of House to depart in July

By Evan Denmark

Simmons Heads of House John Essigmann PhD '76 and Ellen Essigmann PhD '80, and Associate Head of House Steven Hall ScD '85 will leave Simmons Hall at the end of the academic year. Hall will become the Head of House at the New Vassar dorm to be opened Fall 2020.

The Tech sat down with the Essigmanns and Hall to discuss the end of their time “in the sponge,”

as residents affectionately call Simmons.

This interview has been lightly edited for length and clarity.

The Tech: What is the beginning of your Simmons story?

John Essigmann: It’s kind of a funny story. Ellen and I were the heads of house in New House for seven years. We were thinking about moving on, and as we watched this building go up, we

Simmons, Page 2

THE ASSISTANT

Less glamour, more gloom. **ARTS, p. 8**

MIT DEMOCRATS REBUTTAL

Why you shouldn’t listen to endorsements. **OPINION, p. 4**

DATING IS HARD

Especially at the Institute. **OPINION, p. 4**



SONIC

The hedgehog in all his live action glory. **ARTS, p. 7**

BIRDS OF PREY

Entertaining but lacking in development. **ARTS, p. 7**

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WEATHER

And you thought spring was here

By Sheila Baber
STAFF METEOROLOGIST

Happy second week of the semester, everyone! Just as some of us were getting ready for the spring (and I noticed some flower bushes in bloom near Building 66), it turns out that Boston winter is not ready to let us go quite yet! Put those coats and mittens back on, lest you catch a cold. Or worse.

Thankfully, there will be some respite from the rain and fog this weekend. Friday is looking mostly sunny, Saturday is looking sunny, and Sunday is also looking pretty sunny. But this influx of high pres-

sure is accompanied by very cold temperatures—Friday is expected to get down to 7°F (-13.9 °C)!

So why is it so cold in Boston during winter? Why, it is because the Earth’s pole is tilted! The Earth is actually closer to the Sun during Northern hemisphere winters, and farther during Northern hemisphere summers. But the angle (and so the flux) of incident sunlight is on the Northern hemisphere is lower due to the orientation of the tilt with respect to the sun. Now we are in the process of getting farther away from the sun, with the pole tilting towards the sun. Spring is coming someday!

Forgive me, I’m Course 12.

Extended Forecast

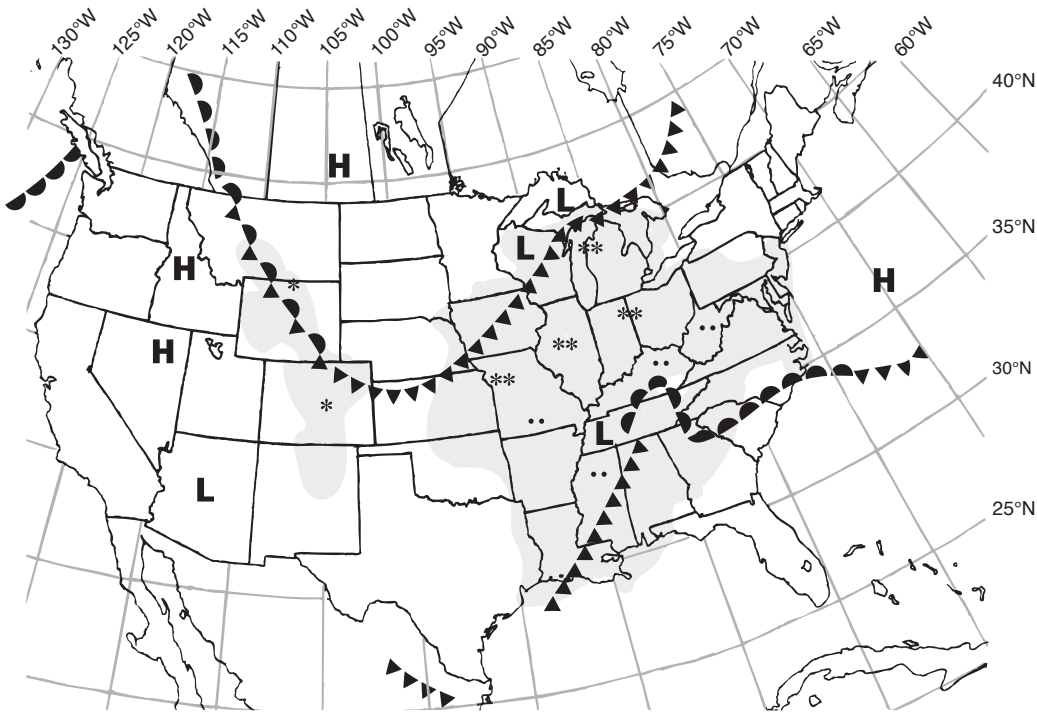
Today: Rain and sleet. High around 39 °F (3.9 °C). East wind to become northwest, around 7 mph.

Tonight: Rain will clear, mostly cloudy. Northwest winds 8 - 11 mph.

Friday: Mostly sunny, with high near 29 F (-1.7 °C) and low around 7 °F (-13.9 °C). Northwest winds 10 - 14 mph.

Saturday: Sunny, with high near 30 °F (-1.1 °C) and low around 27 °F (-2.8 °C). Northwest winds 7 - 9 mph becoming southwest in the afternoon.

Sunday: Partly sunny with high near 44 °F (6.7 °C) and low around 29 °F (-1.7 °C). Southwest and west winds with gusts as high as 22 mph.



Situation for Noon Eastern Time, Thursday, February 13, 2020

Weather Systems	Weather Fronts	Precipitation Symbols		Other Symbols
H High Pressure	--- Trough	Snow	Rain	☁ Fog
L Low Pressure	— Warm Front	Showers		⚡ Thunderstorm
S Hurricane	▲ Cold Front	Light		∞ Haze
	▲ Stationary Front	Moderate		Compiled by MIT Meteorology Staff and The Tech
		Heavy		

Huttenlocher intends for computing to be incorporated into other majors

College, from Page 1

Operations Research Center, the Institute for Data, Systems, and Society, the Center for Computational Science and Engineering, CSAIL, the Laboratory for Information and Decision Systems, and Quest for Intelligence.

In addition to these existing units, the college will introduce three new “cross-cutting” areas: the Social and Ethical Responsibilities of Computing, the Common Ground, and the Center for Advanced Studies of Computing.

Huttenlocher said that “any students and faculty in these existing units or part of the new things that we’re building are part of the college.”

Huttenlocher described the Common Ground of the College of Computing as an educational initiative of “multi-departmental teaching groups to facilitate offering of computing classes and coordination of computing-related curricula across academic units at MIT.” The Common Ground’s objectives are to develop integrated computing classes, to enable co-teaching, and to de-

sign an embedded curriculum that infuses ethical issues in computing classes and computation in other existing classes.

Huttenlocher expressed an intention to incorporate computing into other majors, so that students “don’t even have to be in a blended major with Course 6 to learn the parts of computing [they] want to learn and understand the paths through curriculum at MIT to get [them] there.”

During the forum, Huttenlocher also addressed the social and ethical responsibilities of computing,

including teaching, research, and engagement initiatives. Huttenlocher said that “the important thing” about conversations regarding these responsibilities is having “multiple perspectives and developing the language and the research and the results to have informed perspectives,” Huttenlocher said.

Huttenlocher said that from an academic standpoint, the college leadership team wants “to make sure” that the college is “actively integrating social, ethical, and policy considerations in [the] teaching, research and implementation of

computing.” He added that “some course materials for embedding social ethical responsibilities in classes” will be prepared “pretty quickly.”

Huttenlocher also presented plans for the College of Computing’s administrative headquarters in Building 45, which is intended to house 50 faculty research groups, a mix of lab space types, two classrooms, open and closed community and meeting spaces, a street-level café, and potential event space. The construction of the headquarters is expected to be completed in 2023.

John Essigmann: Simmons architecture allows fluid movement of students

Simmons, from Page 1

had no idea that we would be living here. Because the construction was way over budget, there was some stress within MIT Administration about the new dorm, so they wanted experienced heads of house to come in who knew about student programming.

In our first year, Simmons wasn’t completed. We had no MPR [multi-purpose room]. The reception hall served as the place where we had house government meetings. The dining hall wasn’t open, so they brought in food from Next House and set it up in the glass arcade. On nice days, we’d have dinner on the terrace. You’d say it was like we were all going camping and everybody had a job in helping make this campsite operational.

When we were asked to move over here, we thought it would just be for a couple of years but, you know, Simmons is really a wonderful place.

TT: Why did you decide to stay at Simmons?

J. Essigmann: There are a couple of reasons. One, Ellen and I have always liked doing challenging projects together.

The second reason is something a little bit more philosophical, something that Larry Bacow and Bob Silby [former MIT faculty] called the educational triad. It is this idea that when you’re a professor at MIT, you have three responsibilities. One is the class-

room, one is research, and one is your community. And if all of those things come together very well, then it is wonderful. And I believe the blueprint for Simmons was the educational triad.

In the original plan for Simmons, there was the idea of residential scholars, older adults who represent the academic mission, in conjunction with community. And I think it worked very well so that’s why we stayed and why we tried to keep it going.

TT: Steve, what is your story to Simmons?

Steve Hall: It must have been 2007 when an email went out to the faculty looking for new Heads of House. I actually interviewed at East Campus, but did not get selected so I was encouraged to apply to Simmons. I was selected and it has been great since then.

TT: You’ve been here for 17 years. How would you describe the culture of Simmons when it started and how has it evolved?

J. Essigmann: Personally, I think it has something to do with the architecture which allows this fluid movement of students through the building that prevents Balkanization. Before, we were in New House, which is at the other end of the dipole. It is a highly Balkanized community, which is wonderful. But here, the whole floor functions as a whole.

And it became a place where you could do experiments with the space. The lounge system is an ex-

periment created by the founder’s group. The form and the function of the architecture kind of go together. We have physical lounges that you could occupy as a social lounge and make your own. Over the years, there have probably been about three dozen formal lounges. Simmons was an incubator and students were driving the cultural process.

Only a small number of dorm events were our ideas. Most have been student-driven. Some students even invented a silly game called Scootah Hockey.

Ellen Essigmann: We’ve seen both the structure of small separate communities, like at New House, and also larger communities at Simmons. It works so well over at New House. We’ve also seen how wonderful it is at Simmons where people don’t stay on one floor. They may move around year to year, but the architecture doesn’t stop them from returning to previous areas of the building. For example, many students might go back to the study break that their freshman GRA is hosting. This leads to a wonderful mix of people because you may have your home section or lounge, but also plenty of flexibility to move and meet new people.

And this created a community that just grew organically, very grassroots. Looking back, there has just always been a critical mass of students who were really enthusiastic about doing things and creating things at Simmons.

TT: What were some of those pivot moments that you thought changed the culture of Simmons?

Hall: A real dining program has made a big difference. Dining used to be à la carte and there were only five meals per week. For instance, you could go down to dining on a weeknight and there might be 20 people. It really was a subcritical mass of people to build a community.

J. Essigmann: Yeah, mandatory dining really had a great effect. It builds a community, especially for first-years, who are all taking the same GIRs. Students now have the opportunity to study together, dine together, and socialize together, which really created a gluing experience.

TT: Steve, as you become the Head of House for the New Vassar dorm, have you thought about how you want to create those social gluing structures?

Hall: Yeah, there is a founder’s group and we are certainly thinking about those structures. The group has thought hard about values, and both students and staff want it to be a fun, welcoming, and inclusive place. I certainly hope that a lot of values from Simmons will end up in the new dorm.

TT: What does the future hold for each of you?

J. Essigmann: The short answer is that we will move out in July. The long answer is that after we leave, we both have a lot of things that we want to write down, not just about our professional lives, but also

what we’ve learned about the formulas for success in student programming here. Like in science, we do an experiment, we tabulate the data, and we write a paper.

TT: When you write those things down, what are some of the top things that come to mind?

J. Essigmann: We do host ten study breaks per semester, one for each GRA. I think that, from my perspective, study breaks create a time when students can be guaranteed they are going to see us. So it’s not just about food; it’s about face time with each other.

Another thing we do is host special events, like a Valentine’s Day dinner, Thanksgiving dinner, and the Senior Send Off, which have become wonderful community building events that students really look forward to.

E. Essigmann: I think the Simmons Hall government is really quite unique on campus because it is New England town hall meeting-style rather than a representative style. It allows everyone to participate, which contributes to that grassroots style of organization. Not to say these are things that we invented because we didn’t, but they are an important part of what makes Simmons work.

TT: How many study break smoothies have you made?

J. Essigmann: I think that’s why they invented logarithms.

Both John Essigmann and Steven Hall will remain in their faculty positions after their transition out of Simmons.

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Solution to Dating
from page 11

7	3	2	8	6	4	5	9	1
1	9	4	5	2	3	8	6	7
8	6	5	7	1	9	3	4	2
6	7	9	1	3	5	2	8	4
2	1	8	6	4	7	9	3	5
4	5	3	9	8	2	1	7	6
3	4	1	2	7	8	6	5	9
5	8	6	4	9	1	7	2	3
9	2	7	3	5	6	4	1	8

Solution to Discounted
from page 11

5	2	6	4	3	1
4	1	5	3	2	6
2	5	3	1	6	4
1	4	2	6	5	3
3	6	4	2	1	5
6	3	1	5	4	2

Solution to See 36
from page 11

DCC	PITROW	ABCD
AHA	SAHARA	CRAN
MILLIMETER		HORA
ALLI	SSE	TOWS
GLUON	IDLE	MONEY
ESPNEWS	UPI	BAD
CHE	ALI	OATS
FRUIT	FILLINGS	
SLAB	RIM	ODE
ION	DAS	AGITATO
DOGFIGHTS	GIVEN	
RELY	WIG	MEAN
CATO	PIED	ATERRE
AGOG	BREEZE	SEX
PEPS	JETSET	EDT

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**NO EXPERIENCE
NECESSARY!**



MOVIE REVIEW

***Birds of Prey* is nothing to squawk at**

DC's newest showcase of Harley Quinn brings together a new cast of entertaining but mostly underdeveloped heroines

★★★★★

Birds of Prey: And the Fantabulous Emancipation of One Harley Quinn

Directed by Cathy Yan

**Screenplay by Christina
Hodson**

**Starring Margot Robbie,
Rosie Perez, Ewan
McGregor**

Rated R, Now Playing

By Rogers Epstein
STAFF WRITER

Ever since *Suicide Squad* came out and flopped in theaters, one of its few memorable takeaways was Margot Robbie's performance as Harley Quinn. From the prevalence of Harley Quinn Halloween costumes that year, it was clear that she was bound to return to the screen. Knowing this at the time, Robbie was able to spearhead *Birds of Prey* in the hope that this new movie would stay true to the character. Working with director Cathy Yan, she and other lead characters were much more consistent and interesting than those in *Suicide Squad*.

In fact, a much better movie to compare to *Birds of Prey* is *Deadpool*. Both are

superhero films where the titular character provides some heavy narration, and the first halves of both movies utilize a good amount of nonlinear storytelling in order to provide exposition and set up character motivations. This bouncing back and forth is honestly a bit distracting. Additionally, both movies are R-rated and use that freedom wisely. Harley is definitely a character that makes more sense when dropping F-bombs and inhaling the occasional drug. Violence is also heightened, so if you can't watch a pair of legs get broken here and there, this might not be the movie for you.

The movie begins with Harley dealing with her breakup with the Joker and attempting to start finding her own place within Gotham. While partying, she meets Dinah Lance (Jurnee Smollett-Bell), aka “Black Canary,” and Roman Sionis (Ewan McGregor), aka “Black Mask,” our main bad guy. At first, Harley mostly stumbles her way around the plot. It reminded me a lot of Jack Sparrow in the most recent *Pirates of the Caribbean* films, where he has been turned into a caricature who only progresses through the story through others’ decisions and his own dumb luck. It’s a little disappointing to see Harley portrayed similarly in the beginning, taking a while before she makes a decision that impacts the plot.

Roman starts off the movie as an engaging villain – his opening quintessential “I’m a villain” scene (you’ll know it when you see it) is strikingly brutal but also shows his instability. Despite McGregor’s overacting the character as an unredeemable prick throughout the movie, Roman also provides some of the funniest moments of the film. Another engaging character is Dinah, who starts out as a singer in Roman’s club. Her arc throughout the

movie is probably the most interesting of any character's. She is presented with many opportunities to try to do the right thing, and while she is a good person from the start, it is enjoyable to watch her learn to act on her morals when she could easily turn a blind eye.

As a film that introduces a decent-sized ensemble of new female fighters, it's inevitable that many will feel one-dimensional. Yet many still get at least a splash of depth. For example, Huntress (Mary Elizabeth Winstead) mostly serves as an assassin but gets an unexpected dash of personality that plays surprisingly well. Pickpocket Cassandra Cain (Ella Jay Basco) falls short in providing any individual charm, but her consistency and connections with other characters play well into the story. Gotham policewoman Renee Montoya (Rosie Perez) comes across as a stereotypical '80s detective (which they acknowledge in the film). However, her predictable storyline of trusting her gut against the will of her superior still gels well with other characters.

I also enjoyed most of the action sequences, which were well shot and choreographed. Some standouts include the colorful “terrible crime” that Harley reports, and the fun set pieces in the final act showdown between the “Birds of Prey” and Sionis’ henchmen. There were probably a few too many fight scenes, though, as many characters were given perhaps one too many opportunities to show off their skills. While the movie was a modest 109 minutes, I still feel some of the time could’ve been better spent, say, exploring Harley’s relationship with her pet hyena.

While there is certainly much to enjoy about the movie, I would have desired more substance from it. Especially with respect to the villains, it's hard to get behind most characters. Roman Sionis is fairly unsophisticated in motivation. With the exception of Dinah Lance, it's hard to point to much development and characterization of the lead roles, given that *Birds of Prey* is so plot-driven. That said, who am I to go into a Harley Quinn movie hoping for anything but a fun action flick?



COURTESY OF WARNER BROS.

Margot Robbie returns as Harley Quinn in *Birds of Prey*.

MOVIE REVIEW

Gotta go see *Sonic the Hedgehog*

Dynamic characters balance out structural flaws for a fun, fast-paced film

By Kristina Chen
EDITOR IN CHIEF

After fleeing his home planet to protect his powers from exploitation, Sonic (Ben Schwartz), an anthropomorphic blue hedgehog who runs faster than sound, finds himself alone on Earth. Lying low in the small town of Green Hills to avoid detection, Sonic finds himself lonely and restless, spending his days watching from a distance but never interacting with the humans of the town. It isn't until Sonic accidentally sets off a power outage spanning the entire Pacific Northwest that his routine begins to change. Pursued by the unhinged scientific genius Dr. Robotnik (Jim Carrey), Sonic reveals himself to and seeks help from Tom Wachowski (James Marsden), a police officer hoping to transfer to the San Francisco Police Department.

Although the film's initial trailer, released April 2019, faced criticism for its unsettling design of Sonic — delaying the film's release from November 2019 to February 2020 as production redesigned the

character — the time taken to alter the design proved worthwhile. The computer-generated Sonic fits almost seamlessly in his more realistic environment and expresses his feelings of enthusiasm, frustration, and anger through convincing and life-like facial quirks. Sonic's quality of movement, especially his speed, is consistently dynamic and charming to watch, and the audience is treated with several engaging action sequences that showcase Sonic's power in various ways. I liked that each action scene was distinct and gave viewers an opportunity to see different facets of Sonic's abilities and how they interact with their surroundings and opposing forces.

Sonic is not only well drawn but also well written. In every scene that he appears, Sonic draws attention with his high energy level and compelling character arc. Introduced as an outsider who is only able to pretend to be friends with other living things, Sonic immediately gains the sympathy of the audience. Though some might find his ceaseless excitement and inability to keep quiet irritating, Sonic's flaws and

the mistakes he makes can be explained by his experiences with isolation, which have made him overeager to have friends and to enjoy the world while he can. These flaws serve to make Sonic a more accessible character and allow viewers to see beyond his otherworldly blue fur and super-speed.

Similarly, the primary antagonist, Dr. Robotnik, constantly catches the audience's eye but in a very different way. Jim Carrey's rendition of Robotnik is neurotic and perfectly overdone. The evil lengths that Robotnik goes to in order to get what he wants and his thoughtless treatment of those around him inspire instant dislike, yet every appearance of Robotnik keeps viewers entertained, unable to predict what strange thing he might choose to say or immoderate action he will choose to take. His intense lack of conscience combined with his dramatic mannerisms inflate his villainous presence and make him a worthy counterpart to the naive and earnest Sonic.

Unfortunately, the film disappoints when it comes to characters other than its protagonist and antagonist. Sonic's partner Tom and most other humans are flat and one-dimensional, used as devices for Sonic's development rather than as characters that can stand on their own. Moreover, the writing in most scenes involving these secondary human characters, aside from the occasional dad joke, is bland and not quite the right tone for movie characters. While some scripts earn criticism for cringey and unrealistic writing, this film was on the opposite end of the spectrum, with some conversations being so mundane and unmemorable that I questioned their value to the film.

In addition to underdeveloped characters, the film falters due to an underdeveloped plot. As I watched the film, I felt that I could label its components as if filling in a junior high story graph, identifying the beginning exposition and rising action with a couple climaxes somewhere in the middle and ending with a conclusive resolution.

★★★★★

Sonic the Hedgehog

Directed by Jeff Fowler

**Screenplay by Pat Casey,
Josh Miller**

**Starring Ben Schwartz,
Jim Carrey, James
Marsden**

Rated PG, Playing Feb. 14



COURTESY OF PARAMOUNT PICTURES AND SEGA OF AMERICA

Ben Schwartz voices Sonic in *Sonic the Hedgehog*.

Director Kitty Green takes us behind the scenes of her film *The Assistant*

The Assistant

Directed by Kitty Green

Screenplay by Kitty Green

**Starring Julia Garner,
Matthew Macfadyen,
Noah Robbins, Kristine
Froseth, Makenzie Leigh**

Rated R, Now Playing

EDITORS

Jane (Julia Garner) is a new assistant at an unnamed film production company. Fresh out of school and immediately landing a job working for (who is assumed to be) a major figure in the film industry would be a dream come true for anyone looking to make it in Hollywood. However, Jane's initial optimism is broken down piecemeal as she is met with the harsh reality of working in such an environment.

In a society where the abhorrent actions and intentional ignorance of Hollywood's elite have been unraveled, *The Assistant* acts as a period piece, set in a time before the Weinstein scandals and #MeToo movement. It harkens back to the time when people blindly worked for moguls like Weinstein, obeying every order out of fear or ambition (or both).

Director Kitty Green sat down for a college roundtable interview to shed some insight onto the film and the making of it. Because she comes from a documentary background, it might have made sense for Green to have made a documentary on the topic. Instead, she chose to make a film out of it.

"If it were a documentary, it would've felt like a reel of women complaining. [With film], you can really hone in on the gestures, the microaggressions," said Green.

The use of gestures and attention to detail is masterful. Whether Jane is picking up a stray earring from her boss's floor or eating a solitary bowl of froot loops, her every move feels strained. Garner adeptly conveys a sense of detached pain; it feels as though Jane wants nothing more than to leave but must soldier on. Every insult Jane suffers, every unsettling situation she witnesses, every small mess she must clean up, is so densely layered that by the end of the film, its weight feels almost suffocating.

Green emphasizes that *The Assistant* is the narrative of a woman. The boss is never depicted on screen, which was entirely intentional. Green wanted to move away from the overwhelming number of depictions of the “bad men.”

"The idea [is] that if we get rid of Harvey Weinstein, we fix everything. It's a bigger problem than that. In order to address [it] we need to look at not just how to stop assault, but how to get women into more positions of power," Green said.

The executives in the film are nameless and faceless. They could be any men, and Jane herself could be any woman. This was a key decision on Green's part: "[I] didn't make anything in it too personal so anyone could connect with [Jane]," she said. And she succeeded. Women from all walks of industry (a yacht company, cosmetics, etc.) had come up to her to express the relatability of the movie.

Having already been researching the topic of consent and power structures on college campuses, after the Weinstein scandal broke in 2017, Green decided to shift her subject onto the film industry, interviewing many women who had experienced the life Jane led in the film.

From former employees of the bankrupt Weinstein company and Miramax employees whose NDAs were over to current employees at major studios, Green was able to start piecing together the struggles of being a woman in the business. She heard stories of how strangely personal tasks would be sandwiched between mundane office work — the assistant might pick an earring off the floor, for instance.

The pacing of the film is unique in that the audience is made to go through every step of Jane's day with her. From the depressing cereal in the morning to each phone call and photocopy, there is no montage of the more mundane tasks to skip to the suspicious ear-ringing pickup.

Green spared no details — she “didn’t want to let people off the hook.” She wants you to feel as uncomfortable as Jane feels in the scenes. And in a way, it makes it feel more real than it already is. It is like you’re literally going through the day with the character, forcing you to take some responsibility as well.

Green's vision is successful. The camera rarely leaves Jane, and we are entirely focused on her every move. As she hungrily reads a screenplay, her dreams become ours. As she rushes to send an apologetic email, her panic becomes ours as well. The film feels like a slow-motion explosion; the tension is unbearably painful, and yet it is impossible to look away.

Another unique aspect to the film is the eerie silence, illustrating the “culture of silence” that had been adopted. With the only sounds coming from office work, like keyboard clicking and paper shuffling, the conscious lack of music makes it easier for the audience to step into Jane’s shoes. Between the drone of office lights and the metallic thud of cabinets closing, conversations are the only respite the audience has from the silence that seems to hang heavy over the office.

With such a short script and limited dialogue, the film more or less relies on Garner's performance, which is the highlight of the film. When casting, Green wanted someone who would be "infinitely watchable" since the audience would just be watching Jane go through her daily tasks for most of the movie.

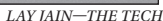
In addition to Garner, Kristine Froseth stands out as Sienna, a bright-eyed young woman from Idaho the company suddenly hires. Froseth's sweet delivery of the line, "Do I need a lawyer or something?" as she rifles through stacks of papers, stung sharply. We see this scene through Jane's eyes, and as Garner hesitates, we feel her unease.

As Green puts it, Garner is “infinitely watchable”; each expression, each action is delivered with the most thoughtful of processes. Her Jane feels deeply familiar — someone we know, someone we care about, someone we could become.

Unafraid to criticize the very business it comes from, *The Assistant* is intelligent in its vision and execution. It is certainly not a light-hearted movie, but rather an eye-opening experience.



Julia Garner stars in *The Assistant* as Jane, a new assistant at a film production company.



The Media Lab's *Off the Charts* art installation explores life experience as a deaf person.

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Global Education Office closed, study abroad to be managed by MISTI

The Global Education Office (GEO) closed Jan. 31. Study abroad programs and services will now be managed by MISTI, according to an email from the Global Education Team to students interested in studying abroad.

The team wrote that students “will be able to receive the same level of support, assistance, and care as before, despite the elimination of the Global Education Office and positions.”

Office of the Vice Chancellor

(OVC) Senior Advisor for Communications Michael Rutter wrote in an email to *The Tech* that the plan to merge study abroad into MISTI has been in development for two years. Rutter wrote that the GEO “was established over a decade ago when MIT had a very active study abroad program with a focus on the Cambridge-MIT exchange program, which no longer exists.”

Rutter wrote that the merging of study abroad programs into the

MISTI office is expected to result in “no significant changes” on the program application process or students currently studying abroad.

“A team re-evaluated MIT’s international programs and decided that integrating the GEO and MISTI offices would better serve the needs of current and future students,” Rutter wrote.

Students interested in studying abroad will now work with one of MISTI’s 17 program man-

agers. “Bringing a wider range of global programs under one office will also help students access more comprehensive information and explore opportunities,” Rutter wrote.

The OVC is now working with former GEO staff to “help them find other positions at MIT or elsewhere,” Rutter wrote.

—Cami Mejia

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Dating the 'Tute

Solution, page 3

	3		8				9	
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Discounted Chocolate

Solution, page 3

60x				36x		1
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15+						5
	2-			40x		

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column and row contains exactly one of each of the numbers 1–6. Follow the mathematical operations for each box.

See 36 Across

Solution, page 3

ACROSS

- 1 Member of the 700 Club?
- 4 Racetrack service area
- 10 Four starters
- 14 Expression of discovery
- 15 Word from the Arabic for “desert”
- 16 Juice name prefix
- 17 Ruler measure
- 19 Dance done to klezmer music
- 20 “. . . for __ know”
- 21 GPS heading
- 22 Hauls away
- 23 Quark-binding particle
- 25 It’s not earning interest
- 29 Sports “encore” network
- 31 Early Cronkite employer
- 32 Stale, say
- 33 Friend of Fidel
- 34 Common Muslim name
- 35 Food that may be rolled
- 36 Title of the puzzle
- 40 Hunk of marble
- 41 Wire __ glasses

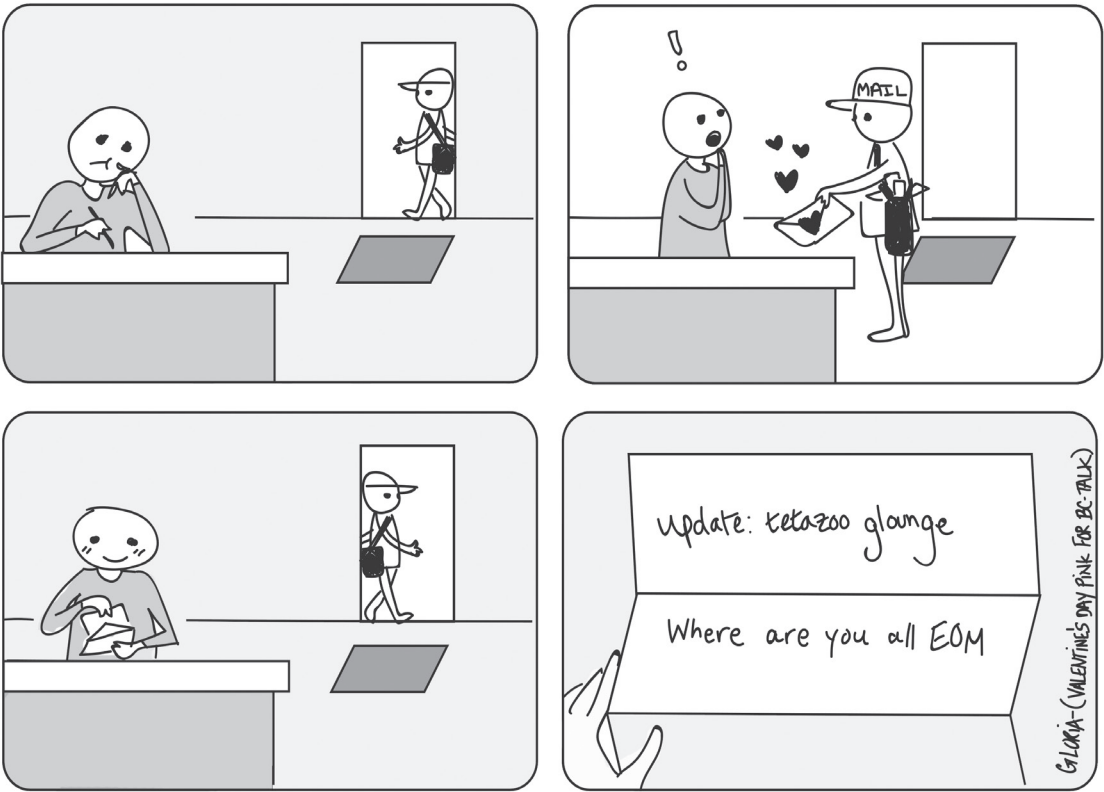
- 42 Lines of admiration
 - 43 Result of electron loss
 - 44 Law and Order VIPs
 - 45 Hurried tempo
 - 49 Aerial battles
 - 52 Donated
 - 53 Bank (on)
 - 54 Halloween costume accessory
 - 56 Ornery
 - 57 Julius Caesar adversary
 - 58 City center second home
 - 61 Showing great enthusiasm
 - 62 Nothing-to-it task
 - 63 Chromosome determinant
 - 64 Perks (up)
 - 65 Latter-day nomads
 - 66 It ends for RI in mid-fall
- ### DOWN
- 1 Cost, so to speak
 - 2 Calms down
 - 3 Evoke
 - 4 Inflation stat.
 - 5 Purina alternative

- 6 Proposition to be proven
- 7 Appraised
- 8 Beryllium bearer
- 9 49 Across setting
- 10 Explosive exclamation
- 11 It might have lunch
- 12 Places for traveling toddlers
- 13 Chain letters
- 18 Den member
- 22 “That’s enough!” text message
- 24 Dr Pepper retro brand
- 26 Slow time
- 27 Dramatic postscript
- 28 Upholsterer’s amt.
- 30 Weak-willed one
- 34 Aspiration
- 35 Not to be repeated
- 36 Building’s square feet
- 37 Kitchen cooker
- 38 Londoner’s fast food
- 39 Old-style “Got it, dude”
- 40 Science Kid of TV
- 44 Cable channel for

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61					62							63		
64					65								66	

- renovators
- 45 Dramatic digressions
- 46 Disinclined
- 47 Got emotional, with “up”
- 48 Right after this program
- 50 Publicizes or criticizes
- 51 Birds do it
- 55 Steady look
- 57 Tube top
- 58 It might be lunch
- 59 Angry feeling
- 60 Vietnamese New Year

Valentine’s Day



MIT players put up a good fight scoring in both second and third periods of the game

The MIT Men's Club Ice Hockey team played the University of Connecticut on Saturday, Feb. 8 at the Johnson Ice Arena. Unfortunately, MIT lost the game 4-2 after an excellent fight.

The game started off quite slow, as neither team scored until the seventh minute of the first period, when Colombo Disalvatore IV scored for UConn thanks to an assist by David Zalozhin.

The match got a bit more exciting in the second period, with a total of three points scored. The first goal of the second period was scored by Jonathon Intravaia of UConn during a power play to increase their lead to 2-0. Within minutes, MIT came back with a goal of their own, taking advantage of a power play Nolan Hed-

lin G scored off an assist from Aaron Goodman G and Carson Smith '21. To end this period, UConn scored in the last minute, tallying their third goal.

The third period was the most exciting period of the game as MIT attacked, trying to end their two-goal deficit, while UConn showed their defensive prowess as they kept their defensive line strong. MIT's attacks paid off as David Woodruff G scored an unassisted goal during a power play 15 minutes into the period. Seconds later, UConn scored another goal, ending the match at a score of 4-2.

The MIT team's next game is against their Cambridge rivals, Harvard, and is highly anticipated. The match will be played at 8:45 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 17 at the Bright-Landry Hockey Center at Harvard.



BEN KETTLE—THE TECH

MIT ice hockey players Army Leroy G (left) and Jamison Rich '20 fight to free the puck in Saturday's game against UConn.

Friday 14th

Men's Volleyball
vs. Elmira
7:00 p.m.

Saturday 15th

Men's and Women's Track and Field hosting the Gordon Kelly Invitational
Noon

Men's Volleyball
vs. Eastern Nazarene
Noon

Women's Tennis
vs. Brandeis
Noon

Wednesday 19th

Men's Tennis
vs. Bentley
4:00 p.m.

Women's Basketball
vs. Wellesley
7:00 p.m.

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