

# Stellar/LMOD to be replaced by Canvas LMS before fall term

## Transition is collaborative effort between departments

By Shelley Choi  
STAFF REPORTER

This article was published online  
on June 24, 2020.

MIT is transitioning from Stellar and Learning Modules (Stellar/LMOD) to the Canvas Learning Management System (LMS), a popular course management system that supports online learning and teaching, for the fall semester. Stellar/LMOD will remain available to those who wish to continue using it.

Dean for Digital Learning Krishna Rajagopal announced the transition to Canvas in an email to academic administrators May 4.

Rajagopal wrote that “when Stellar and LMOD were developed, the overarching approach in systems/application design was largely monolithic.” MIT has used Stellar since 2001, and LMOD was incorporated in 2013.

However, “integrating a dynamic mix of technologies such as Zoom, Gradescope, Piazza, Residential MITx, CAT-SOOP and more into a

seamless learner experience... requires a modern LMS at its core,” Rajagopal wrote, adding that Canvas “opens possibilities for leveraging a rich technology ecosystem of products/platforms to meet future needs.”

“A modern LMS allows instructors and students to engage in ways that are difficult, or impossible, in Stellar,” Rajagopal wrote, citing examples such as embedding videos, accessing course materials on

Canvas, Page 7



KEVIN PHO — THE TECH

MIT students organize a demonstration, holding up signs to support the Black Lives Matter movement.

# Grad students support OPT in letter to Trump

## June 22 executive order does not halt OPT

By Kristina Chen  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

This article was published online  
on June 24, 2020.

Graduate students from MIT and Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) wrote a June 15 letter to President Donald J. Trump in support of the Optional Practical Training program (OPT) and the STEM OPT extension for international students. The letter responded to Section 6 of Trump’s April 22 “Proclamation Suspending Entry of Immigrants Who Present Risk to the U.S. Labor Market During the Economic Recovery Following the COVID-19 Outbreak.”

The letter was signed by over 70 student governments, including MIT’s Graduate Student Council (GSC) and Undergraduate Association. In addition to Trump, the letter was also addressed to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Chad Wolf, and Secretary of Labor Eugene Scalia.

The letter was authored by Benjamin Lane G, vice-chair of the GSC’s external affairs board, and Divyansh Kaushik, vice president for external affairs of the CMU Graduate Student Assembly.

Trump wrote in Section 6 of his April proclamation that Pompeo, Wolf, and Scalia would review non-

immigrant programs and recommend “other measures appropriate to stimulate the United States economy and ensure the prioritization, hiring, and employment of United States workers.”

The letter expressed concern that the Trump administration would review the OPT program and possibly suspend it. OPT is a period of temporary employment for international students with F-1 status during or after completing their studies. Students in STEM fields can apply for a 24-month extension to their post-completion OPT employment authorization.

Trump issued an executive order June 22 that suspends the entry of aliens holding H-1B, H-2B, or L visas, as well as certain aliens holding J visas through Dec. 31, 2020. The executive order did not suspend the OPT program.

The graduate students’ letter urged Trump to “maintain the OPT program and the STEM OPT extension in their entirety” citing that international students contributed nearly \$45 billion and over 450,000 jobs to the U.S. economy during the 2018-19 academic year.

Kaushik said in an interview with *The Tech* that “students in OPT are actually filling critical skill

Letter, Page 6

# Remote appointment guidelines to international students released

## Student leaders express concern that new criteria were sent to individual departments, not entire student body

By Kylee Carden  
STAFF REPORTER

This article was published online  
on June 24, 2020.

MIT has published guidance for students seeking to hold remote appointments, including UROP, research assistant, and teaching assistant positions, from foreign countries during the summer and fall term on the Team 2020 website. The guidance describes the eligibility re-

quirements and application process for holding remote appointments from outside the U.S.

In addition to good academic standing, secure funding, and the permission of the student’s supervisor, the eligibility criteria require that “any continuing student must have returned to their home country prior to May 21, 2020.” While the “option to be on a remote appointment from outside the U.S. is not available to students who choose to leave the

U.S. after May 21, 2020,” the guidance writes that “requests for exceptions will be reviewed if there are special circumstances that necessitated travel after this date.” The criteria were sent to departments in May.

After several departments received emails with the criteria, international student leaders wrote an email addressed to Vice Chancellor Ian Waitz and Director of the Inter-

International, Page 6

# Outside Engagements survey closed amid controversy about its content

## Survey asked students to choose between hypothetical donors

By Kerri Lu  
NEWS EDITOR

This article was published online  
on June 24, 2020.

The Student Committee on Guidelines for Outside Engagements closed its Outside Engagements Survey amid controversy June 12.

The committee released its Outside Engagements Survey in a June 11 email asking students and recently graduated alumni to share “what values you consider important in MIT accepting outside engagements, including financial donations.” To encourage participation, respondents would be entered in a lottery for monetary prizes.

The committee wrote that the survey results would inform the committee’s final report, which would be released “later this summer.” The committee also wrote that the survey data would be “treated as confidential” so that “individual respondents cannot be identified.”

Survey, Page 6

# Reif shares undergraduates’ fall return preliminary decisions

## Detailed plans about returning students and the fall on-campus experience to be announced week of July 6

By Kristina Chen  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

This article was published online  
on June 17, 2020.

The upcoming school year will have a two-semester structure, and the proportion of undergraduates on campus during the fall term will be “conceivably as high as 60

percent, but likely much lower,” President L. Rafael Reif announced in an email to the MIT community June 17.

This decision was based on Team 2020’s assessment of several options and community feedback. Reif wrote that more detailed plans that answer questions about which undergraduates can return to campus,

when the semester will start and end, where students will live, and how campus life and grading will look will be released “no later than the week of July 6th.”

The choice of two semesters helps students “stay on track to their degrees,” Reif wrote. The fall semester may “start a week early (around September 1),” with in-person in-

struction ending before Thanksgiving. Students would then finish the term remotely.

Any class that can be taught online “effectively” will be virtual. Reif wrote that undergraduates on campus “will have some small-group in-person learning experiences,” particularly for classes that require lab, workshop, or performance space access.

MIT does not yet know how many undergraduates will be able to return to campus. Reif wrote that this decision “depends on several factors, some beyond our control,” such as the COVID-19 pandemic’s trajectory and government’s response.

Fall, Page 8

## WHITE PRIVILEGE

The necessity of broadening our perspectives.  
**OPINION, p. 4**

## DEI SOLUTIONS

MIT leadership must commit to a strategic plan.  
**OPINION, p. 5**



## STONEWALL

Pride was never just a parade.  
**CAMPUS LIFE, p. 2**

## HEAD OF HOUSE MEMORANDUM

100% return option is unfeasible. **NEWS, p. 6**

## ELSEVIER CONTRACT ENDED

MIT Libraries will align with publishers whose values match the libraries.  
**NEWS, p. 8**

## SECTIONS

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## Marginalized groups and their eternal fight for equal rights

*This article was published online on June 4, 2020.*

It's pride month! The time of year when no one can escape the rainbow aesthetic and people from all across the LGBTQ+ spectrum (alongside allies, we love you and appreciate you too) flood the streets to celebrate their hard-earned place in society. At least, that's what would normally happen, but several pride parades have been canceled since the rise and persistence of COVID-19, and the celebratory mood that usually accompanies pride feels remiss with the recent collective outrage over police brutality against our black siblings. Even though we can no longer gather in person, we can still take the time to learn about the work of those who came before as well as show pride in being ourselves. "What's the big idea though?" you may ask. "I don't understand all the hullabaloo about gay pride."

Now, let's set the scene: In the early morning hours of June 28, 1969, police officers entered the Stonewall Inn. The Stonewall Inn was a bar that was frequented by members of what we now know as the LG-BTQ+ community. The officers began making their routine arrests, targeting a drag queen to start off, but that night would mark the beginning of a new era. The bar goers had had enough, and a mob quickly formed outside. People on the streets began to riot, throwing objects at the police officers, protesting against the injustices they had been enduring for so long. Eventually, the police officers barricaded themselves in Stonewall to hide from the angry mob, but to no avail. The dozens turned into hundreds, all drawn together and bonded through a shared experience of being constantly kicked down by society. Enough was enough.

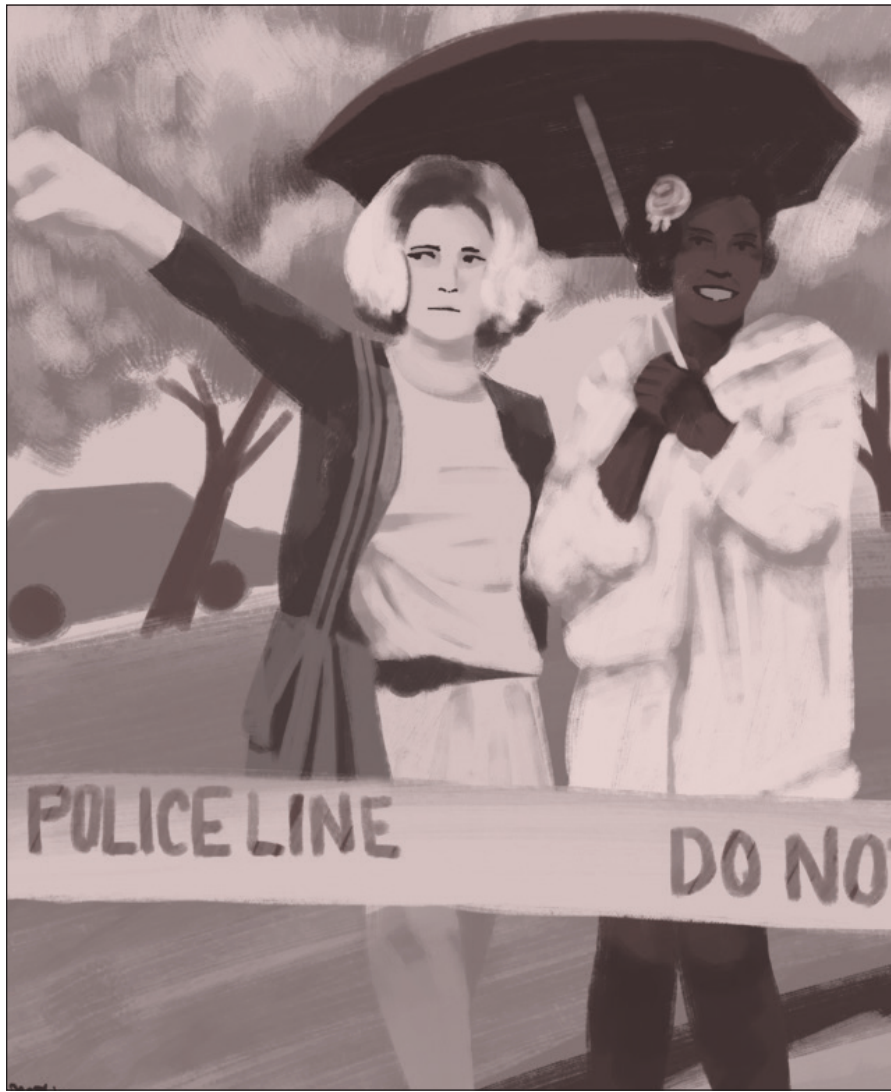
That early morning riot would be the tinder that fueled the fire of the Gay Liberation Front, a movement that would go on to organize one of the first gay pride marches in the country on the anniversary of the Stonewall Riots a year later. But it's also worth noting that the Gay Liberation Front was not the first of its kind to exist in the U.S. Other activist movements fought for gay rights all across the U.S. prior to Stonewall, but none had the radical traction of the

Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera were two trans women of color that were integral in pushing the gay rights movement forward. They were also important in securing a place for transgender people within the movement, particularly in their founding of STAR (Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries). Ever wonder why the “T” is such a staple of the original LGBT acronym? It’s because of the work of people like Johnson and Rivera that trans and gender non-conforming people saw their place within the community. These beautiful and strong black and brown queer people were among the many who fought on the front lines in the early days of the pride movement to secure the rights we have today.

Maybe it was because even in the community, some members weren't as welcoming as others to their trans and gender non-conforming neighbors. Maybe it was because economic and racial disparities put queer people of color at a disadvantage in advocating for themselves. Or maybe it was because when the likes of Rivera tried to find a platform to speak for equal rights for all, they were booed off and jeered at by their white, middle class, cisgender homosexual peers. Why not all of the above?

We may have come a long way from the early days of the gay rights movement, but we still have a long way to go. I still vividly remember the Orlando Pulse Shooting of 2016, mostly through images from the news. The constant red and blue of police sirens. The flower memorials. The pride flags. The memorial gatherings. The “Deadliest Mass Shooting in U.S. History” headlines. Trending messages of “Orlando Strong” and “Love Wins.” The crying faces of the victims’ family and friends. It was heartbreaking to see my hometown split into pieces by the tragedy, and to hear from close friends directly affected by the incident. It terrified me to know that Pulse was a mere 20 minute drive from my home. An act of hatred and terror happened right in my backyard.

Since 2015, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) has been tracking the number of trans and gender non-conforming people who met their ends through violent means. 2019 so far has been the deadliest year with at least 26 reported deaths, and there have already been at least 12 deaths in 2020, the most recent death being Tony McDade in Tallahassee, FL, on May 27, right in the aftermath of George Floyd's death.



MAX YU — THE TECH

**Sylvia Rivera (left) and Marsha P. Johnson (right) protest** at a rally for gay rights. Based on photography by Diana Davies.

All of this brings me to the idea of privilege. Most trans and gender non-conforming people who are the target of violent hate crimes tend to be trans women of color. I'm sure there's a lot to unpack in that statement alone, but the most important thing is to realize that those of us who have privilege need to learn how to leverage it for those who are less privileged. Transgender people were disadvantaged during the early days of the gay rights movement because their cisgender, middle class peers tried to push them out. Today, there exist movements like the LGB Alliance who want to fight for equal rights for everyone except for trans people. There are straight pride movements who aim to stifle all the hard work the queer community has put into ensuring our rights are protected. There are men whose toxic masculinity brings them to murder trans women and there are cops whose racism brings them to murder black people.

As we enter June having lost George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Nina Pop, Tony McDade, and countless others, it's important to remember that the gay pride movement started in response to police brutality against queer people, especially black queer people. Generations later, we still nurse the wounds our elders suffered at the hands of prejudiced individuals and institutions.

In our complicated world of labels and social structures, layers of privilege can seem endless and overwhelming. But it is our job to directly confront them with the goal of creating a society that can one day unconditionally respect people and their differences. We can't stand idly by while hate persists. We must confront our biases and our privilege. We need to have uncomfortable conversations. We need to speak up for our less privileged peers, and allow room to be corrected if we speak out of turn or speak incorrectly. We need to be willing to put in the work to fix our broken world.

The news recently has left me with feelings of anger, sadness, and a sense of complete and utter helplessness. To my black siblings, I see you. I hear you. I'm trying my best to comprehend the hurt and pain this must be causing you and I will confront my discomfort so that I may listen and understand better. I want to learn how to be a better ally for you.

Some other food for thought and resources compiled to help fight in the chaos of the world today can be found at the on-line version of this article.

Also important: if you have the means, please donate to the Black Visions Collective, Campaign Zero, North Star Health Collective, Reclaim the Block: fund our broader movement, and Unicorn Riot.

The Tech is collecting successful application essays (**hint:** yours!).

Email your pieces to [cl@tech.mit.edu](mailto:cl@tech.mit.edu)!

# Face Masks

Solution, page 10

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

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column, row, and 3 by 3 grid contains exactly one of each of the digits 1 through 9.

# Social Distancing

Solution, page 10

20+				12x	
60x		1÷		2	
2			150x		1
6x				1-	1-
	10x	4x			
3		4		12x	

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.

## DOUGH-NOTS

by Fred Piscop

Solution, page 10

### ACROSS

- 1 Later on
- 6 Actor Pitt
- 10 Number on a sports page
- 14 Dog collar attachment
- 15 Four-star review
- 16 \_\_ story (biography)
- 17 Containing nothing
- 18 Author unknown: Abbr.
- 19 \_\_ so (nevertheless)
- 20 Hinged outer-wall installation
- 23 Elongated swimmer
- 24 Observe
- 25 Criticize, informally
- 28 Cut (off), as branches
- 31 Alligators' habitats
- 36 Right-angle shape
- 37 Andes Mountains country
- 38 Dote on
- 39 Samuel Beckett "no-show" play
- 43 Online memo
- 44 On the house
- 45 Big Australian bird
- 46 Impish one

- 48 "Then again . . ."
- 49 Pig food
- 50 Body art, for short
- 52 Suffix for novel
- 54 Type of vacation lodging
- 62 Staple of Cajun cuisine
- 63 Price reduction event
- 64 So all can hear
- 65 Take out shirt creases
- 66 Privy to
- 67 Musical beat
- 68 Flex
- 69 \_\_ out a living (barely got by)
- 70 Evil grin

### DOWN

- 1 Actor Baldwin
- 2 Disaster aid agcy.
- 3 Bugler's "lights out" music
- 4 Great respect
- 5 "Partridge," to "cartridge"
- 6 High fiber cereal
- 7 Vent verbally
- 8 States with certainty
- 9 Declares false

- 10 Snow day toy
- 11 Digital TV recorder
- 12 Not too many
- 13 5/6 of a dozen
- 21 Talk show host DeGeneres
- 22 Modern music genre
- 25 Tailor, while working
- 26 Camel cousin from 37

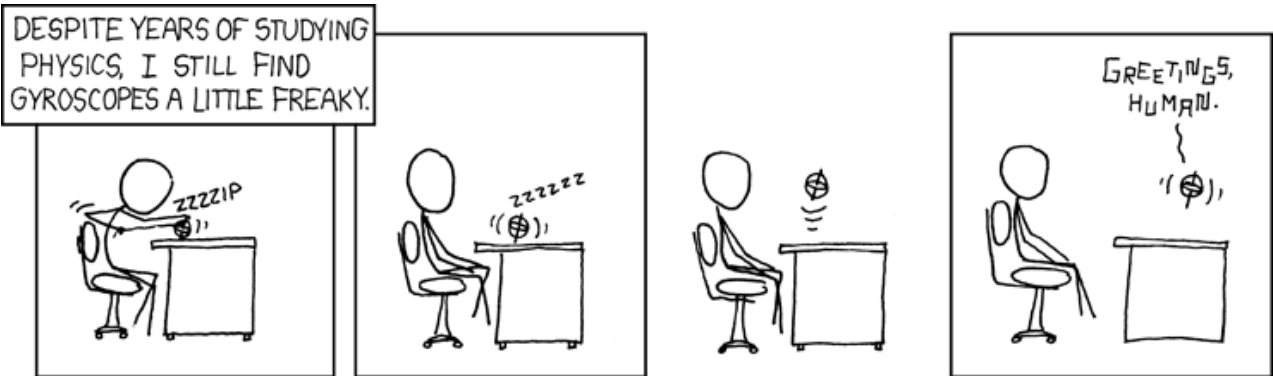
### Across

- 27 Fake name
- 29 Charity's URL ender
- 30 Like cumulus clouds
- 32 Fuss
- 33 Tiny plane or train
- 34 Publicity piece, for short
- 35 Establish
- 37 Pontius \_\_
- 40 First of three game X's
- 41 Smelter's raw material
- 42 Knot up again
- 47 Scottish girl
- 49 Obtained unlawfully
- 51 Acknowledge in an acceptance speech
- 53 Leaves in a hurry
- 54 It's often full of hot air

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
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	54	55	56				57	58			59	60	61	
62					63					64				
65					66					67				
68					69					70				

- 55 Smartphone graphic
- 56 Make repairs to
- 57 \_\_ vera gel
- 58 Rip roughly
- 59 Alaskan gold rush city
- 60 Scam victim
- 61 Scent, good or bad
- 62 Chest bone

## [332] Gyroscopes



We didn't actually land on the moon – it just looked like we did because of precession. Also, gyroscopes caused 9/11.

## Integration and contribution will make important contributions

*This article was published online on June 2, 2020.*

**Some will argue that the death of George Floyd has nothing to do with white privilege, but until we see reports of black police officers asphyxiating white men on camera without batting an eye, I have to disagree.**

Some will argue that the death of George Floyd has nothing to do with white

Unfortunately, white privilege is an abstract concept, and many beneficiaries refuse to self-identify. While segregation was once the rule of the land, its offspring has been social stratification bordering on a caste system that reinforces its consequences, to the point where I suspect that many white Americans have not a single person of color that they call friend.

**There are boundless opportunities, but if individual Americans do not broaden their exposure it may be simply a matter of time until the effects of white privilege result in other unjust deaths.**

A metric serves to illustrate the breadth of the problem: given 13% of the population is black in this country, it seems reasonable that the average white person would count at least one black person among his

ten closest friends. Probability theory reinforces that notion: in the absence of bias, a white person has a 51% chance of having a black person among his five closest friends, a 76% chance of having a black person among his 10 closest friends and 99% chance of having a black person among his 30 closest friends. However, I suspect the average white’s “closest friend list” would approach triple digits in many cases before a black friend was included. For many that black friend doesn’t exist at all. If Donald Trump truly did have “my African American” as a friend, he likely would be in rare company indeed compared to the average white American.

*Charles Theuer is a member of the Class of 1985.*

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## OPEN LETTER

# Student evaluation on the progress of the 2015 BSU/BGSA Recommendations

*This article was published online on June 2, 2020.*

From: Kelvin Green II (SB student in Course 8), Josué J. López (PhD candidate in Course 6), Candace Ross (PhD candidate in Course 6), Student Members of the Academic Council Working Group

To: President Rafael Reif, Provost Martin Schmidt

CC: Academic Council

On February 18, 2020 the Academic Council Working Group on Community and Inclusion (ACWG) presented the current status of the 2015 MIT Recommendations by the Black Students' Union (BSU) and Black Graduate Student Association (BGSA) to the Academic Council. During the meeting, Associate Provost Richard Lester inquired about student sentiment regarding current progress on the recommendations. Vice President and General Counsel Mark DiVincenzo suggested the question be directly addressed by ACWG student representatives. After curating student responses, we present the answer below.

**establish a diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic plan that incorporates solutions to existing problems and considers future needs.** This will require intentional efforts that fundamentally change how we approach DEI problems today and will ensure transparency and accountability for the future. Most of MIT's DEI work has used a decentralized approach to problem solving. Although independence can be great for innovation and can empower community members to implement change, it has obstructed high impact DEI progress. This is displayed in the lack of DEI solutions at both a School and Department level.

Today, we call on each member of the Academic Council to actively contribute to an Institute-wide DEI strategic plan and engage in the efforts of the ICEO John Dozier and Associate Provost Tim Jamison. A strategic plan is more than a statement of values or the convening of a working group with limited resources. This plan must be an Institute-wide, multi-faceted effort that does not rely on a single office or single member of senior leadership. This means engagement from school deans and department heads during the entirety of the planning and execution process. A DEI strategic plan incorporates all pertinent stakeholders and learns from the work of ACWG. The plan will help us transition from being reactive to proactive about DEI. The plan must be readily available, clear, and inclusive. The outlined metrics for success will foster accountability and community engagement. Without an Institute-wide plan for DEI, we will not reach President Reif's goal of OneMIT.

## How is MIT planning to solve the outstanding diversity, equity and inclusion problems if we have yet to create an institute-wide strategic plan?

In the last decade, nine reports and 177 recommendations have been posed to the Institute by students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Together, they raise concerns about inequities at MIT and present impactful solutions. These detailed evaluations of MIT highlight matters of race, gender, socioeconomic status, and the intersectional identities that contribute to diverse experiences at the Institute. In response to the 2015 BSU/BGSA Recommendations and in recognition of the need for a focused effort on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), the Office of the President established the ACWG. The positive impact of this working group on the MIT student experience is well established. There have been five years of collaboration, significant financial support, and inclusive leadership dedicated to our DEI goals. We are grateful to the leaders that play an active role in DEI and are encouraged by the new leadership of ICEO John Dozier and Associate Provost Tim Jamison. As we approach the five-year anniversary of the BSU/BGSA Recommendations, one question stands out: How is MIT planning to solve the outstanding diversity, equity and inclusion problems if we have yet to create an institute-wide strategic plan?

**It is now imperative for MIT senior leadership to create, support, and es-**

**A strategic plan is more than a statement of values or the convening of a working group with limited resources.**

*Ten-year Black graduate student recruitment plan:*

One of the long standing challenges this strategic plan must tackle is the stagnated enrollment of underrepresented minority (URM) graduate students. From 2005-2021, MIT's Institutional Research reports that the percentage of Hispanic/Latino graduate students has increased by only two percent. There has been zero progress for either Black or American Indian/Pacific Islander graduate students. This trend is worse at the faculty level: there has been no change recorded in the percentage of URM faculty in the past five years. Coupled with the climate survey that reports URM students feel less accepted and supported compared to other groups, this demands an Institute-wide course of action. These problems are magnified for students of intersectional identities, par-

ticularly women and queer people of color. Thus, MIT's strategic plan must be intersectional in order to be truly effective.

Recall that five years ago, the first BGSA recommendation specifically called for a 10-year plan to increase URM graduate students, in particular Black graduate students. As one of the premier problem-solving institutions in the world, it is difficult to comprehend why MIT has no plan or solution five years later. This is disappointing and disillusioning. In the same period, MIT has accomplished other ambitious initiatives such as the MIT.nano, the largest nanotechnology university facility in the U.S., and the Stephen A. Schwarzman College of Computing. These initiatives required the buy-in from multiple units and hundreds of faculty. This demonstrates that when properly motivated we can address longstanding goals regardless of complexity or cost. A decentralized culture cannot be the explanation for why we lack an Institute-wide focus on DEI.

**As one of the premier problem-solving institutions in the world, it is difficult to comprehend why MIT has no plan or solution five years later. This is disappointing and disillusioning.**

*Shifting burden from students and increasing faculty engagement:*

For many years, students, staff and a subset of faculty—it should not be lost on us that the Faculty Policy Committee has been raising parallel concerns and recommendations since at least 2004. See Faculty Policy Committee Statement On Representation of Minorities on the Faculty and in the Graduate Student Body—especially women and people of color, have carried the burden of leading DEI efforts. To be successful, faculty and senior leadership must lead DEI efforts and help carry the weight. Together their decisions directly influence the number of URM graduate students and faculty at the Institute. When the recommendations were made in 2015, there was an underlying expectation of Institute-wide involvement. Deans of the schools, department heads, and faculty must reflect upon the ways they have answered this call. Have deans of schools tried to integrate into the work of the ACWG? Have department heads reviewed their admissions and hiring procedures? Have tenured faculty members actively sought to engage with DEI efforts for graduate admissions? These implicitly powerful stakeholders must elevate, support, and reward DEI work. Departments

must incentivize faculty to fully engage with these issues, for instance through admissions and faculty recruitment processes. Given that school deans meet weekly and department heads meet monthly, the infrastructure is already in place for senior leadership to engage in contributing to systemic shifts. If we are going to make lasting change, we need the Office of the Provost, ICEO, School Deans, and Department chairs to be on the same page and contribute their skills and insights to ensure a strategic plan is created and executed.

**To be effective this strategic plan must be backed by the purse strings of the Institute.**

*Regarding COVID-19:*

We also echo the same concerns shared with senior leadership by other students via a May 1st letter entitled “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at MIT in the COVID-19 Pandemic”. We wholeheartedly agree that MIT leadership and all units should prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion in operating budgets. We are especially concerned that the hiring freeze could significantly delay the acquisition of DEI-focused senior staff per School and other open DEI positions in key offices such as the Office of Graduate Education. Considering that decisions are being made at the micro-level, we need to ensure that DEI positions and initiatives will not be substantially cut across the board. This requires collaboration with the relevant parties that control MIT funding.

In closing, we take note that the official role of the Academic Council is to “confer on matters of Institute policy.” This call for an Institute-wide strategic plan falls perfectly in line with the charge of the Academic Council. We therefore encourage active participation from all Academic Council members. We recognize that MIT as a whole cannot be centralized, yet coordinating the groups, committees, students and, most importantly, faculty around DEI is critical in our path forward. Coordinating these efforts and creating a strategic plan is a laborious task but it will drastically improve the culture, experiences, and outcomes for under-represented groups at MIT. Our goal is that the next generation of students need not duplicate these sentiments in a similar letter in another five years. **We call upon MIT to establish an Institute-wide body this Fall with the charge to create a long-term strategic plan, including concrete measures to increase the number of Black graduate students. To be effective this strategic plan must be backed by the purse strings of the Institute.** In presenting these perspectives today as student members of ACWG, we are committed to helping you shape this strategy today and moving forward.

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*The Tech* and earn \$12/hr!

Email *join@tech.mit.edu*



# Waitz: departments were contacted because they ‘knew best’ who had already left the U.S.

Letter, from Page 1

national Students Office (ISO) David Elwell, expressing concerns about the announced eligibility criteria for remote appointments. The email also requested that the entire student body be informed of the policies immediately and that a meeting with administration be scheduled to discuss the policies.

Philipp Simons G, Jonas Lehmann G, Agni Orfanoudaki G, and Alvaro-Miguel Fernandez Galiana G, international student leaders, wrote in an email to *The Tech* that they met with “Vice Chancellor Ian Waitz, the head of the international students office, David Elwell, and other members of the administration,” who were “very understanding of our concerns.”

The student leaders wrote that administrators “worked closely with us in informing the international

student population at MIT” and “expressed a genuine desire to facilitate remote appointments and regretted the prohibitive language in the original guidelines.”

Waitz wrote in an email to *The Tech* that in regards to the perceived lack of communication between administration and the student body with respect to eligibility criteria for remote appointments, administration originally communicated directly to departments because they “did not want to cause students any unnecessary stress” since it is expected that “most appointments will be approved without changes and many others will be approved with modifications.”

Waitz also wrote that a “more targeted communications approach” was selected since “departments knew best who had left the U.S. and could reach out to them directly.”

The “top priority” was to “find a way to support students in these situations and mitigate any financial or wellbeing challenges they may be facing,” Waitz wrote.

Waitz wrote in an email responding to the concerns of international student leaders that administration hopes to resolve issues “on a case-by-case basis” but that the team of representatives from several MIT offices never “had the kind of volume we have now that many students — both international and U.S. citizens — are seeking to work and learn from abroad.”

Waitz wrote that “in the four weeks since the guidelines were released, the review group has received over 300 intake forms on behalf of students seeking to conduct their appointments from outside the U.S.” and that of the “300+ student requests we’ve received, the vast majority are for international graduate students.”

# Lane: Senators Toomey and Harris responded to letter

International, from Page 1

gaps, particularly under STEM extension.”

The letter also stated that “immigrants and especially foreign students are a driving force behind the innovation and technology make the U.S. a great nation.” Thus, suspending the OPT and STEM extension and having international students return to their home countries would result in “their entrepreneurship and innovations” benefitting “those countries instead of the” U.S.

Lane said in the interview that international students should be more appreciated and that “it’s a global market for students, and if we’re not competing for them and showing them that we value them, then they’re just going to go to other countries, and other countries are going to benefit from it.”

Lane added that he and Kaushik have “heard a lot back from” members of the legislative branch to whom they sent the letter, including Senators Pat Toomey and Kamala Harris. Kaushik said that their letter was appreciated and that there has been “a lot of advocacy going on, particularly around OPT.”

Lane said that he and Kaushik wrote the letter to “make sure that student voices are heard.” He described another instance of graduate student advocacy in which MIT’s and CMU’s graduate organizations worked together in 2017 in response to possible graduate stipend taxes.

Both Lane and Kaushik emphasized student participation in advocacy. Kaushik said that students should “be the advocates for those who cannot advocate for themselves.”

# Survey donor options represented ‘threats’ to student ‘safety and wellbeing’

Survey, from Page 1

The survey method used conjoint analysis, a market research technique used to measure the value respondents place on specific attributes of a product or service. The survey contained six questions each asking students to choose between two hypothetical donor engagements based on the donation amount, “MIT’s recognition of the donor,” the “donor’s intended use for the money,” and the donor’s controversial activities, criminal history, and conviction history.

The survey also asked students to rate each engagement “on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 indicates that MIT should absolutely not accept the engagement and 7 indicates that MIT should definitely accept the engagement.”

“It is entirely plausible that you might prefer both or not prefer either of the engagements,” the survey wrote, adding that the donor attributes were “based on randomized lists of qualities constructed by the student committee and are predominantly informed by the vignette discussion open to all students conducted in the fall.”

The survey wrote that the hypothetical engagements were “not meant to resemble any specific past or future potential donors.”

Examples of donors’ controversial activities in the survey included having a criminal background, denying climate change, supporting “stricter voter registration policies/registration purging,” funding “anti-LGBT organizations,” lobbying for “fossil fuel industries,” having a “history of anti-semitic and/or islamophobic comments,” developing “spyware intended for use on US citizens,” or funding the “development of weapons used to harm civilians in another country.”

Examples of donors’ criminal history in the survey included non-violent white-collar crime (such as insider trading or tax fraud), misdemeanors (such as drug possession or DUI), violent crimes (such as murder, sexual assault, or hate crimes), or “political, civil, and/or human rights violations.”

Examples of MIT’s recognition of donors in the survey included allowing in-person visits to campus, publicly displaying the donor on campus through the naming of a building or initiative, making the donor known to the MIT

community, or keeping the donor anonymous.

The survey also contained optional demographic questions about students’ gender, race, academic department, undergraduate or graduate status, and domestic or international status.

The survey drew criticism from the MIT community, including a June 11 tweet by a graduate student criticizing the survey for asking students to choose between unethical donors.

The committee apologized for the survey in an email to students and recently graduated alumni June 12.

“We failed to take into account the stress we put on students by forcing an uncomfortable choice between two donors they found completely intolerable, and in some cases represented threats to their safety and wellbeing,” the committee wrote. “It was a mistake on our part to not include warnings in advance of the sensitive topics that would be presented, or let students skip questions they found harmful.”

The committee also wrote that the timing of the survey in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic

and protests against police brutality and anti-Black racism failed to “respect the wellbeing of students.” The committee is currently “rethinking the timeline of our report so that it allows for feedback from all members of our community and does not compromise the mental health of students in the process.”

“We have closed the survey to allow time for us to revisit how best to proceed with this survey, and to discuss other possible survey methods,” the committee wrote. They added that in the future, students will be able to provide feedback on outside engagements in “contexts that are safe and allow you to contribute only as much as you’re willing.” Furthermore, “the survey was never meant to be the only method for engaging students, nor will it be the only data informing our report.”

The survey “was not intended to suggest that the committee or MIT condones selecting donors based on which are the lesser of two evils,” the committee wrote. “The conjoint analysis survey method was intended to empirically understand how some of the attributes of potentially controversial engage-

ments are employed in choosing whether or not to accept them.”

The committee wrote that they should have asked for feedback on the survey design process and been more “transparent” about the survey design and usage of survey results. However, the committee emphasized that they “would never have designed the survey this way without consulting researchers familiar with conjoint or without obtaining approval from the Committee on the Use of Humans as Experimental Subjects.”

The Undergraduate Association and Graduate Student Council created the Student Committee on Guidelines for Outside Engagements in October to address MIT’s core values in engaging with individual, corporate, and government entities. The committee is composed of six undergraduate and six graduate student members.

The Student Committee on Guidelines for Outside Engagements did not respond to *The Tech’s* request for comment.

Students can send suggestions or comments to the Student Committee on Guidelines for Outside Engagements at student-guidelines@mit.edu.

# Heads of house issue memorandum to oppose the return of entire undergraduate student body during the fall term

*McCormick Heads of House did not co-sign memorandum, supporting the return of all undergraduates*

By Kerri Lu  
NEWS EDITOR

*This article was published online on June 17, 2020.*

The heads of house for 16 of MIT’s 18 undergraduate and graduate residences signed a memorandum June 8 urging administrators to “forgo further consideration of” inviting all undergraduates to return to campus for Fall 2020. The Burton Conner and McCormick Heads of House did not co-sign.

Team 2020’s website writes that MIT “does not have sufficient housing capacity” for a full return while operating its undergraduate residences as well as its fraternities, sororities, and independent living groups (FSILG) “in a reduced density way,” with one student per room. The website writes that possible solutions include assigning two students per room or housing undergraduates in hotels or graduate residences.

The memorandum wrote that Team 2020’s proposal to bring all undergraduates back to campus in the fall “significantly compromises MIT’s ability to create a safe environment for those that live and work in the dorms.”

“As faculty who live on campus in the undergraduate and gradu-

ate residences, we have a uniquely close view into both the academic and social circumstances of the MIT student body,” the memorandum wrote.

It is “not reasonable to expect full compliance with physical distancing rules,” including mask-wearing, in the residences, the memorandum wrote, adding that students are likely to break these rules “due to a high-stress environment” and “the mental health implications of complying with” the rules.

The memorandum also wrote that house teams cannot effectively enforce physical distancing rules in residences “with a structure and culture that is intentionally designed to promote interactions.” Furthermore, “dorms cannot be physically isolated from the campus and surrounding community.”

The memorandum wrote that administrators’ proposal to house some undergraduates in off-campus hotels is unrealistic because “creating several new communities in different hotels with support from existing House Teams is not a viable solution.” Additionally, house teams are “already coping with an untenably high workload.”

Each hotel would require “co-located staffing comparable to

those in existing dorms,” the memorandum wrote, adding that hotels are not designed for studying or long-term living, making physical distancing rules “more difficult to enforce.”

Additionally, the “strain” of maintaining a residential system with all undergraduates back on campus “will leave no flexibility to respond to contingencies if there is an outbreak on campus,” the memorandum wrote.

Finally, the memorandum wrote that the 100% undergraduate return option “might create a false sense of security” and “normalcy,” increasing the likelihood of noncompliance with physical distancing rules. The memorandum suggested “study grants” and “reduced tuition” as possible incentives to encourage students who can safely stay home for the fall semester to do so.

President Rafael L. Reif wrote in an email to the MIT community June 17 that the proportion of undergraduates permitted to return to campus in the fall will be “conceivably as high as 60 percent, but likely much lower.” Each undergraduate will be housed in an individual room, Reif wrote.

Suzy Nelson, vice president and dean for student life, wrote in

an email to *The Tech* that based on Reif’s email, “it is unlikely that hotel spaces will be needed to house undergraduates.”

“If the plans for fall change, we will work to ensure that students in hotels get all the support they need,” Nelson wrote. “The community expectations for residents in both on-campus housing and FSILGs will be based on public health best practices and directions from MIT Medical that have been in effect throughout the pandemic.”

The McCormick Heads of House did not sign the letter “because some of the statements are in conflict with the conversations maintained in the McCormick Community,” the memorandum wrote.

The McCormick Heads of House wrote in the memorandum that having all undergraduates return for the fall term is “feasible with the proper technical and financial resources.”

“Students will come back to Cambridge whether we house them or not, and it will make more sense to have them where we can exert some behavioral control” in the dorms, they wrote.

McCormick Head of House Raul Radovitzky wrote in an email to *The Tech* that returning to Cambridge even if MIT doesn’t house them is

“an option available that may work for some or many students that introduces additional health concerns that we should consider.”

The McCormick Heads of House wrote in the memorandum that students should be required to agree to a “very clear set of rules for the new community standards,” including mandatory COVID-19 testing, before returning to campus. “MIT cannot guarantee 100% safety, and neither can any other space, institution, public venue,” or otherwise during a pandemic.

“MIT will not be asking for anything more — or beyond — of what everyone is already doing at home: masks, handwashing, and distancing except from those in the same household (in this case your floor-mates),” they wrote in the memorandum. “It seems to me like we are not trusting this age group to behave like the adults they are.”

Radovitzky wrote in the email that the McCormick Heads of House preferred the 100% undergraduate return option over the other four options for the fall proposed by Team 2020 because “we feel that we need to all come together, realize the privilege and em-

# Canvas can ‘quickly integrate’ tools like Zoom, Gradescope, Piazza, Dropbox

Canvas, from Page 1

phones and tablets, syncing with calendars, grading assignments within the LMS, and student content sharing and collaboration.

Rajagopal wrote that in the 2018-2019 academic year, Vice Chancellor Ian Waitz created an ad hoc committee, headed by Professor Gareth McKinley PhD ’91, to conduct a “lengthy needs assessment” and start the process of implementing a more modern LMS by 2021 or 2022.

After COVID-19 forced classroom instruction to move online, it became necessary to modernize the LMS by Fall 2020, Rajagopal wrote. A newly created LMS group chaired by Sheryl Barnes, director of digital learning in residential education, in the Office of Open Learning is leading the imple-

mentation of Canvas across MIT. The LMS Advisory Committee, chaired by McKinley, will advise Barnes.

Rajagopal wrote that the Sloan School of Management implemented Canvas two years ago, and the Global Languages section has also piloted Canvas in their classes.

Interphase EDGE, an enrichment program for first years and sophomores housed in the Office of Minority Education, is also piloting Canvas in their Communications, Writing, and Identity class this summer.

Interphase EDGE instructor Joaquín Terrones ’99 wrote in an email to *The Tech* that Interphase chose to participate in the Canvas pilot to “acclimate” students to the platform before the fall semester. Terrones also wrote that unlike Stellar/LMOD, “Canvas is a widely

used platform — many incoming students will already know how to navigate it, as will others joining our academic community from elsewhere.”

Dean for Digital Learning Krishna Rajagopal, Vice President of Information Systems and Technology (IS&T) Mark Silis, and Barnes wrote in an email to *The Tech* that although Canvas does not resolve the limitations of remote learning, it “better enables faculty and students to engage in a relatively seamless manner via a dynamic on-line platform.”

Relative to Stellar/LMOD, Canvas provides “power and flexibility” from its “ability to quickly integrate key tools such as Zoom, Gradescope, Piazza, and Dropbox which are available in the Canvas system

now,” Rajagopal, Silis, and Barnes wrote.

They also wrote that the transition is a collaborative effort among staff in each academic department, around 45 student learning technologists, and the Canvas core team, composed of staff from IS&T and Open Learning.

Rajagopal wrote in a letter to MIT instructors June 8 that the learning technologists are undergraduate and graduate students hired during the summer to help instructors build Canvas sites for Fall 2020 subjects, migrate content to Canvas, and “create engaging and effective learning experiences.” Additionally, each department has a point person who will “help coordinate remote teaching, including the transition to Canvas,” Rajagopal wrote.

Terrones wrote that the student learning technologist assigned to Interphase EDGE “not only made the shift from Stellar to Canvas seamless but also helped us explore new possibilities on the platform.”

Rajagopal, Silis, and Barnes wrote that Barnes is leading the core team’s collaboration efforts with representatives from Canvas. Her goal is to ensure that any issues are being effectively dealt with and that quick progress is being made “to roll out this system MIT wide” by the fall term.

Resources for MIT instructors are available on the MIT Canvas site. Members of the MIT community can send questions or requests to canvas-support@mit.edu.

# Team 2020 releases results for the undergraduate Student Preference Survey gauging student opinion on fall scenarios

*24% of upper-level respondents would take leave of absence if there are no in-person elements in the fall*

By Wenbo Wu  
NEWS EDITOR

*This article was published online on June 17, 2020.*

Team 2020 has released a report of its findings for the fall term, according to an email from Vice Chancellor Ian Waitz to MIT community members June 12. The report details the results of the Student Preference Survey sent to all undergraduates June 6.

According to the survey results, the survey featured 3,517 responses, including 869 incoming first-year respondents and 2,648 upper-level sophomore, junior, and senior respondents.

The first part of the survey asked students to consider an academic scenario involving a mostly-remote curriculum with some in-person elements for lab classes, project classes, and UROPs. The in-person elements would end before Thanksgiving, and students would travel home to complete the remainder of the term remotely.

The survey wrote that COVID-19 Policies and Guidelines will be in place for students on campus, including a “daily health attestation” to report symptoms and regular testing in order to be granted access to “approved campus buildings at specific times.”

Students on campus will also be tested immediately upon return to campus and must self-quarantine until a follow-up test one week later shows up negative. If the follow-up test is positive, the student must continue to self-isolate and test until obtaining a negative result. Students on campus must also follow physical distancing guidelines, wear face coverings, practice “enhanced personal hygiene practices,” and avoid non-essential travel.

Additional restrictions would be in place for students living in MIT residence halls or fraternities, sororities, and independent living groups (FSILGs). Fewer people will live on campus, with students assigned to single rooms, specific bathrooms, and a limited living cohort. Students must wear face coverings when interacting outside these living cohorts and practice physical distancing in common spaces.

In the scenario described in the survey, use of community kitchens will be restricted and students will eat take-out dining hall meals. Social gatherings are strictly prohibited, and visitors are forbidden, with few exceptions. If the number of students who must be on campus exceeds “safe residential capacity,” MIT will provide “alternate housing.”

According to the report, 87% of first-year and 83% of upper-level respondents indicated they would register for scheduled classes in the fall under these policies.

Nine percent of upper-level respondents indicated that they would take a leave of absence for the term. 44% of upper-level respondents indicated that they would request to live in a residence hall, 23% in an FSILG, 14% off-campus near MIT, one percent in Massachusetts not near MIT, eight percent in another U.S. state, and two percent in another country.

The survey then described a scenario in which every class was online, with no in-person elements.

Under these conditions, 57% of first-year respondents would register for fall classes and live in MIT-affiliated housing, 32% would register for fall classes but not live in MIT-affiliated housing, and 22% would defer their enrollment. Of the first-year respondents who would take fall classes but not live in MIT-affiliated housing, 99% indicated that they would live with their family.

With no in-person elements, 58% of upper-level respondents would register for fall classes if they were allowed to live in a residence hall or FSILG and 42% would register for fall classes if they were not. 24% of upper-level respondents would take a leave of absence from the fall term.

If housing in a residence hall or FSILG is not available but in-person elements exist, 37% of upper-level respondents would opt to take a leave of absence for the term. If assigned to live instead in a hotel near MIT, 70% of upper-level respondents would live in the hotel, 19% would find another residence, and 11% would take a leave of absence for the term.

If “therapeutic treatments and vaccines for COVID-19 are not widely available,” 51% of first-year respondents who would opt to register for fall classes indicated that they would prefer living with a roommate over living in a single. Meanwhile, 56% of upper-level respondents would prefer a single, 41% would prefer a roommate, and three percent would live in non-MIT-affiliated housing.

When asked about how important it is that people on campus comply with the COVID-19 Policies and Guidelines, 74% of all respondents indicated it was either “extremely” or “very” important, 22% indicated it was “moderately” or “somewhat” important, while three percent indicated it was “not at all” important.

Additionally, 79% of respondents indicated that it is “extremely” or “very” likely they would follow the COVID-19 Policies and Guidelines. Meanwhile, 36% of respondents indicated that it is “extremely” or “very” likely that undergraduates on campus would follow these policies.

The second part of the survey asked undergraduates about their preferences between three scenarios for the entire 2020-2021 academic year:

Two semesters with scheduled classes in both fall and spring terms, with almost all classes held virtually. Students will only be allowed to spend one semester on campus while the other must be completed remotely.

Two semesters with scheduled classes starting January 2021 and ending late July or early August, with no IAP or spring break. Between September to December 2020, MIT would provide students with “remote experiential learning” opportunities, such as “remote UROPs, remote projects, independent study, with some opportunities to earn credit.”

Three semesters from September to December 2020, January to April 2021, and May to late July or early August 2021, with no IAP. Students will be allowed on campus for two of the three semesters, predetermined by MIT. Classes fulfilling major requirements will be scheduled for the two on-campus semesters while students may take additional online subjects without charge in their remote semester.

The survey wrote that the second option would provide “more time for a potential vaccine and therapeutic treatment to be developed.” If these measures become available, “safety protocols for physical distancing and testing could be relaxed” and MIT could operate “as it did pre-COVID with all students back on campus” in both the second and third options.

Under the first scenario, 59% of respondents would register for classes in the fall, 27% would register for classes for their on-campus semester and take a leave of absence for the other, and 14% would defer their enrollment or take a leave of absence.

Under the second scenario, 68% of respondents would register for both semesters, 19% would take a

leave of absence for one of the semesters, and 13% would defer their enrollment or take a leave of absence.

Under the third scenario, 64% of respondents would register for classes, five percent would defer their enrollment or take a leave of absence, and 31% indicated their decision to register for classes would depend on which semesters they were allowed to be on campus.

51% of first-year and 35% of upper-level respondents indicated they would register for classes across all three scenarios.

The Team 2020 report slides wrote that community members were asked in May to choose the principles and values that should guide MIT’s decision for reopening campus through a 2020 Option Feedback Form and three community charrettes.

According to the slides, the 2020 Option Feedback Form allowed respondents to choose the three to five principles most important to them. Among the 900 complete and 900 partial responses to the feedback form, the top five values were “accomplishing MIT’s mission” (69%), “community health and welfare” (59%), “preserving flexibility” (47%), “expert guidance” (43%), and “access to campus” (42%).

Among charrette participants, who were allowed to choose two important principles, the top five values were “diversity, equity, and inclusion” (30%), “community health and welfare” (26%), “accomplishing MIT’s mission” (11%), “preserving flexibility” (10%), and “access to campus” (six percent), the slides wrote.

The slides wrote that there is “broad consensus” among feedback form respondents and charrette participants that students with “academic needs” or “poor learning environments” should be prioritized for return to campus.

# MIT summer programming canceled or virtualized through Aug. 31

*This article was published online on June 11, 2020.*

MIT’s April 24 guidance on summer programming has been extended through Aug. 31, according to an update on MIT’s COVID-19 Info Center website June 3. All “summer programming in which participants live in MIT residence halls will need to be virtualized, canceled, or rescheduled” and “all

other summer programming will need to take place remotely.”

MIT-sponsored student domestic and international travel also “remains suspended” during this period, the update writes.

Affected activities include “admissions staff travel for recruitment purposes, K-12 programs, conference services/Samberg Center,” the Department of Athletics, Physical

Education, and Recreation, the MIT Museum, and UROPs, according to the update.

The update writes that the decision “does not apply to research activities or any programs associated with the start of the fall semester.” It is “possible” that “orientation and on-ramp programs scheduled for August could still move forward” and that a decision on fall-oriented

programming will be “dependent upon the larger decision that is forthcoming about MIT’s approach to campus operations in the fall,” the update writes.

Faculty or staff may request an exception to use campus facilities, which may be granted in “rare instances,” according to the update.

The extension was recommended by the MIT Summer

Planning Team, which “considered available public health, state, and federal guidance, decisions on summer programming by Ivy+ peer institutions, and advice from MIT Medical and MIT Emergency Management.” The recommendation was “endorsed by MIT’s senior management team.”

—Edwin Song

# BC Heads of House address uncertainty of dorm’s status

Heads of House, from Page 6

brace the opportunity we have to be allowed back on campus, commit to caring for the safety of each other in a responsible manner, and show the world one more time what is possible at MIT.”

Radovitzky also expressed concern that the other proposed options may result in “increased inequity for those who cannot be on campus,” as well as negative “impact on student mental health” and “our ability to fulfill our commitment to our community of providing them with the most meaningful MIT experience.”

The memorandum noted that BC Heads of House Janelle Knox-Hayes and Jarrod Hayes did not sign the letter due to “the uncertainty surrounding the status” of BC residents.

BC was originally scheduled to be closed for renovations June 2020 to August 2022. However, the construction of the New Vassar dorm, originally slated to open in August, has been delayed due to Cambridge’s March moratorium on construction. As a result, BC may

continue to be open to house undergraduates in the fall.

BC has served as a quarantine center for students exposed to COVID-19 since undergraduates moved out in March.

Knox-Hayes and Hayes wrote in an email to *The Tech* that they “do not know if BC will continue to serve as the centralized support facility or if some other quarantine option may be enacted” in the fall.

The Academic Policy and Regulations Team (APART), led by Faculty Chair Rick Danheiser, issued a statement that APART’s consensus view is that the 100% undergraduate return option was “conceivable, but with serious issues.”

Of the five options proposed by Team 2020, APART most favored Option 3, in which 60% and 75% of undergraduates live on campus in the fall and spring respectively, followed by Option 5, in which all undergraduates are remote in the fall. APART rejected Options 2 and 4, which respectively call for delaying the start of the school year to January 2021 and implementing a three-semester academic year.

# Changes to include public health education, wearing masks, and regular testing

Fall, from Page 1

Reif wrote that the Institute aims “to give as many students as possible the opportunity to return safely.”

Reif added that students living on campus will be housed in individual rooms “to allow for physical distancing,” so fall undergraduate residential capacity will be lower than normal. Double and triple rooms will be used as single-occupancy rooms.

Reif wrote that MIT has “significant control” over its ability to provide testing, contact tracing, and quarantining, but “no matter how careful we all are,” MIT “must anticipate” COVID-19 cases and have the capacity to identify and limit an outbreak.

On-campus changes during the fall will include mandatory public-health education, mask-wearing, and regular testing. Additionally, daily health checks using an app or website will be required. Contact tracing, physical distancing, and single point entry requiring an MIT ID to access buildings will be implemented, along with reconfigured

scheduling and work spaces. There will also be less travel and no large gatherings or lectures.

Reif also wrote that “hundreds of MIT employees” have “continued to work on-site,” and that more community members will return as campus activity increases.

He listed community members in order of eligibility to return, starting with research staff and faculty “because so much of their work is lab-based,” followed by graduate students whose research “depends on lab access” and whose housing allows for physical distancing. Undergraduates, “many of whom depend on campus resources,” will be allowed to return next. Any administrative and other non-research staff who “can work effectively online” will conduct remote work “at least through the fall semester.”

Reif wrote that MIT is “striving to respond to the wide variation in people’s lives” such as individual health conditions, home work environments, and difficulties reaching campus.

# MIT chaplain resigns due to email

Moloney: Floyd’s murder was not necessarily ‘an act of racism’

By Kristina Chen  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

*This article was published online on June 17, 2020.*

Rev. Daniel Moloney, MIT’s Catholic chaplain, resigned June 9, according to a statement by the Archdiocese of Boston. The Archdiocese asked the chaplain to resign after Moloney sent an email to the Tech Catholic Community (TCC) in response to the killing of George Floyd and the subsequent protests.

Moloney wrote in the email that while Floyd should not have been killed by a police officer, Floyd’s killing was not necessarily “an act of racism.” Moloney added that “people have claimed that racism” is a “major problem in police forces. I don’t think we know that.” He wrote that the police officer had “acted wrongly” and that “it is right that he has been arrested and will be prosecuted.”

Moloney also wrote that Floyd “had not lived a virtuous life,” stating that Floyd had committed sins, “but we do not kill such people” and instead “root for sinners to change their lives and convert to the Gospel.”

“Our solidarity with one another is deeply frayed now,” Moloney wrote, describing tension surrounding protests in the Boston area. He wrote that he had spoken to people who wanted the protests to stop “because they are afraid of more riots and looting” and people who wanted to join the protests but were “uneasy about having police present.”

The Archdiocese wrote in its statement that Moloney’s “comments regarding the murder of George Floyd do not reflect the positions of the Archdiocese.” By resigning, Moloney “accepts the hurt” his comments “have caused.” Suzy Nelson, vice president and dean for student life, wrote in an email to student and faculty leaders June 12 that MIT senior leaders and the Bias Response Team had received reports about Moloney’s email. Nelson wrote that Moloney’s message “contradicted the Institute’s values” and “was deeply disturbing.”

Nelson added that “by devaluing and disparaging George Floyd’s character,” Moloney did not “acknowledge the dignity of each human being and the devastating impact of systemic racism” on “African Americans, people of African descent, and communities of color.”

According to Nelson’s email, all MIT chaplains sign the Office of Religious, Spiritual, and Ethical Life’s “Relationship with Affiliated Organizations and Representatives” agreement, which states that chaplains should demonstrate “respect for the dignity and worth of all people and a sensitivity to the beliefs and cultural commitments of others” and that “actions or statements that diminish the value of individuals or groups of people are prohibited.” Nelson wrote that Moloney’s email did not “live up to these expectations.”

Gustavo Burkett, senior associate dean for diversity and community involvement, and Nelson spoke with the TCC Advisory Board and the Archdiocese of Bos-

ton about Moloney’s email. Moloney was asked to resign following these discussions.

Burkett wrote in an email to *The Tech* that the Institute Community and Equity Office (ICEO) will begin working on a Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan for MIT “very soon.” He wrote that the Division of Student Life (DSL) will partner with the ICEO to address diversity and inclusion in the student experience.

“Ideas such as diversity training for staff and affiliates will be an essential component of DSL’s work on the plan,” Burkett wrote.

In addition, the Archdiocese will work with the Institute to nominate a Catholic chaplain whose views are “consistent” with Institute values of “inclusion, respect, and dignity for all community members as well as the values proclaimed by the Church’s leadership,” Nelson wrote.

Mariana Avila ’22, TCC president, wrote in an email to *The Tech* that “many people in the TCC feel very hurt and angry” after reading Moloney’s email and “are frustrated that Fr. Moloney did not show compassion toward the Black community and acknowledge the suffering they endure due to racism.” She also wrote that “some are shocked by his resignation” due to his “positive impact” on the TCC during his five years as chaplain.

Avila wrote that the TCC Council held a forum attended by over 60 people June 9 “to discuss people’s reactions and opinions to Fr. Moloney’s email.” The council is “determined to continue fostering unity and support” in the TCC.

# Elsevier publications in and after 2020 no longer available via MIT

Bourg and Levy: Elsevier was unable to present a proposal that was in line with the MIT Framework for Publisher Contracts

By Grace Song  
STAFF REPORTER

*This article was published online on June 17, 2020.*

After several months of discussion over a new contract, MIT has ended negotiations with the academic publishing company Elsevier. Starting July 1, Elsevier journal articles published in and after 2020 will no longer be available at MIT through Elsevier’s website.

Director of MIT Libraries Chris Bourg and Chair of the Committee on the Library System Roger Levy wrote in an email to the MIT community June 11 that Elsevier was unable to present a proposal that aligned with core principles of the MIT Framework for Publisher Contracts, a guide to negotiations based on open access policies as well as MIT’s mission and vision for scholarship.

Bourg and Levy wrote that despite “agreeing to a six-month extension of our current contract to provide Elsevier time to develop an offer for us based on principles we shared with them in August 2019, Elsevier was not able to present a proposal that aligned with the framework.”

MIT has “perpetual access” to most pre-2020 Elsevier articles, Bourg and Levy wrote. Additionally, “access to e-books, book series, handbooks, reference works, and databases published by Elsevier is not affected.”

Bourg, Levy, and staff of the MIT Libraries’ Negotiations and Scholarly Communications and Collections Strategy teams wrote in an email to *The Tech* that access to the “vast majority of articles needed by the MIT community”

can be achieved through MIT’s current available options and interlibrary borrowing. The Libraries also offered suggestions for alternative access to Elsevier-published articles.

Bourg, Levy, and MIT Libraries staff wrote that MIT Libraries and Elsevier failed to agree on a system “that would allow MIT authors to retain copyright of their research output, did not require authors to waive their rights set forth in the MIT Faculty Open Access policy, and was priced in a fair and sustainable way.”

“We understand that this new approach to negotiations is challenging for many of our vendors, as they are accustomed to focusing primarily on price, their calculations of what the market can bear, and what amount of inflation they want to charge the Libraries this year,” they wrote.

There are also difficulties in implementing open access on MIT’s side. The new publication process requires an engaged population and well-resourced libraries, which MIT has sought through the creation of DSpace@MIT, a repository made for unrestricted access to articles by MIT-affiliated authors, Bourg, Levy, and MIT Libraries staff wrote.

The open access movement took root in the 1960s and largely refers to the rights to freely read, use, and distribute published work granted by authors and copyright holders.

Bourg, Levy, and MIT Libraries staff wrote that MIT “was a pioneer in institutional access policies,” the MIT Faculty Open Access policy in 2009 being the first of its kind in North America.

Additional steps have been taken since to expand the number

of open access articles, including a “read and publish” agreement with the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) in 2018, which “combines the cost to subscribe to journals with a payment to make the final published version of MIT-authored articles open access on RSC’s website,” Bourg, Levy, and MIT Libraries staff wrote.

A January 2020 collaboration with three other universities led to an open access agreement with the Association for Computing Machinery that includes automatic deposit of MIT co-authored articles into DSpace.

The MIT Framework for Publisher Contracts, released October 2019, solidified MIT’s commitment to transform its relationships with publishers. Over 100 institutions have since endorsed the Framework and are free to adapt the Framework for negotiating their own contracts, Bourg and Levy wrote in their email to the MIT community.

Bourg and Levy wrote that they “hope to be able to resume productive negotiations with Elsevier in the future.”

Bourg, Levy, and MIT Libraries staff wrote in their email to *The Tech* that contract negotiations are currently taking place with other publishers as well, with the Framework as a central element.

“We hope to see publishers take the opportunity offered by the Framework to be truly transformative, instead of shoehorning an old financial model into a new space. We have been particularly interested in experimenting with scholarly publishers, those whose missions and values match our own,” they wrote.



# UA releases its recommendations on options for Fall 2020

*UA recommends MIT administrators ‘develop a clear list of guidelines determining qualifications’ that permit a student to remain in on-campus emergency housing during the fall, even if the semester is held remotely*

**By Kerri Lu**  
*NEWS EDITOR*

*This article was published online on June 17, 2020.*

The Undergraduate Association’s (UA) Committee on COVID-19 released its recommendations to Team 2020 on possible scenarios for the fall semester June 6.

Team 2020 announced on its website in May that it was considering six options for the fall semester. Vice Chancellor Ian Waitz described modified versions of the proposals in a Zoom meeting with administrators, faculty, and student leaders June 5.

1. All undergraduates are invited to return to campus, with many classes offered remotely. Physical distancing measures will be implemented in student residences and instructional spaces.
  2. All undergraduates are invited to return to campus, but the start of the fall semester is delayed by a few months. IAP is canceled, and the academic year may stretch into Summer 2021.
  3. The fall semester will be split into two six-week sessions, with a two-week gap between sessions. Each student will attend one session on campus and the other session virtually.
  4. 60% of undergraduates are invited to return to campus for the fall semester. 75% of undergraduates are invited to return for the spring semester.
  5. The fall semester will be conducted remotely.
  6. The school year will be split into three academic semesters. Each student will attend two semesters on campus and one virtually.
- According to the UA website, Team 2020 is no longer considering Option 3 as of June 7.

The UA recommends Options 1, 3, and 4 and does not recommend Options 2, 5, and 6.

Additionally, the UA recommends that fall semester classes begin one week early and end the weekend before Thanksgiving for options 1, 3, 4, and 6. This plan “preserves IAP virtually, minimizes travel risks, and decreases some of the time people are on campus during flu season,” the UA wrote.

The UA wrote that because this calendar plan may be inequitable for students with financial instability or dangerous home situations, MIT should provide “exceptions for students with specific needs” to allow them to remain on campus.

The UA recommends Option 1 “if it can be implemented safely” because it provides an equitable learning environment for students and preserves a sense of campus community. However, MIT must “provide socially distant and safe learning spaces, have effective COVID-19 testing and contact tracing, and have a suitable contingency plan” if a second wave of COVID-19 occurs.

The UA does not recommend Option 2 because the delayed timeline will prevent students from gaining income, work experience, and industry connections through UROPs and internships during IAP and the summer, directly affecting students’ “post-graduation employment prospects.”

The UA recommends Option 3 because “although it is logistically challenging and academically disruptive,” it allows all students to be on campus for at least part of the fall semester.

The UA recommends Option 4 because it allows most students to return to campus during the academic year. However, this option may lead to “high deferral and leave

of absence rates” for students not chosen to return, the UA wrote.

The UA does not recommend Option 5 because student social life, campus culture, and the quality of education would be negatively impacted by a remote semester. Many students would take deferrals or leaves of absence in this scenario, creating “overcrowding and housing insecurity” in future academic years, the UA wrote.

The UA does not recommend Option 6 because the three semester plan is “highly disruptive and requires the largest adjustment from staff and students.” The UA cited high housing density, the uncertain status of the COVID-19 pandemic in the winter, disparities in departments’ abilities to adjust their curriculums, lack of campus community, moving costs for students living on campus in discontinuous semesters, and disruption of summer internships as potential risks.

For the options involving reduced campus capacity, Waitz proposed two options in a Zoom meeting June 3. The first option involves juniors and seniors being on campus in the fall, while first years, sophomores, and seniors will be on campus in the spring. The second option prioritizes the return of students whose majors most require in-person instruction.

The UA recommends the first option over the second because it prioritizes seniors’ ability to complete degree requirements such as lab classes, allows all undergraduates to have an on-campus experience, preserves MIT community within class year, and would result in fewer deferrals and leaves of absence. While the option is “not ideal for students in lab-heavy majors,” it provides greater “overall value to the student body,” the UA wrote.

The UA wrote that the second option “greatly improves the quality of education for students with lab and project based classes” and “addresses the academic inequity between majors” that require in-person physical resources and those that do not. However, some students may “game the system” by changing their major or enrolling in lab courses to return to campus. This option also prevents first year students, most of whom don’t take lab classes, from forming connections with the MIT community.

The UA wrote that MIT administrators should “develop a clear list of guidelines determining qualifications allowing a student to remain in” on-campus emergency housing in the fall, even if the semester is held remotely. Qualifications could include “financial burden,” “lack of access to adequate educational resources” at home, “mental health and access to Student Support Services,” “safety of home life,” and the necessity of international travel to get home, the UA wrote.

The UA wrote that MIT administrators’ recent projection that roughly 500 students will remain on campus due to need is “reasonable,” but “MIT must be flexible and prepared to increase this number if necessary.”

The UA wrote that MIT’s “primary goals” should include “preserving the quality of the academic experience”; “providing a viable and equitable population strategy”; “designing a depopulation strategy in the event of a second wave” of COVID-19; “optimizing the quality of the social and living experience”; “prioritizing health and welfare” of the MIT, Boston, and Cambridge communities; and “providing flexibility in fall options that is fair socially and academically.”

The UA additionally acknowledged that “restrictions on social

distancing will limit the benefits of being on campus,” including social life and extracurriculars. MIT’s plan to repopulate campus should address the concerns of student clubs, fraternities, sororities, and athletic teams, the UA wrote.

The UA wrote that if the campus must be depopulated due to a second wave of COVID-19, the depopulation “should be planned as staggered departures from campus, and students should be given as much lead time as possible” when informed that they will need to leave. The UA suggested that administrators should give updates “on the status of campus safety” through the MIT Medical Patient Newsletter or MIT Forward.

The UA wrote that “MIT has historically been ineffective in providing adequate support to students during a leave of absence.” Administrators should develop “rigorous plans to support students taking leave” because the Institute “is likely to see the highest rates of deferral in its history” in the upcoming academic year, the UA wrote.

In MIT’s May 2020 Remote Experience Survey, 53% of student respondents indicated that they would “rather take a semester off than try to do it via remote learning.”

Additionally, 70% of student respondents indicated that they “had a difficult time learning in this new, self-directed environment,” and 64% indicated that “distractions” in their living arrangement “made it difficult to learn” during the spring semester. Only 42% of student respondents indicated that “class sessions held on Zoom or similar technology were effective” for learning.

The UA wrote that MIT administrators should consider student input before deciding on the fall term’s grading policy.

## Institute departments, labs, and centers participate in June 10 #ShutDownSTEM, #ShutDownAcademia, #Strike4BlackLives

*Departments encourage education on issues including ‘allyship, antiracism, and privilege/white fragility’*

**By Kerri Lu**  
*NEWS EDITOR*

*This article was published online on June 11, 2020.*

MIT departments, labs, and centers participated in the #ShutDownSTEM, #ShutDownAcademia, and #Strike4BlackLives movements June 10.

#ShutDownSTEM, #ShutDownAcademia, and #Strike4BlackLives urged non-black researchers to strike as a form of protesting systemic anti-black racism in academia. The strike was intended for researchers not directly involved in COVID-19 research, according to the Shut Down STEM website.

The strike took place in the wake of the May 25 killing of George Floyd by a white police officer and the ensuing protests across the U.S.

Every department in the School of Science and the School of Engineering participated in #ShutDownSTEM. Michael Sipser, dean of the School of Science, wrote in an email to *The Tech* that individual departments, labs, and centers organized their own activities for #ShutDownSTEM.

According to the discussion schedule attached to Sipser’s email, the biology and chemistry departments held discussions on topics such as “white privilege, fragility, and guilt”; “personal implicit bias”; “non-Black LGBTQIA+ allyship to the Black community”; “how pseu-

doscience can perpetuate racism”; “anti-blackness in the Cambridge/Boston community”; “anti-blackness in STEM”; and confronting racist family members.

The math department and the earth, atmospheric, and planetary sciences department separately held department-wide readings and discussions on anti-black racism in STEM.

The brain and cognitive sciences (BCS) department also participated in #ShutDownSTEM and held a town hall June 8. BCS leadership wrote in an email to the BCS community June 9 that the department plans to expand its Diversity Committee and raise funds to support “anti-racist initiatives” suggested by black graduate students, “build relationships with Historically Black Colleges and other minority serving institutions,” and expand local outreach efforts.

The physics department held no meetings but encouraged researchers to “spend a day on conversation, reflection, and education on racism against African Americans,” Sipser wrote, adding that the Kavli Institute for Astrophysics and Space Research hosted a town hall.

Physics professors Tracy Slatyer and Daniel Harlow helped organize the Strike For Black Lives through Particles for Justice, a worldwide group of physics faculty and postdocs formed in 2018 in response to a misogynistic talk given at CERN.

Harlow wrote in an email to *The Tech* that the strike, led by physicists Brian Nord and Chanda Prescod-Weinstein, was developed in collaboration with the organizers of #ShutDownSTEM. Harlow wrote that he hopes the strike will mark “the beginning of a new period in academia,” inspiring researchers “to confront our own complicity in systemic racism and to think productively about how we can improve in the future.”

Slatyer wrote in an email to *The Tech* that as of June 9, over 4,000 people had signed the pledge to strike. Slatyer chaired a committee in the MIT Center for Theoretical Physics to “organize education and action-planning events” for the strike.

Slatyer acknowledged the “real risk that non-Black academics might congratulate themselves on dedicating a day to the strike, and then slip back into complacency and inaction.” However, Slatyer wrote that many non-black academics will be “exposed to ideas and information they haven’t previously encountered,” and the strike will “reinforce” previous efforts by black academics to challenge racism in STEM academia.

“It’s also important for both Black and non-Black students to see senior people and leading institutions in our field taking the issue of systemic anti-Blackness seriously enough to dedicate real time to working against it,” Slatyer wrote.

Anantha Chandrakasan, dean of the School of Engineering, wrote in an email to *The Tech* that engineering departments, labs, and centers paused research and organized “programming, discussion, and resources around eradicating anti-Black racism in academia and STEM – and beyond.”

The nuclear science and engineering, mechanical engineering, chemical engineering, civil and environmental engineering, and EECS departments held department-wide discussion forums, Chandakasan wrote. The Institute for Medical Engineering and Science and Harvard-MIT Program in Health Sciences and Technology maintained an open Zoom channel for discussion all day, with a community forum in the afternoon.

Community members were also invited to share their perspectives with departmental leadership. For instance, EECS department head Asu Ozdaglar PhD ’03 wrote in an email to the EECS community that participation in the EECS “Listen-In” would help EECS leadership “support structural change” to foster a “more welcoming” and “inclusive” community. Over 330 participants attended the EECS Listen-In.

Melissa Nobles, dean of the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (SHASS), wrote in a statement emailed to *The Tech* that some HASS departments are “posting statements of solidarity on

department webpages and social media, while others are meeting to discuss class curriculums and action.” SHASS will also publish a webpage with readings on “systemic racism, civil rights, and social justice,” Nobles wrote.

Nobles wrote that SHASS participated in #ShutDownAcademia to “stop business as usual and plan action on issues of racial inequality.”

The Sloan School of Management also participated in #ShutDownAcademia. An email from Sloan leadership encouraged the Sloan community to use the strike day to watch the Black Business Students Association’s June 1 call to action, watch the June 2 MIT Community Vigil, or continue educating themselves on “on allyship, antiracism, and privilege/white fragility.”

“We encourage managers to consider canceling meetings” to “allow for reflective time for themselves and staff,” the email wrote.

According to the email, Sloan will also participate in the Virtual Day of Absence June 19 by holding discussions on allyship and dismantling systemic racism. The Virtual Day of Absence website writes that participants will protest anti-black racism by being “absent from electronic communication platforms,” including email, on June 19, a holiday celebrating the emancipation of enslaved African Americans.

# MIT community members hold peaceful BLM demonstration

*Payne: it ‘takes more than a brief acknowledgement of a broken system to tackle the difficult’ changes to fix it*

By Wenbo Wu  
NEWS EDITOR

*This article was published online on June 11, 2020.*

About 100 MIT community members held a peaceful Black Lives Matter (BLM) demonstration June 6 on the steps outside Lobby 7.

The demonstration was in response to incidents of police brutality against black Americans, including the recent killing of George Floyd by a white police officer May 25.

The two-hour event was organized by Cadence Payne G and outgoing Black Graduate Student Association (BGSA) co-president Chelsea Onyeador G. Demonstrators held signs reading “Black lives matter,” “Scientists for black lives,” and “Disarm MIT police.”

Payne wrote in an email to *The Tech* that she and Onyeador “were anticipating that maybe 15-30 people would show since the information was circulated” less than a day before the event. It was “beautiful to see folks turnout in solidarity,” Payne wrote.

Onyeador wrote in an email to *The Tech* that demonstrators sat on the steps and “shar[ed] space with each other.”

Onyeador wrote that the event also featured two guest speakers who discussed the “absurdity” of “our racialized society”; charged “the crowd to examine their actions and the racist institutions that we all, often inadvertently, contribute to”; and called attention to the “lack of progress” towards the recommendations presented by the Black Students’ Union (BSU) and BGSA to MIT administration in 2015 in the wake of the 2014 Ferguson protests.

Payne wrote that she spoke at the closing of the event, encouraging people “to see their community structures through a critical gaze and take note of the number of Black students and faculty that constitute their departments.”

Onyeador wrote that the event came together June 5 when she and

Payne were texting, “venting” their “frustrations” about current events. “We both... wanted to be involved and support BLM efforts” and “play a more active role in calling out the injustices we felt not just as black people but as black students and academics,” Onyeador wrote.

Payne wrote that she and Onyeador then created a flyer and distributed it to their “immediate friend and departmental groups.” The event was publicized by “word of mouth and social media.”

Payne added that she and Onyeador “did not consult” MIT for official guidance. “When advertising the event, we made it very clear that MIT was not endorsing or sponsoring the demonstration in any way,” Payne wrote.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Payne wrote that they “made it clear that masks and social distancing were required to participate.” Hand sanitizer was also available, Onyeador wrote.

Payne wrote that she and Onyeador were inspired by “the individuals who ‘have been sitting’ on the Lobby 7 steps with a ‘Free Listening’ sign.”

“I felt it was important to call attention to issues” black students “faced specifically at MIT,” Onyeador wrote, adding that she wanted “our pain and our frustration to be seen.” Onyeador added that the demonstration also allowed community members “to both acknowledge” the “shortcomings of the institution” and “lend support.”

Onyeador wrote that she was “frustrated” that messaging from MIT “meant to reassure and support” black community members suggested that racism and police brutality were issues “that we faced only in the outside world.”

Candace Ross G, a demonstration attendee, said in an interview with *The Tech* that she is “not a big fan of diversity statements in and of themselves,” because they often involve “departments saying that they value their students of color” without a concrete “action plan or even a concrete goal.”

Ross said that she is “very behind MIT having a strategic plan.” Without a plan, “concrete change” is “hard to imagine” and “it just feels like words,” Ross said.

“The MIT brand is powerful,” and “taking up space on our own campus to show solidarity with the BLM movement speaks volumes,” Payne wrote. “Having students, faculty, and staff present in support of this movement” is a “powerful display.”

Payne added that while “we are at the institute of technology,” it remains “critical” to “recognize the value of humanity that plays a role in how we contribute to the world.”

Ross said that “it was pretty empowering” to see “how the Cambridge community was actively supporting students and this movement,” citing bikers whistling and “cars and buses driving by and honking every few minutes... We would start clapping every time they honked.”

Onyeador wrote that it often “feels that we are constantly having to prove our worth and that we deserve to be here,” because black students are often doubted by peers, faculty members, and administration.

Black graduate students “are never allowed the space to just focus on being technically excellent and producing good work, though we certainly do these things,” Payne wrote.

Specifically, Payne wrote that black students “also have to teach... our superiors how to be anti-racist,” “how to form spaces that serve us,” “about institutional racism and how it manifests in our own classrooms,” and “how to unlearn racist behavior and microaggressions that they may unknowingly possess and use because nobody has ever corrected them.”

“It’s been pretty heartbreaking to see how many people have been just experiencing blatant bigotry by tenured faculty members” nationwide, Ross said.

Ross added that “one of the hardest things” of being a black MIT

graduate student “is that we are just so underrepresented..., especially at the faculty level,... that it can be hard to feel like you belong.” For example, Ross pointed out that the EECS department has only 10 black graduate students out of 742 total graduate students, according to the Registrar’s website.

“We are often expected to act as representatives for our entire race” or “assimilate as much as possible in an attempt to receive acceptance from our non-black peers and colleagues,” efforts which are often still not “seen as good” or “competent enough,” Onyeador wrote.

“Most students of color here are very active in diversity and equity work, which means that you put a lot of time into it,” taking away from research, Ross said. “You do a lot of free labor because you really want to see a change,” but upon not seeing any, black students end up “sacrificing their work.”

Onyeador echoed these thoughts, writing that having to “advocate for ourselves” and “possibly make things better for the next Black student” leaves black students less “time to dedicate to academics” compared to “our white peers.”

“We are exhausted,” Payne wrote. “One week, I tallied a total of 30 hours” spent on “Diversity and Inclusion work” across “different groups and organizations,” Payne wrote, adding that although the work is voluntary, “at times it does feel like an obligation.”

Ross said that “MIT has to get to this place where you remove the burden from students” and where “efforts are driven by faculty members,... particularly tenured faculty.” Tenured faculty “objectively have more power than anyone else because it’s basically impossible to get fired,” a “unique power you don’t even see in industry,” Ross said.

Ross acknowledged that while many faculty members, including professors Wesley Harris, Edmund Bertschinger, Melissa Nobles, and Kristala Prather ’94, have worked on these efforts, the efforts were

“disproportionately” made by “faculty of color and women faculty.”

Payne wrote that it “takes more than a brief acknowledgement of a broken system to tackle the difficult systemic change required to fix it,” and that to be a good ally “is to not share a square on social media and think that” it “is enough.”

“We need more Black folks in these academic spaces” and an “institutional culture that makes them feel like they belong here,” Payne wrote. The Institute’s “prestigious” reputation is “not enough to recruit worthy Black minds” when “they often have many prestigious offers,” Payne wrote, adding that “transparency on the structure of these efforts” is “critical moving forward.”

“Many times when we try to voice these issues, we are told that we are being overly sensitive or aggressive,” Onyeador wrote.

Payne wrote that while there “is no perfect path for reversing 400+ years of the systemic oppression of Black people in this country,” individuals should listen to and learn from “the Black folks that are contributing free, emotional labor to share their experiences and expertise.”

Additionally, Payne wrote that individuals should “keep your foot on the gas”; “show up and speak out” until “the right people get the message”; “write those difficult emails”; “talk to your departmental leadership”; and “hold MIT accountable for the progress they have failed to make to recruit and retain Black students and professors” and not fulfilling the 2015 BGSA and BSU Recommendations.

The “systemic racism that results in the violent and inhuman murders of Black people at the hands of police is the same racism that exists at MIT,” Onyeador wrote.

“Your Black community is tired, and it’s now your time to put in the work behind the scenes to support them,” Payne wrote. She concluded that a “community passionately united against a broken system is a community that wins. We have nothing to lose but our chains.”

# Waitz holds three two-hour charrettes to give community members a space to propose possible ideas for the fall term

*A report detailing insights from the charrettes to be released to the MIT community ‘around June 15’*

By Kristina Chen  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

*This article was published online on June 3, 2020.*

Three two-hour charrettes were held May 26-27 over Zoom by Vice Chancellor and Team 2020 Lead Ian Waitz to gather community feedback. A charrette is “an intense collaborative design process used to” solve “a shared design challenge,” according to the Team 2020’s website.

Waitz wrote in an email to *The Tech* that the charrettes were attended by about 425 community participants in total in addition to 90 facilitators and notetakers. Of the

participants, seven percent were incoming graduate students, six percent were current graduate students, two percent were incoming first years, 23% were current undergraduates, and 62% were staff and faculty.

Waitz began each charrette by introducing the “design challenge” of proposing fall models where some, but not all, of undergraduates are on campus. He asked participants to select two or three values from those listed on the Team 2020 website to consider when designing their models.

Participants were then divided into breakout sessions for the remainder of the charrette. Across the three charrettes, there were 70

breakout sessions, Waitz wrote in his email. Each session consisted of community participants, a facilitator, and a notetaker.

In the breakout sessions, participants were given ten minutes to design a fall model with several constraints in mind. The constraints included the uncertainty of the pandemic trajectory and medical advances, measures taken to protect community health, space limitations of campus, most classes being remote, and community members’ willingness and reasons to return to campus.

In addition, participants were asked two main questions: what the academic calendar would look

like, with options such as the two or three semester models, and which undergraduates should be invited to return to campus, with possibilities including division by class year, major, course requirements, and ability to learn remotely.

Participants then shared their designs and discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the possible models.

The notetaker documented the various proposals in the breakout sessions, which were recorded with the participants’ permission.

Waitz wrote that “a team of people from Institutional Research and the Teaching and Learning Lab and a few other offices” is performing

“formal qualitative analysis” of the feedback collected. He wrote that once the data is “analyzed and synthesized,” Team 2020 will release a report to the community and to the MIT Senior Team to aid in fall decision-making.

The report will be released to the MIT community “around June 15,” Waitz wrote.

Community members were also asked by Team 2020 to submit their feedback through an online form or to organize small group discussions. According to Waitz, the online form received over 1,000 responses, which are also being analyzed by Institutional Research and the Teaching and Learning Lab.

Solution to Dough-Notssolution from page 3

A	F	T	E	R	B	R	A	D	S	T	A	T
L	E	A	S	H	R	A	V	E	L	I	F	E
E	M	P	T	Y	A	N	O	N	E	V	E	N
C	A	S	E	M	E	N	T	W	I	N	D	O
			E	E	L		S	E				
S	L	A	M		L	O	P		S	W	A	M
E	L	L		P	E	R	U		A	D	O	R
W	A	I	T	I	N	G	F	O	R	G	O	D
E	M	A	I	L		F	R	E	E		E	M
R	A	S	C	A	L		Y	E	T		S	L
			T	A	T		I	S	T			
R	I	C	E		S	A	L	E		A	L	O
I	R	O	N		I	N	O	N		T	E	M
B	E	N	D		E	K	E	D		S	N	E


Solution to Maskssolution from page 3

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

Solution to Distancing solution from page 3

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

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# MIT mathematics department faces criticism from former and current students over its lack of diversity and inclusion

*Students and faculty share personal experiences and discuss departmental problems on Piazza forum*

By **Kylee Carden**  
STAFF REPORTER

*This article was published online on June 11, 2020.*

An ongoing discussion about diversity and inclusion in the math department began on the department's Piazza page last week after several current and former math majors criticized the department's lack of inclusivity.

In response to the May 25 killing of George Floyd and other instances of police brutality against black Americans, Michel Goemans PhD '90, mathematics department head, wrote an email to the MIT Mathematics community opposing police brutality and expressed the "strong commitment in the Mathematics Department to diversity and inclusivity."

Many current and former students of the MIT Math Department took issue with Goemans' claim that diversity and inclusion are priorities for the department. A June 3 Piazza post criticizing the math department's lack of inclusivity has gained over 400 views and hundreds of comments written by students, faculty, and staff.

Shohini Stout '21, a contributor to the discussion on Piazza and former math major, wrote in an email to *The Tech* that the sentiments expressed in the email Goemans sent came across as "superficial" and that a "citation is needed" for his claims.

Barbara Peskin PhD '80, math department academic administrator, wrote in an email to *The Tech* that specific examples of the department's actions in promoting diversity and inclusion included creating the MIT Math Piazza, hosting a Diversity Forum, providing Open Advising Hours for students

to get advice from faculty, starting a mailing list for first-year students interested in math, expanding the Diversity and Community Building Committee, and supporting the Women in Math group.

The Piazza featured discussion on student and faculty diversity, as the math department has a large proportion of male and white or Asian undergraduates, graduates, and faculty.

Of the 312 undergraduate primary majors enrolled in the math department in the 2019-2020 academic year, 27 are black, seven are Native American, and 29 are Hispanic, according to the registrar website. Of the 125 graduate students in the department, one is black, one is Native American, and three are Hispanic.

There are 111 female undergraduate primary majors and 18 female graduate students in the department, according to the registrar website.

Of the 68 faculty in the math department, six are women. The mathematics faculty is mostly white or Asian with no black faculty members.

Peskin wrote that the pipeline problem, the issue of the pool of potential faculty members from underrepresented backgrounds being too small, is "a very serious problem," and that MIT offers programs such as MathROOTS and PRIMES Circle to "help widen the pipeline."

Goemans wrote in an email to *The Tech* that the department received the 2020 Award for an Exemplary Program by the American Mathematical Society for its outreach activities "with particular attention to increasing the representation of women and underrepresented minorities."

Goemans wrote that the department "just hired three assistant professors, two of them women" but that "competition for women for faculty positions, postdoctoral positions, and graduate students is fierce, and the yield is considerably lower for women."

Gigliola Staffilani, chair of the math department's Committee on Diversity and Community Building, also commented on the Piazza thread. The committee is tasked with "fostering a community of learning that is welcoming, inclusive, engaging, and aimed at the highest academic accomplishments."

Staffilani has also served on hiring committees and committees that select graduate students and postdoctoral fellows.

Staffilani wrote in an email to *The Tech* that she has the "role of checking if the search for new hires is conducted fairly in terms of diversity" and that the department personally contacts strong candidates who are women or of underrepresented backgrounds if they have not applied to MIT.

Staffilani wrote that this year, the department "hired two new women assistant professors, and one of them had not applied."

Despite the work of faculty and staff, Staffilani wrote that the ongoing discussion on Piazza revealed that math department initiatives "have gone unknown or have not been very effective."

Professor Henry Cohn '95 wrote in an email to *The Tech* that "it's sad to reflect on how far society at large, MIT, and the math department still have to go."

Goemans wrote that "there is a lot of anguish and soul-searching in the department, and this is a time for listening and understanding."

Professor Bjorn Poonen wrote in an email to *The Tech* that "the burden is not on undergraduates to solve the problems, but their advice has led to some positive developments."

For instance, Poonen has scheduled weekly Zoom meetings until the end of August for members of the math undergraduate community to talk with faculty.

The first of these sessions took place Monday. Poonen wrote that "about 10 undergrads" were present and that there was discussion about curriculum, math UROPs, and ideas for helping math majors get to know each other.

Other ideas suggested on Piazza include adding a student feedback form on the math department website, publicizing a platform for students to meet problem set partners, creating student groups for minorities in the department, increasing recitations for math classes, creating more first-year advising seminars, and developing a first-year discovery class.

*The Tech* contacted several students who participated in the Piazza thread for comment.

John Urschel G, an African American PhD student, said in an interview with *The Tech* that "there is a true underrepresentation of African Americans" in mathematics and that "issues at all levels feed into each other."

Urschel said of the inequities faced by people of color that "a lot of damage is done before a student even walks onto a college campus, and then when they walk onto a college campus, oftentimes there are not that many of them to the point where they can feel isolation because they do not necessarily feel like they belong."

Nelson Niu '21, a math major, said in an interview with *The Tech*

that it saddens him that he cannot "look at an underrepresented first-year student in the eye and say that they should be a math major and will find a home in the math department."

The culture of the math department has been another focus of the dialogue, and several students have claimed that the departmental culture is toxic, overly fixated on competitions, and exclusive.

Rona Wang '21 wrote about her experiences as a math major on the Piazza thread. Wang recounted an instance of a Putnam fellow quizzing her on math concepts and then advising Wang against taking a certain math graduate class and an instance of participants of the Mathematical Olympiad Program suggesting Wang "was hooking up with certain Olympiad boys" after they helped her with psets.

Kelly Chen '21, a math major, wrote in an email to *The Tech* that the math department's annual end-of-year celebration, although designed to be an opportunity for socialization and to honor graduating seniors, "mostly celebrated those who did extremely well in math competitions like the Putnam, as well as a handful of students who received departmental/MIT awards or distinguished fellowships."

"Aside from one professor briefly congratulating all graduating seniors, there was no mention at all of any of the students who had not won an award. This seemed to be a pretty clear indication of what kind of students the department recognizes and values," Chen wrote.

Andrew Lin '21, a math major, wrote in an email to *The Tech* that he hopes that "the increased attention on these issues will make it easier for subsequent discussions about systemic improvements."

# Institute holds community vigil in the wake of protests over George Floyd's murder by former Minneapolis police officers

*DiFava: MIT Police Department holds 'great respect for the peaceful protests' following Floyd's death*

By **Kerri Lu**  
NEWS EDITOR

*This article was published online on June 3, 2020.*

The MIT community held an online vigil June 2 "in the wake of the recent tragic killings of African American people across the United States - including the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd - and the protests that have followed," Institute Community and Equity Officer John Dozier wrote in an email to the MIT community.

Floyd was killed under police custody in Minneapolis May 25 when former officer Derek Chauvin pressed his knee into Floyd's neck for about eight minutes, The New York Times reported. Protests erupted in U.S. cities, including Boston, the week following Floyd's death.

The Institute Community and Equity Office (ICEO) hosted the vigil.

Dozier began the vigil by asking MIT community members to "lean on your community — reach out to your friends, mentors, advisors, colleagues, and professors" in "these troubling times... complicated by physical distancing."

President L. Rafael Reif also addressed the community: "We know, and we insist, that black lives matter. That black lives are worthy and complex and inspiring. That every black person is unique and as beautifully human, and that every black person of every age, everywhere, deserves dignity and decency and respect."

"This truth, and the basic humanity of people of color, are violated in our nation every day," Reif said, citing Floyd's death as an example. "But so many have suffered before him, over weeks and decades and centuries. Our nation is in terrible trouble," Reif said, citing the "systemic racism that is destroying us from the inside."

Reif asked the MIT community to "accelerate positive change" by "insisting on full accountability for the officers" involved in Floyd's killing, supporting the current protests, which are "overwhelmingly filled with peaceful people begging for justice," and calling for reform of the criminal justice system.

Reif said that those who have the "advantages" of education, money, power, and "even safety in our homes and neighborhoods" benefit "every day from a society with a racist history and a racist present. And MIT is part of that society."

Reif urged viewers to support MIT's ongoing effort, led by Dozier, to "develop a strategic plan for diversity, equity, and inclusion" in the MIT community.

Undergraduate Association President Danielle Geathers '22 said that "as a black woman, my heart is heavy... not only because of the persistent racist attacks on black lives which are exacerbated by the disproportionate impact of COVID-19," but also the "abject pain that accompanies the prevalent normalcy surrounding black deaths and the vulnerability of black lives."

Geathers said that the deaths of Arbery, Taylor, Floyd, and Tony McDade are "a visible display of a prolonged injustice which has lingered beneath the surface since before our country's founding."

Geathers cited the history of racial inequality at MIT, pointing out that "even today, many black students don't feel fully supported by the Institute."

"An overt act of hate is only one manifestation of racism," Geathers said. "We cannot solely denounce hate, but we must be vigilantly aware of its cousins: privilege, ignorance, and apathy. We must improve" MIT's ability to be "a place of opportunity, and to reverse the existential threats that confront all of us."

Graduate Student Council President Madeleine Sutherland G urged viewers to "remember to take care of" themselves as they "go out into the world to fight injustice."

"There comes a time when we have to call evil by its name. The anti-black racism plaguing this country and claiming so many lives is one such time," Sutherland said. "In particular to my non-black colleagues, it is important to listen to and believe our neighbors who have been telling us about racism and police brutality for years."

Office of Minority Education Director DiOnetta Crayton said that activists can bring "positive change" by being "warriors" for "justice in our own spaces, in our own spheres of influence."

Crayton said that two types of activism are necessary. "We need



KEVIN PHO—THE TECH

**Demonstrators sit together** in solidarity on the steps in front of Lobby 7 on a Saturday afternoon

those called to serve and change systems from within, and we also need those called to shake the walls, the ceilings, and the very foundations of oppressive policies and systems from without," Crayton said.

Crayton cited several leaders — Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton, President John F. Kennedy, President Barack Obama, Nelson Mandela, Petey Greene, Shirley Chisholm, Shirley Ann Jackson, Angela Davis, Ava DuVernay, and the founders of the Black Lives Matter movement — who inspired change in the fight for civil rights.

"We need everyone who says they care, not just to care but to do

their part to fight the injustices that threaten to destroy us all," Crayton said.

Dozier said that police brutality against black Americans "speaks to the systemic dehumanizing and undervaluing of black lives, born out of slavery, reinforced by Jim Crow laws, and promoted even today by media stereotypes," and is not merely "the result of a few bad people doing bad things."

"We can and must legislate the hateful dehumanizing actions of those who are unwilling to check their biases. I stand in support of the peaceful protesters insisting

Vigil, from Page 11

on accountability in the recent killing,” Dozier said, emphasizing that he supports the MIT community’s efforts to build a more “inclusive, equitable, and just future.”

Corban Swain G said that Floyd’s killing is “on the continuum of our experiences with inequities in education and representation in the student body and faculty of MIT.” The ensuing protests “and their documented sabotage by incendiary groups” are “on the continuum of the Black History Month installation in Lobby 7 in 2019 and its desecration with symbols of hate,” Swain said.

Swain read two poems, “On-Campus Security” and “The Movement,” that he wrote about racial injustice. “On-Campus Security” was based on an email sent to an MIT dorm community to publicize a party in February that was later canceled.

“The email repeated the phrase ‘average black male around five foot six wearing a blue backpack’ nine times, jokingly referencing a police description of a suspected dorm intruder. Although an apology was made, for black folks on campus this was unfortunately another example of how we were not welcome,” Swain said.

In the poem, Swain replaced each instance of the repeated phrase with a description of racism “to shape a narrative about the struggle for inclusivity and security for black students on campus.”

History professor and criminal defense lawyer Malick Ghachem said that “policing practices... must change in radical ways,” but this change will require “sacrifice.”

“I do not know whether overcoming police brutality requires the wholesale abolition of police departments,” but “if we had police departments that acted more like fire departments..., seeking to heal or to put out fires rather than to apply force and escalate tension, we would almost certainly be in a better place,” Ghachem said, citing the medical personnel from the Minneapolis Fire Department who “tried to save” Floyd after the police had “done their damage.”

Ghachem called on viewers to draw from the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic, to realize that “people are in fact capable of making great sacrifices and undertaking great risks, but also that the distribution of sacrifice and risk in America is very uneven.”

Ghachem also advocated an increased “appetite” for “productive confrontation” in the face of injustice.

Literature professor Sandy Alexandre referenced Toni Morrison’s statement that “the very serious function of racism is distraction.”

Alexandre said that “to tell yourself that racism is a distraction is, in effect, a coping mechanism.”

“The past and the present have proven time and time again that racism is not merely a thorn in a person’s side. It’s also a suffocating knee on a person’s neck,” Alexandre said.

“To graduate from the notion that racism is a distraction is to enter into more advanced knowledge that racism is, in fact, also a serial killer. This is not sensationalism. This is not hyperbole. This is what MIT on any ordinary day would call ‘hard data,’” Alexandre said.

Alexandre said that racism “has killed Fred Hampton, Henry Dumas, Amadou Diallo, Oscar Grant, Tamir Rice, Freddie Gray, Sandra Bland, Eric Garner, Philando Castile, Atatiana Jefferson, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, David McAtee, and many more.”

“You effectively turn a serial killer into a personal henchman when you see it destroying communities of color and you sit idly by, letting it continue on its killing spree,” Alexandre said.

Alexandre urged the MIT community to fight racism by “supporting people and organizations that affirm the full range... of black lives” and “undernourishing and starving white supremacy and its minions.”

Ramona Allen, vice president for human resources, compared racism to a virus that “mutates and changes,” leading to a “national sickness marked by widespread economic, political, and social inequalities.”

Allen connected her experiences with racial inequality as a child in segregated Boston to the “collective, deep-seated, historical traumas that are now manifesting on the streets.”

“It’s exhausting to be a person of color in this country,” Allen said. “I’m tired of imagining my husband, family, and friends, people who look like George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, facing a legal system that does not recognize their fundamental worth and humanity.”

Allen urged members of the MIT community to take action: “Educate yourself. Raise awareness. Sign petitions. Donate to bail funds. Support our activists. Protest. Vote. We need all people involved — not just people of color, but all people — to fight for change.”

Allen emphasized the need for “changes in laws, behaviors, and hiring practices” and “greater opportunity for people from marginalized communities to access education.”

Chevy Cleaves, Lincoln Laboratory chief diversity and inclusion officer, said that his military service was “meant to purchase for all citizens — not just some of them — the opportunity to realize, embrace, and extend our highest ideals.”

However, “the sacrifice that established and now sustains us is cheapened by the message that our Constitution and our institutions are for some citizens and not all,”

Cleaves said. “Like many others, I have feared for my family, those who look like us, and the community of those Americans who understand the meaning and possibility of our aspirations.”

Cleaves expressed his hope that Americans “commit to facing the common internal threat” of racism “in a way that brings sustained change.”

Black Student Union (BSU) co-chair AudreyRose Wooden ’21 read a poem she wrote, titled “Our Protectors,” about the strength of the black community.

Former BSU co-chair Kelvin Green II ’21 said that “fighting the violent reality of racism” cannot be done alone. “To me, this means we must tap into the ancestors and their wisdom. They are those that thought of us, here and now, who knew we would have questions, who knew we would be outraged, and then decided to write so that we could read.” Green then read a passage from Morrison’s Beloved.

BSU co-chair Kendyll Hicks ’20 expressed sorrow for “the families whose black mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, sons, and daughters” were “treated as problems instead of people; whose bodies were battered by those who were sworn to protect them; who fell victim to a system that has masterminded the murder of a people.”

“Do you really care about your black students, faculty, and staff if you’re not willing to use your power and resources to protect us?” Hicks asked MIT administrators.

Hicks compared MIT’s vigorous response to the COVID-19 pandemic to MIT’s inaction against the “public health crisis” of police brutality. “To acknowledge and be informed without concrete effort is to be complicit and to support the police terror that’s occurring,” Hicks said.

Hicks called on MIT administrators to “publicly demand the accountability of all officers involved” in Floyd’s death and “publicly support the demonstrations and broader black liberation efforts happening across the country.”

“Accept this problem as your own because we will never achieve an equitable and just community on campus if our humanity is being disregarded everywhere else,” Hicks said.

Hicks said that to honor the lives lost, “we must listen, learn, educate, speak up, vote, donate, empathize, love, and fight.”

Aiyah Josiah-Faeduwor G said that “for the collective struggle for black liberation,” many members of the black community “charge ourselves with the task of being vulnerable and doing the spiritual, emotional, and physical labor” of publicly sharing their identities and experiences.

Josiah-Faeduwor said that by the time he was eighteen, he had seen his father and two older brothers incarcerated, adding that

by then, his “biggest fear in life involved encounters with the police.”

“I wanted to remain free and safe from what plagued my community. I didn’t want to end up in the predicament each role model I had growing up fell into,” Josiah-Faeduwor said.

“Today, before policies change, our mentality” and “collective commitment to the liberation of black people must,” Josiah-Faeduwor said. “The time is now, and we need that support now. There are black lives being lost in these streets, and the decisions each of us make over the next few days may impact the fate of our world for the next few generations.”

Jaleesa Trapp G called the MIT community to reflect on their everyday interactions with black people: “If it feels awkward when you’re checking in on black people in your research group [or] on your staff, why does that feel awkward? Is that the only time that you check in with them?”; “Do your students feel comfortable at a place like MIT?”; “Do we acknowledge that MIT was created because of the slave economy?”

Trapp asked viewers to educate themselves about racism against the black community: “Why is it that, when there’s a high profile black death..., you have to ask where you should donate?”; “Are you actively looking for black people to support” who “do this work all the time?”; “What are you doing to educate yourself everyday, and not just when something happens?”

To conclude the vigil, Heather Konar, Office of Graduate Education communications officer, led a performance of Rhiannon Giddens’ “Cry No More.”

An anonymous commenter wrote in the chat during the vigil that MIT should “remove the Blue Lives Matter flag from MIT Police.”

Lynda Nelson, senior administrative assistant for MIT Research Administration Services, responded that the Blue Lives Matter flag should not be removed, citing the killing of MIT officer Sean Collier by the perpetrators of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing. Nelson wrote, “Boston Strong - ALL lives matter!”

Fran Marrone, administrative assistant for the aeronautics and astronautics department, concurred with Nelson: “I am so sad for Officer Sean. All lives do matter.”

Several commenters criticized Nelson’s statement. Anthony Farrell ’13, administrative assistant for the Institute Events Office, wrote that the Blue Lives Matter flag “continues to minimize the importance of the Black Lives Matter movement without listening to their words” and “is a painful symbol of disregard for the black community.”

ICEO Program Director Beatriz Cantada wrote in response to Nelson, “I’d be happy to engage in discussion with you about how Blue

Lives Matter is problematic and anti-Black.”

The ICEO later removed Nelson’s comment and its responses from the chat.

MIT Police Chief John DiFava wrote in an email to the MIT community June 2 that Floyd’s killing left him “shaken and angry.” DiFava condemned the “cruel violence” of the killing and “the shame it casts on the vast majority of law enforcement officers who are trying to do a good job.”

DiFava wrote that MITPD has “great respect for the peaceful protests” following Floyd’s death.

“We know that this tragic event is one of many injustices African Americans have suffered at the hands of police over time. We support the need for change,” DiFava wrote.

DiFava wrote that “a culture built on trust, diversity, fairness and inclusion” is “ingrained in everything we do at MITPD.” Officers “continually make efforts to self-assess and to listen,” training “constantly to build and reinforce the habits and values of good policing,” DiFava wrote.

DiFava wrote that all MITPD officers “stand together with the MIT community on the side of justice and human decency.”

“Our job — one we take very seriously — is to keep our community safe. That means every member of our community, without exception and with absolute respect for the dignity of all,” DiFava wrote.

Reif wrote in an email to the MIT community May 29 that the killings of black Americans “highlight yet again the tragic persistence of racism and systemic injustice” in the U.S.

“I know that the pain of these events is especially intense for certain members of our community, beginning with those who are African American and of African descent, though certainly not ending there,” Reif wrote, adding that the COVID-19 pandemic and “rising strains in U.S.-China relations” have also led to “harassment and discrimination” against members of the MIT community.

Reif wrote that he charged Dozier to lead an effort to “strengthen” the MIT community and “work on these challenges, for ourselves and for our society,” building “a community where we aspire always to treat one another with sympathy, humility, decency, respect and kindness.”

A list of resources for MIT community members can be found on the ICEO website. According to the website, Student Mental Health and Counseling Services is creating a workshop series on “responding to and processing racial microaggressions and healing from racial incidents” and a discussion group on coping with recent events of “targeted violence toward communities of color as well as the compounded disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color.”

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