thetech.com

WEATHER, p. 2 Sunny and breezy FRI: 61°F | 52°F SAT: 75°F | 56°F Mostly sunny.

Thursday, October 8, 2020

Volume 140, Number 34



Members of the MIT community receive their flu shots at the Johnson Athletic Center Monday.

IN SHORT

Half-term subjects final exam period will start Friday and take place next week.

Indigenous People's Day is Monday. No classes will be held. Tuesday will follow the Monday schedule of classes.

Flu vaccines are available at MIT Medical flu clinic in the Johnson Athletic Center from 8 a.m.-4 p.m on weekdays for all Covid Pass participants and enrolled students, until Oct. 16. The clinic will be closed on Monday.

To register for Spring classes, all MIT students must submit proof of receiving a flu shot by Oct. 30.

Nominations for recent MIT **graduates** to the MIT Corporation are open until Oct. 30.

Interested in joining The Tech? Email join@tech.mit.edu.

Send news and tips to news@

MIT launches pilot to detect for COVID-19 in residential wastewater

Method allows asymptomatic detection

By Sophia Wang

MIT introduced a wastewater testing pilot initiative to monitor COVID-19 on campus late September. The project has been implemented in seven buildings: Random House, McCormick Hall, Simmons Hall, Sidney-Pacific, Tang Hall, Westgate Apart-

ments, and the Sloan School of Management

The project complements the clinical testing conducted by MIT Medical, Vice President of Campus Services and Stewardship Joe Higgins and Senior Associate Dean of Housing and Residential Services

Wastewater Testing, Page 2

Simmons Hall dining worker tested positive for COVID-19 Individuals not contacted by MIT Medical are not

known to be at risk for getting COVID-19 from worker

By Nicole Chan

Simmons Hall temporarily closed its dining service the evening of Oct. 1 after a Simmons dining staff member tested positive for COVID-19.

MIT Dining Director Mark Hayes wrote in an email to Simmons residents Oct. 1 that the staff member 'worked in the kitchen area and was not involved with serving meals to residents." The staff member selfisolated and was "responding well"

Hayes wrote that MIT Dining and Housing and Residential Services performed a "deep cleaning of all potentially affected spaces in Simmons." Dinner service for Simmons residents was temporarily moved to Lobdell Dining Hall in the Student Center for the evening following Hayes' email.

Additionally, MIT Medical contacted all individuals who "may have had close contact with the staff member" and reported the case to public health officials, Hayes wrote. Individuals who "have not heard from MIT Medical" have "no known risk" of contracting COVID-19 "from this case."

Hayes wrote in an email to The Tech that "the wellbeing and safety of diners and staff is a top priority for MIT Dining and Bon Appetit."

Hayes wrote that dining staff members are tested "twice a week" like "students, faculty, and staff." When working in the kitchens and serving food to students, dining staff "follow federal, state, local," and MIT guidelines "for reopening restaurant and foodservice operations," including wearing personal protective equipment, "physical distancing in kitchens and serving areas, and enhanced cleaning protocols."

Hayes wrote that if additional dining staff members test positive, "the dining operation where they work will close for 24 hours for enhanced cleaning while MIT Medical begins contact tracing and notifies any individuals who have had close contact with the staff member." Moreover, "meals for the affected community will be served in an alternate location until their dining facility can safely reopen."

In his email to Simmons residents, Hayes wrote that students should call MIT Medical's COV-ID-19 hotline if they are "experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, such as fever, cough, fatigue, or shortness of breath." He wrote that MIT community's compliance of public health measures "have helped keep our campus transmission rate successfully low," citing recently collected data from MIT COVID-19 testing. According to the MIT COVID Apps Dashboard, MIT has had eight positive cases among 16,177 tests performed in the past seven days.

Five MIT Turing Award winners endorse Joe Biden, Kamala Harris ticket in November 2020 election

Liskov: international students who study in the United States are a 'very important driver' of technological progress

By Caroline Cunningham

24 Turing Award winners, including five MIT computer science professors, endorsed Joe Biden for the Nov. 3 presidential election in a statement Sept. 18. The MIT computer science faculty who joined the endorsement are Professors Shafi Goldwasser, Butler Lampson, Barbara Liskov, Ronald Rivest, and Michael Stonebraker.

According to the Association for Computing Machinery, Turing Award winners are selected for their "contributions of a technical nature to the computing community."

The Turing Award winners' endorsement states that "Joe Biden and Kamala Harris listen to experts before setting public policy," which is "essential when science and technology may help with many problems facing our nation today."

The endorsement writes that "information technology is thoroughly globalized," citing international students in U.S. computer science departments and "international collaboration" on open source projects. "Computer Science is at its best when its learnings and discoveries are shared freely in the spirit of progress. These core values helped make America a leader in information technology.'

Stonebraker said in an interview with The Tech that President Donald Trump's "anti-science" positions on issues such as COVID-19 and climate change are "unacceptable."

Stonebraker also noted the contrast between MIT as an institution

Endorsement, Page 2

MIT Medical provider tested positive for COVID-19

An MIT Medical health care provider tested positive for CO-VID-19, MIT Medical Director Cecilia Stuopis '90 wrote in an email to the MIT community Sept. 30.

Stuopis wrote that the affected individual "is isolating at home" and "doing well." Additionally, MIT responded to the positive case with "swift action" including "contact tracing, communication with affected individuals, support for those in quarantine, deep cleaning of af-

fected spaces, and appropriate coordination with local and state health authorities."

Stuopis wrote in an email to The Tech that MIT Medical determined "through contact tracing" that the case was likely not contracted at MIT. Instead, "there was a clear episode that occurred off campus at a social gathering."

Stuopis wrote that "it is not unusual for health care providers, in any setting, to contract CO-VID-19." She wrote to The Tech that MIT Medical is keeping its health

care providers safe with "special precautions" including "proper PPE [personal protective equipment]" and "environmental modifications and design."

"For example, areas like the testing trailer are designed specifically to prevent viral transmission and keep both staff and patients safe," Stuopis wrote. Additionally, "MIT Medical staff members are working in solo offices, avoiding group meetings, and staying apart whenever possible."

— Caitlin Fukumoto

Face mask regulations increased in Cambridge Violations may lead to \$300 fine

By Vyshnavi Vennelakanti

The City of Cambridge's face covering policy starting Oct. 2 requires all residents over the age of five to wear face coverings in all public places, businesses, and common areas of residential buildings.

Face coverings can only be removed while seated in restaurants or cafes for dine-in. Those found in

violation of the order may be issued a warning or a violation notice with a fine of \$300.

Regardless of pod affiliation or physical distancing, students living on campus are required to wear face coverings in "all outdoor common areas, including walkways, courtyards

Face Covering, Page 2

SATURDAY NIGHT IIVF

A fresh injection of humor. ARTS, p. 8

SPEAK UP

Silence hurts. OPINION, p. 4

URM CAN'T WAIT

A strategic plan is not enough. OPINION, p. 5



BOSTON BOOK FESTIVAL

Bringing people together virtually. ARTS, p. 8

MOON BOY

How many cows do you reckon have jumped over the moon?

CAMPUS LIFE, p. 6

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Thursday, October 8, 2020

WEATHER

Flu shot season

By Masha Geogdzhayeva and Renbin Liu

The severe thunderstorm last night should have all of us in Boston feeling refreshed and awake, enough to tide us over until we can sleep in this long weekend. When you're done catching your zzz's, though, consider an outing. This weekend promises warm temperatures in the 60s and 70s and clear skies, perfect to enjoy everything you love about autumn without the usual weather-induced discom-

fort. Use this opportunity to take a nice walk to somewhere you can get your mandatory flu shot done before the fall chills fully set it.

In the meantime, Hurricane Delta is raging through the Gulf Coast and is expected to threaten coastal Louisiana as a major hurricane. Unlike the lazy slow-moving Hurricane Sally, Delta is expected to move relatively quickly and bring dangerous storm surge and wind to the Gulf Coast. After landfall, Delta will bring heavy rainfall to the Ohio Valley and mid-Atlantic.

Extended Forecast

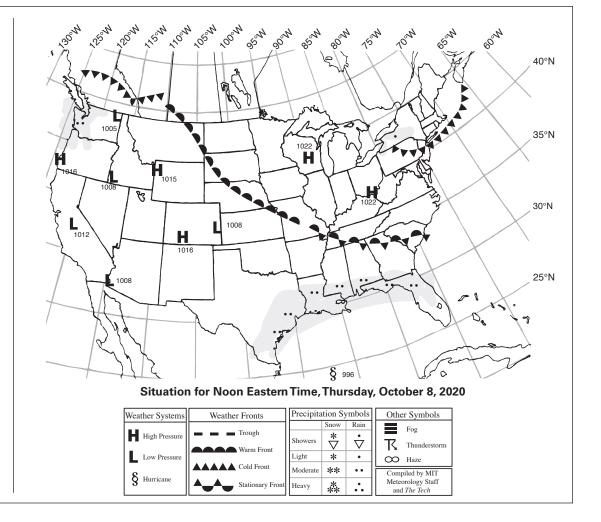
Today: Sunny. Breezy, with northwest winds around 18-21 mph. High 61°F (16°C).

Tonight: Clear. Northwest wind around 10-15 mph. Low 43°F (6°C).

Tomorrow: Sunny. West wind around 8-10 mph. High around 61°F (16°C) and low around 52°F (11°C).

Saturday: Mostly sunny. Southwest wind around 14-18 mph. High around 75°F (24°C) and low around 56°F (13°C).

Sunday: Mostly sunny. North to northeast wind around 9 mph. High around 72°F (22°C) and low around 49°F (9°C).



Trump visa restrictions have caused Chinese students at MIT to 'struggle'

Endorsement, from Page 1

that "believes in science" and Trump as an individual who "totally rejects science."

Liskov said in an interview with *The Tech* that international students who study in the U.S. are "a very important driver" of technology.

Both Liskov and Stonebraker said that they head computing re-

search groups at MIT with a significant proportion of international students. Liskov said that she signed the endorsement due to the Trump administration's perceived "lack of understanding" about the benefits international students bring to the U.S. Liskov added that having the "best possible people" is the "best way to compete" with other countries in scientific and technological

Stonebraker said that the U.S. benefits from international students who come for their education and then "tend to stay." He noted that the U.S.'s pull of the "best and brightest" computer science students has "enhanced [the country's] gene pool."

The New York Times reported Sept. 18 that four of the Turing winners who signed the endorsement said in an interview that President Trump's "restrictive" policies on immigration are harmful to computing.

MIT and Harvard sued the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) after ICE announced July 6 that international students with F-1 visas could not take a fully online course load and remain in the U.S. for the fall. DHS and ICE rescinded the policy directive July 14.

scinded the policy directive July 14.
Stonebraker said that "the new

visa restrictions" enacted by the Trump administration have caused many Chinese students at MIT to "struggle."

Stonebraker added that he is "nervous" that under Trump's immigration policies, the U.S. may lose "technical domination," and that to avoid "negative consequences," the next president must prevent the U.S. from losing the technological ""rms race"

Wastewater detection does not depend on availability of clinical testing

Wastewater Testing, from Page 1

(HRS) David Friedrich wrote in an email to residents Sept. 21.

The project is a partnership between the biological engineering department's Alm Lab; MIT Facilities; the Office of Environment, Health and Safety; Housing and Residential Services; and MIT Medical, Higgins and Friedrich wrote.

Alm Lab research scientist Katya Moniz PhD '14 said in an interview with *The Tech* that the initiative detects cases at the residential level and projects clinical data. If successful, the program may serve as a long-term adaptive testing procedure.

"A sampling device has been installed in the wastewater exit pipes of the pilot buildings. Samples will be collected daily, and tested for SARS-CoV-2," Higgins and Friedrich wrote, noting that wastewater-based detection of SARS-CoV-2 is an "effective early warning system for COVID-19 at an aggregate level."

"No personally identifiable information will be derived from these samples, and we will not use them for any purpose other than monitoring SARS-CoV-2," they

The technology used in the wastewater testing initiative has been in development for years at the Alm Lab. Moniz said.

The Alm Lab will be processing wastewater samples for the fall semester. The team has extensive experience in the testing process, both at the treatment facility level and at the manhole level (serving a few thousands of people in nearby neighborhoods).

Moniz said that "data suggests there is a lot of shedding before people go to the doctor" with many pathogens "detectable in wastewater." Symptomatic and asymptomatic infections can be detected with this method, Moniz said, which cannot "necessarily" be done clinically "because people who aren't sick don't come in." Furthermore, wastewater detection "doesn't depend on the availability of clinical testing," making it "unbiased" and "sensitive."

Moniz said that six of the seven buildings tested through the pilot

are undergraduate and graduate residential halls chosen based on the ease of access to their wastewater pipes.

The project team led a community meeting on Sept. 23 open to all residents of houses involved in the pilot. Friedrich wrote in an email to *The Tech* that "the general consensus among residents who attended these sessions was that this pilot was a welcome approach to monitoring COVID-19 in our residential community."

Moniz said that the reason the lab is "looking at primarily residential halls is because we know SARS-CoV-2 is excreted in stools." By comparison, research on shedding through urine has been mixed. Consequently, the Sloan School of Management, the final building included in the project, is an opportunity for Alm Lab to further explore the mechanics of shedding and ultimately determine potential project scale-up, Moniz said.

All data collected from wastewater testing is anonymized, Moniz said, adding that since testing is performed at the aggregate scale, the method serves as a non-invasive, anonymized detection system. No student information is collected in the process, and wastewater testing

is limited to COVID-19 detection.

MIT Medical's clinical data will be used to validate the project. Moniz explained, "We want to make sure that if we're detecting positives, that they're true positives. We also want to make sure we're not missing people," in which case "we need to go back to the drawing board and find out what's missing in our system."

Brian Schuetz, chief of staff at MIT Medical, wrote in an email to *The Tech* that MIT Medical does not "foresee any major challenges in the collaboration," but acknowledges that "this is a new field and we don't yet know the operational, analytical or clinical issues that may arise."

Schuetz wrote that the initiative is "supported" by "the amazing data infrastructure in MIT Covid Apps, which provides a great platform for integrating and visualizing the testing, symptom and wastewater data."

Friedrich wrote that while the pilot's results are currently "being reviewed and analyzed by the Institute's Covid-19 Monitoring Team," as "the pilot initiative progresses, we will revisit the possibility of integrating this aggregated data as part of MIT's Covid-19 reporting

The house teams and student leaders of the participating residences, as well as members of the broader MIT community, have voiced support for the project during HRS-hosted briefing sessions held for the pilot initiative, Friedrich wrote

The project will be reevaluated at the end of the fall semester to determine the initiative's effectiveness and any plans to continue and expand. Moniz said.

Higgins expressed hope for the initiative, writing in an email to *The Tech* that the wastewater-based detection program "adds another dimension to the system of protection in place today" and "has the potential to transform how we approach Covid-19 detection over the long-term."

Bandanas unacceptable face coverings due to 'unacceptably low protection'

Face Covering, from Page 1

and roof decks," Judy Robinson, senior associate dean of residential education, and David Friedrich, senior associate dean of Housing and Residential Services, wrote in an email to students living on campus Sept. 30.

"Face coverings are required in all indoor common areas such as lobbies, hallways, elevators, stairwells, laundry rooms, parking lots/ garages," Robinson and Friedrich wrote. These regulations "will not impact the privileges available to members of pods in designated pod lounge areas." The MIT COVID-19 student policies write that students may remove their face coverings when "alone in a private office or personal space with a closed door" or when interacting with members of their pod in their residence hall. Students may also remove their face coverings when seated to eat or drink while

maintaining six feet of physical distancing.

The policies also write that "on the basis of published test data, bandanas are not acceptable face coverings because of unacceptably low protection."

During the summer, Cambridge residents, including students living

on campus, were permitted to temporarily remove their face coverings outdoors while maintaining six feet of physical distancing. The use of face coverings helps prevent asymptomatic people from transmitting COVID-19 to others through respiratory droplets, Robinson and Friedrich wrote.

Thursday, October 8, 2020 THE TECH 3

MIT Libraries adopt phased service policy for fall

Overdue fines have been suspended in light of COVID-19 pandemic so 'no one should stress over returning library items right now,' Fay wrote, although returning items is possible

By Vyshnavi Vennelakanti

MIT Libraries are adopting a phased plan for providing access to physical collections in the library for the fall term, while continuing to provide full access to MIT Libraries' online resources, interlibrary borrowing of digital content, and librarian virtual services. According to the MIT Libraries webpage, services are limited to current MIT students, faculty, and staff.

The webpage states that students, faculty, and staff may request scanned digital copies of materials in MIT Libraries' physical locations. Students can look up items using a quick search function on the MIT Libraries website and request digital copies of items "only available in print/hard copy."

MIT Libraries Director of Communications Brigham Fay wrote in

an email to *The Tech* that turnaround times for borrowing materials have ranged "from as little as a few hours to a few weeks." Turnaround times depend on whether MIT Libraries can "purchase an e-copy of an item," or "how quickly the supplier turns on access" to the item.

Additionally, if scans of physical items are requested, turnaround times depend on "where the item is located, the volume of requests, and the limited staffing" MIT Libraries has on campus under "safety protocols."

MIT Libraries "had to completely redesign our workflows to adapt to these unusual circumstances," Fay wrote, adding that the staff "have been incredibly flexible and dedicated to supporting the MIT community."

"In the first three weeks of the service, the MIT community submitted approximately 400 requests for digital copies of items in general Libraries. "If needed, you will be circulating collections," Fay wrote. Additionally, Distinctive Collections has received "more than 110 requests so far from MIT users."

MIT Libraries also began delivering and providing contactless pickup of physical items such as MIT-owned books and other media Sept. 28.

Individuals returning to campus can "return items at the book drop outside the entrance to Building 7." Individuals who received items via campus mail may "save the envelopes and labels," "reverse the label" containing the library address on the back, and drop the items in campus mail. However, Fay wrote that given the pandemic, "overdue fines have been suspended" and that "no one should stress over returning library items right now."

Off-campus individuals can return items by mailing them to MIT able to request one pre-paid shipping label per semester to mail items back to us," Fay wrote, adding that further details will be provided "soon" on the MIT Libraries

According to its webpage, MIT Libraries provides a chat service operating 10 a.m.-5 p.m., responds to questions via email within one business day, and offers subjectspecific help with materials for classes and research.

Fay wrote that borrowing textbooks is "a source of particular frustration to students, faculty, and librarians in a remote teaching environment." Fay added that MIT Libraries staff "are ready to help MIT students and faculty navigate these challenges," and have created an FAQ "about remote access to textbooks and other materials required for MIT classes."

The FAOs state that many publishers, including Pearson, Cengage, and McGraw Hill, do not "make electronic copies of their textbooks available for libraries to purchase, regardless of price." In cases where the Libraries cannot provide students an e-copy of a textbook, purchasing it is often the "fastest" or "only" solution. However, if cost is a concern, "financial support may be available" from Student Support Services or the Office of Graduate Education.

"MIT community members shouldn't hesitate to ask us for assistance with accessing specific resources or finding alternatives," Fay

MIT Libraries' locations have remained closed since March 14 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

MIT Libraries' Service Updates page will be updated throughout the year to reflect any changes in MIT Libraries' services.

Meet your fellow tech staff. (aka, your new 3 a.m. pset support group)



join@tech.mit.edu W20-483, 617-253-1541

Solution to Syllabus

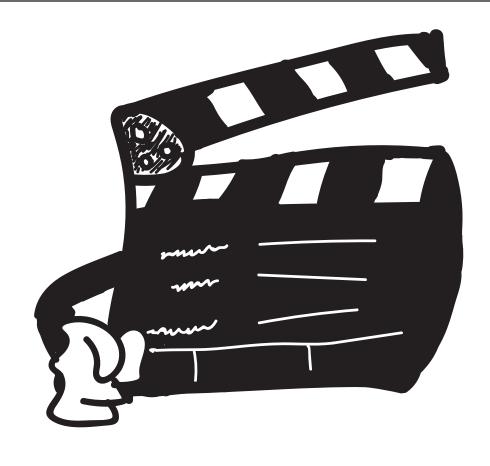
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GUEST COLUMN

Speak up to save Armenian lives

What hurts most is silence

By MIT Armenian Society

It was a very typical Saturday night that ended with a very shocking twist. At least, it would be shocking for the average person. But to me, it came less as a surprise than as a familiar reckoning with grief and emptiness. "War broke in Armenia," my mom texted. "Azerbaijan has attacked us."

Again.

The first thing you do in this kind of situation: don't panic. I am speaking from experience, trust me. The second thing you need to do is get familiar with the situation, learn what caused the attack this time, and check all the latest news. Afterward, check on your loved ones. If you are a soon-to-be-19-year-old girl like me, most of your guy friends are in the army, and they are the ones protecting your holy land and making sure your people can sleep safely at night.

I really hope no one has to experience what my people are going through right now, and the thing that hurts the most is the silence

Western media likes to portray this issue as a territorial dispute with two parties fighting on the same moral grounds.

On the morning of Sept. 27, Azeri forces began a large-scale attack of multiple fronts on Artsakh, also known as Nagorno-Karabakh. The decades-old fight of the people of Artsakh for self-determination has not been this bloody in 25 years.

Artsakh has been populated primarily by ethnic Armenians for millennia, boasting many dozens of ancient churches and other monuments. Upon the formation of the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin, at his whim, redrew each member country's borders of national republics, and this territory was handed over to Azerbaijan. For the duration of the USSR, Armenia and Azerbaijan were at peace, even though people of Artsakh kept on voicing their dissent. When the USSR collapsed, Azerbaijan unleashed a full-scale attack to prevent Artsakh from realizing its right to self-determination. Against all odds, Artsakh conducted its referendum, won the war, and declared its independence. Azerbaijan signed the ceasefire, yet it did not want to give up on Stalin's prize, so it continued on and off violating the agreement, instigating small and large provocations at the line of contact.

Azerbaijan, an oil-rich country with significant restrictions on freedom of speech, has been ruled for decades by the dictatorial regime of the Aliyev family. They have been actively using Armenians as a scapegoat and manipulating the issue of Artsakh as an excuse to silence opposition and cover up Azerbaijan's internal problems.

Azeri dictator lham Aliyev and Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdo an have been preparing for this. They have imported hundreds of Syrian mercenaries and launched their missiles at critical public infrastructures. They've sent drones to Armenia proper, not even close to the Artsakh border. Moreover, they've issued the shelling of civilian settlements in Artsakh in blatant violation of international humanitarian law. Thousands of civilians and international reporters have been subject to incessant shelling and cluster bombs across the entire region, including in Stepanakert, the capital of Artsakh.

Western media likes to portray this issue as a territorial dispute with two parties fighting on the same moral grounds, too apathetic to delve into the nuances of the conflict and take a stance (a remarkable exception is *The Guardian*). But the imbalance is clear: Azerbaijani leadership wants to claim Artsakh for their own, and they will not stop until its citizens have been driven out or slaughtered. For Armenia and Artsakh, the territory is their ancestral homeland, and as a tiny landlocked country enveloped by more prosperous powers, it is fighting for its very identity and right to self-determination.

It would be insincere of us not to try and share with you the pain we feel for senseless destruction, suffering, and death we see as the result of Azeri aggression.

Very few ethnic Armenians remain in the world; the last thing any of us want is even more dead Armenians. Yet, we also do not want dead Azeris. Our dearest wish right now is for the fighting to stop, but that won't happen until the corrupt, authoritarian Azerbaijani regime calling for violence is stopped.

Every day there is a person who hesitates to make a statement. But the only way we can achieve peace is by speaking up for justice in this world.

MIT is home for the bright and talented. We live, study, and create here together, learning from each other and growing professionally together. We felt it would be insincere of us not to try and share with you the pain we feel for senseless destruction, suffering, and death we see as the result of Azeri aggression. Though imperfect, the BLM protests from this summer serve a great example that if people unite and demand justice, change will happen. Police officers were indicted and fired, statues came down, private organizations took stances, and even MIT developed an Institute-wide action plan for diversity, equity, and inclusion. This is the power of spreading awareness and standing up for a just

Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "In the end, we will remember not the words of *our* enemies, *but the silence of our friends.*"

Every day there's a new attack on another city, another village, another house. Every day another mother loses her child, another woman becomes a widow, and another child becomes an orphan. Every day houses that were standing for decades are demolished, and yet another family stays without a roof over their head. Every day there's a new list of heroes who fell while protecting our homeland. Every day there is a person who hesitates to make a statement.

I hope you won't have to be in my shoes; at eighteen, I have already seen three wars in my lifetime. But the only way we can achieve peace is by speaking up for justice in this world.

The authors of this article are members of the MIT Armenian Society:

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Stop telling URMs to wait for change

Four ways MIT can advance DEI without a strategic plan

By Ufuoma Ovienmhada, Bianca Lepe, and Ki-Jana Carter

The 2010 Report of the Initiative for Faculty Race and Diversity called for an Institute strategic plan to address diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) among faculty at MIT. The 2015 BGSA Recommendations called for an Institute strategic plan to address recruitment of underrepresented minorities (URMs) at MIT. At the time of this article's publication, there is no strategic plan in place. However, the Institute Community and Equity Officer John Dozier and Associate Provost Tim Jamison are at present leading a steering team composed of students, staff, and faculty to design MIT's first ever Institute-wide Strategic Action Plan for DEI at MIT. Amidst the repeated calls for a strategic plan by MIT community organizers and the echoed call for a strategic plan by President Reif, a critical question emerges: should MIT really be banking all of our hopes for advancing DEI on a... plan?

The world always tells Black people and URMs to wait, and MIT's track record is no different.

There is evidence, both anecdotal and factual, that supports a strategic plan as a needed vehicle for change to occur. Strategic plans help organizations define a long-term strategy, set priorities, and make decisions on allocating resources to pursue change. Strategic plans are necessary for addressing complex long-term goals. Student leaders from the Academic Council Working Group on Community and Inclusion, and many others who have tried to make progress on DEI efforts at MIT, repeatedly point to the decentralized nature of our institution as the primary barrier to meaningful change. Hence, centralized action via a strategic plan is critical for MIT's community. Other universities — the University of Michigan, the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Oregon among many others have created strategic plans to improve the climate and opportunities for students with underrepresented identities via a long-term, comprehensive, and meaningful timeline of

While there are good reasons to design an Institute-wide strategic plan (and, to be clear, the authors strongly support strategic plans as a tool for change), this type of lengthy, committee-constrained process can cater more to timelines that are comfortable for the majority, rather than prioritizing the most marginalized among us to improve their quality of life as quickly as possible. Strategic plans, and specifically the way that strategic plans assign timelines to equity and justice, ring similar to the historical and contemporary division between the moderate strategy and the liberal strategy in global civil rights politics. In the U.S. civil rights era, moderates, who disagreed with direct action and confrontation, were heavily critiqued by Martin Luther King Jr. He wrote, "I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in the stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Council-er or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate who is more devoted to 'order' than to justice... who paternalistically feels he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by the myth of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait until a 'more convenient season."

In the 60s and 70s in South Africa, antiapartheid activist Steve Biko faced a similar challenge with the moderate. He wrote "their protests are directed at and appeal to white conscience, everything they do is directed at finally convincing the white electorate that the black man is also a man and that at some future date he should be given a place at the white man's table."

The same pattern persists today. Black community organizers who intimately know the needs of their constituents have spent centuries articulating what changes are needed to liberate Black people in America: police abolition, prison abolition, reparations, voting rights (from Part III of Stamped From the Beginning by Ibram X. Kendi). The arguments for these structural changes in society have been well laid out and backed by data by many historical and contemporary scholars.

The world always tells Black people and URMs to wait, and MIT's track record is no different. MIT organizers have provided well-thought-out arguments for structural changes through a series of recommendations and reports over the years, and when MIT did not create a strategic plan in 2010 in response to the 2010 Faculty Report, MIT told URMs to wait. When MIT did not create a strategic plan in 2015 in response to the BGSA recommendations, MIT told URMs to wait. And even now, with the creation of the DEI@MIT Strategic Planning Initiative, MIT is telling URMs to wait. We are told "cultural change is slow," and we must wait.

But what if we can't wait? What if the student who is falling behind on research due to unpaid DEI commitments can't wait?

But what if we can't wait? What if the student who is falling behind on research due to unpaid DEI commitments can't wait? What if the student who is constantly confused for the only other Black person in the department can't wait? What if the student who has never had their name pronounced correctly can't wait? The people who should set the timeline for justice and inclusion work at MIT are the URMs whom this work

is meant to uplift. Strategic plans are necessary for addressing policy changes such as Institute Discrimination and Harassment Response office procedures, major financial efforts that will require fundraising, and cultural changes in thinking. However, there are several obvious, meaningful steps that deans and department heads can take today to address DEI at MIT, without a strategic plan, that are in step with the timeline of URMs who need change now. These are drawn from the heavily researched Reject Injustice through Student Empowerment (RISE) demands. Following is a summary of four sections of the RISE Demands that can be implemented without a strategic plan:

- Reform graduate admissions Department heads and deans could immediately improve the graduate admissions process by providing fee waivers for URM applicants and removing the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), which does not provide any meaningful insight into the readiness of graduate students, from all graduate applications. Removing the GRE is a change that several departments, including the Media Lab and Aero Astro, have already taken. In addition, every department should commit to sending a representative to a diversity conference every year and allocate finances to make this happen.
- **Increase** resources for support education and To create an environment at MIT that actively supports URMs, people of nonbinary genders, and women, school and department-level leaders should also require annual anti-bias training for members of admissions committees and live (as opposed to pre-recorded) anti-bias and diversity training for all faculty who will serve as student mentors. There is ample research demonstrating how to make these trainings effective, and department heads and deans should leverage this research and implement these requirements.
- Increase student participation in faculty hiring and tenure decisions Because faculty spend so much of their time directly interacting with students, it is crucial that student input be involved in the hiring and tenure processes for departmental faculty members. To facilitate this, departments should invite student-elected representatives to sit in on the interview panel and participate in the discussion of new faculty hires and include student letters in tenure application packages (~20). These letters will come from currently and/or formerly mentored students, students taught by the candidate, and student representatives from departmental DEI student groups.
- ${\bf Provide financial support for DEI labor}$ Students are at MIT to be students, but some minority students suffer from a phenomenon known as the Minority Tax in which URM students and allies

disproportionately devote time away from their research towards greater DEI advocacy efforts, often putting them in academically and professionally challenging positions without any protections. Furthermore, while students are expected to serve on DEI committees unpaid, MIT pays Diversity and Inclusion Consultants hourly rates starting at hundreds of dollars per hour. MIT must take action to value the labor of students engaged in the ideation and execution of DEI efforts either through hourly pay or partial graduate fellowships. The institute-wide DEI@MIT Strategic Planning Initiative has set a precedent for this need by committing to pay all students serving on the steering committee.

We shouldn't bank all of our hopes for a just MIT on a multi-year process when there are many simple changes that can be implemented immediately.

These changes are straightforward to implement and should be adopted across the board immediately. MIT can and should proceed with the DEI@MIT Strategic Planning Initiative and their timelines. Student organizers can and should continue to interact with that initiative and hold Institute leaders accountable to their timelines. But URM students are suffering today. We shouldn't bank all of our hopes for a just MIT on a multi-year process when there are many simple changes that can be implemented immediately. Furthermore, we need to move faster, not just for the sake of moving faster, but to mitigate the harm that marginalized people at MIT are experiencing. Those in positions of power who resist adopting these easy, evidence-based approaches to increasing diversity and inclusion are comfortable with the status quo that repeatedly oppresses certain members of our MIT community. Department heads and deans must take the above recommended actions now to demonstrate that they are not in the business of policing the timeline for underrepresented minorities and genders to receive equitable, inclusive, and just treatment at MIT.

If you support this form of change on our campus, please sign our petition, reach out to us at rise4mit@gmail.com, support our campaign, and join us at a RISE event happening in your department.

Ufuoma Ovienmhada is a PhD student in AeroAstro, a co-president of the BGSA, and an organizer with RISE.

Bianca Lepe is a PhD student in Biological Engineering and an organizer with RISE.

Ki-Jana Carter is a PhD student in Materials Science and an organizer with RISE.



WENBO'S WALKS

When you wish upon a moon

A four-leaf clover for a block of cheese

By Wenbo Wu

EDITOR

When I was young, I used to dream of a little boy on the moon. And when he'd dream, he'd hope and wish that dreams didn't end so soon. He'd walk a little crater and sing a little greater of another on earthen ground. "Oh how nice it must be, how calm and at peace, it must be to finally be found!"

The boy often wished upon a star, the only one he knew. His turning world phased him none, though oft he caught the blues. In the dark he'd ponder away, unknowing of his worth. He'd wish that there would come a day when his star would face him north.

He wandered searching, looking for something, oh what a lonely sight! He'd call out forever into the darkness and far into the night. The darkness followed, and he encircled, he put on quite a chase! He once caught his shadow, but it slipped from his fingers, before it flew away.

He could hardly be real, not seeing himself, in palms or on the floor. He used to pine for a wizard or elf, to lift him from this chore. He'd stand, then fall, then rise again, in his task to chase the light. For the darkness loomed above his head, and filled him quite with fright.

I paced like him as nomads do, from Dallas to New York. I questioned him with longing eyes, "For whom do you fall short?" I calmed my dreams with poetry, yet lingered

on the words. I placate minds in twos or threes, and hummed between the chords.

Like the phases of the moon, my heartstrings waxed and waned. How I yearned to keep it full, to leave pain sick with vain! The shadow glued to my figure ran, as I fled the darkened street. I tossed and turned and wept again, all within my sheets.

But came a day when I converged, upon happy happenstance, a field of dreams from a movie scene enraptured in a trance. I sat me down and beside me found the prettiest path of ground, and upon inspection discovered confections of the clover most prettily profound.

Its quadruplicate leaves left me no longer bereaved, for luck saw someone too. I looked into his very eyes, and thus proclaimed it true. The boy on the moon awoke with a start, and in his heart a fire grew. Beside him bloomed a silent companion, *maybe he's like me too*.

Thus hands were held and natures felt in many exclaims of glee. Reality's reprieve from depths of dreams is that it's not temporary. In six months felt, in six months past, the moon had danced thus forth. Even in the umbra of the newest moon, I'd know its joy henceforth.

So I ask of dreams, and dreamers alike, to raise a glass tonight. I hope you sleep well, and I hope you stay strong, for the love that'll come to light. And I hope when you look up, you'll see what I see, perhaps someone dreaming too. And them not so lonely, with their company, and a marvelous breathtaking view



A boy looks at the only star he knows.

WENBO WU — THE TEO

It's Dangerous to Go Alone!



Take This.

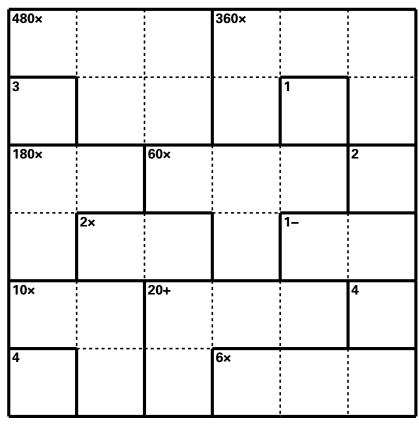
photo@tech.mit.edu

6		4	8					
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					4	5		9

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.

Exam Conflict

Solution, page 3



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.

Three Pack by Steve Faiella

Solution, page 3

ACROSS

- 1 Flat craft on a river 5 24-hr. cash sources
- 9 Washbowl
- 14 Fencing sword
- 15 Hammer target
- 16 Wear down gradually
- 17 With 61 Across, giving up another for one's own benefit
- 19 Makes airtight
- 20 Unlikely, as a chance
- 21 Acrobatic performance
- 23 Canary or kitty 24 Honolulu's island
- 26 __ as a cucumber
- 28 Make a mess of things
- 33 Foamy chocolate dessert
- 35 Elongated fish
- 36 Cause of woe
- 37 Sounds of relief
- 38 Nightingale Pledge takers: Abbr.
- 39 After-tax
- 40 Type of IRA plan
- 42 Scooby-__ (toon dog)

- 43 Sports-shoe grippers
- 46 Reveal secret intentions
- 49 Say loudly
- 50 François' girlfriend
- 51 Pose a riddle
- 54 Took a snooze
- 56 Term like "my dear lady"
- 59 Muscle twinge
- 61 See 17 Across
- 64 Dance music often played on an accordion
- 65 Grow weary 66 Fancy hired car
- 67 Large beer mug
- 68 Alternatively
- 69 Saint-Laurent of fashion

DOWN

- 1 Football official, for short
- 2 Orangutans, for instance
- 3 Have the opinion
- 4 Monotonous
- 5 Raggedy 42 Down
- 6 Touches a base, then runs 7 Senator Romney
- 8 Doesn't sit straight

- 9 Give, as a prize
- 10 "__ we there yet?"

- 18 Islamic priests
- 22 Christmas carol
- 25 Color variety
- 27 High shot in tennis

- 31 What a long sock might reach
- 32 Movie sound stages
- 33 The fourth planet

- 38 Casino spinner
- 41 Rd. without traffic lights
- 43 America's Uncle
- 44 Top-shelf, informally
- 47 He never disagrees

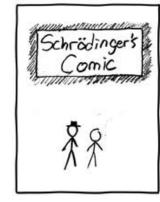
- 11 Bathtub cake
- 12 Just chillin'
- 13 Hatchling's home

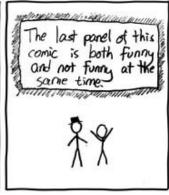
- 28 Great enjoyment
- 29 Choir member
- 30 Military levels

- 34 "This is not good . . ."
- 42 Small plastic person
- 45 "In a perfect world . . ."
- 48 Works a banquet
- 51 Nile reptiles
- 15 16 17 19 20 25 30 |31 |32 33 | 34 35 40 51 52 53 56 59 64 65 66
- 52 Detect visually
- 53 Veggie with crinkly leaves
- 55 TV psychologist Dr. ___ McGraw
- 57 Tel __, Israel
- 58 Viral Internet idea 60 Glide down snow
- 62 Itsy-bitsy
- 63 "Send help" signal

[45] Schrodinger











There was no alt-text until you moused over.

THE TECH 7

TV REVIEW

Saturday Night Live's Season 46 premiere offers satisfying satire of a world on fire

In their return to live performance, *SNL* finds humor in the uncertainty and confusion we all feel right now

★★★☆

Saturday Night Live Season 46 Premiere

Directed by Don Roy King

Screenplay by Anna Drezen, Colin Jost, Michael Che, and Kent Sublette

Starring Chris Rock and Megan Thee Stallion

By Raj Movva

I don't envy the Saturday Night Live cast right now. There's so much chaos and uncertainty in the world, and fans expect SNL to cover it in a way that's funny, yet tasteful. The best comedy often must straddle the line between satire and outright offensiveness — but we also don't usually have a president hospitalized with the same virus that he profoundly mismanaged.

The cold open, a recreation of last Tuesday's presidential debate, didn't get my hopes up. Five years in, Alec Baldwin's impression of Trump has grown stale, and Jim Carrey's exciting appearance as Joe Biden was just "accurate," no more or no less. There were digs at Trump but also frequent pokes at Biden's senility, which felt like *SNL*'s attempt to avoid being "too" critical of Trump in light of his diagnosis. On the whole, the sketch lacked clear direction and failed to innovate much from the actual debate. Beck Bennett and Maya Rudolph's respective performances of moderator Chris Wallace and VP candi-

date Kamala Harris offered the only memorable moments.

As the show went on though, the vision started to congeal into something more cohesive. Across host Chris Rock's monologue, musical guest Megan Thee Stallion's performance, and *Weekend Update, SNL* conveyed the national zeitgeist in comedic and powerful ways. The rest of the sketches provided excellent auxiliary content, playing off of other niche ways in which our lives are just weird right now (for example, not being able to see the bottom of others' faces because of masks). Below, I briefly review each bit of the show in more detail.

Opening Monologue, Chris Rock: 3/5. Rock offered a call to action in the face of national uncertainty, urging the audience to stay politically involved. He argued for rethinking the way the government is structured. His coverage of these topics felt cliché, and there weren't many memorable jokes. However, Rock's stage presence was excellent, and his delivery gave his monologue significant import. He ended with a well-selected quote from James Baldwin to cap off his rousing of the audience: "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

Superspreader Event: 3/5. In this sketch, a news anchor reports on a COVID superspreader event at a name change office, in which characters with names like "Edith Puthie" and "Mike Rodick" (say them out loud) were interviewed. It's a classic *SNL* installment that shows up every couple of seasons, and I'm personally not a big fan, but some people love them. I did enjoy Beck Bennett and Kenan Thompson's characters.

Bottom of Your Face (Music Video): 4/5. *SNL*'s music video sketches in the last few seasons have been great, largely thanks to Chris Redd and Pete Davidson. In this sketch, they rap alongside Kenan about wanting to start a relationship but being

unsure because they can't see the bottoms of their love interests' faces. It's a pretty great idea with some banger lyrics and execution; Megan Thee Stallion also features in this sketch, and she definitely carries it.

Future Ghost: 3.5/5. Kyle Mooney plays a video-game addicted kid who gets to see his life 20 years into the future (2020) thanks to a ghost (Chris Rock). It plays off the idea that a couple decades ago, no one could've expected 2020, but expectations are subverted in some fun ways. Mooney does a great job with these sorts of characters, and the skit has a couple well-written twists.

Drew Barrymore Show: 3.5/5. 2020 hasn't affected everyone equally. This skit plays off the stereotype of rich, middle-aged white women (a subclass of Karens) being tone-deaf to the effects of the pandemic, systemic racism, etc. from the perspective of Drew Barrymore (Chloe Fineman). Fineman began to display her wide range of impressions during last March's *SNL* at-home shows, and she does so again here.

Megan Thee Stallion - "Savage": 4.5/5. Megan Thee Stallion was a huge standout this entire show, and her musical performance was one of the most memorable I've seen on SNL. It helps that I love "Savage" as a song - to me, it feels like a powerful reclaiming of the ways in which black women are boxed into contradictory stereotypes ("angry and bossy," "emotional and chatty," and "cold and unfeeling" all at the same time), and that comes through in the live performance. She further highlighted the specific intersectional struggles of black women by playing a recording of a 1962 Malcolm X speech, followed by an excerpt from activist Tamika Mallory criticizing the recent Breonna Taylor decision. If there's one thing to watch from the show, it'd be this performance.

Weekend Update: 4.5/5. Update was another highlight of the show. Michael Che had a bit on the irony of Trump getting CO-

VID, saying that events had unfolded like a joke that's almost too perfectly constructed. "Like, it's so on the nose. It'd be like if I were making fun of people who wear belts and then my pants just immediately fell down." For my favorite joke of the night, Colin Jost took to Trump's Twitter account: "Despite everything, President Trump actually seems to be in good spirits. He tweeted a message that ended with 'LOVE' and three exclamation points. So it sounds like they're cutting his hydroxychloroquine with... a little bit of molly." Update also spent a bit of time on topics unrelated to Trump's infection, recruiting Bowen Yang for a perfectlyacted bit on the China TikTok situation and peppering in some classic weird news with fun punchlines. Between Update and the next sketch, there was a brief pan to Kate McKinnon dressed as RBG: a fitting and welcome tribute.

NBA Bubble: 2/5. For context, the NBA playoffs this year happened in a "bubble" in Orlando, in which players only interacted with one another, and family members and significant others weren't allowed in. This sketch attempted to satirize that with the concept of a draft, in which the players select women to enter the bubble. The sketch was poor execution of a good idea at best and just sexist at worst.

Stunt Performers: 2.5/5. The final sketch was centered on five stunt actors whose jobs were affected by the pandemic. It's one of those *SNL* classics where the base premise is already weird, and then there are particular characters with even weirder roles. Unfortunately, it just didn't click with me.

October 2020 is a pretty odd time to be alive, and we definitely felt that in *SNL*'s Season 46 premiere. All told, the cast's return to studio 8H injected fresh humor into the pain and confusion many of us are currently feeling, and that's exactly what I wanted from the show right now.

STORY REVIEW

Boston Book Festival and *The Book of Life and Death*

The Boston Book Festival comes through in the pandemic from Oct. 5–25 to bring people together with stories

By Anisha Agarwal

Stories have always had the power to bring us together; they push humankind to create and tell to write and sneak Now we need that power more than ever. The Boston Book Festival is an organization that celebrates words and stories yearround, as well as in a large annual festival (also called The Boston Book Festival, or BBF) that encourages reading and cultural exchange in Boston. Events inspire book enthusiasts across Boston to get involved with the community of readers and thinkers — and with literature — in a more creative way. This year, the annual festival is being held Oct. 5-25. The festival consists of interviews and panels with a diverse set of writers and creators. This year, the events will all take place virtually via Crowdcast live streams.

As part of their initiative, BBF hosts One City One Story, a short-story writing competition. Each year, BBF selects, prints, and distributes one story across the city for free. This year, they have chosen *The Book of Life and Death* by Grace Talusan. *The Book of Life and Death* follows Marybelle, a Filipino woman who works as a live-in helper for families across the world. Talusan spends much of the story delving deeply into the relationship between Marybelle and Jing, Marybelle's employer. I had the opportunity to have a

phone call with the author. In our discussion, she noted that it's a messy, intimate relationship. It is very unequal. "You are inviting this person to work in your home, requires a lot of trust, yet the en which ployer always has the upper hand. It's an extreme example of what I see throughout my working life. Where are these boundaries between employees and employers, and what is our relationship to work?" This question of the boundary between employer and employee, work and life, is something that resonates with Talusan, especially given the further blurring of the lines between work and home in the current pandemic. Reflecting on this balance, she said, "There's this way that work and home life have blended together. The more devoted we are to our work, the better workers we are. So what happens if you're working in someone's home? The relationships get even more intimate."

In Talusan's short story, we see the protagonist Marybelle leave her daughter behind to take care of other people's babies. We see her grapple with living in a world where she exists to be invisible. We watch as people discuss her existence, her experience, while she stands in the room, unnoticed. Talusan drew from her own life to create these moments. "I've had the experience of being talked about as if I wasn't right there," she said. "People don't know me, that at one point I was undocumented. People



ALONSO NICHOLS

Grace Talusan won the festival's One City One Story event with her short story *The Book of Life and Death.*

debate things without knowing about my personal tie, and I hear them talk theoretically about something that I'm living. What a disconcerting experience that is."

Marybelle's story asks the reader what it means to be a good mother. It asks us to grapple with the realities of freedom in America for many immigrants. It asks us to see the world as extending farther than the sphere of our own existence, to see the people beside us for whom they are rather than the roles they play in our lives.

To get your own copy of *The Book of Life and Death* (which I'd highly recommend), visit https://bostonbookfest.org/one-city-one-story.

For more information about how to participate, the schedule of events, and the people involved, check out *bostonbookfest*.