

# MIT staff to be provided ‘up to two hours’ of paid leave to vote

*MIT Staff Against Racism starts petition to change election day into Institute-wide paid staff holiday*

By Srinidhi Narayanan

MIT staff members will receive “up to two hours” of paid leave to vote on or before Election Day, Vice President for Human Resources Ramona Allen wrote in an email to faculty and staff Oct. 6. The email was in response to a circulating petition requesting that Election Day, Nov. 3, be named as an Institute-wide paid staff holiday.

The petition was started by the Committee for a Paid Election Holiday, a part of an organization called MIT Staff Against Racism.

Previously, the MIT Employee Policy Manual allowed staff members to request two hours of unpaid time for voting on Election Day. The petition writes that not providing

paid time off “discourages workers from voting.” Furthermore, two hours “would barely be enough time for staff to vote in Kendall, let alone home districts farther away.” The manual was updated Oct. 5 to allow for up to two hours of paid leave.

The petition points out that voting in-person on Election Day is a risk many voters will be forced to take “as they face drastically increased wait times due to shortages of poll workers.” The petition cites long wait times as “one of the many racist tactics used to disenfranchise black and brown people,” stating that it is therefore “especially important this year for those who are able, to not just show up to vote but to also help keep the wait times short

and polls open for others by volunteering as poll workers.”

The petition also writes that absentee voting is an unreliable option, citing “manipulation of the postal service, absentee ballot rejection, and selective absentee ballot mailing.”

“Due to increased voter suppression and barriers to access, it is imperative that MIT, a leading institution and voice of progress, support full access to the polls. Critical shortages of poll workers, confusion and delays around absentee ballots, and the fear of contracting COVID-19 discourage already disenfranchised workers from exercising their democratic rights,” the petition writes.

Election Day, Page 2



NATHAN LIANG — THE TECH

Angela Davis speaks at the first event of the DEI seminar series coordinated by the biological engineering, chemical engineering, and materials science and engineering departments Oct. 21.

# MIT heads into Phase 3 of laboratory research ramp-up

*Research not requiring in-person work should remain remote, the new guidelines recommend*

By Jennifer Ai  
STAFF REPORTER

MIT transitioned to Phase 3 of the research ramp-up (RR3) for laboratory-based research Oct. 14, Maria Zuber, vice president for research, and Tyler Jacks, chair of the Research Ramp-Up Lightning Committee, wrote in an email to the MIT community Oct. 13.

RR3 removes the limit on the number of hours laboratory research personnel may work on campus, Zuber and Jacks wrote.

However, they emphasize that all other restrictions from Phase 2 relating to COVID-19 safety procedures will continue to be enforced, including social distancing by six feet in static work conditions and maintaining a density of 125 square feet per person. As a result, the RR3 guidelines recommend utilizing work shifts “to prevent overcrowding.”

In particular, the guidelines state that principal investigators (PIs) and Core Facilities leaders should work together to “operate a sched-

uling system and maintain a record of weekly work schedules.” Those who do not utilize work shifts are required to “justify their plans” to the Department Monitoring and Compliance Committee (DMC).

The guidelines also state that the DMC committees must report compliance violations weekly to the Office of the Vice President for Research.

Although many restrictions have been lifted, the guidelines recommend that research not requiring in-person work should re-

main remote.

The guidelines also recognize that “the latest guidance from MIT” allows outdoor on-campus gatherings for users of Covid Pass “up-to-date with the required testing and attestation, provided that proper physical distancing and face covering practices are observed.”

No changes will be made to the existing guidelines for non-laboratory research created by the Thunder Committee, Zuber and Jacks wrote. Office space remains limited to 50% occupancy, and at least six feet of

separation must be maintained in static work conditions.

Other continuing restrictions include the use of face coverings except when eating alone and when alone in a closed office. Because eating must be done alone, the guidelines recommend sign-up sheets for PI-controlled spaces, including public offices for scheduling meals. In addition, workers are asked to frequently wash hands and sanitize workspaces. COVID-19 testing must also remain up to date.

## IN SHORT

The deadline to apply for a **credit, volunteer, or sponsored research funded UROP** is Oct. 22.

**Virtual Family Weekend** is Oct. 23–Oct. 24.

The deadline to **add an H2 half-term subject** is Oct. 30.

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.

The deadline to nominate faculty members for the **2020 School of Science Teaching Prizes** is Oct. 30.

Interested in **joining The Tech?** Email [join@tech.mit.edu](mailto:join@tech.mit.edu).

Send news and tips to [news@tech.mit.edu](mailto:news@tech.mit.edu).

# New Vassar scheduled to open in January 2021

*Burton-Conner to undergo renovations starting Spring 2021 and reopen Fall 2022; despite delay due to COVID-19, ‘the project timeline is on track,’ Dean Friedrich writes*

By Srinidhi Narayanan

Burton-Conner (BC) will undergo renovations starting in Spring 2021. New Vassar (NV) is scheduled to open in January.

BC was originally scheduled to undergo renovations June 2020 to August 2022. Senior Associate Dean for Housing David Friedrich wrote in a statement to *The Tech* that despite the delay in starting renovations, “the project timeline is on track and the building is targeted to reopen for the fall 2022 semester.”

“During the fall 2020 semester, Burton Conner has served a vital purpose as support housing for members of the MIT community who test positive for COVID-19 and must isolate or who require a temporary quarantine accommodation,” Friedrich wrote.

NV is scheduled to open in January 2021. Friedrich wrote that “members of the New Vassar Founders’ Group convened earlier this month to continue community planning efforts for MIT’s newest undergraduate residence.” The NV Founders’ Group includes students, staff, faculty, and the NV House Team.

BC President Sarah Aaronson ’23 wrote in an email to *The Tech* that the BC student government “has been bringing in new first-year students through the SCUFFY [Support CommUnities For First Years] and ESC [Exploring Support Communities] programs as well as advising the plans for the upcoming renovations.”

Aaronson wrote that “most of the work for planning transitions [for BC students] happened during the Spring 2020 semester. Policies such as staple groups for the switch lot-

tery and different priorities for BC residents in the switch lottery, however, are no longer relevant because of COVID-19.”

She wrote that the only ongoing planning “is working with DormCon Housing Chairs to ensure that the housing lottery for the spring is satisfactory to BC residents along with other dorm residents and students.”

Aaronson also wrote that “while BC residents might rank New Vassar highly because there are more spots,” NV will not function as a “swing dorm” or provide any “specific alternate service for BC residents specifically.”

The Housing and Residential Services (HRS) website states that “it is important for New Vassar to have its own identity, so the community will not serve as a ‘swing’ dorm in the short or long term.” The website writes that “being a swing dorm

would be disruptive” to NV establishing “a house identity and cohesive spirit if a large number of spaces are reserved for another residence hall that functions independently from New Vassar.”

Friedrich wrote that HRS “continues to work closely with members of the Burton Conner Transition Team to help preserve the residence hall’s vibrant history and to support the community during the transition period.”

Aaronson wrote that “prior to COVID-19, BC residents were slated to have access to the Coffeehouse Lounge for most of the time to hold small floor events as well as use spaces like Lobdell for our larger, campus-wide events.” Support has also come “in the form of providing storage for suite and floor belongings” as well as the digital preservation of the dorm’s murals.

## EUPHORIA

An intimate look at the life of a modern teenager. **ARTS, p. 5**

## SUCCESSION

What happens if Trump refuses to leave office? **OPINION, p. 4**



## SPOOKY SEASON

What’s scarier, stress or spiders? **CAMPUS LIFE, p. 8**

## LOST HOPE

Detained for driving while Black. **CAMPUS LIFE, p. 7**

## SECTIONS

Opinion . . . . .4  
Arts . . . . .5  
Fun Pages . . . . .6  
Campus Life . . . . .7



WEATHER

Mild in Boston, Arctic outbreak in the Midwest

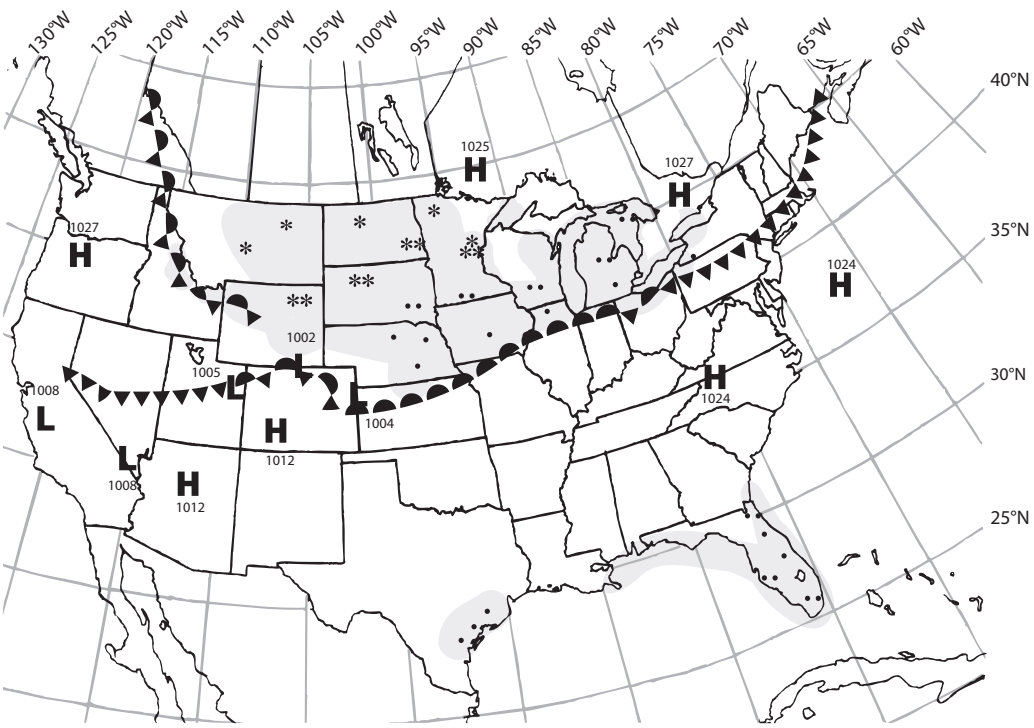
By Karen Li

Here in Boston, we will be seeing plenty of sunshine to cheer us up from yesterday's dreary, mid-week morning fog. Be sure to go outside to breathe some fresh air as above-normal temperatures continue to persist until the end of the week. Furthermore, take advantage of the clear skies to help relieve some eye strain from all those hours of Zooming online. The arrival of a cold front late Saturday af-

ternoon and evening will bring forth some cooler air, but little or no rain. Be sure to have a jacket ready for more fall-like temperatures on Sunday! In the meantime, the winter storm system crossing from the Northern Rockies into the Northern Plains and Upper Midwest is expected to set records for October snowfall in multiple regions, making for dangerous travel conditions. To our dear friends in the Midwestern United States, please be safe!

Extended Forecast

**Today:** Mostly sunny. High around 68°F (20°C). West wind around 6mph, east wind in the afternoon.  
**Tonight:** Mostly cloudy. Low around 53°F (12°C). East wind around 6mph.  
**Tomorrow:** Mostly sunny. High around 63 °F (17 °C) and low around 54°F (12°C). East wind around 9 mph.  
**Saturday:** Partly sunny. High around 69°F (21°C) and low around 46°F (8°C). Southwest wind around 7-10 mph.  
**Sunday:** Mostly sunny. High around 52°F (11°C) and low around 46°F (8°C). Northeast wind around 11 mph.



Situation for Noon Eastern Time, Thursday, October 22, 2020

Weather Systems	Weather Fronts	Precipitation Symbols		Other Symbols
		Snow	Rain	
<b>H</b> High Pressure	--- Trough	* (light)	∇ (light)	☁ Fog
<b>L</b> Low Pressure	— Warm Front	* (light)	∇ (light)	⚡ Thunderstorm
<b>8</b> Hurricane	▲ Cold Front	** (moderate)	• (light)	∞ Haze
	— Stationary Front	* (light)	• (light)	

Compiled by MIT Meteorology Staff and The Tech

Committee for a Paid Election Holiday: two hours of paid time ‘inadequate’

Election Day, from Page 1

Around 800 students, faculty, and staff have signed the petition, as of press time. Allen wrote that while MIT is unable to name Election Day an official Institute holiday, the Employment Policy Manual has been amended to provide staff with up to two hours of paid leave for voting. Allen said that the time may be used either for early voting or on Election Day. Employees “must request the time at least three days in advance” and “managers will approve requests where possible,

but may deny requests when staff members are needed to maintain necessary campus operations.” Allen wrote in an email to *The Tech* that “in tandem with opportunities to vote prior to Election Day in person or by mail, or during early morning or evening voting hours on Election Day itself, we believe that this gives community members flexibility to vote without sacrificing compensation.” Allen explained that “more significant changes to Institute holidays cannot be considered in isolation of the academic calendar and overall schedule of holidays and paid time off.”

The Committee for a Paid Election Holiday wrote in an Oct. 8 email to faculty and staff, forwarded to *The Tech*, that they found “the proposal for two hours of paid time off to be inadequate.” The committee wrote that “two hours is simply not enough time,” citing that many staff members living “far away from campus” would “not be able to fit travel and wait time into that window.” The committee added that the letter “does not consider staff who live in states other than Massachusetts and might be subject to stricter voting laws.” The committee also pointed out that the letter “urges, but does

not require, supervisors to approve time off and be flexible with regards to scheduling. This policy does not protect staff whose supervisors would push back and offers no recourse. An institute-wide official holiday would protect the most vulnerable workers.” President L. Rafael Reif wrote Sept. 21 in a letter to the MIT community that he hopes all MIT community members “able to vote will find a safe way to do so.” Reif added that community members can also “support voting and help ensure a safe and healthy election.” Community members can volunteer as poll workers and

remind “the people around” them to vote, and students can also join MITVote, Reif wrote. The committee referenced Reif’s letter, writing that “MIT staff must have a paid day off if the administration expects staff to take these sentiments to heart. Verbally encouraging participation but not providing the means to do so is an empty gesture.” The committee acknowledged Allen’s response as “an encouraging signal that our message has been heard,” but that “there is still a lot of work to do and we will continue to push toward the goals outlined in our original petition.”

It's Dangerous to Go Alone!



Take This.

photo@tech.mit.edu

**Solution to boool**  
from page 6

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

**Solution to Getting**  
from page 6

RULES	FRAN	SPEW
ABOVE	IOWA	LOWE
SEVEN	EVER	LOWE
PRESSURE	DROP	
ESC	APED	
MAST	SEMITE	AMI
ASIAN	ANON	ZIN
CINNAMON	RIZZLE	
ODE	SALT	TILER
NEW	CREASE	PEST
SEAT	ITS	
BRIDAL	SHOWER	
FIDO	NIKE	AMITY
ERIN	IMIN	CADRE
ZANY	SENT	KNEES

**Solution to boog**  
from page 6

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





School of Science

**You've heard of**  
**RATE MY PROFESSOR...**

**Now you can**  
**GRADE MY PROFESSOR.**

Nominate  
*OUTSTANDING*  
Science teachers  
by Oct 30

SCIENCEM.IT/AWARDS











**boog**

Solution, page 2

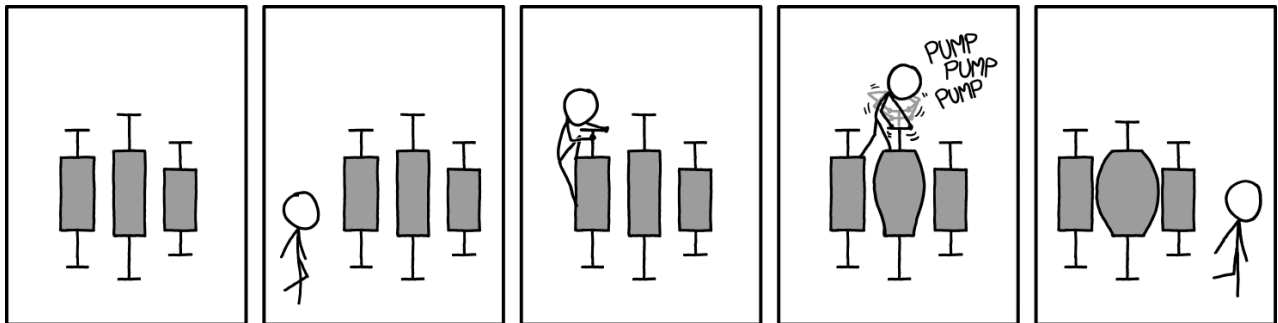
120x		72x		1-	
			6x	150x	
	9+				4
15x		30x			12x
	48x				
6÷			60x		

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.

## Solution, page 2

62 Bakery loaves  
63 Aladdin's hat  
64 Nest-egg acronym  
65 Loud commotion

by Randall Munroe



You have to be careful doing this. Sometimes, when you push the whisker down, dynamite explodes.







