MIT's Oldest and Largest Newspaper

thetech.com



WEATHER, p. 2

THU: 31°F | 27°F Cloudy, then Snow.

FRI: 33°F | 22°F

SAT: 33°F | 16°F Mostly Cloudy.

Volume 141, Number 1

Thursday, February 18, 2021

Massachusetts permits MIT to vaccinate its whole community

Mass. unlikely to distribute doses to MIT Medical

By Kristina Chen and Nicole Chan

ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITORS

President L. Rafael Reif announced that "MIT will have permission to vaccinate the extended community" for COVID-19 in a Jan. 29 email to the MIT community. This applies to all faculty, staff, postdocs, students, and affiliates, as well as dependents of community members, with MIT potentially immunizing "as many as 50,000 individuals."

Members of the MIT community should fill out the vaccine eligibility form "right away," regardless of their interest in being vaccinated by

MIT, MIT Medical Director Cecilia Stuopis '90 and Vice Chancellor and Chair of the MIT Vaccine Planning Team Ian Waitz wrote in an email Feb. 3.

The form asks individuals to indicate whether they are interested in receiving the vaccine from MIT and to provide basic demographic information, as well as that of family members or dependents who may also want to receive the vaccine from MIT.

Stuopis and Waitz also wrote that responses to the eligibility form "will be kept private" and are not binding. If respondents "receive the vaccine elsewhere" or "change their mind about receiving the vaccine," they can update their responses to the form at any time.

Stuopis and Waitz wrote that Massachusetts' vaccination phase, as determined by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and "how regularly and in what volume" MIT receives doses from the state influence whether individuals can receive vaccinations.

Waitz asked attendees at the Feb. 17 faculty meeting to "encourage" those around them to respond to the form. "We need to increase the response rate" to "be as prepared as

Vaccine, Page 2

New intl. student reg. guidance reiterated

MIT advises students to take at least 24 credits of in-person coursework

By Kristina Chen

First-year international students are advised to follow the Fall 2020 guidance on registering for inperson coursework determined by the International Students Office (ISO), according to a Feb. 8 email

from Vice Chancellor Ian Waitz.

Per the ISO's fall guidance, new international students should take at least 24 credits of hybrid or inperson coursework to enter the U.S.

A July 24 U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) guidance wrote that new international students with F-1 visas pursuing fully online coursework would not be permitted to enter the U.S.

The DHS guidance did not fully specify the conditions that would allow first-year international students following hybrid programs to enter the U.S., prompting the ISO to release its fall guidance. The DHS released an FAQ Aug. 7 which

Internationals, Page 2

IN SHORT

Q-Week for on-campus students runs until Feb. 22.

PE classes begin Feb. 22.

The **UROP Extended Direct Funding** deadline (for students who have yet to met the ELO guarantee) is Feb. 23.

MIT affiliates should complete the COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Form

The deadline to submit nominations for the **MIT Awards** is March 26.

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

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



A snow friend welcomes MIT first years, sophomores, and juniors back to campus Monday on Killian Court.

Year in Review, see insert on p. 4

Grad students asked to return for appointments

Open letter urging MIT to rescind policy receives over 600 community signatures

By Kristina Chen

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Vice Chancellor Ian Waitz wrote in a Dec. 7 email that graduate students with Spring 2021 RA, TA, or fellowship appointments were "being asked to return/come to the U.S." by Jan. 30 to maintain their appointments.

The International Students Office wrote that this is in accordance with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) 5-Month Temporary Absence Rule, which was

suspended for Spring and Summer 2020. It was not confirmed whether this rule would or would not apply in Fall and Spring 2021.

Graduate students would only be eligible to continue their appointments remotely if affected by visa delays, travel restrictions, border closures, or other COVIDrelated factors; if the student or member of the student's household was instructed by a medical provider to not travel to the U.S.; or if

Appointments, Page 2

2021 Commencement ceremony to be held online

MIT's Spring 2021 Commencement ceremony will be held online, President L. Rafael Reif wrote in an email to the MIT community Feb. 4. The necessary conditions for holding large public gatherings and celebrations "are still many months away," Reif said.

Reif stated that after consulting with the "Commencement Committee, student leaders, the deans, and the senior leadership team," it was determined that early June was too soon to plan a large campus gathering.

campus gathering.
Reif addressed the Class of 2021 directly, writing that "we are intensely focused on making June's online Commencement event meaningful, memorable and delightful," and saying to both the Class of 2021 and the Class of 2020 that "we are equally committed to

creating a special celebration for you [...] in person, in the future, once it is safe to do so."

The virtual ceremony will be executed under the guidance of the Commencement Transition Team chaired by Professor Iim Poterba. According to the transition team's website, some of the committee's 2021-specific tasks include "confirming the elements of the One-MIT Commencement ceremony; guiding planning for the undergraduate diploma ceremony; making recommendations for elements that are appropriate for School advanced degree diploma ceremonies; serving as a resource to Schools as they plan their events; and recommending both composition and charge for the next generation of the Commencement Committee."

The One-MIT Commencement ceremony, proposed in 2019, would include the Commencement speaker's address and degree conferral and would be open to all graduates and their guests

In his Feb. 4 email, Reif also announced that MIT Reunions for 2021 are to be conducted online. Reif said that "an unexpected benefit" of holding reunions virtually in 2020 was that they "attracted a record number of alumni attendees from around the world, including many who might not have traveled to campus otherwise."

Activist and criminal justice lawyer Bryan Stevenson was announced as MIT's 2021 Commencement speaker Feb. 4.

— Srinidhi Narayanan

EGG DONOR ADS

College newspapers should reconsider running potentially dangerous ads. **OPINION**, **p. 4**

SUSTAINABLE INVESTING

MITIMCo can lead with more transparent, ethical investment practices. **OPINION, p. 4**



ME VS. ME

Sometimes I wish I could exist without being defined by my Asian-American identity.

CAMPUS LIFE, p. 3

COMPENSATIONBIAS

Pay practices must also align with DEI values.. **OPINION, p. 5**

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Thursday, February 18, 2021

WEATHER

Country covered in snow

By Sarah Weidman
CHIEF METEOROLOGIST

The first week of the semester in Cambridge has been a characteristic week for late winter in the city. Old snow left on the sidewalks slowly melts in the winter sun, but cold nights freeze all that snowmelt into black ice. Be careful when you're out walking at night — it gets slippery! Later this afternoon, a storm will slowly roll into Cambridge, bringing more snow. Although the snow is expected to be light, the storm will stick around into Saturday, so we may see several inches of accu-

mulation over the next two days. Another chilly February weekend!

The storm that is about to come through Boston left its mark on much of the rest of the country over the past few days. Many states that rarely see snow sub-freezing temperatures were hammered with unseasonable cold and several inches of snow. Nearly 75% of the country was covered in snow on Tuesday afternoon! The storm hit Texas particularly hard, with temperatures so low that power outages swept through the state. Another "unprecedented" storm for these unprecedented times. Keep warm out there, everyone!

Extended Forecast

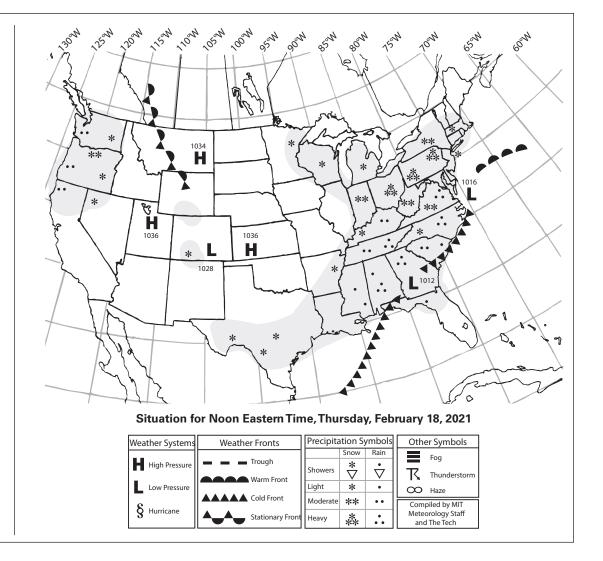
Today: Snow likely starting late afternoon. High around 31°F (-1°C). Northeast wind around 5–10 mph.

Tonight: Snow likely. Low around 27°F (-3°C). East wind around 8–14 mph.

Tomorrow: Snow. High around 33°F (1°C) and low around 22°F (-6°C). Northeast wind around 12–16 mph.

Saturday: Mostly cloudy, with slight chance of snow showers. High around 33°F (1°C) and low around 16°F (-9°C). Northwest wind around 10–13 mph.

Sunday: Sunny. High around 32°F (0°C) and low around 18°F



Approximately 8,000-10,000 MIT individuals meet phase 2 vaccine criteria

Vaccine, from Page 1

possible when and if we have vaccines."

As of Feb. 16, the eligibility form has a response rate of 73% among academic and residential faculty and senior leaders, 66% among graduate students, and 59% among undergraduate students, according to Waitz and Stuopis' presentation at the faculty meeting. The response rate is lower for support and service staff, though they "might fall into some of the more vulnerable categories for being at risk," Stuopis said.

Stuopis said at the faculty meeting that MIT had administered

1,093 first and 497 second doses of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine to eligible community members in phase 1 and the beginning of phase 2. Stuopis added that MIT's ability to vaccinate community members is limited by the vaccination phase and the number of vaccines being provided by the Commonwealth.

Phase 1 of vaccination in Massachusetts took place between December 2020 and February 2021 and prioritized healthcare workers, first responders, and those in long-term care facilities, rest homes, assisted living facilities, and congregate care settings.

Phase 2 is taking place with four groups: the first is individuals over

the age of 75, the second is individuals over the age of 65, individuals with more than two certain medical conditions, or residents and staff of low income and affordable senior bousing

The first group in phase 2 became eligible to receive vaccines starting Feb. 1. The second group is eligible starting Feb. 18.

According to Stuopis, the population in Massachusetts that meets the conditions of the second group of phase 2 is expected to exceed one million people. Stuopis said that in the MIT population, there are approximately 8,000–10,000 individuals who meet the criteria of the second group.

Stuopis also said that although MIT is "ready, willing, and able," the Commonwealth has ceased making vaccine deliveries to medical groups like MIT Medical, making it "hard" to do "large-scale vaccination."

Stuopis added that she would be "highly surprised" if MIT receives "any vaccine for the remainder of phase two," based on communication from the state.

Waitz wrote that "for the next

couple of weeks," MIT community members may be "more likely to find" a vaccination "appointment at one of the large state facilities than they are at the MIT Medical facility."

Reif wrote that MIT Medical asks MIT community members to

"not call or email them seeking a vaccine appointment." Also, they should not "wait to receive their shot from MIT" if they "have another option for getting vaccinated george"

The remaining two groups of Massachusetts' phase 2 are workers (including early education and K-12, food service, public health, transit, vaccine development, court system, medical supply chain, etc. workers) and individuals with one certain medical condition.

Phase 3 includes groups that are not listed in Phase 1 or 2. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts expects that this phase will launch in April.

Petition by International Support Network receives over 280 signatures

Internationals, from Page 1

wrote that international students would not be able to enter the U.S. "to pursue a full course of study that is 100 percent online."

A petition authored by the In-

ternational Support Network MIT with over 280 signatures urged MIT to decrease the number of units required for first-year international students to enter the U.S.

"Peer institutions such as Columbia, Tufts, Berkeley and UMich-

igan [sic] only require new international students to take only one hybrid or in-person course," the petition wrote.

Waitz wrote that "international students can make a decision that best meets their individual needs

and circumstances" and that firstyear international students intending to register for fewer than 24 units should consider the risks of possibly encountering future issues related to immigration status or applications. He added that government guidance on the minimum amount of required in-person coursework for new international students "continues to be conflicting" and that the ISO believes that its guidance "is most in line with the federal requirements."

Letter to MIT admin compared new policy to July 6 DHS and ICE directive

Appointments, from Page 1

the student is caring for a family member with an illness. Students under these circumstances were asked to submit an intake form through their graduate administrator, to be reviewed individually to determine options available to the students.

A Dec. 11 open letter to the MIT administration responding to Waitz's email received over 600 signatures from student organizations, graduate and undergraduate students, alumni, and postdoctoral associates. The letter wrote that the policy "forces students living overseas to uproot their lives" to return to the U.S. where COVID-19 "is raging harder than ever."

The letter urged MIT to rescind its policy, "involve those impacted before making wide-reaching policy decisions," and "protect international students from further precarity and mistreatment."

The letter compared MIT's policy to the July 6 DHS and Immigration and Customs Enforce-

ment (ICE) directive that banned international students taking fully online coursework from remaining in the U.S. MIT and Harvard filed a lawsuit against DHS and ICE that eventually resulted in the directive being rescinded.

The letter also wrote that as of Dec. 23, of 195 remote appointment requests, 145 were approved without change, 40 were approved with change of funding, and 5 remained under review. 800 remote appointments were approved during Fall 2020, according to the letter.

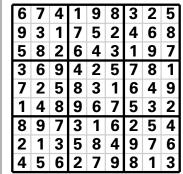
The letter added that Harvard and Yale will continue to pay remote stipends in the Spring.

A forum on the policy was held for graduate students Dec. 14. A follow-up Dec. 16 guidance acknowledged student concerns regarding the policy and summarized Waitz's message from the forum, writing that MIT would provide "more timely and ongoing updates" and "increased flexibility when reviewing exception requests," as well as clarify "that the eligibility criteria include all medical conditions."

MIT's fall guidance on remote student appointments announced that the "vast majority" of graduate students abroad would be able to continue their fellowships, TA, or RA appointments, with some TA or RAships possibly converted to nonservice fellowships depending on the country the student is living in, the student's research area, or "export control requirements."

As in the fall, undergraduate students abroad are not able to participate in paid UROPs or other hourly wage opportunities.

Solution to First Day from page 7



Solution to Q-Week

nom page 7										
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Solution to In Uniform

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Course 6?

Join the Technology Department! join@tech.mit.edu

THE LEGI

ME VS. ME

Trying to untangle my identities, but it's impossible

Somehow it goes deeper than the Chinese characters tattooed on my skin

By Joanna Lin

"Your personal statement was very interesting and enjoyable to read, but it doesn't present a clear argument why Joanna Lin would make a good doctor." Somehow, this sentence hit me like a ton of bricks, especially because it was spoton. I had recently received advice to keep my entire essay moving towards a defined thesis, so I did my best to not write in my usual scatterbrained format. Unfortunately, my draft was a clear, convincing argument for why doctors should exist, but barely touched on why I should be given the chance to become one.

The more we talked about my passions and motivations for pursuing medicine, the more we delved into my identity as an Asian American. While it's a topic I have discussed at length with a lot of people, I had really hoped not to talk about it at this particular meeting.

The conversation brought me back to another I shared with a long-time high school friend. Amid reminiscing of our freshman selves acquiring guava juice for a summer reading presentation and the shocking realization that we had been friends for nearly seven years, we got to the point of her research project: to examine college personal statements.

I shared my memory of suddenly being struck by inspiration in the shower, only to now look back on my personal statement with discomfort at the privilege it exuded. I also acknowledged that the failure of that essay to get me into any "good" Common App schools played a large factor in my feelings — I don't think I would have been admitted to MIT if they had read that essay.

But that's beside the point. The point is, I wrote about my great-great-grandmother, sending off her only grandson to school through a landmine set by the Japanese; I wrote about my great-grandmother running a grocery store with nothing more than a kindergarten education; I wrote about my parents making their way in America on pennies. Being Asian American, being the child of immigrants — that was integral to making me who I was. It wasn't even a question that I would include those stories. And every single Asian American woman my friend interviewed did the same.

Was there something about our Asian American identity that demanded to be the most compelling part of our much more complex personalities? And is that a bad thing, anyway?

In exasperation at myself and at how much stronger my rewritten personal statement was, I messaged my friend again that I had, sadly, come crawling back to the cliché. She just responded, "well now is an especially good time to capitalize on the asian identity tbh."

She was referring to what you could say is the AAPI community's "moment" right now, with the unbelievable surge in hate crimes and an unfortunately believable absence of mainstream media attention. I'm seeing East Asian support of darker-skinned Southeast Asians, and the discussion with the Black community about standing together has never been more loud.

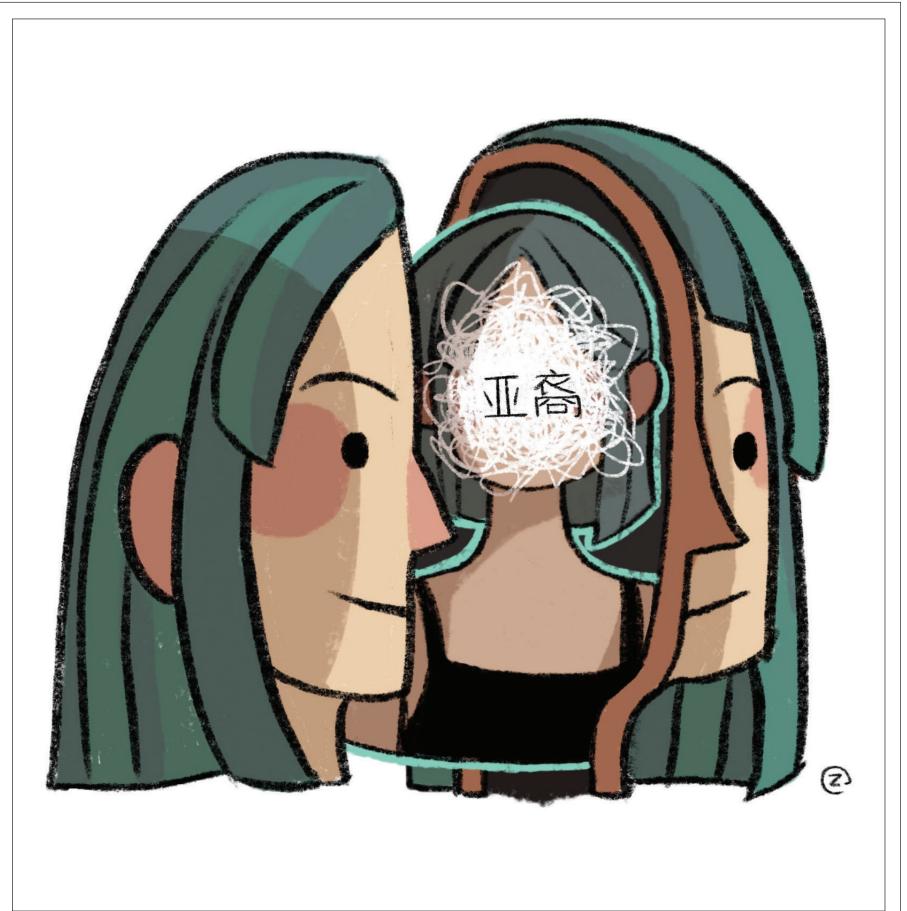
Our collective suffering is not something I want to capitalize on. Not now, not ever. I think I particularly didn't want to write about my Asian American experience because of our current visibility.

This is not to say that I wish being Asian American were not part of my identity. I

would never give up my lived experiences or those of my ancestors, and I celebrated a heartbreaking Lunar New Year alone this year. It's still an integral, immutable part of me that brings me so much pride.

But I wonder if it's possible to write about, or even describe, myself without it just once. Evidently the first draft of my personal statement was an utter failure at achieving this goal: I had written *myself* completely out of the picture. Upon reflection, there is literally no other part of my identity, not even my gender, that has this profound of an impact on describing myself.

All I wanted to write in my new personal statement was how medicine is the most important gift you could give anybody, how I love connecting through language, how I simply wish to *soigner*. In the short 5,300 characters I was allowed, I wanted those ideas to be able to exist in a vacuum without functionally depending on my identity as an Asian American. But maybe I shouldn't even try to extricate myself from the tangled roots of my family, my history, and my culture. In the end, I guess it wouldn't be me anymore.





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The Tech (ISSN 0148-9607) is published on Thursdays during the academic year (except during MIT vacations) and monthly during the summer by The Tech, Room W20-483, 84 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, Mass. 02139. Subscriptions are \$50.00 per year (third class). POSTMASTER: Please send all address changes to our mailing address: The Tech, P.O. Box 397029, Cambridge, Mass. 02139-7029. TELEPHONE: Editorial: (617) 258-8224. Facsimile: (617) 258-8226. Advertising, subscription, and typesetting rates available. Entire contents © 2020 The Tech. Printed by Graphic Developments, Inc.

EDITORIAL

Elitist and racist egg donation ads have no place in student newspapers

Most ads fail to disclose the risks of egg donation process while offering vast financial compensation

By The Tech Editorial Board

If you are a female MIT student with the last name Wu, Huang, or Chen, you may have received an email in the past two weeks with the subject line "亞州精 英 Outstanding Asian." The email offered \$50,000 in compensation for an Asian egg donor, ideally a "21-year-old Chinese MIT student, top in her class," with "several awards in high school and university." This concerning request is actually a permutation of an advertisement that The Tech has run twice in the past decade, once in 2012 and once in 2017. The ad, paid for and submitted by the same individual, has not changed much over the years, though the most recent email iteration has swapped out "genius" for "outstanding" and more than doubled the compensation from \$20,000 to \$50,000. Both the 2012 and 2017 appearances of the ad disturbed MIT community members for its racial stereotyping, tactless wording, and lack of acknowledgment of the medical risks involved with egg donation.

Unfortunately, this is not the only advertisement soliciting egg donations that The Tech has run or faced criticism for, with similar ads — requesting donors of certain races, heights, eye and hair colors, levels of athleticism, personalities, and minimum SAT scores — printed frequently during the late 1990s and throughout the 2000s. Moreover, MIT is not the only college whose newspaper has made space for these ads. College newspapers at Columbia, Harvard, Princeton, Stanford, the University of Pennsylvania, and Yale, among others, have also run similar ads seeking egg donations. And it's no coincidence that these schools have a few things in common: Most are Ivy League institutions, and all are regularly ranked in the top ten among U.S. universities.

The strategic placement of these advertisements in newspapers with an audience of barely-20-something students at "elite" institutions is almost as troubling as the rhetoric found in the advertisements. Some are stereotypical and racist, primarily those that associate Asian women with blanket descriptions like "intelligent" or "highachieving." These ads reduce Asian women to commodities and labels that perpetuate the harmful "model minority" myth, which places limiting expectations on the roles

Asians can take, erases the countless other traits that these women may possess, and uses Asians as examples of a "successful" or "submissive" minority to oppress more marginalized groups.

An additional common demand of these ads is for standardized test scores and transcripts, as if these arbitrary screenings of how smart a potential egg donor is will correlate with the eventual intelligence of the child. Both standardized testing and grades are often measures of performance and preparation, rather than intelligence, and ads quantifying the value of a woman's oocytes with these metrics subscribe to an already dangerous emphasis on numbers and achievements at universities like MIT. Furthermore, while genetic factors do contribute to intelligence, it's troubling to see ads implying that only an egg donor from a top ten university can ensure that your child matches your intellect. These ads demonstrate scientific ignorance, reducing environmentally influenced, complex traits like intelligence and even personality to "special gifts" that can be selected and purchased in the form of an egg donation.

Another problem with the most recent advertisement is that, like many other ads requesting certain features from donors, it offers a financial compensation more than five times greater than the usual amount, as determined by the Ethics Committee of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine. This remuneration is paid to recognize the "significant time, inconvenience, and discomfort associated with oocyte donation," suggesting that these drawbacks are considerable. Additionally, the magnified compensation further commercializes the specific physical, racial, and intellectual characteristics that these ads entreat, making it such that only those with the financial means can afford "outstanding," "Ivy League" eggs and resulting in a discomfiting sense of exclusivity surrounding egg donations. Though the Ethics Committee found that many egg donors consider "being able to help someone" their biggest motivation, an ad offering such a large sum of compensation may blur the line and incentivize donation from a less informed individual. For college students at private schools, likely burdened by high tuitions and other costs, the prospect of a full year's worth of tuition could certainly blur these lines. Yet these ads insufficiently disclaim the serious possible harms that could come from egg donation.

The Ethics Committee also advises that all risks related to oocyte donation should be clearly disclosed. The invasive process involves the suppression of the body's natural ovulation cycle and hyperstimulation of the ovaries with follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) and human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG) through self-injections. High levels of hCG can lead to ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome (OHSS), which could result in hospitalization or death. Furthermore, the long-term effects are not well studied, but women have reported infertility and psychological distress after donating. Nonetheless, many ads found in college newspapers do not explain the medical process of egg donation, nor the associated risks in any of their iterations.

We understand that egg donation can help those who are unable to have children, and reproductive medicine has been instrumental in creating families for those who want them. There are companies that can facilitate these procedures while informing all parties and ensuring minimal risk. However, these advertisements that individually target young Asian women at MIT do not properly disclose sufficient information about the process and offer vast financial compensation, making them both racist and dangerous. Often, the ads request that potential donors contact private individuals, rather than a known or reputable egg donation clinic.

In the future, we will not be running egg donation ads that do not include requisite disclaimers addressing the risks involved for egg donors, that originate from private individuals rather than credible agencies or clinics, or that include language suggesting that donors of certain races or from certain schools inherently possess stereotyped traits preferred over those of other donors. We urge student newspapers at our peer institutions to similarly reconsider these factors when choosing whether to print advertisements requesting egg donations.

Editorials are the official opinion of The Tech. They are written by the Editorial Board, which consists of Publisher Joanna Lin, Editor in Chief Kristina Chen, Managing Editor Chloe McCreery, Executive Editor Wenbo Wu, and the opinion editor, a position that is currently vacant.

GUEST COLUMN

How merit-based raises hurt DEI

MIT must make a stronger commitment to DEI through its pay practices

By Caleb Larson, Gabby Ballard, and Brandon Milardo

Recently, MIT Human Resources announced that it will be instituting across-the-board 3% raises for all staff making under \$75,000 in 2021. This is a welcome reversal of a policy that MIT announced last April, suspending all merit-based raises for the year due to financial concerns related to COVID. According to MIT's 2020 Quality of Life Survey (conducted before the pandemic), 65% of staff reported increased cost of living as a source of stress, and 61% said the same about the cost of housing alone. With the additional financial pressure of the pandemic, the wage freeze threatened to push staff even deeper into economic precarity.

While this announcement is a relief for staff who are feeling the pain of increased economic insecurity, it comes with some restrictions and raises important questions around the nature of merit-based raises in the first place. The recent policy does not apply to staff making above the \$75,000 cut-

off, many of whom are part of single-income households, supporting family members or even extended family due to increased unemployment rates. This is especially hard to accept considering that MIT's 2020 Report of the Treasurer shows record highs in revenue (\$3.95 billion), net assets (\$24.21 billion), and endowment (\$18.38 billion). It also raises the question of deep inequities in MIT's compensation policies.

This guaranteed 3% cost of living increase will replace the usual yearly merit-based raise that staff are eligible for, as determined by their supervisor, typically with a 3% maximum. If a supervisor finds an employee's performance unsatisfactory, they can decrease that raise. Factoring for inflation (approximately 2% per year) and the increased cost of living and utility use due to working from home, this can easily turn into a pay cut.

Although merit-based raises are supposed to reward hard work, the statistics around compensation bias (particularly regarding race and gender) show how unjust the reality is.

Professor Emilio J. Castilla of MIT's Sloan School of Management conducted a 2012 study showing that there are significant racial and gender biases in merit-based performance reviews.

Professor Roberto M. Fernandez, also from Sloan, had a similar study in 2018 comparing the starting salary offered to men and women who graduated from the same MBA program, finding that women were offered nearly \$8,000 less than men on average.

According to U.S. census data, Black women in Massachusetts make only 58 cents on the dollar compared to their white male counterparts.

MIT has made a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). This was strongly reaffirmed in the wake of the protests over George Floyd's death this past summer. What better way to show that commitment than to make a concrete policy which would protect employees from compensation bias, supported by MIT's

Merit, Page 5

MIT should make its non-merit based cost of living increase permanent

Merit, from Page 4

own research?

There are many ways pay transparency and equity must be addressed. If MIT can't guarantee the fairness of how merit-based raises are awarded, then it is obligated to battle this inequity by making this year's non-merit-based cost of living increase a permanent policy.

For those who are skeptical about whether this is feasible, look no further than Harvard University. Around the same time that MIT announced its wage freeze, Harvard announced it would guarantee staff pay which includes a 3.5% non-merit-based raise for all workers with over a year of employment.

Do we want MIT to be an environment that merely pays lip service to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion or one that demonstrates its commitment to DEI through strong action? Do we want an administration that supports the economic security of its employees through the toughest of times or one that treats them as just another budget line item to be slashed without the input of those who are affected? Do we want a compensation policy that is fair, transparent, and unbiased or one that is shrouded by an opaque and questionable meritocracy? If

MIT wants to engender a work culture that truly values all of its employees, these are the questions it must consider.

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GUEST COLUMN

New year, new MITIMCo: MIT's chance to lead in socially responsible investing We commend MIT for its actions so far, and hope to see more progress

By Anushree Chaudhuri, Jasmine Chen, and Daisy Wang

In 2020, the MIT Investment Management Company (MITIMCo) joined Climate Action 100+ (CA100+), a global investor-led engagement initiative to ensure that the world's largest corporate emitters take necessary climate action. Among our peer institutions, only Harvard and Brown are part of CA100+. We commend MIT for joining the ranks of more than 545 investors committed to admirable efforts on climate.

In 2015, when students and faculty gathered outside President Reif's office for a sitin demanding that MIT divest fossil fuel assets, MIT responded to the protest with an acknowledgment of the climate crisis but with no real policies for institutional change. After five years of ambiguous action, joining CA100+ is especially encouraging. Along with the new MIT Climate and Sustainability Consortium, it is a step towards the "active engagement and bold convening" promised in MIT's 2015 Climate Action Plan.

A second reason this move is encouraging is because it breaks MIT's history of complacency in responding to humanitarian and ethical investment dilemmas. In 1986, the MIT Coalition Against Apartheid rallied outside the Student Center, urging the MIT Corporation to divest from South Africa. MIT never responded nor divested its South African assets. In 2004, students began another campaign for divestment from genocide in Sudan. When the MIT Corporation finally convened the ad hoc Advisory Committee on Shareholder Responsibility (ACSR) to discuss Sudan two years later, Harvard, Stanford, Yale, and 45 other peer institutions had already divested. Under the Harvard Corporation's permanent Committee of Shareholder Responsibility, the decision-making process took five months, finishing 14 months before MIT did. On the other hand, the MIT ACSR's discussion process took about eight months, including a frustrating two-and-a-half month recess with no explanation, until MIT finally divested on May 14, 2007, based on violations of MIT's investment principles.

Along with the other leaders of the Sudan divestment movement, Kayvan Zainabadi, a biology graduate student and then-president of MIT Amnesty International, wanted to understand what this vague mention of "investment principles" meant. Furthermore, he sought to set in stone the precedent of making decisions based on these principles. Zainahadi worked with the Undergraduate Association and Graduate Student Council to submit a joint resolution, Establishing Responsible Investing Principles at MIT, to the MITIMCo, Corporation, and administration. This resolution recommended that the MIT Corporation establish ethical investing guidelines and "take actions to establish a Standing Committee on Investment Responsibility" to replace the ad hoc committee that

had failed to act efficiently on the Sudan divestment issue.

A five-person panel, including Zainabadi and Seth Alexander, the president of MIT-IMCo, discussed restructuring the ACSR. This discussion never turned into action. After Zainabadi and his peers graduated, students lost institutional memory of how close we had come to progress. In a January 2021 interview, Zainabadi, soon to be an Assistant Professor at Weill Cornell Medical College, said, "Nothing changed. Knowing what I know, I wouldn't donate to MIT."

While his sentiment rang true at the time, MITIMCo joining CA100+ now represents a slow, incremental change in MIT's approach to investments and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) issues. Some of the central asks of CA100+ are for climate-related financial disclosures, net-zero goals, and frameworks for ESG governance from company boards. The MIT administration also pushes initiatives to research climate scenario analysis, strengthen corporate financial disclosure, and encourage transparency from companies. This is a prudent strategy: Robert G. Eccles, a tenured Harvard Business School professor and the world's foremost expert on integrated reporting, told Harvard Magazine that an integrated reporting framework for sustainability-related matters "is going to lead to better resource-allocation decisions that will create value over the long-term, while allowing companies to take a more holistic view of their role in society."

However, we discovered a key difference between thirteen liberal arts peer institutions and thirteen tech schools, including MIT: while 11 out of 13 of the liberal arts schools disclosed explicit ESG investing policies on their websites, not a single one of the tech schools followed suit, despite the clear ties between ESG investing and strong returns. In his Forbes article, "The Curious Case of Engineering Schools and Sustainable Investing: MIT Is Not Alone," Eccles concluded that "the endowments of these tech schools are far behind their more literary peers when it comes to where the investment world is moving."

Joining the Climate Action 100+ coalition affirms that MIT is reshaping itself; this MIT is beginning to resemble the MIT that is a global leader of innovation, research, and technology addressing climate change. MIT is perhaps ready to do what Eccles calls for: to be the first tech school to break a tradition of inertia and establish a permanent framework for ESG investing.

Let's ensure the the end, of a movement for change. We encourage MIT to make a fuller commitment to climate action by publicly announcing that they are a part of Climate Action 100+, just as they announced the MIT Climate and Sustainability Consortium and work toward new policies on donations. To build on its continued promises of "active engagement and bold convening," MIT can take a lead investor role in influencing shareholder resolutions as a part of CA100+, establishing itself as a leader among tech institutions in driving change.

Based on its current investment principles, which are purely focused on generating returns, MITIMCo searches for partners with "motivations beyond money," claiming to engage only with investors of "the highest standards of ethical behavior and strong reputations of fair dealings with others." In accord with these statements, MIT should align its value-based investing with values-based commitments, following the footsteps of the modern investment community in accounting for financial risk and ensuring optimal returns. We call on MIT to incorporate three new principles: 1. Transparency and Public Commitments, 2. Climate and ESG-Oriented Portfolio Goals, and 3. A Framework for Accountability and Community Input.

We also outline three simple steps for MIT to make concrete progress towards these principles.

MITIMCo becomes a signatory of the Principles for Responsible Investment

The PRI is the global leading advocate of responsible investment. As an independent network supported by the United Nations, it has a long-term goal of creating an "economically efficient, sustainable global financial system." MIT should become a signatory to publicly display its steadfast commitment to sustainable investing and risk management, joining international organizations and peer institutions such as Brown, Harvard, and Northwestern University. Completing an investment manager application and annual reporting for the PRI also ensures that accountability and transparency are maintained.

MITIMCo releases a statement of

A statement of purpose is a publicly released memo that expands on MITIMCo's investment principles and articulates the connection between profits, purpose, and values. A statement of purpose will provide a solid foundation for more transparent and socially responsible governance to guide decision-making. Specificity plays a key role in the goals encompassed by this statement. MITIMCo needs to identify the time frames they use in evaluating its strategy and long-term capital allocation choices. Its standards for investment and engagement must contain concrete metrics to assess progress, such as those suggested in the MIT Alumni Climate Action Plan recommendations. Finally, we expect that the statement of pur pose will be followed by measurable goals and accountability to fulfill responsibilities to stakeholders.

The MIT Corporation should reconsider creating a Standing Committee on Investor Responsibility (SCIR).

Unlike its peer institutions, the MIT Corporation does not have a permanent framework to address sustainable investing issues. Its only current form of community input is the Corporation Joint Advisory Committee on Institute-Wide Affairs. While this committee does include undergraduate and graduate student members, it does not deliberate on socially responsible investing. As a sixth Corporation standing committee, the SCIR should: 1. help draft MITIMCo's statement of purpose, setting clear guidelines for sustainable investing and establishing a framework for effective management and accountability; 2. account for factors such as long-term financial interests, results of stress testing, and uncertainty; 3. represent the interests of undergraduate and graduate students, alumni, faculty, and staff by including at least two members from each group; and 4. make its meeting minutes, voting records, and recommendations, as well as the Corporation's response, public to the entire MIT community. We do not expect that the establishment of the SCIR will make divestment any more frequent; rather, the next time MITIMCo and the Corporation consider any urgent environmental or humanitarian issue, including the question of divestment versus engagement, the decision-making process will be more systematic, efficient, and transparent.

We - students, staff, faculty, alumni, and administration — are all drawn to MIT by a mission that unites us. We seek to develop in each other "the ability and passion to work wisely, creatively, and effectively for the betterment of humankind." Our reputation as a global leader of innovation rests on our shoulders. The MIT endowment, ranked fifth in the U.S., is not a publicly traded corporation, but each and every one of us is a stakeholder in our \$18.83 billion of influence. We can choose to stand together, leaving an Institute that is better prepared for the next challenge we face.

Sign the petition to support MIT in establishing socially responsible investing

Anushree Chaudhuri (she/her) is a member of the MIT Class of 2024 and involved with the Student Sustainability Coalition, UA Sustain, Terrascope, and the Environmental Solutions Initiative Rapid Response Group.

Jasmine Chen (she/her) is a member of the MIT Class of 2024 and involved with the Environmental Solutions Initiative Rapid Re-

Daisy Wang (she/her) is a member of the MIT Class of 2024 and involved with UA Sustain and the Environmental Solutions Initiative Rapid Response Group.

Editor's note: Daisy Wang porter at The Tech. Her reporting with The Tech thus far has spanned student life and community health during COVID-19; diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives; and the appointment of MIT faculty to government positions. She has not covered stories related to MIT's climate action, endowment, or investment practices and contributed to this op-ed as a student.

OPINION POLICY

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6 THE TECH Thursday, February 18, 2021

Local 26 files charges against Bon Appetit over warning issued to shop steward

UNITE HERE Local 26 is filing charges against Bon Appetit over a final warning issued to Mark Sims, chief shop steward of MIT's dining hall workers' union and chef at McCormick

As shop steward, Sims represents MIT's dining hall workers and works with Bon Appetit managers to resolve issues in the workplace between employees and management. Bon Appetit and its workers follow a union contract, which is meant to be enforced with the help of shop stewards.

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Sims said in an interview with The Tech that he had approached management to bring up concerns a union member had about a manager.

Sims then received a warning from Bon Appetit management, who described him as "aggressive, loud, and scary." Sims, who is a Black man, feels that the discipline against him is racially motivated and limits his ability to advocate for other workers as shop steward.

By filing charges, Local 26 expects Bon Appetit to remove the discipline from Sims' record.

Sims said that he appreciates "the support from students and the Student Worker Alliance."

The MIT Student Worker Alliance has organized a rally for dining workers that will take place on Feb. 22 over Zoom. A Facebook post announcing the rally writes, "Dining workers at MIT are often treated unfairly, are subject to racism and sexism, and in some cases are punished for standing up for dignity and respect on the job."

Dining workers and student advocates will be present at the rally, where participants will

discuss how they can "come together to fight for a just and equitable MIT.'

UNITE HERE Local 26 President Carlos Aramayo wrote in an email to The Tech, "We take this situation very seriously and expect a just solution. UNITE HERE Local 26 stands with Mark and we applaud his leadership in defending the rights and well-being of his coworkers."

Local 26 represents food service and hospitality workers in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, including workers at MIT.

THIE DAYKNEYD STRAYNES

— Kristina Chen

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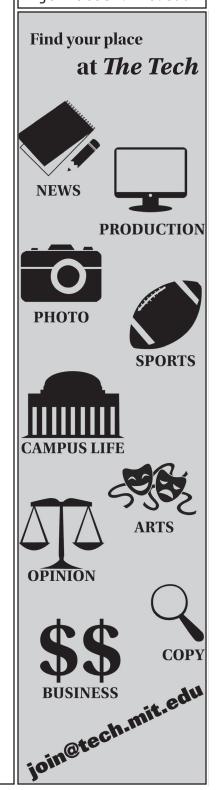
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Questions? Please contact interphase@mit.edu





FUNFUNFUNFUNFUN **FUN**FUNFUNFUNFUNFUNFUNFUNFUNFUN UNFUNFUNFUNFUNFU

First Day

Solution, page 2

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

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.

Q-Week

Solution, page 2

20+		5+		3÷	
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24×			1-		3
	2-	1		360×	
2		30×	6		
1-			20×		

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.

IN UNIFORM by Billie Truitt

Solution, page 2

ACROSS

- 1 Karate blow
- 5 Segments of a play
- **9** Old West pursuit group 14 "Very funny!"
- 15 Sycamore or maple
- **16** Pester
- 17 Auction website
- 18 Dash or marathon 19 Make fun of
- 20 Blaze battler
- 23 Green holder for peas 24 Takes the wheel
- 25 Sings alone 27 Heart test: Abbr.
- 29 "Be right with you!"
- **33** Dads
- 37 Go the distance
- 40 "Me? Never!"
- **41** Passenger plane staffer 44 Edible ice cream holder
- **45** Notion
- 46 Opinion piece
- **47** Section of an anthem 49 Race, as an engine

- **51** Rich layer cake
- 54 "High" esteem
- 59 List ending abbr.
- **62** Letter deliverer
- 64 Back-to-health program, for short
- **66** Banquet platform
- 67 "Yes, that's clear"
- 68 Accused's excuse
- 69 Suffix for luncheon
- 70 Relatives of 72 Across
- **71** Have a feeling
- 72 Stags and does
- 73 Admit the truth, with "up"

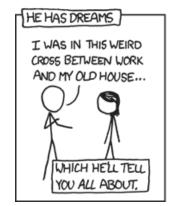
DOWN

- 1 Gourmet cooks
- 2 Customary behavior
- 3 Chicago airport
- 4 Check recipient
- **5** In jeopardy 6 Rugged cliff
- **7** Computer repairers
- 8 Look after

- 9 Store's customer
- **10** __ in a million (rare) 11 Break sharply
- 12 Nothing special
- **13** Closely observed
- 21 Just out of the oven
- 22 Privileged group
- **26** Contents of hourglasses
- **28** Feeling pleased
- 30 In order (to)
- **31** Sicilian volcano
- **32** Minneapolis or Miami
- **33** Cpl.'s subordinates
- 34 Very much
- **35** __ colada (rum cocktail)
- 36 Insurance seller
- **38** Devoured
- **39** Bit of a constellation
- 42 Small jeweled crown
- 43 "Not in a million years!"
- 48 Horror movie menace
- **50** Pencil end 52 __ over (helped through difficulty)
- 53 Fill with delight
- 15 16 18 19 20 25 33 |34 |35 |36 37 38 39 44 45 46 48 49 50 59 60 61 64 66 70 68 69 72
- **55** "Good __!" (Charlie Brown lament)
- **56** Supermarket path
- 57 Offends the nose 58 Gown, for example
- **59** Historical periods
- **60** Prefix for phone or vision **61** Where a goatee grows
- 63 Quote as a reference 65 Belly muscles

[621] Superlative

SARCASM. MATH. AND LANGUAGE by Randall Munroe





HE CAN SPEAK FRENCH.





8 THE TECH
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2021



Beavers are back!

Once again, another semester begins at MIT. Students from all around travel to campus — for some, this is a return back to a place many call "home," and for others, this is the start of a completely new chapter. Quarantine week has made it clearer than ever that our particular situations may differ, but at the end of the day, we're all in this together when it comes to keeping each other safe and supported.



