thetech.com

Volume 141, Number 25



WEATHER, p. 2 Mostly Sunny. SAT: 58°F | 45°F Chance of Showers.

Thursday, October 21, 2021

MIT's investments return at 55 percent after \$9 billion growth in endowment this fiscal year

MIT to increase endowment payout by 30 percent in fiscal year 2023 which will begin next year July 2022

By Shelley Choi NEWS EDITOR

MIT announced an unusually strong endowment performance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021 on Oct. 14. President L. Rafael Reif wrote in a letter to the MIT community that the Institute's return on pooled investments achieved a 55.5% return, "its strongest annual

performance in more than 20 years," on the same day.

MIT's endowment rose by 49.0% and \$9 billion, to \$27.4 billion in 2021 from \$18.4 billion in 2020. Endowment makes up the largest portion of MIT's total investments.

MIT also released the fiscal year's Report of the Treasurer. Executive Vice President and Treasurer Glen Shor wrote in the report that MIT

closed the year with net results of \$216.4 million.

MIT's endowment is "intended to support current and future generations of MIT scholars." It is used for activities such as "education, research, campus renewal, faculty work, and student financial aid," according to MIT News.

Endowment, Page 2



Students and MIT community members enjoy food, music, and dancing at the Garba Raas event hosted by the South Asian Association of Students Oct. 16.

IN SHORT

Oct. 22 is the last day of classes for half-term subjects offered in the first half of the term.

Oct. 25 is the **first day of classes** for half-term subjects offered in the second half of the term and for second quarter physical education classes.

All students are required to receive a flu vaccine by Nov. 21 in order to access buildings and register for classes

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

Send news and tips to news@tech.

Values statement committee introduces first draft of new Institute-wide values statement

Continued community engagement for statement to take place this school year

By Kristina Chen EDITOR IN CHIEF

The MIT Values Statement Committee completed its initial research for and prepared a first draft of a values statement for the

The values statement committee was charged by then-Chancellor Cynthia Barnhart PhD '88 and Provost Martin Schmidt PhD '88 in December 2020.

The committee is co-chaired by

Tracy Gabridge '88, deputy director of MIT Libraries, and Daniel E. Hastings PhD '80, head of the department of aeronautics and astronautics. The committee membership includes Institute staff, undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and alumni.

To create the values statement, the committee analyzed documents and artifacts from MIT's history, and sought community feedback through meetings, surveys, and direct input.

The committee held a community conversation on the values statement Oct. 20 through a live webcast and released a draft report on the statement.

According to the report, the values statement is meant to "build a shared sense of purpose, expectations, and responsibility.'

At the community conversation, Hastings said that multiple Institute committees, including the ad hoc committee to review MIT gift processes, had called

for a value statement to guide decision-making.

Ceasar McDowell, values statement committee member and professor of urban studies and planning, said that an expression of values would help "in those situations where we may have to make a choice between two things that seem equally important."

Gabridge added that the values statement may "empower commu-

Values Statement, Page 3

HackMIT hosts eighth yearly student hackathon, on campus and virtual

878 students took part in the hybrid event, majority virtually

By Srinidhi Narayanan

HackMIT 2021, MIT's studentrun 24-hour undergraduate hackathon, took place over the weekend of September 18–19. The hackathon first took place in 2013, and has

HackMIT was hosted as a hybrid event — MIT-affiliated participants were permitted to attend in person, while non-MIT affiliates attended virtually. 878 students participated in total — 345 students in-person, and 533 virtually. Participants worked in teams of up to four; 180 teams submitted projects.

Hack was also attended by several sponsor companies, including Microsoft, Hudson River Trading, Scale AI, Tangram, and Gather. Sponsor companies gave tech talks and hosted workshops; some companies instated special prizes as well. A complete list of sponsors, ordered by tier (most expensive to least expensive sponsorship packages), and sponsor prizes, can be found on HackMIT's website.

Participants submitted projects to HackMIT across four tracks, or impact areas - healthcare, community, education, and sustainability. Winning teams were selected in each of the four categories: three overarching winning teams were also selected.

The Tech spoke to the heads of HackMIT's four internal teams: logistics, corporate relations (CR), marketing, and development (dev), about the process of running

Katherine He '24 (co-director of HackMIT 2021), Hannah Kim '24, Jessica Xu '24, and Natalie Huang '24 represented logistics, CR, marketing, and dev respectively. This interview has been edited for clarity and length.

The Tech: What is the timeline for planning and running an event like HackMIT?

Katherine He: We start planning Hack typically in March, right after our spring recruiting cycle ends, and we go throughout the summer, until Hack happens, which is mid September to late September. So it's a whole half year process.

Kim: For the CR team we start at the same time as the rest of the teams. Basically all we do for the entire cycle is email a bunch of different companies that we think are willing to sponsor us. And usually, that's just cold emailing people or reaching out to recruiters that we know at different companies and basically asking them to come out to the event in the fall. That pretty much stretches the entire cycle. As we get closer to Hack, we start scheduling events for the sponsors — they can run workshops or mini events or tech talks - and we start sending information to our participants so that

HackMIT, Page 2



Undergraduate students meet potential mentors at the Biotech Group UROP Mixer the evening of Oct. 14.

PHYSICAL DISTANCE

Advice for touch starved first years. CAMPUS LIFE, p. 11

WE DO NOT NEED A GSU

Graduate students can effectively advocate without unionizing. OPINION, p. 8

GSU WORKS FOR GRAD STUDENTS

Unionization makes graduate students an Institute priority. OPINION, p. 10



MITSO

A refreshing first live concert back. ARTS, p. 6

FIRST TIME TEAM

MIT's Women's Wrestling begins this year. SPORTS, p. 12

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| Campus Life 11 |
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Thursday, October 21, 2021

WEATHER

Fall-ing into some cozy times!

By Amena Khatun and Katherine Pan

Hi friends! :) Get ready for the cold weather of Boston to start to hit! This week, we'll see a dive in the temperatures as fall really starts to set in. A storm system is moving across the midwest and east, possibly bringing us the first snow of the season. Bundle up for cold nights and stay warm if you're staying out late.

Hopefully, the first set of midterms are over, and we can finally enjoy our weekend. This weekend is the Head of the Charles, so go out there and support your favorite crew team! The waterfront is colder, and there is a slight chance of rain, so make sure to bring an umbrella. If you're a part of the class of 2024, get excited for the Twenty-Fourmal! Dress up in your cozy fall attire and enjoy some hot tea and good company with friends.

Extended Forecast

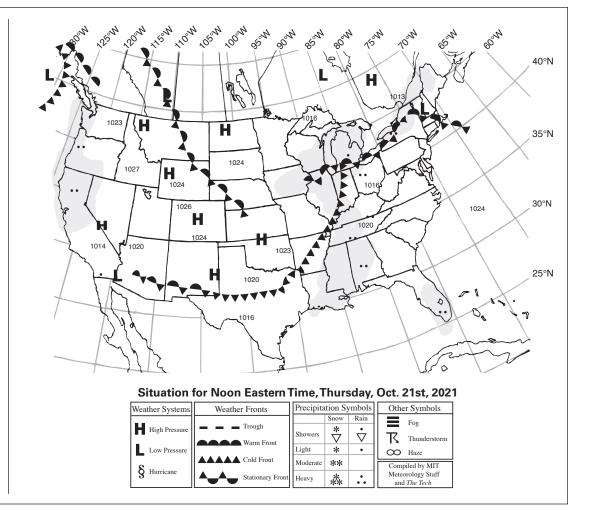
Today: Sunny. High around 72°F (22°C). Winds 7-10 mph in the southwest.

Tonight: Mostly cloudy. Low around 60°F (16°C). Winds 10-20 mph

Friday: Sunny. High around 69°F (21°C) and low around 51°F (11°C). Winds 9-10 in the west.

Saturday: Cloudy with a chance of showers (30%). High around 58°F (14°C) and low around 45°F (7°C). Winds 5-7mph in the north.

Sunday: Mostly sunny. High around 56°F (13°C) and low around 43°F (6°C). Winds 7-9 mph in the northwest.



3% pay and stipend increase for staff and graduate students announced

Endowment, from Page 1

The investment pool with the endowment provided \$851 million, or about 30 % of MIT's operating revenues, for the last fiscal year, Reif wrote. This covered "everything from utilities, to support for teaching and learning, to the sudden need for a community-wide Covid testing system."

Endowments consist of "gifts from alumni and friends" who expect that "funds will be invested in ways that enable ongoing benefits over many years." MIT's endowment consists of approximately 4,400 individual funds. The endowment is managed by the MIT Investment

Management Company (MITIM-Co), a division of MIT.

Endowments can thus be either donor-restricted or not, meaning they are often "permanently designated by the donor for a specific purpose," Reif wrote. This could potentially limit "spending priorities for the new funds." Salaries and wages, departments and research, and undergraduate areas lead the largest composition of endowments with donor restrictions.

Reif wrote in the letter that the rise in endowment enables MIT to "put these gains to use more quickly" while "maintaining appropriate balances to meet future needs."

Due to this year's exceptional

returns, Reif announced that MIT will increase endowment payout by 30% for fiscal year 2023. Traditionally, MIT was only able to "increase endowment support for campus operations" by around "4.5 percent each year."

Reif also announced that "campus-based, benefits-eligible staff and faculty" will receive a "special 3 percent base pay increase," effective Dec. 1. All "RAs, TAs, graduate students with fellowship appointments, and postdocs" will also receive a three percent stipend increase.

Reif wrote to MIT News that "new funds will be deployed in ways that benefit students at all levels, and make the Institute more

capable of advancing the cuttingedge research and science the world needs." Task Force 2021 and Beyond is tasked with identifying such key priorities.

Shor echoed Reif in the treasurer's report, writing that "foremost" among the "priorities" is to "deploy MIT's expertise to unlock breakthrough solutions to climate change." This includes the Institute's Fast Forward: MIT's Climate Action Plan for the Decade plan to "achieve the goal of decarbonizing the global economy by 2050."

Shor noted in the treasurer's report that despite "immense challenges of operating in the COVID-19 pandemic environment," the In-

stitute "continued to demonstrate strong financial performance."

MIT "implemented targeted cost controls" in the beginning of fiscal 2021, "anticipating pressures on its finances from the need to adapt to COVID-19." Pressures included restraints from a "reduced on-campus presence and pandemic-induced restrictions," leading to "loss of student-related revenue" and "one-time subsidy to faculty and staff to assist with heightened childcare needs."

MIT reported the largest increase in returns at 55.5% compared to peer institutions, such as Harvard University at 33.6% and Yale University

HackMIT supports new coders with basics workshops and beginner prizes

HackMIT, from Page 1

everyone knows which sponsors are coming out and when.

Jessica Xu: For marketing, we focus on the branding for the event. This includes the website, swag, and overarching theme.

Natalie Huang: In dev, we handle technology projects. We work on them weekly, and, starting in June, have more time sensitive ones. We do our splashed landing page in June, then work on the registration page and deploy that site in July. Throughout July and August we work on our admissions puzzle. We also work on day-of technology, our judging platforms, and projects' mission platforms in August

ects' mission platforms in August. TT: How did the pandemic affect planning Hack?

KH: From a logistics perspective, it was definitely a lot more challenging than running either a [fully] in-person or virtual event. I think the main issue was that we didn't really have a concrete set of guidelines from MIT until late into the summer. We were basically planning for several different scenarios at once. What if we have to go full virtual? What if we have to restrict the event to MIT students only? The lack of guidelines made

-:---F1 joinTechno.py

it very difficult for us to order large quantities of food or book spaces.

Another challenge was trying to figure out what types of guidelines to put in place for virtual vs. inperson hackers, since we wanted both to have the best experience possible. In the hybrid environment, how do we make sure that takes place? How do we make sure that we're not accidentally prioritizing the in-person hackers?

HK: We weren't too affected in the beginning for the most part, for CR, since all we had to do is get in contact with sponsors. As we got closer to the event, we had to figure out how to balance the interactions between sponsors and virtual and in-person hackers. For example, we had to figure out how we could make sure that virtual sponsors could interact with in-person hackers. Or how virtual hackers could interact with in-person sponsors, which is much more difficult. We had to think about how sponsors could make the most out of it, and how to ensure that they were satisfied with how things run.

NH: For dev, I honestly don't think that much changed, because we don't handle interactions between hackers and sponsors. The biggest change was that we adapted some of our apps, creating in-person and virtual mentoring apps. We did choose to keep a lot of our other apps fully virtual.

TT: What turned out really well? On the flip side, was there anything that didn't go as well as you'd hoped, or something you'd be looking to improve?

KH: We have a feedback form that we send out to hackers. One of the pros was that the hackers overwhelmingly had a very positive response to the hackathon. We're especially happy to hear that both virtual and in-person hackers had a good experience.

good experience.

The biggest con is that running a hybrid event is very draining on the overall energy of the hackathon. When there's a really big space, but fewer in-person hackers and many online hackers, you don't see the excitement. It's harder to get everyone hyped up about the hackathon and excited to participate. The main thing we found difficult was keeping up the energy throughout the 24 hours.

HK: We used Gather to give virtual sponsors a booth to interact with hackers, and got a lot of good feedback about interaction between virtual hackers on Gather.

NH: For dev, we implemented a lot of new projects this year, like a new registration system. Those got up in a relatively reasonable time. In terms of cons, our judging and project submission is always a little messy because of the amount of communication between hackers, judges, sponsors, and the team. It wasn't significantly worse this year than any other year, but it's definitely a process that we could improve every time.

TT: A big thing at hackathons is accessibility. Are there resources for beginners, is the event accessible to new coders and experienced coders alike, etc.? Is this a priority for Hack? How do you ensure accessibility?

KH: This is definitely something we think about a lot. First of all, we definitely value beginner coders. We're super excited to be able to give them an experience where they're able to learn in an individualistic way, and have experiential learning. We also plan a high school hackathon in the spring, called Blueprint.

For some specifics, we host a lot of workshops to help students learn about sponsors, APIs, or even just skill sets and basic coding, like learning how to code in React. The dev team teaches a beginner workshop during Hack Week. And in our project submission process, we allow teams to self-tag as beginners. We have a beginner prize for that pool. Our admissions process is also pretty simple. We emphasize to our team that coding experience is not necessary, and that we should evaluate the applications without considering coding experience as the main factor. Nearly half of our coders are beginner coders.

We also look at the number of beginner hackers who were accepted, how many of them submitted projects, and how many beginners signed up for a mentor in our mentoring process.

TT: How do you pick sponsors? What are you looking for in sponsors?

HK: We don't pick and choose too much when we reach out to companies. They can be as big as Microsoft, Facebook, and Google, or they can be small startups that are just a couple years old. Every year we host a few startups that are created by MIT alumni. We provide packages to the sponsors — for different prices, they get different benefits, like running tech talks or workshops, speaking in our opening ceremony, access to hacker skill sheets, hosting their own challenge with a prize.

File Edit Options Buffers Tools Im-Python Python Help

from new_skills import *

def learnMarketableJobSkills():
 return linux, OSX, javascript, applescript, perl, python, PHP

if self.interest == True:
 print "E-mail join@tech.mit.edu"

Webcast community conversation held for new values statement Oct. 20

Values Statement, from Page 1

nity members to be able to initiate a discussion if it appears that values are being disregarded."

The report states that while MIT's mission statement helps MIT decide "what is worthwhile to pursue," a values statement "will define how we behave and treat each other in doing so."

The draft of the values statement begins with the statement, "We begin where MIT began, with a belief in human potential."

The draft emphasizes diversity, collaboration, and innovation, stating "We strive to make our community a welcoming place where people from a diverse set of backgrounds can grow and thrive," "We celebrate collaboration as the best path to fresh answers," and "We strive for the highest standards of intellectual and creative excellence."

The draft also makes note of MIT's unique hacking culture by writing, "We prize originality, curiosity, ingenuity and creative irreverence — and we treasure quirkiness, nerdiness and hacking, as fruits of the same tree."

The draft additionally discusses responsibility and warns against arrogance. It writes, "we are willing to face difficult facts, admit our mistakes, speak plainly about failings in our systems," and "we must take special care that exceptional talent does not become an excuse for bad behavior and disrespect."

The draft report also listed recommendations for implementing the value statement. These recommendations include updating MIT's motto from "mens et manus" to "Mind, Hand, Heart"; calling on "visible commitment and action" throughout MIT and from

the MIT Corporation, senior leaders, and faculty; growing awareness of the values throughout MIT; and making the values statement "an ongoing and living endeavor."

While the statement was initially meant to be completed July 31, 2021, the committee recommended an "extended engagement process" during the 2021-22 academic year to allow community members time to consider the draft and provide feedback.

The values statement committee will hold staff town hall meetings in November, a series of in-person and hybrid meetings with students and postdocs in the fall, and a series of RealTalk@MIT community conversations in the spring.

The report calls the statement "deliberately aspirational" and acknowledges that some of the values in the statement "sometimes exist in tension or even in competition with one another."

During the community conversation, Hastings responded to a question about the value of freedom of speech with respect to the recent cancellation of the Carlson Lecture, citing two sentences from the draft values statement: "On a campus without gates, we champion the open sharing of information and ideas" and "We strive to make our community a welcoming place where people from a diverse set of backgrounds can grow and thrive."

Hastings said that the two sentences "may at times come into tension," and a decision-maker guided by the values statement would have "to make a decision that weights" the two values.

Sally Haslanger, values statement committee member and professor of philosophy, responded that it should be taken in account

that while the "value of expressing views might be undeniable," "it might not be the right, time, place, or role for someone to express their views."

Haslanger said that taking this could result in recognizing consequences of expressing certain views and that "our values tell us how to weigh those consequences," making it possible to find a resolution despite tension.

Haslanger added that unrestricted freedom of speech "does not promote open inquiry" because "when the powerful take up all the airtime or use their speech to discredit the less powerful, they effectively silence others and block inquiry."

The report specifically mentions that the committee "confronted the tension between the value and recognition of individual merit and the systemic meaning and practice of meritocracy" when discussing merit, a value the committee "spent more time on" discussing "than any other single topic."

The report writes that the committee "often heard references, particularly from alumni and faculty, to MIT being a 'meritocracy," and that those who saw MIT this way usually felt that "peers and colleagues judged [their] effectiveness based on what [they] could do, not on where [they] came from."

On the other hand, the report notes that staff members were "much more likely to point out that, even at MIT, those born into advantages of class, race and gender are overrepresented in positions of influence," and merit "rarely came up in discussions" with students and postdoctoral scholars.

The report lists MIT's needblind admissions process and absence of honorary degrees as examples of merit-based valuation distinguishing MIT from institutions that consider legacy admissions and financial worth in determining community membership.

However, the committee found that the term "meritocracy" had limitations, due to evidence "showing that organizations that profess meritocracy as a value tend to spawn systemic discriminatory practices" arising from differences in background, experience, and opportunity.

Amy Glasmeier, values statement committee member and professor of urban studies and planning, addressed the question of merit at the community conversation, saying that "meritocracy, as it was originally formed, really meant who had access to what and by what means were they judged to have access" and that "for younger members of MIT and members of MIT from around the world, meritocracy wasn't always open."

Thus, the committee decided against explicitly mentioning merit in the draft statement and instead chose to "think more broadly about terms that would allow us to be more fully inclusive about MIT today."

Another question raised at the community conversation asked how staff at MIT were taken into account in the creation of the values statement.

Ann Warner-Harvey, values statement committee member and director of administrative services and operations in the office of the vice president for finance, responded that the membership of the committee included staff and that the committee met with individuals and groups across campus.

Peter Fisher, values statement committee member and head of the department of physics, added that, having served on many Institute committees that worked with staff, staff "voices are particularly important in this moment, in this values statement, because I don't think their dedication is widely understood."

Glasmeier also responded that the committee "focused a lot on staff" after hearing of issues relating to the circumstances and feelings of staff, which guided the committee in thinking about how the statement "actually" applied to "everyone."

Natasha Hirt '22 and Cadence Payne G, undergraduate and graduate student representatives to the committee, also addressed student feedback on the statement.

Payne said that at a town hall discussing Institute values, "a lot of students, in the face of power dynamics when interacting with faculty and staff" expressed hope that their voices be represented "more broadly" and that there be "a platform to hold people accountable" when values are not being upheld.

Payne also said that students wanted more transparency and to know more about decision-making happening "behind the scenes" at MIT.

Hirt added that it was important that the statement "is not only written and then posted somewhere ... but that the whole question of accountability is regularly engaged with by faculty and staff and that students are continually being brought into the discussion."

Community members can send feedback on the values statement through a survey or idea bank on the values statement website or request a meeting by emailing values-committee-input@mit.edu.



4 THE TECH

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2021

FUNFUNFUNFUNFUNFUNFUNFUNFUNFUN FUNFUNFUNFUNFUNFUNFUN

In Deep Water by Jonathan Huang

Solution, page 11

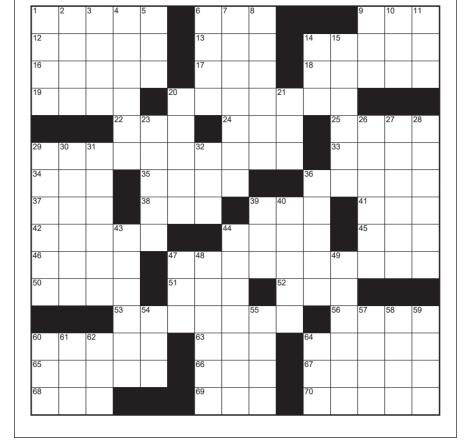
ACROSS

- 1 Dam-generated power 6 Serpent of the sands
- 9 Shelley wrote one to the West Wind
- 12 Spiritual characters
- 13 Suffix with electron
- 14 The Cosa Nostra or the Bratva
- 16 *____ roof of car*
- 17 Monotonous
- 18 Good notification after an interview
- 19 Plant fiber in rope
- 20 It can contain algae or uranium
- 22 Part of a Freudian trio
- 24 Global pandemic responder
- 25 Result from a mosquito bite
- 29 Fuss to discuss
- 33 Beverage dispenser option
- 34 Beginning of autumn?
- 35 "When I asked for ____" (Shang from Mulan)
- 36 Kim Janey, to Boston
- 37 "I" in FWIW
- 38 NBA stat
- 39 Architect of the Green Building
- 41 Ending to several pasta names
- 42 Quincañeras and bar mitzvahs
- 44 Lobster part of a main course
- 45 Python necessity
- 46 One of them does?
- 47 Wing dressing
- 50 Important numbers for poker players
- 51 Egg cells
- 52 Tire unit
- 53 Limited quantity in MITx
- 56 Stuck in a sticky situation
- 60 Specify the facts
- 63 Dump
- 64 Type of decay
- 65 Point of contention between Chicago and New York
- 66 "Loyalty, got royalty inside my " (Kendrick Lamar)
- 67 Door sign or succulent
- 68 Nevertheless
- 69 Group of Western Hemisphere countries
- 70 A common chemical, or a homophonic hint to 1-across,

29-across, 47-across, and this clue itself?

DOWN

- 1 Like a secret map?
- 2 Predecessor of Christmas
- 3 Unit of volume, sometimes for Scotch whisky
- 4 Descend from El Capitan
- 5 WWII agency that became the CIA
- 6 Recitation leader
- 7 Quickly etches and sketches
- 8 Hitchcock thriller movie
- 9 Missed the mark
- 10 German article
- 11 Location of the stapes
- 14 Bovine onomatopoeia
- 15 "I bless the rains down in _ (Toto)
- 20 Subject of Asimov's Laws
- 21 In addition
- 23 [Oh dear!]
- 26 Avalon creator
- 27 Antibodies in COVID-19 treatment
- 28 Company that began selling Gummibärchen in 1922
- 29 Bob or bun
- 30 Laces on loose shoes
- 31 Persevered
- 32 Soln. to a problem
- 36 Annoys
- 39 Local inn
- 40 Verb for acne or war
- 43 Substitute good, during wartime
- 44 What burns out in burnout
- 47 With 54-down, a good winter drink
- 48 Burn outw
- 49 Purchase at a seafood market
- 54 See 47-down
- 55 Some kisses
- 57 Organization awarded the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize
- 58 "Get out!"
- 59 Purple root
- 60 Sneaky gadget user
- 61 Draw
- 62 HIV "nuke" drug
- 64 Blood pressure hormone



We get you the tickets. You get us the review.



events • movies • theater • concerts music • books • restaurants • interviews

Weary

Solution, page 11

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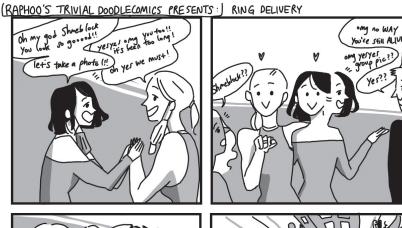
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Drowsy

Solution, page 11

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

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.







MOVIE REVIEW

Wes Anderson's ode to *The New Yorker*, the French, and Bill Murray

Another Anderson classic for the archives

By Erika Yang

ARTS EDITOR

Whimsical is the word I always use to describe Wes Anderson films. The bright color palettes, quirky characters, and scintillating storylines create a unique but deceptively innocent atmosphere, akin to a children's film for adults. The cheerful elements often mask an underlying bleakness, and *The French Dispatch* is no exception to this classic Wes Anderson formula.

In what is perhaps the most Wes Anderson film to date, The French Dispatch engages the audience in a journalistic tale dedicated to the life and times of Kansasborn Arthur Howitzer Jr. (Bill Murray), the editor-in-chief of The French Dispatch, which is published in its French outpost in Ennui-sur-Blasé. To honor both his death and the magazine, the remaining journalists spotlight three of the journal's most prominent stories in addition to an obituary for the final issue. While the world is universal, the stories themselves are mostly self-contained, making the film more of an anthology of short films under the roof of a singular brand, akin to an actual newspaper or magazine.

Anderson puts his own twist on classic journalism stories while remaining true to the heart of a magazine. Featuring tortured artists, young revolutionaries, and radishhating children, the stories check off many

of the typical categories found in a newspaper, and depending on the topic, some stories may appeal to certain audience members more than others. Flipping through each one feels very much like flipping through the pages of a paper. Each story is so unique in its narrative and visuals that comparing them against each other would be incredibly difficult, but in a way, they do build off of one another. Compared to the first two stories, the third focuses more on the reporters themselves and the inner workings of the magazine, and specifically on how its editor-in-chief operates. We see how Howitzer recruits Roebuck Wright (Jeffrey Wright) into the magazine, catapulting him from a jailbird to a famous reporter by giving him a chance to write an article. A key piece of advice given to him: "Make it sound like you wrote it that way on purpose."

While it is near impossible to become truly invested in any of the stories simply due to the short time allotted to each, it is also impossible to not become intrigued after each section. Anderson drops enough details for the audience to leave pondering more about the meaning of it all, or at the very least, an aesthetic visual journey.

As each story is introduced, the visuals grow increasingly varied and the isolated bubble the story lives in a little more porous. The issue commences with the

story of Moses Rosenthaler (Benicio del Toro), a convicted murderer and talented artist whose paintings garner a following in the outside world during his time in prison. J.K.L. Berensen (Tilda Swinton), the reporter for the story, presents it in a lecture-style format; this allows the scenes to oscillate between her and the events described and also forms a barrier between the reporter and the event. This barrier is collapsed with the second story, where the reporter, Lucinda Krementz (Frances McDormand), engages in a relationship with one of the key figures, revolutionary Zeffirelli (Timothée Chalamet). The series of spotlights culminates with the kidnapping of The Commissaire's (Mathieu Amalric) radish-hating son, Gigi (Winston Ait Hellal), an absolute masterpiece for the eyes. Anderson plays around with the stylings of the scene, moving between the black-and-white realism and an animated cartoon for the car chase at the end. The transitions are surprisingly unjarring and serve as a refreshing break from the monochrome intensities of the preceding events. Wes Anderson is already renowned for his unique style, and The French Dispatch furthers these creative visions, adding another dimension to a Wes Anderson film.

The cast features many of Anderson's frequent collaborators (Murray, Swinton) as well as some newcomers (Lyna Khoudri,

Wright, Del Toro). In the fashion of a true ensemble cast, everyone's performances are equally as strong and commendable as the other's, exhibiting the perfect amount of levity and whimsicality that define a Wes Anderson film.

Largely inspired by *The New Yorker* and Anderson's affinity for the French, *The French Dispatch* experiments with the boundaries of cinematic storytelling and somehow makes Wes Anderson even more Wes Anderson.

The French Dispatch

Directed by Wes Anderson

Screenplay by Wes Anderson

Starring Bill Murray, Benicio del Toro, Tilda Swinton, Timothée Chalamet, Léa Seydoux

Rated R, Playing Oct. 22

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Ranch-flavored ice cream? Red Bull sorbets? Oh my

If you value your tastebuds' sanity, stick with J.P. Licks' classic flavors

By Mindy Long

Established in 1981 by Vincent Petryk in Jamaica Plain (hence J.P.), J.P. Licks is Boston's beloved kosher ice cream shop. It currently has 17 locations throughout Massachusetts. In any shop you can find 30 flavors at a time, 15 of which are classic — think cookie dough, mint chip, pistachio, strawberry, vanilla, chocolate, to name a few — and 15 of which are featured flavors. Each featured flavor is in stores for anywhere from three to six weeks. Current featured flavors include caramel apple, French vanilla almond, pumpkin custard, and midnight munchies.

In honor of its 40th anniversary this year, J.P. Licks is bringing back old favorites, such as French vanilla almond (currently in stores) and fruity pebble cereal milk. In November, carrot cake ice cream, which is actually marinated in carrot juice, will make its comeback.

Alongside these comeback flavors, be on the lookout for brand new ones in the upcoming months like black raspberry cookies and cream and applewood smoked bacon (for a Johnny Cupcakes partnership).

I had the opportunity to chat with Kim Diaz, J.P. Licks' director of operations, about its two newest flavors: midnight munchies and strawberry lime Red Bull sorbet. Inspired by the return of hungry college students to Boston searching for late-night snacks, midnight munchies is peanut butter ice cream loaded with chocolate-covered pretzels, Kit Kats, and potato chips with ranch flavoring. Since every item in J.P. Licks is kosher, the flavor developers had to be creative to perfect the potato chips and ranch flavor. Extra salt, pretzels, and peanut butter were added before it was approved to roll out in stores. Strawberry lime Red Bull sorbet, on the other hand, was easier to craft. Puree and Red Bull were simply mixed together to create a tangy, sweet, and energizing ice cream.

I sampled these new flavors at J.P. Licks' Beacon Hill location, located directly across the Longfellow bridge from MIT Sloan. Dipping into the midnight munchies, I could taste the Kit Kat bits encased in creamy peanut butter ice cream. However, the aftertaste quickly clapped back as a pungent garlic sting overwhelmed the

peanut butter. I had to eat a couple more scoops before becoming accustomed to the stark contrast of the cool ranch Doritos substitute against the sweet peanut butter Kit Kat mix.

At that point, I decided to move on to the strawberry lime Red Bull sorbet. The color of dark pink lemonade, the sorbet tasted like a typical fruity sorbet at first. I could taste the Red Bull after the ice melted. This flavor was less of a shock than the midnight munchies but after two scoops, I couldn't eat anymore as the sweetness was overpowering.

Needless to say, J.P. Licks' two newest featured flavors were disappointing. The midnight munchies mashed together two very different textures — sweet peanut butter with salty garlic-tinted ranch — the end result of which detonated my tastebuds. As a point of personal reflection, though, I now wonder how college students like me shove sweet snacks along with salty potato chips into our stomachs at once. On the other hand, though the strawberry lime sorbet complemented the Red Bull well, the outcome was an overwhelmingly sweet concoction.

If you ever find yourself visiting J.P. Licks in the coming weeks, I recommend sticking to their tried and proven classic flavors. This cycle of J.P. Licks' featured flavors leaves more to be desired in the future.

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Ice cream, \$

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CONCERT REVIEW

Three ways to celebrate live music

MITSO's first concert of the year celebrates a rebirth of MIT orchestral music

By Lani Lee STAFF WRITER

Celebration — a word associated with a variety of occasions — was expressed by the MIT Symphony Orchestra (MITSO) at the end of a long year-and-a-half without live music. The first MITSO concert of the semester brought forth infectious energy in Kresge Auditorium with a colorful palette of joy consisting of three motivationally similar yet executionally different pieces composed in the early twentieth century. Director Adam K. Boyles welcomed the audience with interpretations of and introductions to the works, which created a relaxing, informal atmosphere for the audience to enjoy.

Bernstein's Overture to his operetta "Candide" opened up the evening with strong melodic lines and immense power from the large orchestra. The interactions between the string section's playful pizzicato and wind instruments' flurry of

Bernstein's Overture to "Candide," Ravel's Piano Concerto in G, Respighi's Feste Romane

MIT Symphony Orchestra

Venkatesh Sivaraman '20 on Piano

Conducted by Adam K. Boyles

Kresge Auditorium

Oct. 16

sound seemed to depict a scene of a bustling crowd at a gathering. The sweeping strings, highlighting the melody from the operetta number "Oh, Happy We," sang out the sheer jubilation of the occasion, and the joy seemed to spread throughout the orchestra. MITSO really shone in moments like these, when instruments shaped melodic lines together in coherent, vivacious ways.

The second piece, Ravel's Piano Concerto in G, welcomed back one of the winners of the MIT Concerto Competition, pianist Venkatesh Sivaraman '20. The first movement took off with a whip-crack into a spiral of arpeggios and glissandos in the piano, a catchy piccolo tune, and a wash of string thumps acting almost like percussion. Sivaraman allowed the orchestra to shine in many parts, but also knew exactly when to bring out the piano, especially its lowest and highest registers. The tempo of this movement was moderate compared to many other renowned interpretations, but this allowed the jazzy sections to dabble in the soulful blues of the melodies, bringing out the unique sensuality of the piece. The second movement was equally emotive, if not more so, the unaccompanied piano evoking a scene of a lonely waltz in a grey apartment. The serenity slowly called for lustrous harmonies in the orchestra, and the violins cushioned the music in a soft cloud of muted open harmonics. The short third movement rejuvenated the percussive energy of the first movement and hurled into a frenzied excitement at the finale. The standing ovation and cheers from the audience were certainly a fitting epilogue to this musical journey.

The final *Feste Romane* started drastically differently than the Ravel, with fanfare trumpets in the balcony announcing the deadly imperial Roman circus. The sym-



KATE L

Pieces performed at this weekend's MITSO concert include Respighi's *Feste Romane*, Bernstein's Candide, and Ravel's Piano Concerto in G Major.

phonic poem pictured different rituals of Rome in one continuous motion without breaks between the movements. The multitude of percussion instruments, rare emphasis on lower strings, and featured soli evoked different images in each section of the piece. Through this storytelling, MITSO established tension in the air with fireintense tremolos, crisply accented dissonances in unison, and unexpected instrument entrances. In the fourth movement, the entire orchestra peaked with loud, chaotic, cheer-like notes played by all instruments, which was echoed by the audience

with applause, tying the idea of a celebration all together.

"The fact that we are here tonight, listening to live music together again, we ought to celebrate," expressed Boyles. Without a live performance since March 2020, MITSO may have endured a difficult transition to new instrumentalists and rehearsal constraints at the start of the semester. Despite these complications, the powerful energy from the huge orchestra was chilling to hear live, and the many more concerts to come (three more this semester alone) deserve the attention and cheers of the MIT community and beyond.

MOVIE REVIEW

No Time to Die had far too much time

The movie tries to be too many things at once and succeeds at none of them



COURTESY OF NICOLA DOVE

Daniel Craig and Ana de Armas star as James Bond and Paloma in No Time to Die.

By Renee Ge

No Time to Die has finally come to theaters after being delayed multiple times due to the pandemic. As Daniel Craig exits the role of 007, No Time to Die attempts to humanize Bond while still clinging onto all of what is Bondlike: dry quips, fight scenes, foreign countries, a femme fatale, and sinister organizations hell-bent on some version of catastrophic destruction. But instead, it languishes on an incoherent storyline for nearly three hours.

The film begins with Bond leaving his lover, Madeleine Swan (Léa Seydoux), and retiring to Jamaica. However, he's called back into service in order to track down a missing scientist, and this mission quickly gets derailed as

more and more secrets are unearthed. Along the way, he must repair his romantic relationship and deal with the fact that the world has moved on without him.

One glaring weakness in the film is the way Bond treats women. When Bond is attacked by assassins while visiting the tomb of a previous love interest, he somehow concludes that Swan is at fault. He shoves and drags her around, and when they are in the car with the assassins shooting at them, there is a moment when he chooses to ignore the situation and stare off into space while one can hear the sound of bullets pounding at the glass and Swan's increasingly desperate pleas for him to do something, anything. He takes his time before acquiescing.

The way Bond pushes Swan around when he's angry and the way he risks both their lives to prove a sick point about how dependent she is on him show that their relationship is extremely toxic. Even though it is clear that this film intends to develop their relationship somewhere down the road, I actually cheered when Bond put Swan on a train and vowed to never see her again.

It's not just Bond's attitude toward Swan. After his retirement, the world had moved on from James Bond, and throughout Bond's journey back into the world of MI6, there is a question constantly playing in the background: Is he past his prime? Can he do it again? The film makes sure that he does, but at the cost of diminishing the women around him For instance Paloma (Ana de Armas) is terrifyingly competent but always defers to Bond because she is starstruck by him. Nomi (Lashana Lynch) and Bond trade snubs for most of the film because Nomi is his replacement, but the film resolves this by having Nomi learn to respect Bond and make space for him. A significant part of the film is essentially women of color being reminded of this white man's supposed greatness.

In a college roundtable interview, Lynch talked about Bond's relationship with the women in the film: "[it's] very indicative of where a lot of men that I know personally are thinking towards these days — respecting women, speaking up for them, and leading them to have more agency in their industries." But while that intention is apparent throughout the film, women don't need men to speak for them or teach them how to lead, and the depiction of that can be harmful.

What is also concerning is how the villain, Lyutsifer Safin (Rami Malek), is portrayed alongside Japanese aesthetics. When Bond confronts Safin, Safin wears a kimono-like robe and sits at a low table. His garden of poisons uses East Asian design elements. Safin says some maudlin lines about how Bond and him are two sides of the same coin, but what is most noticeable is his accent, a sibi-

lant, effortful drawl. English is not his first language.

This isn't limited only to this one James Bond film — it applies to the entire series. It is tiring to see villains who speak with an accent and who are coded with a non-Western culture. It is tiring to watch men who go off to far-flung, foreign countries and claim that murder is justified because they are "saving the world", when what they are really doing is defending nebulous national interests.

While these points made me dislike the film, I have to acknowledge that the main expectation of a James Bond film is for it to provide stunning visuals and high-stakes action, and *No Time to Die* delivers that well. The camerawork in some of the scenes is gorgeous. The whiplash of transitioning from an emotional scene to the main characters being shot at does the job of thrilling the audience. Experiencing it all on a big screen in person is a suitable "welcome back" from the pandemic.

No Time to Die

Directed by Cary Joji Fukunaga

Screenplay by Neal Purvis, Robert Wade, Cary Joji Fukunaga, Phoebe Waller-Bridge

Starring Daniel Craig, Léa Seydoux, Ana de Armas, Rami Malek, Lashana Lynch

Rated PG-13, Now Playing

MOVIE REVIEW

Teaching a nation to cook

Julia Child's relationship with food and feminism

Julia

Directed by Betsy West and Julie Cohen

Starring Julia Child (archive footage), José Andrés, André Cointreau

Rated PG-13, Playing Nov. 5

By Neha Pant

These days, photos of fancy meals fill our social media feeds, and cooking competitions air daily on national television. As a result, it's often difficult to envision an America that ran on TV dinners and Jell-O salads. As a child growing up in the 1930s, though, that America was Julia Child's reality. It wasn't until she traveled to France, and had a near-religious experience trying loup de mer (sea bass), that she began her transformation into the culinary icon that we know and love today.

Julia, the latest brainchild of Oscarnominated documentary directors Betsy West and Julie Cohen (RBG), follows Child's life from her conservative upbringing in California to her last appearances on television in her 90s. It portrays Child as revolutionizing the way that Americans thought about food, presenting cooking as a means of self-expression rather than a chore that needed to be done. It also humanizes her by exploring her relationships, touching on her love for husband Paul, her friendship with cookbook co-author Simca, and her support of pro-choice and anti-AIDS activist groups.

From the beginning, *Julia* highlights its namesake's electric personality — it opens with Child animatedly making an omelette on a typically dry informational channel. The clips of Child are contrasted with monotone news reports and book reviews from that same channel, making it easy to understand why viewers fell in love. In fact, that one-off appearance received so much praise that it inspired a PBS station in Boston to give her a show. In an interview with *The Tech*, West described Child as "succeeding not because her brand was crafted by TV executives, but because her audience was hungry for authenticity."

This theme of Child disregarding what was "expected" persists throughout the film. In a country where being a man was effectively a prerequisite for becoming a chef, Child enrolled in Le Cordon Bleu and began a cookery class for other women out of her home. The film pairs scenes of Child's gradual mastery of French cooking with opera music and intimate close-ups of dishes — Julia invites us to see food through Child's eyes, as an art form that's meant to evoke emotion.

However, Child's passionate, didactic approach to food was completely unheard of in both publishing and television at the time. *Julia* makes this obvious, showing clips of pretty, smiling, but silent women in advertisements for cooking products. Child's cookbook very nearly didn't get published because of how thorough it was — it was considered too intimidating for the American housewife by the overwhelmingly male decision-makers in the publishing industry.

It was actually a woman, Judith Jones, who fought for Child's book to be published after its initial rejection by Houghton Mifflin. Several years later, Ruth Lockwood, the producer of Child's show *The French Chef*, was a woman in the television industry as well, a rare occurrence. According to the directors, this theme of other women helping

Child achieve icon status was a happy accident. However, this narrative of redefining gender roles was a common thread through both Child's life and the film.

Julia stresses that Child did not identify as a feminist, "likely because in that day, you couldn't — 'women's libbers' were ridiculed, described as unattractive women who hate men," Cohen mentioned in our interview. The film does an excellent job of capturing the nuances of her relationship with feminism, showing how she paved the way for increased female participation in the restaurant industry, but also describing how important cooking for her husband and her identity as a home-maker was to her.

In a world where feminism still some times evokes images of militant women, Julia is the portrayal of an icon that we need inspirational, humanizing, and comforting. It celebrates her excellence and her impact while still highlighting the human elements that are so often stripped away from the women whose careers we idolize. We learn about Child's technically perfect boeuf bourguignon alongside her love for feeding her husband, about her business-savvy side in addition to her struggles to conceive. In many ways, Julia does exactly what Child herself did so many years ago, masterfully presenting complicated material in a way that feels approachable for everyone watching.



COURTESY OF SONY PICTURE

The documentary Julia details Julia Child's life from her childhood to her late 90s.

THEATER REVIEW

What happened in 1809?

Arcadia is a thought-provoking dive into the unknown

Arcadia

Original Play by Tom Stoppard

Directed by Crystal Su '22

Kresge Little Theater

Performed Oct. 8, 9, and 10

By Amanda Tong

In 1809, a precocious 13-year-old girl sits opposite her tutor at a dining room table that is scattered with thick stacks of books and a curiously perched turtle. She poses a question: what is "carnal embrace"? Her tutor's deflection: prove Fermat's Last Theorem. As the opening scene of Life on Stage Theatre's (LOST) most recent production, *Arcadia*, this first interaction perfectly encapsulates the tone of this fascinating dramedy that uses math and science to explore an overarching theme of the known and unknown, of order and chaos.

Arcadia centers around two stories that take place in the same house: one in 1809 that explores the curiosity of young prodigy Thomasina Coverly (Leela Fredlund '24), urged on by her tutor Septimus Hodge (Jose Soto '24), and the tribulations of adult life that circle around them; the other in present day that follows professor Bernard Nightingale (Tian Lin '23) and author Hannah Jarvis

(Montse Garza '22) as they argue about what transpired in 1809. In these two timelines, ideas about history, science, and mathematics are intertwined in a tragic history that is unveiled throughout the course of the play.

LOST's production of *Arcadia* executes a great blend of tones: the dramatic narrative in 1809, the philosophical interpretations of algebraic discoveries, and the witty comedy that made the whole audience laugh at the word "iterative." Despite no setting changes throughout the three hours of the play, the cast makes great use of its props — among them include a turtle, books and letters that appear across the timelines, and easels to draw live in front of the audience.

Additionally, LOST's exceptional cast shines on stage, bringing each character to life with a certain charm. For the cast in 1809, Fredlund encompasses the blooming curiosity of a young teenager, while Soto gives charisma to his character's morally grey actions. Jellaby (Andi Liu '25), Ezra Chater (Shannon Weng '22), Richard Noakes (Emiliano Altuzar '24), Lady Croom (Eugeniya Artemova '24), and Captain Brice (Emily Fan '23) as the supporting characters help carry the playful banter throughout the night.

For the present, Lin's audacious portrayal of the melodramatic Bernard always had the audience laughing. Opposite Lin was often Garza, whose snarky and sarcastic delivery brought forth the amusing chemistry between her character and Lin's. Both the actors of Valentine (Shardul Chiplunkar '22) and Chloe (Jessica Knapp '22) brought great comedic timing to the stage, between witty one liners and hilarious flirtations that got the audience laughing right away. Special applause must be given to the actor of Au-



MICHELE GABRIELE

LOST cast members Emiliano Altuzar '24, Eugeniya Artemova '24, Emily Fan '23, Leela Fredlund '24, Shannon Weng '22, and Jose Soto '24 (from left to right) act in *Arcadia*.

gustus (Theo Cucu '22), who conveyed the feelings of a mostly mute role purely through body language and had much of the audience sympathetic to his character.

Arcadia was a wonderful display of the talents of LOST in their abilities to bring

characters to life and reel the audience into the story, all the while using the stage as a platform to ponder how, as stated in the directors' note, "we must always make our way forward, even if... it feels like everything in the world is against us."



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GUEST COLUMN

Why we do not need a graduate student union at MIT

MIT has a years-long track record of improving the graduate student experience holistically

By Kevin Wang

If you are a graduate student, you will have heard about the ongoing campaign for us to organize as part of the MIT Graduate Student Union (GSU). You may have received emails and cold calls about their efforts. As of today, MIT does not have a graduate student union, and the GSU does not represent MIT graduate student workers. In order for the GSU to be officially recognized as a union, they require more than 30% of graduate students to sign a union card and must win a subsequent on-campus election with over 50% of the votes.

As you contemplate your personal decision, I would like to argue for why we should not form a graduate student union at MIT. These represent my personal opinions only, and I am not directly affiliated with the MIT administration or the Graduate Student Council (GSC).

Our gains are the result of constructive campaigns led by the GSC.

Graduate student unions have not secured pay increases higher than those at MIT.

MIT has granted us very fair stipend increases and benefit enhancements in recent years. MIT has especially invested in students that have higher living expenses or lower stipend income (such as with nine-month appointments). Our gains are the result of constructive campaigns led by the GSC.

Every year, MIT works with the GSC to analyze the cost of living for graduate students taking into account on- and off-campus rent, meals, and general inflation. They also compare MIT's stipends to those at competing graduate schools and make a recommendation for the following year's stipend rate as well as other benefit enhancements. While MIT makes the final decision, the current administrators have shown a track record of listening and responding to our concerns.

MIT knows that we know best which issues are important to us and shares our goal of improving the holistic graduate student experience as much as possible within their financial constraints. Our collaborative work has led to the introduction and subsequent expansion of grants for graduate families with children, the removal of the 10% lower stipend rate, the addition and improvement of health insurance coverage with graduate stipends, and more, all achieved without a graduate student union.

There exists no evidence that graduate students at top-tier private universities that do have graduate student unions have fared better. Two major private universities with graduate unions are New York University (NYU) and Harvard. (Yale's unionization campaign ended in 2018, and Columbia's union remains without a contract since 2016.) As you can see in the accompanying figure, in general, neither university's union has been able to negotiate higher stipend increases than MIT has offered us through our established process, with the exception of the one-time raise at NYU last year which came with the introduction of a new six-year contract. Harvard's first-ever union contract last year offered a lower raise than MIT.

It is also worth remembering the existing official MIT policies: MIT grants 10 days of paid vacation to a full-year RA/TA plus typically 12 Institute Holidays per year (this year, there are 19 Institute Holidays). MIT provides three months of paid maternity leave for birth mothers, and one month of parental leave for non-birth parents. MIT offers guaranteed transitional funding for graduate students switching advisors. Some students work with supervisors that grant additional flexibility in these or other areas, such as sick time, bereavement leave, remote work, etc.

Lengthy and protracted bargaining leads to more uncertainty for students.

The Harvard Graduate Student Union (HGSU) won their first one-year union contract in June 2020. It took over 1.5 years of bargaining and mediation, as well as a one-month strike in December 2019, to reach this agreement, which expired again in June 2021. In March 2021, the HGSU began to bargain with Harvard for a new three-year contract, and the two parties missed their deadline for agreeing to a contract. This month, the HGSU voted for another strike, to begin later this semester.

Meanwhile, Harvard's graduate students work and are paid under the terms of last year's contract, with no increase in pay. In contrast, MIT granted us a 3.25% pay increase without delay and a further mid-year 3% increase from December, just as high inflation pressures our living expenses.

While it is possible that when Harvard finally ratifies a new contract, back pay for any retroactive pay increases beginning in July 2021 will be agreed upon, this is unlikely to happen until later in 2022. Furthermore, some benefit enhancements such as additional health insurance coverage would not be able to be retroactively paid back and would begin whenever the contract is ratified. This happened at NYU, where they agreed to a new six-year contract for 2020–2026 a year late, in Summer 2021.

Such payment delays — along with the unknown length of strike action and the associated losses in pay — increase uncertainty in the lives of graduate students, who already live with relatively little disposable income and are facing steep cost of living increases this year due to inflation. This is especially the case for one- or two-year master's students, who could receive back pay after their graduation, too late to mitigate any financial pressures faced during school.

Would we really let a strike get in the way of the MIT cultures and traditions that we love so much?

Graduate student strikes are ineffective.

In traditional businesses, strikes are a powerful threat, because a walkout by workers causes immediate and direct harm to business operations and revenue. Workers strike (and forgo their pay) in order to inflict even greater financial and reputational harm on their employer. When an airline's union goes on strike, flights are inevitably canceled, and airlines lose out on capacity, unable to recover the revenue at a later date.

This is not the case at academic institutions like MIT. If we went on strike, we would only harm ourselves and our campus harmony. Any stoppage of work as a Research Assistant (RA) would only delay our progress in our research and graduation. A strike would be unlikely to cause any harm to research funding, because grants and contracts are paid months and years in advance and not on an hourly basis. If Teaching Assistants (TAs) went on strike, we students would be harmed through delayed grading, missed feedback, or the cancellation of office hours. MIT would not lose any tuition revenue because of a strike.

A university strike is only a shot in our own foot. It is difficult to see any meaningful financial harm that would be suffered by MIT from the strike. MIT is allowed to not pay us for the time we are on strike (and would not hesitate to do so, such as at Columbia University). The United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) union that the GSU is affiliated with also does not offer strike pay, which other unions use to partially offset the lost income from strike action.

It is much easier to see the harm a strike would have on our campus culture. The heart of MIT is built around us students going above and beyond because we care

CORRECTIONS

A news article in last week's issue of *The Tech* suggested that Dr. Erin Fischell who resigned from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution was affiliated with the EAPS department.

Fischell resigned due to a work environment specific to WHOI and is in fact not EAPS-affiliated. Additionally, a clarification was made to a statement found in the article, "Abbot's comments are deeply offensive" from Professor Robert van der Hilst. The statement has been specified to clarify van der Hilst meant that "Abbot's references to 20th century atrocities in Europe are deeply offensive."

OPINION POLICY

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.

Dissents are the signed opinions of editorial board members choosing to publish their disagreement with the editorial.

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Letters, columns, and cartoons must bear the authors' signatures, addresses, and phone numbers. Unsigned letters will not be accepted. *The Tech* reserves the right to edit or condense letters; shorter letters will be given higher priority.

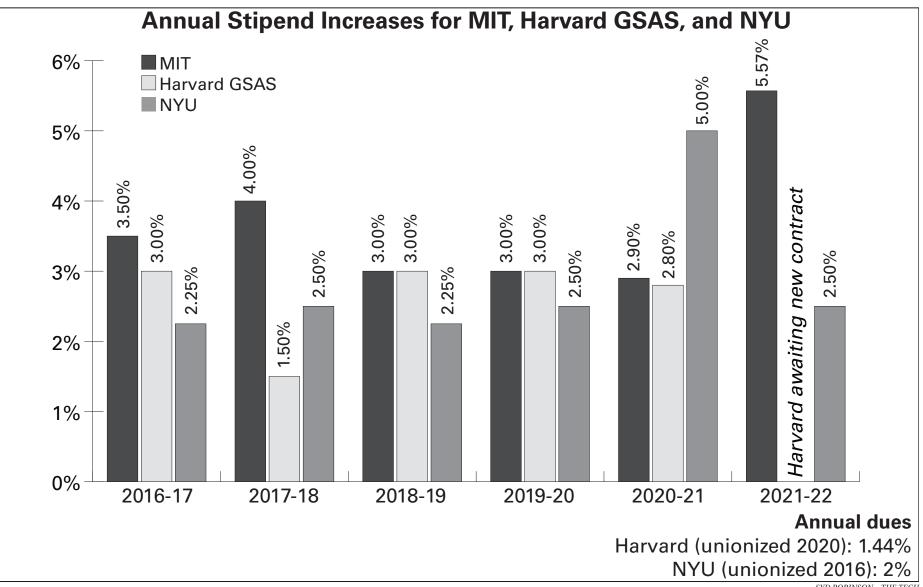
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 ${\bf Guest\ columns}$ are opinion articles submitted by members of the MIT or local community.

TO REACH US

The Tech's telephone number is (617) 253-1541. Email is the easiest way to reach any member of our staff. If you are unsure whom to contact, send mail to <code>general@tech.mit.edu</code>, and it will be directed to the appropriate person. You can reach the editor in chief by emailing <code>eic@tech.mit.edu</code>. Please send press releases, requests for coverage, and information about errors that call for correction to <code>news@tech.mit.edu</code>. Letters to the editor should be sent to <code>letters@tech.mit.edu</code>. The Tech can be found on the World Wide Web at <code>http://thetech.com</code>.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2021 THE TECH 9



Compared to private universities with graduate student unions, MIT has seen higher graduate student stipend percentage increases in several recent years.

about and love the Institute and its people. MIT classes are incredibly inspiring because TAs pour their hearts and souls into creating fun lectures and problem sets or spend long nights planning the 2.009 Build Challenge, not because we are being paid to work exactly 20 hours a week. Otherwise, why do we volunteer our free time planning amazing Campus Preview Weekends or graduate visit days for the next generation of Beavers? Would we really let a strike get in the way of the MIT cultures and traditions that we love

It is unreasonable to believe that senior administrators would be able to get approval for a multimillion dollar permanent wage increase within just two weeks.

Unions charge membership fees while

MIT funds the current GSC. The GSU would charge us 1.44% of pretax

income in membership dues, which would be \$620/year at the standard MIT PhD RA rate after December 2021. Two-thirds of the fee would flow to the national UE union, an organization from which we would benefit little. The remaining third would be used to pay for local union organizing costs. Note that currently, MIT pays for the operating expenses of the Graduate Student Council.

Joining a union would shift these costs from MIT to our own paychecks. And make no mistake, every TA and RA will have to pay this fee, whether or not they want to be a member of the union. Non-members are typically asked to pay a solidarity fee equal to the membership dues (as with NYU's graduate student union), and indeed the solidarity fee is one of the key issues in the current contract negotiations between Harvard and the HGSU (the university is opposed to making non-members pay).

It is true that most advocacy work of the GSC representatives is currently done on a volunteer basis, at most rewarded with the free food typical at MIT. Yet this would not change with a union. In a typical graduate student union, all stewards and committee members, including members of the bargaining committee that negotiate the contract, are elected from volunteers. Little would change, except that we would be paying for the food. At best, only a few executive leaders of the union could be paid a stipend by MIT without having to work as a RA/ TA (NYU has three such positions in their

Graduate student unions have no say in campus housing policy.

"The GSU will push MIT to prioritize affordable housing for graduate students" is perhaps the most misleading claim of the GSU campaign. The GSU organizers know very well that affordable housing is a demand that resonates with us and will get us to sign a union card, but they omit the fact that unions have no right to bargain over housing matters, as housing is unrelated to matters of wages, hours, or any other terms of employment as an RA or TA. The GSC represents student opinions on a much broader set of issues than the GSU would be legally allowed to. Our advocacy work makes MIT well aware of student concerns around housing. Because housing should not be an issue in this union campaign, I will not argue further on this topic.

Unions limit MIT's flexibility in rapidly changing environments.

Let the record stand that MIT's response to COVID-19 in March 2020 was appropriate, well-timed, and well-executed. In hindsight, there was no viable alternative to ending in-person instruction and research. The administration protected and supported us along the way and has not received enough recognition for its actions. The communication we received has been accurate, realistic, and at no point misleading. For example: MIT committed to not closing graduate housing early on, and never did.

Without hesitation, MIT offered to pay for our moving expenses, flight tickets, and lease cancellations. Over the summer, MIT reimbursed lost income from canceled summer internships and worked to arrange funding extensions for students delayed by the pandemic MIT and Harvard sued the federal government for the rights of international students to study and work remotely from abroad.

In the fall, MIT provided graduate TAs iPads and internet plans and covered the legal and tax costs of students working from abroad. Our 2020-2021 stipends increased as scheduled without any pay cuts. Despite being subject to very restrictive conditions on campus, we as graduate students fared relatively well through the pandemic and were able to continue our research and

If the pandemic had happened in the middle of a multi-year union contract, it may have been more difficult for MIT to react as flexibly as it did. While a contract does not necessarily prevent MIT from going above and beyond the funding agreed in the contract, it would not be unreasonable that MIT would negotiate for concessions from the union in exchange for the immediate benefits (such as travel and moving expenses) provided.

Finally, agreeing to a contract with pay increases set three or six years in advance could be unwise, especially when nobody can predict the inflation rate in the current environment. The NYU contract locks graduate students in for a 2.5% annual raise until 2026, which could result in a stipend significantly below the cost of living in New York City in the future.

The university could give further midcontract raises out of goodwill should competitive pressures add up. But history has shown that the goodwill earned from providing such unilateral raises is easily forgotten when the next round of contract negotiations occurs. For example, an unexpected mid-contract goodwill pay raise by American Airlines has not led to any improvement in its labor relations. This makes it difficult for employers to justify going above and beyond the contract.

Some statements from the GSU cannot be taken seriously.

In order to garner broad support for their campaign, the GSU organizers have begun to discredit themselves by claiming every possible issue on campus as something a union would solve. Every improvement is hailed as a "GSU win," announced without any further proof that this is indeed the case.

Their most recent statement saying, 'Make no mistake, this pay increase is happening because thousands of graduate workers are standing together, signing union cards, and demanding better working conditions at MIT," is indicative of the echo chamber that the GSU has found itself in. Correlation does not imply causation. As has since been clarified by MIT, the campuswide raise "was the result of extensive planning that first started over the summer when we began to understand what the return might be on our endowment. This happened well before the Institute had know the MIT GSU's organizing campaign."

I strongly believe that graduate students have a voice at MIT.

And this makes perfect sense. It is unreasonable to believe that senior administrators would be able to get approval for a multimillion dollar permanent wage increase within just two weeks. Neither would it explain why MIT would increase the pay for all its ~13,000 staff members in addition to its ~7,000 graduate students. Dartmouth College issued similar pay raises and bonuses to its staff and students, citing the increased endowment returns without an active unionization campaign.

If the GSU wants to be taken seriously, it should stick to making factual arguments about the benefits of the union, of which there are certainly some, instead of overstating its impact on campus. A 3% permanent pay raise plus an additional 3% increase in the Institute's tuition subsidy for graduate students, funded with investment returns, is a generous offer that does not deserve mockery with memes, especially since we

all could have personally achieved similar returns (the S&P 500 was up 40% in the same

MIT can improve the graduate student experience in more dimensions than a union can.

I strongly believe that graduate students have a voice at MIT. In recent years, the many holistic improvements that go beyond simple pay increases have proven that MIT will respond to important graduate student issues, if we present sufficient evidence of the need at hand. Our current structures allow the graduate experience at MIT to be reviewed as a complete package that is a delicate balance between tuition subsidies, summer funding, stipend rates, housing rates, support services like GradSupport and MIT Medical, funds for individual hardships, and funds for student life and student group activities.

Right now, we are very privileged to have an administration that wants us all to succeed.

A union would break up the package, and any particular gains a union contract would bring in stipends and health insurance could theoretically be countered by regressions in housing or student life funding, which are not part of the bargaining process. You will soon hear the recommendations from Task Force 2021 and Beyond about the future of graduate student funding, some of which demand financial investments from MIT that far e scope that a union contract is able to cover. I am very excited about potential structural changes to external fellowships, summer funding or graduate tuition rates, which could have a far greater impact on graduate students at MIT.

If you are passionate about an issue, I encourage you to join an existing Institute or GSC committee, or even advocate for a new one, if your issue is not currently being covered. Yes, the current structure is not perfect: MIT could compensate students' time volunteering on committees better, MIT could enforce stronger rules on workload and working conditions, and MIT could make stronger guarantees that existing policies will outlive a change in administrative personnel.

But we are making great strides with our current amicable working relationship between the GSC and MIT. Right now, we are very privileged to have an administration that wants us all to succeed. Let's not lose this momentum.

Kevin Wang is a graduate student in Aeronautics and Astronautics at MIT. He represents graduate students on the Institute Committee on Student Life and Task Force 2021 and Beyond.

10 The Tech
Thursday, October 21, 2021

GUEST COLUMN

With a union, graduate working conditions become an institutional priority

The GSU is essential for improvements like raises in graduate stipends and funding support

By Bridget Begg, Yadav Gowda, Sneha Kabaria, Pedro Reynolds-Cuéllar, and Gabrielle Robbins

On Sept. 27, nearly 1,000 graduate workers rallied in Hockfield Court to announce the formation of the MIT Graduate Student Union. On Thursday, Oct. 14, just 17 days later, MIT announced a historically unprecedented mid-year raise for all graduate students. This raise is notable not just for its timing but also because it will be entirely centrally funded, circumventing strain on scarce department resources. By taking decisive collective action and forming a union, graduate students are making our research and working conditions a priority for the vast resources of the Institute.

MIT claimed the unexpected raise was the result of this year's endowment gains – MIT saw endowment gains of over \$9 billion over the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021. However, MIT's endowment has also seen a positive return on investment every single year since 2010, a growth totalling \$19.5 billion. Notably, according to the FY2021 Treasurer's report, MIT's Net Assets — including endowment, land, buildings, and equipment — currently total over \$36 billion. Out of that, \$15 billion are in unrestricted funds - funds whose use MIT has complete control over. To put that number in perspective, \$15 billion could fund stipends at their current rate for every single graduate student for over 50 years. It could pay for dental insurance for every single graduate student for four thousand years.

Why has MIT been reluctant to devote even a fraction of those financial resources to graduate student needs?

Even at the height of the pandemic in 2020, the worst financial year since the Great Recession, the MIT endowment saw an 8% return on investment. One only needs to look at the massive changes to Kendall Square to see that MIT is not shy about spending its money. In 2015, MIT committed over \$1.2 billion to fund the Kendall Square

Initiative, an amount which was nearly 10% of the endowment at that time. So why has MIT been reluctant to devote even a fraction of those financial resources to graduate student needs?

This reluctance was highlighted during the pandemic. In May 2020, MIT CO-VID Relief published an open letter calling for funding extensions for graduate students in programs with fixed-term funding who were affected by the pandemic. Crucially, we called for these extensions to be universal, well-publicized, and centrally funded, because we knew that pandemic-related research delays were widespread, and that disruptions to our research would require serious long-term systemic solutions. MIT COVID Relief estimated universal extensions at a mere \$3.5 million — money MIT is surely good for.

MIT COVID Relief estimated universal extensions at a mere \$3.5 million — money MIT is surely good for.

MIT administration rejected this approach. Throughout 2020, they instead forced faculty and departmental administrators to find the money for extensions from their own strapped budgets. Some programs cut or cancelled admissions to do so. The central administration provided no guidance to graduate students, many of whom were left to navigate a pandemic with profound uncertainty about their income. Meanwhile, graduate students who requested funding extensions through their departments were often subjected to meeting after meeting, if their requests weren't outright denied. While MIT steadily accrued endowment wealth, many graduate students faced unprecedented financial

It was only in April 2021, a full year after the pandemic began, that the MIT administration finally addressed the issue of pandemic extensions — and only after continued pressure from graduate student advocates. MIT shared an email address that graduate students could use to notify the Office of the Vice Chancellor that they

needed a funding extension. This solution was still woefully inadequate: the COVID-19 Research Impact Survey showed that by May 2021 (mere weeks before many graduate students' funding would end), a majority of students in programs with fixed-term funding were still unaware of the availability of pandemic extensions. The survey also showed that in some programs, 70-80% of current graduate students face ongoing pandemicrelated delays to their work. Yet extensions remain an "emergency," issued on a caseby-case basis; delayed students still have no long-term guarantee of a stipend through completion. This is a massively inefficient response to the long-term challenges of COVID-19. It punts costs to departments; imposes unnecessary stress and worry for students; and takes time away from what should really matter: our research.

While MIT steadily accrued endowment wealth, many graduate students faced unprecedented financial strain.

Compare MIT to Brown University, where graduate students have been unionized since 2018. In April 2020, only a month after the pandemic lockdown began, Brown and the Graduate Labor Organization (Brown's graduate student union) came to a written agreement to provide blanket funding extensions to every single third-, fourth-, and fifth-year graduate student. Brown students did not have to spend countless hours individually trying to extend their funding — they got to spend that time on their research.

It would be unfair to say that the Brown University administration cares more about their graduate students or is more generous than the Institute. Instead, by forming a union, Brown graduate students were able to ensure that their research and working conditions are a priority for central administration. Through their union, they had the power to negotiate for pandemic extensions when they needed them, rather than being subject to the whims of the administration's attention.

It's encouraging to see MIT respond to our unionization by finally beginning to mobilize their vast resources to prioritize conditions for graduate workers. As an employee of an institution whose endowment just grew by \$9 billion, what would you change about your workplace if you could?

We know graduate students are severely rent-burdened, and we know graduate students need better healthcare. We know MIT $cited\ lack\ of\ funding\ in\ refusing\ to\ meet\ RISE$ (Reject Injustice through Student Empowerment) demands for departmental diversity officers. And now, we know MIT has \$15 billion in unrestricted funds that could immediately improve these conditions. Right now, graduate students spend countless hours tracking down delayed paychecks, navigating unexpected medical bills, and appealing for individual pandemic extensions — time we can't spend advancing research and careers. With a union contract, we can codify our current pay increase, secure guarantees of annual stipend increases and pandemic support, and fight for the same improvements covering everything from affordable housing to fair dispute resolution procedures that unionized graduate workers have won across the country. With a union, we will make our research the priority.

With a union, we will make our research the priority.

Sign a union card today at *mitgsu.org/* sign.

The authors of this article are members of the MIT Graduate Student Union.

Bridget Begg is a seventh-year graduate student in biology.

Yadav Gowda is a sixth-year graduate student in linguistics and philosophy and also a member of MIT COVID Relief.

Sneha Kabaria is a second-year graduate student in chemical engineering.

Pedro Reynolds-Cuéllar is a fifth-year graduate student in the Media Lab and also a member of MIT COVID Relief.

Gabrielle Robbins is a fifth-year graduate student in history, anthropology, and science, technology, and society and also a member of MIT COVID Relief.

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2021

Advice for a first-year college student redux Thoughts on the missing tactile planeat for the state of the s

By Paul E. Schindler, Jr. '74

In my previous column, I was on sure footing, statistically. Ten percent of you first-year students will be in the bottom of your class academically. My warning this time is on shakier ground when it comes to universal applicability. Its applicability to you depends on whether or not you are a physical affection enthusiast.

In mid-October 1970, I started to have a vague, uneasy feeling. I couldn't put my finger on it, which, ironically, was the

It wasn't until after Thanksgiving break that I realized the source of the problem: it had been more than six weeks since anyone had touched me. If you, like me, are a tactile member of a touchy family (and you never spent more than two weeks away from home), you have been hugged and kissed

every day of your life until now. The tap was turned off the day you set foot in Building 7.

There are a number of possible solutions. Certainly, I saw both wonderful and awful first-year relationships among my friends, some of which were no doubt an only slightly disguised cry of "touch me!"

One easy solution, if you are from the East Coast, is to go home for the weekend, and load up on loving touches. I am from Portland, Oregon and could only afford to fly home for Thanksgiving, winter break, and spring break. I had no girlfriend at MIT and no prospects. Hugging strangers wasn't a thing then (as it probably is no longer now). Plus, I didn't know I needed it.

Had I known what my problem was, I could have attempted to ameliorate the symptoms by some means other than spending every waking non-class minute (and a number of class minutes) at WMBR or The Tech. For example, I could have taken advantage of the Institute's excellent counseling services. I could have talked about it with my friends. I did, actually, but you can only get so much help from amateurs. You could even (God forbid!) talk to your par-

Part of the problem is that the symptoms are very similar to the symptoms of many other mental maladies peculiar to the first year. Homesickness presents much the same way: a feeling of disorientation, of "something is missing". A feeling of "disassociation," as if you are sleepwalking through your life, or even someone else's life. Sadness that doesn't make it all the way to depression, but which is hard to shake. A feeling of isolation while surrounded by new people, places, and things. A disinterest in your school work (or insecurity about your ability to do it) can be another symptom, although, in my case, the roots of that problem proved to be deeper and different.

Another possible solution is to start a relationship, but my knowledge in that area, being half-century out-of-date, would be useless. In short, while I have advice, I can't solve the problem. My hope in writing this is that I can help you recognize a condition that is often baffling and difficult to diagnose. Trying to understand a sudden lack of tactile support for some of us is like a fish trying to understand a lack of water: you've been swimming in it your whole life, and now it is gone. You barely have words for it, because it's been as ubiquitous as breathing.

Paul E. Schindler, Jr. earned a B.S. in Management in 1974, after serving a term as editor in chief of The Tech. He can be found at www.schindler.org.



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Take This.

photo@tech.mit.edu

Women's Wrestling team started at MIT For the first time, MIT will be sponsoring a Women's Wrestling team

By Suleman Thaniana

This upcoming year, MIT will be sponsoring its first-ever Women's Wrestling team — a step in the right direction, according to Coach Donald McNeil, who said, "I see that there is a clear need to have separate men's and women's teams."

The sport of wrestling dates back to over 20,000 years ago, when it was illustrated in caves around Europe. Wrestling was also one of the first events in the Olympic Games in Greece. Since this period, wrestling has continued to evolve and quickly become one of the fastest-growing sports at the youth and high school level. During the 2018-2019 season, over 247,000 students competed in the high school boys' division and over 21,000 in the high

school girls' division. The number of female competitors grew from about 16,500 to 21,000 in just one year, a massive increase in participation that will likely continue.

Despite the rapid growth of girls' and women's wrestling, there have been limited opportunities for women to compete in college until recently. Most recently, the University of Iowa broke major news, becoming the first Power Five school to offer women's wrestling. According to the Division 1 Women's Wrestling organization, there are currently 26 Division 3, 19 Division 2, and three Division 1 NCAA schools sponsoring women's wrestling. There are also opportunities for women to compete in the National Collegiate Wrestling Association (the club division that MIT competes in), the Women's Collegiate Wrestling Association, the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, and the junior college circuit.

In the past, MIT has had women on the men's wrestling team roster. For example, former MIT women's wrestler Elena Glassman, who wrestled for the team between 2008-2011, was forced to travel long distances to find women-specific practices and competitions. She was only able to find female practice partners in western Massachusetts, and the closest competitions for female wrestlers were in Canada. This year, the plan is to have a small group of wrestlers compete and set the ground for future years. Coach McNeil is very enthusiastic about this group, stating, "The few girls that we have on the team have the capability of being extremely successful competing nationally for MIT. I am very excited for this group of women. My goal is to continue to help grow the women's team and to provide them with as many opportunities to compete as soon as possible."

Harvard, Brown, and Northeastern have also recently established women's wrestling clubs. and the hope is that some matches can be scheduled with these teams and MIT for the upcoming season. This is a big improvement from the days when Glassman had to travel over an hour for practice partners and over four hours to compete against other women.

There are many advocates hoping to strengthen the women's wrestling environment, including Glassman — now a professor at Harvard - who came and spoke to the team this past week. Their efforts have encouraged the team, with McNeil saying, "I believe we will see some additional all-American performances from athletes on both the men's and women's teams."

Ultimately, the women's wrestling team prides itself on being inclusive. The team has students with varying wrestling backgrounds, from total beginners to athletes who have been wrestling since their youth, and those looking to win national titles to others looking to stay in shape. Often, the more experienced wrestlers strive to help the newer wrestlers understand wrestling techniques. There is no judgement in the room, and the team is happy to have beginners and advanced wrestlers alike. If you are interested in joining or have questions, please message wrestling-officers@mit.edu.

Upcoming Sports Events

FRIDAY 22

Women's Volleyball vs. Tufts University 7:00 p.m.

SATURDAY 23

Water Polo

D3 Eastern Championships

Rifle

vs. United States Coast Guard Academy 9:00~a.m.

Sailing

Yale Women's Intersectional $10:00 \ a.m.$

Sailing

CoedAtlantic Championship 10:30 a.m.

Sailing

Norm Reid Team Race $10:30 \ a.m.$

Women's Volleyball vs. Trinity College

11:00 a.m.

Men's Swimming and Diving

vs. Harvard University 11:00 a.m.

Women's Soccer

vs. U.S. Coast Guard Academy 12:00 p.m.

Men's Heavyweight Crew Head of the Charles 12:55 p.m.

Men's Soccer

vs. Babson College

Football

vs. Norwich University 1:00 p.m.

Women's Openweight Crew

Head of the Charles 1:11 p.m.

Women's Volleyball vs. Williams College

SUNDAY 24

3:30 p.m.

vs. United States Coast Guard Academy 9:00 a.m.

Sailing

Coast

Yale Women's Intersectional $10:00 \ a.m.$

Sailing

Coed Atlantic Coast Championship

Sailing

Norm Reid Team Race 10:30 a.m.

Men's Lightweight Crew

Head of the Charles 1:16 p.m.

Women's Lightweight Crew

Head of the Charles 1:30 p.m.

Men's Heavyweight Crew

Head of the Charles

2:05 p.m.

TUESDAY 26

Women's Volleyball vs. Babson College

SPORTS BLITZ

Saturday, October 16

- Sailing achieves 11th out of 15 at Captain Hurst Bowl.
- Rifle snipes a win against John Jay College
- Water Polo experiences a 8-13 loss against Salem University.
- Sailing sweeps the competition, earning 1st at Women's Atlantic Coast Tournament.
- Women's Cross Country finishes 2nd out of 26 at Connecticut College Invitational.
- Sailing finishes 14th out of 17 at Savin Hill
- Men's Cross Country finishes 2nd out of
- 26 at Connecticut College Invitational. Field Hockey sweeps Wellesley College
- Football faces defeat against U.S. Mer-
- chant Marine Academy 34-56. Women's Volleyball crushes Bates Col-
- lege 3-0.
- Women's Soccer steps over Emerson College 2-0.

- Water Polo dunks it 11-9 against Mount St.
- Men's Soccer wins against Wheaton Col-
- Women's Volleyball shuts out Trinity College 3-0.

Sunday, October 17

- Water Polo experiences a 8-15 loss against Wagner College.
- Women's Openweight Crew ranks 1st and 4th at the Quinsigamond Snake
- Water Polo clutches it 12-11 against Wagner College.

Tuesday, October 19

- Field Hockey shuts out Wheaton College
- Women's Volleyball serves up a victory against Wheaton College 3-0.

Wednesday, October 13

- Women's Soccer loses 1-2 against WPI.
- Men's Soccer annihilates Worcester State University 6-0.



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