thetech.com

Volume 142, Number 4



WEATHER, p. 2 FRI: 46°F | 38°F SAT: 55°F | 22°F

Thursday, March 10, 2022



A candlelight vigil is held in support of Ukraine amidst current events, March 3.

NLRB-operated Graduate Student Union election to be held on dates April 4–5

On both days, the voting will take place from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 2:30-3:30 p.m. in Walker Memorial's *Morss Hall and from 5:30–8:30 in room 56-154*

By Wenbo Wu and Kristina Chen

The vote to decide whether or not a graduate student union will be formed will be held April 4-5, The National Labor Review Board (NLRB) announced Feb. 28. According to the NLRB Notice of Election, the vote will take place on both days from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. and 2:30-3:30 p.m. in Walker Memo-

In order to form a union, a simple majority of voters must vote in favor of the union.

rial's Morss Hall and from 5:30-8:30 p.m. in

The notice states that MIT graduate students enrolled in degree programs "who are employed to provide instructional or research services, including research assistants (RAs), teaching assistants, and instructor G's who were employed" by MIT during the payroll period ending Feb. 15 are eligible to vote in the election.

Additionally, RAs in in the Linguistics and Political Science departments, non-grader hourly employees who "may provide instructional or research services," and graduate students conducting research at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute "who are either supervised or paid by MIT (but not both)" are also able to vote in the election, although "their ballots will be challenged since their eligibility has not been resolved." If necessary, the "eligibility or inclusion of these individuals" in the bargaining unit "will be resolved" after the election.

Finally, the notice writes that undergraduates, graduate student resident advisors, graduate students not employed as RAs or TAs, hourly graders who are not also RAs or TAs, graduate students not seeking MIT degrees, "office clericals, managers, guards, and supervisors" are not eligible to vote.

GSU Election, Page 2

MIT to relax COVID-19 face covering and testing guidelines next Monday

Visitors must continue to be escorted by COVID Pass holders or invited using the Tim Tickets system on the MIT Atlas app

> By Srinidhi Narayanan NEWS EDITOR

MIT will relax several of its COVID-19 policies effective March 14, Vice President for Human Resources Ramona Allen, Provost Cynthia Barnhart PhD '88, Vice Chancellor and Dean for Student Life Suzy Nelson, Chancellor Melissa Nobles, Executive Vice President and Treasurer Glen Shor, MIT Medical Director Cecilia Stuopis '90, Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate and Graduate Education Ian Waitz, and Vice President for Research Maria Zuber announced in an email to the community Monday.

Notably, masks will become optional for vaccinated individuals in most indoor areas on campus; COVID-19 testing - currently required once a week for students, campus residents, and unvaccinated community members — will become optional; and daily health attestations will no longer

Masks will still be required on MIT shuttle buses and in MIT Medical facilities.

Campus access, which is currently dependent on testing and completion of daily attestations, will be granted to all vaccinated MIT ID holders; visitors must continue to be escorted by COVID Pass holders or invited using the Tim Tickets system.

MIT previously relaxed the policy on face coverings in residence halls Feb. 21, no longer requiring masks for groups of four or fewer in student living-space lounges.

The changes followed the City of Cambridge's relaxation of indoor-masking policies. Both MIT and the City of Cambridge have reported "sustained improvement" in COVID-19 metrics over the past months, with MIT's positivity rates declining from 2.63% in January, to 0.56% and 0.77% in February and March, respectively. The daily number of students in isolation, both on and off campus,

COVID-19, Page 2



Students and community members gather for the Arab Student Organization dinner banquet at Lobdell Hall on Saturday.

Regular action decisions will be released March 14. Happy Pi Day!

Half-term final exams (H3) are from March 14-18.

The deadline to submit events for CPW is March 19.

Spring break is March 21–25.

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

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

Cynthia Barnhart reflects on her time as former chancellor, looks ahead to new role as provost

Barnhart: 'I really do want to help members of our community thrive here at MIT, because if they thrive, MIT thrives'; 'That very much motivates how I think things must be'

By Jennifer Ai

Cynthia Barnhart PhD '88 assumed the ro le of MIT Provost March 7, 2022, as announced by President L. Rafael Reif in an email to the MIT community Feb. 10.

Barnhart, a Ford Foundation

Professor of Engineering, first joined MIT's faculty 30 years ago in 1992 and has since served as both associate and acting dean of the School of Engineering, as director of the Operations Research Center and the Center for Transportation and Logistics, and as MIT Chancellor 2014-21. During her term as chancellor, Barnhart worked to transform MIT's approach to student support and mental health, most notably through launching the MindHandHeart initiative and the Institute Discrimination and Harassment Response office.

The Tech: Many students feel confusion around what exactly the roles and duties of the provost are. Is there anything you'd like students to know about what your position entails and how you

Cynthia Barnhart, Page 3

FACULTY BEHAVIOR

Faculty should not persuade students regarding how they should vote. OPINION, p. 4

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

MIT has a proven track record of fighting for international students. OPINION, p. 5

OTHER PEOPLE'S CLOTHES

Berlin's party scene. ARTS, p. 7



SPOTS AND SPACES

All eyes on me. CAMPUS LIFE, p. 8

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Our living conditions are our working conditions. OPINION, p. 5

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Thursday, March 10, 2022

WEATHER

Overcast days cloud over Cambridge

By Phoebe Lin
STAFF METEOROLOGIST

Persistent clouds have been casting a gloom over campus this week, culminating in a rainstorm for Cambridge and a possible bomb cyclone for the South and Northeast this weekend. Expect flat, uniform gray stratus clouds to stick around for awhile, and make sure to close your windows and to stay safe inside!

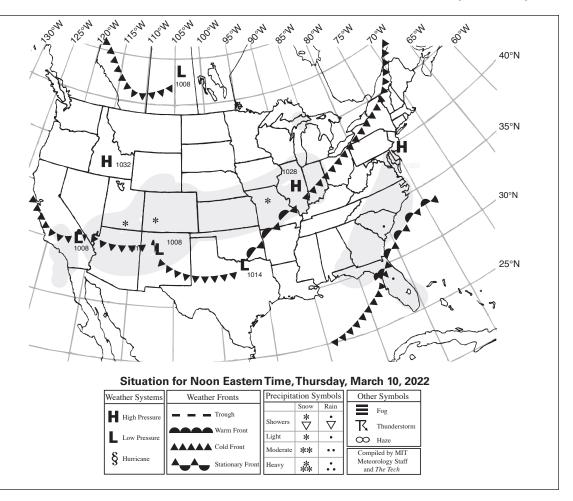
This winter storm already has a name! That's because winter storm Quinlan is expected to bring intense wintery precipitation and strong gusts across the eastern U.S. and into Canada, mostly between Friday and Saturday. Temperatures aren't expected to dip low enough for large amounts of snow, though Cambridge will receive plenty of rain and some healthy gusts of wind ahead of the return of spring.

Extended Forecast

Today: Mostly sunny. High around 49°F (9°C). West winds 5-8 mph **Tonight:** Mostly cloudy. Low around 35°F (2°C). South winds 5-8 mph.

Friday: Increasingly cloudy. High around 46°F (8°C) and low around 38°F (3°C). Southeast winds 4-7 mph.

Saturday: Rainy. High around 55°F (13°C) and low around 22°F (-6°C). Southeast winds 13-18 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph. Sunday: Mostly sunny. High around 34°F (1°C) and low around 29°F (-2°C). West winds 16-20 mph.



Community members can 'control spread without masking' through testing

COVID-19, from Page 1

has also shown downward trends since their peak in the first two weeks of January.

The March 7 email also urged students to utilize COVID-19 testing when they feel symptoms; are in an "elevated risk situation" such as travel or known exposure

to someone who has tested positive; or when they plan to be in situations that may expose others, such as large gatherings or interactions with immunocompromised people.

In a campus updates meeting March 7, administrators stated that the plan to relax COVID-19 policies was finally being revisited after being derailed due to the onset of the omicron variant.

The meeting notes include an analysis of targeted testing and the request to students to test when symptomatic. According to the notes, MIT community members can "control spread without masking" if they test "when symptoms and known exposure occur" given

that more than 75% of people who test positive become symptomatic, with emerging evidence that asymptomatic people are much less infectious. The notes assume that 15% of the MIT population has had omicron and have immunity, that 99% are vaccinated and boosted, and that vaccines are 35% effective against transmission.

This week marks the two-year anniversary of the last day that many MIT employees and students were on campus before de-densifying campus at the onset of the pandemic. Since then, more than 32,000 students, employees, and affiliates have been regularly testing, attesting, and otherwise adhering to Institute COVID-19 regulations.

GSU members, professors, administrators authored many Opinion pieces

GSU Election, from Page 1

In a Feb. 28 press release, the MIT Graduate Student Union (GSU) wrote that following the vote by RAs and TAs, the NLRB will "rule on MIT's argument that Fellows should be denied their right to vote" for the union and set a date for a "Fellows election" if they are

deemed eligible to vote.

The GSU wrote that the "MIT administration hoped to delay" the vote by initiating a "lengthy legal process aimed at denying Fellows the right to vote." This led to the GSU deciding upon a two-step election process that would grant "the majority of graduate workers their right to vote."

Chancellor Melissa Nobles and Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate and Graduate Education Ian Waitz wrote in a Feb. 28 email to graduate students that the election will determine whether "about 3,750 of MIT's 7,000 graduate students" — those eligible to vote in the election — will form a union.

If the graduate student union is

formed, it will be represented by the United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America (UE).

As required by federal law and subpoena, MIT will share the 3,750 eligible graduate students' phone numbers, email addresses, and mailing addresses with the UE and NLRB. The NLRB will use this information to provide information

about voting, and the UE will "be able to use this personal information to assist in their campaign efforts."

In the past weeks, graduate student members of the GSU, professors, and MIT administrators including Nobles and Waitz have authored guest columns and letters regarding the election for *The Tech*'s Opinion section.

By The Tech Sports staff MLB Postseason. In the American League, the

MLB Postseason. In the American League, the Series against Minnesota with ease to advance on the Texas Rangers, recovered from the Tampa Bay.

e, the Philadelphia Phillies swept Cincinnating a ho-hitter by Roy Halladay. They face the ainst Atlanta in which every game was decided along their league pennant and advance to high in, with department bragging rights on

Do you like looking for funny typos?
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Solution to Counting

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Know something important we should write about?

(We probably don't know about it.)

Let us know.

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SUBMIT YOUR BEST WRITING 2022 KARMEL WRITING PRIZES

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Thursday, March 10, 2022

Barnhart hopes 'to meet with, listen to, and learn from' communy members

Cynthia Barnhart, from Page 1

plan to represent their interests as provost?

Barnhart: Students, I think, know the role of the chancellor. The chancellor's role is focused on all things students. The provost role has some overlap. But the provost's role is the chief academic officer, and the chief budget officer. So what that means is that the provost plays a role in a lot of things that affect a lot of people: faculty, students, of course, staff, because part of the role is academic program oversight. It has budget oversight, making decisions about many things that affect students and many others. I think you ask the question, how students will come into my everyday job as provost. I'll begin by saying that having served as an advisor and faculty member, this is my 30th year as a faculty member at MIT. Before that, I was a graduate student at MIT. So I've been here a long time. And I think about my experiences, particularly as an advisor and chancellor. I saw MIT through the student lens. And so I think in everything that I do, that perspective comes with me. I worked closely as chancellor with the provost on matters that involve student mental health, financial aid — essentially, the wide gamut of topics that affects students. So that will continue. I will continue to have that partnership with the chancellor in this role

TT: Relatedly, you often emphasize communicating and establishing trust with students. How successful do you think your efforts have been? And how do you plan on continuing or building deeper relationships with students in the future?

Barnhart: My strategy with students is the same as with all members of the community. I think it's really important that there's broad engagement. One of the first steps that I'm taking — and it won't just be a step followed by other actions, it will be a step that continues through my whole tenure - is to engage broadly, bringing students, faculty, and staff into conversations. MIT is an organization where we share governance. This is something that was very evident in my role as chancellor. It is necessary to keep that top of mind, I think, in every leadership role at MIT, so my approach will be to meet with, listen to, and learn from our community members, and to use those insights to make the community a better place.

TT: Something that is currently being widely discussed at MIT is the possible formation of a Graduate Student Union. How will your previous experiences as a graduate student and as a professor impact the way you respond to this issue? Do you think that the possible formation of a union will have a lasting impact on the relationship between professors and graduate students at MIT?

Barnhart: I'm hesitating a bit because this is a topic that is harder for me to know what is appropriate for me to say or not say. What I can say is that the approach that we have used and we will continue to use is one, again, of partnership with our students. We're trying to work together with our students to achieve what we all agree are important things for them to have. And there's a lot of commonality, I think, and a lot of agreement on that topic. So I guess I don't want to say too much right now about that, other than that we always have at the top of our minds working together with our students, with our faculty, with everyone at MIT.

TT: You have focused largely on the commonalities in interests among people at MIT. But a lot of conflicts have emerged as a result of differences in interests among, for example, students at MIT versus administration. In those instances, what is your plan for dealing with these differences? What should students expect?

Barnhart: I think students should expect exactly what they have been seeing. And let me define what I think they have been seeing: I think there is an openness to dialogue, to sharing viewpoints, to brainstorming about possible solutions, and a commitment to transparency. So while the outcome of any discussion around differences will likely leave some people unhappy, the commitment is that there is the opportunity to voice concerns, to be heard, to have thoughtful consideration of what the different viewpoints are. And then for the administration, the leaders, the goal is to make decisions and explain them.

TT: Many of the controversies MIT has faced have also involved issues of diversity and inclusion, and students have often called upon MIT's administration to act as a leader in demonstrating social and environmental responsibility. As provost, how do you plan to contribute to the shaping of MIT's institutional values?

Barnhart: Well, as provost, my plan is to build on the tremendous efforts that members of our community have contributed over the last few years. So many faculty, staff, and students have invested their time and shared their expertise on these topics in the interest of making MIT a better place. I'm committed to taking the next steps where action is needed, and ensuring that MIT benefits from all of this hard work. That includes efforts related to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Strategic Action Plan, DEI Arts and Culture committee, Values Statement Committee, Free Expression Group, Climate Action Plan, MindHandHeart, and many

TT: You stepped down from your role as chancellor less than a year ago in July of 2021, reasoning that it would allow you "to think about the next thing [you] want to do" and "what impact [you] can have." How did you arrive at the decision to return to an adminis-

trative position, and in what areas do you envision yourself making the most impact?

Barnhart: I'll begin by saying that it wasn't exactly what I expected to be doing. But with MIT being in this time of transition, with both the provost and the president stepping down over the course of one year, President Reif talked with me and reminded me that my experiences as chancellor could help me hit the ground running and provide some continuity, and help the Institute continue to move forward during this time of transition. And that was compelling for me. Because, like so many people at MIT, I care deeply about the Institute, and I want to help where I can.

Some of my goals are to advance efforts that help our faculty or students or staff do their best work. Another goal is to foster innovation in education and research to advance recommendations, priorities, and actions that have been identified by so many different groups who have worked hard for MIT over the last few years. They include Task Force 2021, the DEI Strategic Action Plan Committee, the various working groups that were formed in response response to the National Academy's report on sexual harassment, the strategic budget priorities that were identified through a community engagement process, and the work of committees on mentoring and advising and mental health and wellbeing. A lot of people have worked hard to generate ideas that can make MIT an even better place. And I will work hard to help us realize the potential of all these efforts.

TT: As Chancellor, you focused on, and achieved significant improvements in, transforming MIT's approach to student mental health and sexual harassment. I'm curious to know more about what the administration's perspective is on how successful those past efforts have been, and what still needs to be improved upon.

Barnhart: My advice on that is to have a sit down with Suzy Nelson, David Randall, and Chancellor Nobles, but I'll just say that I'm proud of that work. And I know that it continues to be a top priority for the team now. And again, they have some really exciting things they're working on. So it would be great, I think, to talk to them about that. And I'll just say that I share their excitement and prioritize this work as well.

There are other things that I will focus on as provost. I'll begin again

by pointing out some of the ongoing work that has been started, that I think is very important to continue pushing forward — identifying these strategic budget priorities related to our academic and research enterprise, including increased financial support for faculty, students and staff, and building a path forward for ensuring that these funding priorities are sustained. Another really important effort, I think, is to develop the Strategic Action and implementation plans. I'm very much focused on ensuring that ideas move to actions to address challenges related to diversity, community, sexual harassment, advising and mentoring, mental health and wellbeing, and many more. And another thing I think is important is to push for the recommendations for change in this MIT, post-pandemic world, and implement those plans, advance those recommendations. So my goal, I guess, broadly stated, is to ensure that the hard work of our community is advanced. And we do good things for our community as a result.

TT: Given that the main difference is that your new role will involve interaction with a larger number of stakeholders and you will have to represent more groups with varying interests, do you think this will be a challenge for you? How do you plan to reconcile that with your approach to your previous role, where you were more focused on student needs?

Barnhart: Let me talk about students first. In working with students. the role that I played was to think about MIT and what MIT needs in terms of fulfilling its mission, adhering to its values and principles, and then translating that to the particular issue at hand, and thinking about the various solutions that different students might want align with the Institute, schools, and values. So I think that as provost, it will be the same framework. It might not be a student that is involved in the issue, but it will be the same challenge. How do we ensure that we work together to find solutions that work for our constituents, our community, and adhere to MIT's values and advance MIT's mission? In my mind, it's a really fun challenge to work on.

TT: Is there anything else you would like to say to students?

Barnhart: I really do want to help members of our community thrive here at MIT, because if they thrive, MIT thrives. That very much motivates how I think things must be.



AMINA ABDALLA—THE TECH

Students donate and browse through clothes at the OMP and

UA Sustain Clothing Swap event, Friday.





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OPEN LETTER

An open letter regarding faculty and the graduate student union

Last fall, faculty in the MIT Institute for Work and Employment Research (IWER) called on MIT's faculty and administration to respect students' right to decide whether or not to support unionization. They also called on the administration and the student union organizers to engage in a collaborative process regarding unionization: for example, by agreeing to ground rules for the organizing, election, and initial contract negotiation if the majority of students voted for the union. Their hope, and ours, is for a thoughtful process with respectful interactions that help MIT to emerge as an even stronger institution. However, the chancellor and vice chancellor wrote to graduate students Feb. 27 stating that "MIT's senior leaders do not believe that a graduate student union is the best path forward for current and future graduate students."

While it is the graduate students participating in the election who will decide whether to unionize, the administration

and faculty can, and do, exert leverage. On Feb. 2, the chancellor and provost wrote to MIT's faculty with a set of talking points with which to address their graduate students, along with a list of do's and don'ts to ensure compliance with the National Labor Relations Act. Among the talking points is this:

"For example, it is permitted for a faculty member to say that they do not wish to see a graduate student union come to MIT or that they hope the union will be defeated. As long as there are no threats or promises, a supervisor or faculty member may freely express their opinion at any time. They may engage fully in a campaign to inform students about the union and/or persuade students to vote against the union."

Moreover, the vice chancellor has attended at least one departmental faculty meeting to encourage faculty to oppose unionization. These actions are distressing to us as they violate the spirit of neutrality needed to "ensure that faculty-student relationships will not be adversely affected, regardless of the outcome of the organizing process" (IWER letter).

In the current issue of the Faculty
Newsletter, one of the authors of the IWER
letter notes that while the content of the
talking points "is within the law, having
faculty (who exercise considerable power
regarding the careers of their grad students)

counsel with their grad students may not honor the maxim: 'Let the students decide.'"

THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 2022

We call on faculty to avoid, even if unintentional, the appearance of coercion. We pledge to not attempt to persuade graduate students how to vote on unionization and to avoid presenting one-sided views for or against unionization. We also pledge to work collaboratively with graduate students in research and teaching, as befits the MIT mission, regardless of the outcome of the unionization vote next month.

We encourage other faculty to sign our open letter (https://tinyurl.com/gsu-faculty-open-letter).

Signed:

Edmund Bertschinger Professor of Physics and faculty affiliate, Program in Women's and Gender Studies

Sally Haslanger Ford Professor of Philosophy and Women's and Gender Studies, School of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences

Thomas Kochan Professor Emeritus, MIT Sloan School of Management and Institute for Work and Employment Research

Phil Thompson Associate Professor of Urban Studies and

GUEST COLUMN

MIT Chancellor and Vice Chancellor provide important updates on graduate student unionization issues

Nobles and Waitz 'want all eligible students to fulfill their responsibility to vote on a decision that will have profound impacts on current and future students' April 4–5

By Melissa Nobles and Ian Waitz

Earlier this week, we wrote to MIT's graduate students to share the news that the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has set April 4–5 as the dates for its oncampus election to determine whether some 3,750 of MIT's graduate students will form a union associated with the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE).

We are pleased that election dates have been set, because we feel it's crucial that every eligible graduate student be given the opportunity to make their voice heard on this important matter. Our email to graduate students, which we encourage you to read in full, prompted several concerns and questions, primarily from students who are members of the MIT Graduate Student Union (GSU) — the group of students who have chosen to affiliate with the UE.

Because *The Tech* is an important source of information for our community and because we're asking graduate students to critically assess our statements as well as the UE and GSU's statements before voting in this consequential election, we feel it is

important to share our responses and clarifications regarding the concerns we heard from some students affiliated with the MIT GSU. We have included those questions and responses below.

Please know that, no matter the outcome of the election, we will continue our work to support all graduate students. And, in the meantime, please get informed, assess both sides in this debate, and then vote on April 4 and 5. The election's outcome will be determined by a simple majority of those who vote, but will be binding for both voters and non-voters in the proposed bargaining unit, so it's crucial that you make your voices heard!

Is it true that the UE initially excluded over 2,000 graduate students and then excluded 900 additional graduate fellows? Did MIT's senior leaders state that students on full internal fellowships should not be in the proposed bargaining unit?

The UE did exclude more than 2,000 graduate students from its initial petition with the NLRB. We highlighted this to make clear that applying federal labor rules to our 7,000 graduate students fundamentally

requires drawing lines within our graduate student body. Examples include: Who is a student versus who is a student-employee? What is academic work versus what is employment?

Those 2,000+ students include hundreds of fully self-funded or fully externally-funded students in research-intensive masters and doctoral programs who are also in research groups and labs. The 2,000+ students also include several hundred students on tuition-only fellowships, as well as some students with hourly appointments.

We believe that graduate students who are internally-supported through full MIT fellowship awards are more like externally-supported students than research associates (RAs) and teaching assistants (TAs). This distinction is made in several other graduate student collective bargaining agreements. We also had significant concerns that, if included in the bargaining unit, students on fellowship awards — especially our international students — would lose some of the important flexibilities that come with fellowships. This is

Chancellor, Page 5

CORRECTIONS

In the previous issue of *The Tech*, the crossword solution was cut off. The solution to last week's crossword is shown in full on page 2.

OPINION POLICY

Editorials are the official opinion of *The Tech*. They are written by the Editorial Board, which consists of Publisher Kristina Chen, Editor in Chief Wenbo Wu, Managing Editor William Xu, Executive Editor Chloe McCreery, 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.

Letters to the editor, columns, and editorial cartoons are written by individuals and represent the opinion of the author, not necessarily that of the newspaper. Electronic submissions are encouraged and should be sent to *letters@tech.mit.edu*. Hard copy submissions should be addressed to *The Tech, P.O. Box 397029, Cambridge, Mass. 02139-7029, or sent by interdepartmental mail to Room W20-483. All submissions are due by noon four (4) calendar days before the date of publication.*

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.

Once submitted, all letters become property of *The Tech*, and will not be returned. Letters, columns, and cartoons may also be posted on *The Tech*'s Web site and/or printed or published in any other format or medium now known or later that becomes known. *The Tech* makes no commitment to publish all the letters received.

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

TO REACH US

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why we stated that the 900 students on full MIT fellowships should not be included in the proposed labor union.

MIT and the UE were prepared to have the NLRB decide this issue. And, as students in support of unionization acknowledged last week, MIT expressed a desire to have an election later this spring. But on Monday, Feb. 28, the UE decided to remove the 900 internally-supported fellows from their proposed bargaining unit. That was their decision, not MIT's. Indeed, we would have preferred clarity on this important issue from the NLRB. We understand that the UE removed the internal fellows so that it could proceed with an election earlier in the spring for the other students in its proposed union.

Ultimately, we do not want to draw any unnecessary lines among MIT's 7,000 graduate students. However, the unionization process requires us to do that in one way or another.

The MIT GSU's website states: "RAs and TAs (including hourly appointments or fellowship appointments accompanied by a partial RA/TA appointment) will vote on April 4th and 5th. Following that, the Labor Board will rule on MIT's argument that Fellows should be denied their right to vote for our union and set a date for a Fellows election." You said that is inaccurate. What are the facts?

On Monday, the MIT and UE reached a stipulated election agreement, which was certified by the NLRB Regional Director. The agreement does not include a follow-on ruling for fellows, and there is no petition on

file in which the UE is seeking to represent fellows. If the UE is planning to file a separate petition for fellows at a later date, they have not shared those plans with MIT, and it is unclear whether such a petition would be filed this academic year or later. The UE has recently added this to their website to clarify their intentions (which we were not aware of): "After we win our union election with the RAs and TAs, we will file for an election with the students on fellowship. The NLRB will make the decision about MIT's issue around students on fellowships. We will then have an election for students on fellowship." This presumes the NLRB will rule in

Why is MIT referring to the UE rather than the MIT GSU in communications?

This is a technical matter, but an important one. The official petition with the NLRB was filed by the UE, not the MIT GSU. Likewise, our election agreement that the NLRB authorized is only with the UE. This is unlike the case at Harvard, for example, where both the petition and the election agreement included the Harvard Graduate Student Union-United Auto Workers (UAW). The UE is the organization we are legally obligated to work with, and MIT does not know how the UE may be coordinating with the MIT GSU and the other students in the proposed bargaining unit. If a union is elected, the UE will be the sole bargaining representative of the student-employees in the bargaining unit.

How can MIT's administration and the MIT GSU look at the same issues and arrive at such different conclusions?

There are (at least) four reasons. We have different information, different experiences, different expertise, and different

- An example of different information is noted in the response above. We have almost no insight into the relationship between the UE and the MIT GSU, nor do we know how decisions are made within the MIT GSU. What we do know about are MIT's interactions with the UE, because we have participated in those.
- An example of different experiences is that as students, you have recent day-today experience working and learning at MIT in your particular programs; as administrators, we have decades of experience with graduate education, but from a very different position in that relationship. (We can remember our time in your position as graduate students, but it was long
- An example of different expertise involves, for instance, critical issues with our international students. We assist more than 4.000 students and their families each year with their visas. Getting things wrong can have serious implications, so we have a dedicated group of professionals who provide important guidance to students. We believe that inclusion in the bargaining unit would negatively impact international students on fellowship awards.
- An example of different viewpoints is that the MIT administration believes in the primacy of the academic relationship hetween MIT and its entire student body. Some students may see their employment relationships with MIT as being stronger. It is certainly possible for people to have different views on such a complicated topic.

How do you respond to some students who are questioning your integrity, honesty, and motivations?

We have been devoted to MIT for decades and care deeply about this Institution and the unique experience it offers to all students. That's why we embraced roles in student support, academic life, and Institute administration rather than focusing solely on our passions for teaching and

We believe in and share most of the goals of MIT students who support unionization. And we often share their frustration about how long change can sometimes take at a large, complex organization like MIT — but we do not believe a union will be able to produce better, quicker outcomes on the issues we mutually care about. We would like to continue to work with all 7,000 students through our time-tested collaborative model (one which together we have improved over time), rather than having the UE inserted as the sole representative for one segment of our students and with a focus on only some issues (wages, benefits, and terms and conditions of employment). Ultimately, though, that will be a decision made by the students in the bargaining unit, not us.

In the days and weeks leading up to the election, however, it is critical that we have a respectful, thoughtful dialogue about this important issue. We will continue to share our perspectives and to encourage all eligible students to critically assess both sides. On April 4 and 5, we want all eligible students to fulfill their responsibility to vote on a decision that will have profound impacts on current and future students.

GUEST COLUMN

We are unionizing for quality and affordable housing

Our living conditions are our working conditions

By Lexy LeMar, Thejas Wesley, and Belinda Li

Graduate student-workers come to MIT to conduct research and teach for a better world. We want to understand how things work and are passionate about research. But we also generate billions of dollars for MIT. MIT as an institution has always reaped financial benefits from our work: its funding and worldwide reputation as a top research university follow from the experiments we run and the code we write. However, while MIT's net assets exploded from \$24 billion in 2020 to over \$36 billion in 2021, graduate student-workers remain as we always have: severely rent-burdened by U.S. federal standards, paying on average 55% of our stipends in rent due to policies of MIT's

The need for quality and affordable housing for graduate student-workers is a workplace issue because our living conditions are our working conditions. When a grad worker is stressed about making rent, rationing meals, or spending significant amounts of time dealing with repairs required due to MIT's decades of deferred maintenance, it hampers our ability to perform and focus on our research and teaching. Below are just two of the countless stories regarding housing issues that graduate student-workers are

Lexy's story: Edgerton

Shortly after moving into our Edgerton apartment at the beginning of August, my down from the ceiling in our living room. Housing shut off the central air and placed a window air conditioning unit in the common space, claiming that the water was condensation on the pipes caused by the temperature being set too low. About a week later, we

noticed mold on the ceiling in our closet, so they removed the ceiling panel but did not replace it, exposing the pipes above. These pipes also started dripping, forming a large puddle and rendering our closet unusable. In addition, the dripping water in the living room persisted, so we contacted housing again and they covered the pipes with rags and duct tape, informing us that a more permanent solution would require five to ten days of work, cutting open the ceiling and replacing the hatch. Given that the repairs would substantially disrupt our living space, we opted to hold off on the repairs until IAP.

When we later faced problems with our toilets overflowing and flooding the bathroom, failing to flush properly, and making strange noises, housing was slow to arrive, and their fixes were not real solutions.

Although each of these issues were eventually addressed, the added stress of dealing with these problems has detracted from my coursework and research and impacted my mental health. Having a clean and functioning living space is very important to me. Others have similarly endured uninhabitable living conditions, including mold and broken plumbing in Ashdown. All people deserve dignified and safe living conditions. And given what we pay for rent and how wealthy MIT is, we deserve better.

Belinda's story: Site 4

For many Site 4 residents, the price of rent is overwhelming. The efficiency apartment, the cheapest option at Site 4, is priced at \$2,274 per month. This is egregious considering that the baseline monthly stipend rates established by MIT are \$3,186 for pre-candidacy research assistants and \$3,488 for post-candidacy doctoral research assistants. Thus, even the cheapest Site 4 option can be as high as 71% of some workers' monthly stipend.

It's absurd that MIT deems these rates to be affordable.

As a Site 4 resident myself, most months I make barely enough to break even. I'm constantly looking for places to save, and often forgo meals if I'm "not hungry enough" to warrant the extra cost. I find myself stressing about my budget when I should be allocating that time and energy towards research.

I had resigned to my fate that my entire time at MIT would be spent like this. After all, I was simply a solitary individual and couldn't possibly tell MIT to change its housing policies or prices. But then I learned how housing and rent were central issues for grad workers building our union and how many people were facing the same issues as me. With the help of other grad workers in our union, I organized a dorm visit at Site 4. There, I got a chance to hear stories from my neighbors: many of us put Site 4 low in priority during the lottery but were placed here despite ample vacancies in other buildings. Several unlucky individuals have gotten stuck in elevators, some have dealt with peeling paint and murky water, and others still with broken heating. Complaints were filed but not addressed promptly. The front desk was short-staffed. And almost everyone agreed that the rent was too high.

These issues are not isolated incidents, but rather widely felt across all graduate residences. We have tried advocating for more affordable housing for decades through the Graduate Student Council and student governments within each residence, but to no avail. This is because MIT's administrators prioritize profits over people and research

Unionizing will address the underlying causes of these problems

The root causes of all of these issues are that MIT's administration maintains unilateral control over our working and living conditions and that we must each deal with our

issues alone. Unionizing directly addresses both of these issues. With a legally recognized union, MIT must negotiate with us. And although housing is not a so-called mandatory subject of bargaining, MIT admin is 100% able to negotiate with our union on these issues. When they say otherwise, it's because MIT's administrators would prefer to leave us severely rent-burdened and without quality housing rather than respectfully negotiate with our union. MIT — with its immense wealth derived from our work - can surely subsidize housing (as Stanford does by 30%) and improve the safety and quality of the living spaces we occupy.

Unionizing will usher in a qualitative change in that none of us will ever be alone as we try to navigate mold, brown water, and broken heaters. We will have access to a powerful grievance procedure to address our specific housing issues. And we'll have our union of thousands of grad workers standing together to insist on safe, quality, and affordable housing.

We don't have to suffer in silence! Through the power of collective organization, we can do something to change our

Vote yes to unionizing on April 4 and 5 for affordable and quality housing, and sign the Vote Yes Petition at https://mitgsu.org/vote-yes-petition!

Lexy LeMar is a first-year PhD student in Chemical Engineering, resident in Edgerton, and organizer with the MIT Graduate Student Union (GSU).

in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, resident in Site 4, and organizer with the MIT GSU.

Thejas Wesley is a fifth-year PhD student in Chemical Engineering, resident in Edgerton, and organizer with the MIT GSU.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Director of International Students Office responds to international students op-ed

To the editor,

In an op-ed that appeared in The Tech March 3 ("We are international students and we are voting yes on the GSU"), some MIT Graduate Student Union (GSU) students raised concerns that MIT is not doing enough to support international students and asserted that a union can do more. When weighing these claims and considering how to vote in the April 4-5 election, international students should be aware of the following important facts, prepared by MIT's senior administrators.

If the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) is successful, they will need to negotiate a contract, called a collective bargaining agreement. Such agreements have limits to what they can cover. For example, it is illegal to bargain for contract terms that violate federal immigration law.

- A collective bargaining agreement cannot make any changes to federal immigration law. MIT and its international students must follow federal immigration laws whether or not a union is elected.
- Federal immigration rules state that expanded internships and experiential learning opportunities that meet the requirements for F-1 Curricular Practical Training (CPT) authorization must be done via changes to the curricula. Making changes to curricula is an academic decision that requires extensive input from various members of our community, including faculty, students, departmental administrators, and others.
- Academic decisions are not mandatory subjects of labor bargaining, and are usu-

ally retained by the university (as they are at Harvard and Columbia, for example). Notably, the graduate student union contracts at Harvard and Columbia do not contain provisions regarding expanded CPT opportunities. As an outcome of the Task Force 2021, a joint faculty, student, and staff effort, MIT is already working on creating an Institute-wide professional development academic requirement for all graduate students. This

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International Students, from Page 5

would expand access to valuable internship, personal, and interpersonal skills development, and experiential learning opportunities for all students. In doing so, it would also provide expanded CPT opportunities for all F-1 international students, addressing this issue across the board

MIT has a proven track record of fighting for international students, without any union involvement. During a time when the nation's leadership was particularly hostile to international students, President Reif wrote the following in a *New York Times* opinion piece: "As a nation, when we turn our backs on talented foreign students, we not only lose all that they bring to our classrooms and laboratories, we also give up a strategic asset."

• In 2020, together with Harvard, MIT successfully filed suit against the U.S.

Department of Homeland Security (US-DHS) and its Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency to prevent enforcement of a policy that would have barred international students on F-1 visas from taking a full online course load while studying in the U.S.

- Every year, MIT's International Students
 Office (ISO) assists more than 4,000 students and their families with their visas.
 Getting things wrong can have serious implications. That's why MIT has a dedicated, growing group of professionals who provide important guidance to students. Neither the MIT GSU nor the UE has this level of expertise and resources.
- MIT's ISO supports international students who need help to cover legal fee costs for student consultations with immigration attorneys, pays USDHS application fees, and helps with emergency flights home and short-term family housing needs. International students are also

eligible to seek and receive emergency funds from a number of other MIT student support offices. If the UE becomes the sole representative of graduate students in the bargaining unit, we do not know how these matters will be handled in contract negotiations and what an article on international students might look like.

MIT approved *virtually every* request (either as is, or with some modifications) for remote international appointments during the pandemic.

- During the pandemic, MIT dedicated \$5.8 million and significant administrative resources to enable 1,300 requests for remote international appointments. This ensured that students did not face any interruptions to their academic and research progress and were able to continue their studies and research from abroad.
- MIT's remote international appointments process is equally (if not more) accom-

modating than the processes that were agreed to after several years of negotiations in the Harvard and Columbia graduate student union contracts. Under those contracts, remote international work is limited to situations where students are "unable" to return to the U.S. due to immigration issues or other reasons outside of students' control. When that occurs, Harvard and Columbia have agreed to make "reasonable efforts" to enable remote work. MIT went above and beyond these measures to enable remote work during the pandemic for a wider range of reasons, even when students did not face absolute barriers to returning, in order to prevent negative impacts on students' studies, research, and personal lives.

Sincerely,

David C. Elwell Associate Dean and Director of the International Students Office

GUEST COLUMN

The case for labor unions

It is on all of us to ensure that the MIT graduate student labor union comes to life, and we all might finally come to life right along with it

By Kelvin Green II

I stepped away from writing opinion editorials to focus on fiction and my responsibilities outside of writing. However, I have been pondering a few questions and like babies they now yearn to break their long silence with a forceful cry. Before I remark on my purpose in writing, I must first acknowledge the friend whose own writing moved me to pick up this pen - Ufuoma Ovienmhada. In her speech at the MIT 2022 Celebration of Martin Luther King Jr.'s life, Ovienmhada carefully articulated that she "Love[s] MIT;" she cites the beloved bell hooks (1952-2021) who said, "There can be no love without justice," and, "The heart of justice is truth telling." She also offers the definition bell hooks used for love, from M. Scott Peck who defined love as "The will to extend oneself for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth." Ovienmhada acknowledges that the three truths she offers about MIT may be difficult to hear or embrace, however we are reminded again at the end of her speech of bell hooks' love ethic, to which Ovienmhada's speech gracefully pays tribute. We would all do well to listen to bell hooks. We would all do well to listen to Ovienmhada.

In a similar spirit, I have been thinking about the growing movement for a graduate student labor union at MIT. A movement, as I understand it, to form a legal entity with the ability to ensure equity, equality, fairness, and justice on the part of MIT toward graduate students. This movement is steadily garnering support with digital and print media, forums and mixers, canvassing and phone banking, and other investments of time by graduate students, for graduate students. I am encouraged by their steadfast work, knowing full well that they are not only fighting for a labor union, but against misinformation from authority and aversions to the imagination by members of the MIT community, Still, these students find the strength and muster the courage to organize for a labor union despite their reality of being overworked and underappreciated This context serves as the foundation to my

- 1. Why are graduate students seeking to form a labor union at MIT? Which is to say, why are graduate students choosing to fight in what is a long battle for a labor union, knowing not only the contentious history of forming labor unions in this country but also that they'd be fighting against a 160-year-old institution of higher education backed by plentiful financial and legal resources controlled by the senior leadership and the Corporation?
- And nascently, is there not an easier way to fulfill the demands of these graduate students? Demands such as:

 fair work expectations and all the resources required to do their jobs ef

fectively; (2) a safe and equitable work environment with dependable accountability; (3) financial security and guaranteed support; (4) affordable housing and comprehensive benefits; (5) equal academic and professional opportunities for international students. Fair. Safe. Equitable. Dependable. Security. Support. Affordable. Equal. All of their demands sound reasonable, so why do they need a labor union to convince MIT to fulfill them?

Forming a labor union has historically been done to transfer power from the employer to the employed. I am thinking of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) which was founded in Harlem in 1925 by African American railroad porters and maids at the Pullman Company. Yet, the battle for the BSCP truly started 60 years before, when in the name of inclusion Pullman allowed newly liberated and formerly enslaved folks to work at his company, while taking advantage of their needs by demanding long hours of hard work with poor compensation. Pullman used his power to say that the workers could accept the conditions or quit. Instead, they unionized to fight back and chose a fitting motto — "Fight or Be Slaves." I am also thinking of the graduate students at New York University who were the first of their kind at a private university to unionize and negotiate a contract with their administration for a living wage, better health care, and greater protections against harassment and discrimination (2001). Although this initial unionization was short-lived due to legal retaliation by NYU (the union's contract expired in 2005 and wasn't recognized again until 2013), the pioneering success and a semester-long strike by the NYU graduate students is both commendable in its felicity and inspiring in its landmark success.

Labor unions have been created either proactively using knowledge of the contentious history of workers in this country; or, more often, reactively to an extensive series of unjust violations by an employer that warrants the employed to unionize. The movement for a graduate student labor union at MIT seems to be an example of the latter. Yet, it may not be clear how, because the senior leadership purports that "students are what make MIT" and even recently have spoken with language of support for a graduate student labor union, when in actuality MIT has no desire to give up decision-making power, and understandably so - giving up power means giving up control. MIT may proffer to inform the community about labor unions, yet it continually fails to center the stories of the very students who seek this labor union. And though MIT acts on what it says, its actions continually fall short of its word. Yes, entities echoing Diversity, Equity. and Inclusion (DEI) in their halls are likely preferential toward establishing a labor union. But, an entity which only purports to live these values will work behind closed doors to dismantle efforts which challenge their power and strategically stall the progress a labor union promises to their employees — a group which unequivocally includes graduate students .

Those who organize to form labor unions are neither irrational nor impulsive. Those who organize to form labor unions are critical thinkers driven by necessity. It would not surprise me if this necessity stems from the fatigue of graduate students who have endured decades upon decades of neglect by MIT. Thus, forming a union should not be contextualized as graduate students' first straw, but the next one (maybe the last straw) after decades of trying to work with MIT to solve graduate student problems. Graduate students are taking their livelihoods into their own hands to protect themselves and their wellbeing. In this way, the growing movement for a graduate student labor union at MIT is not separate from the legacy of labor union movements in the United States — it is a part of this legacy. We should be applauding their efforts and supporting their movement with self-invested action

I remember joining my first labor union. At first, I was skeptical due to what I had heard about unions, but all my coworkers were enthusiastic about it, so I felt open to considering joining. I read the documentation and I remembered my grandfather, Richard, who fought against Phillip Morris for decades as part of a labor union. I joined. A couple months into the job, I realized I was underpaid and expected to work ridiculous hours. I was slower to realize I was paying for this with my emotional, physical, and psychological well-being. I remember learning that most of my coworkers felt the same way, so it became an item of business in the union meeting. It is not easy to share legitimate concerns with an employer (especially around work conditions and pay), but the union offered me community and allowed my voice to join a chorus of other workers' voices. Shortly after the legal negotiations with our employer (which enables), our pay increased to better reflect our value and our hours were reduced to better match our needs. More than that, I remember learning how the union restored my agency as a worker, which I initially did not know was mine to have because of the way I was conditioned to believe the world works: a world where being a worker means sublimating one's frustrations into pleasing so-called 'superiors,' where the fear of losing job security is the stimulus for one's productivity and the reason for turning a blind eye, and yes, a world where going to graduate school means unavoidable suffering through the coursework and lab work and PIs and faculty and putting up with it all at the cost of one's health. I refuse to accept this world. Especially, when we live in

a country where labor unions exist. In this spirit I am reminded of the late Toni Morrison (1931-2019), who said, "Don't let anybody, anybody convince you this is the way the world is and therefore must be. It must be the way it ought to be." Labor unions at their best ensure the working world is how it ought to be, and — most importantly — the members of the union hold the power to dictate that "how."

During my five years at the Institute — after building relationships with people in the Office of the President, Office of the Chancellor, Office of the Provost; after building relationships with faculty, staff, students, and alumni; after serving this school and the greater MIT community out of love — I have learned that MIT's number one priority is its capital, both tangible (i.e., physical property) and intangible (i.e., intellectual property and global reputation). The evidence for my claim is found in the stories of students across the Institute and over decades, students like myself who have labored incessantly for life and against death at MIT — to foster DEI as values and not commodities to be exploited for good press; to foster a thriving student community where people are valued as individuals and not merely laborers who produce intellectual property they will never own; and to foster a "truth telling" spirit that rejects the myth of neutrality on issues of justice. We should not need a labor union. We should not need to form a legallybinding entity to negotiate with MIT on issues concerning graduate student life. Graduate students should not have to go to these lengths to be heard and respected. That is, if the students and MIT are on the same page. But, we are not on the same page and have not been for decades. That is why the need for a graduate student union is a need, not

I use communal language — "we" and "us" — in this writing, because it is important to remember this fight is a collective effort. As my fraternity brother Rev. Dr. King (1929-1968) stated, "Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you ought to be. This is the interrelated structure of reality." The time is now for us to rise together. Let us refuse to succumb to apathy. Let us refuse to embrace the myth of neutrality. It is on all of us to help the graduate students restore their agency. It is on all of us to ensure that the graduate student labor union comes to life. And who knows? We all might finally come to life right along

Kelvin Green II is an undergraduate senior in Course 8 with minors in Courses 21W and 21L. He has served on the executive teams of the Black Students' Union, Undergraduate Association, and a plethora of local and Institute-wide committees. He is a brother of Chocolate City and of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Rho Nu Chapter.

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BOOK REVIEW

Other People's Clothes: A peek at Berlin's party scene

Calla Henkel's debut is a gaudy, glamorous journey



By Anahita Srinivasan

STAFF WRITER

"Every night you miss in Berlin is a night you miss in Berlin," begins Calla Henkel's debut novel *Other People's Clothes*. And indeed, this concept is a driving force for the two main characters of this superficially sparkling story. *Other People's Clothes* is a psychological thriller about two art students, Zoe Beech and Hailey Mader, who are studying abroad in Berlin, Germany for a semester. They rent an apartment from writer Beatrice Becks and her mother Janet, but as they settle in, they start to suspect that Beatrice is spying on them, trying to gain material for her new novel. Determined to give Beatrice

a story worth writing about, Hailey decides to turn the apartment into a nightclub. She crafts elaborate personas for herself and Zoe and begins throwing outlandishly wild parties every week. And Zoe goes along with it — at least until tragedy strikes.

Henkel does a brilliant job crafting the atmosphere of the novel. Other People's Clothes is peppered with references to the aughts — Lindsay Lohan's stint in rehab and Britney Spears's constant presence in the tabloids, to name a couple. The most pervasive reference, however, is to the infamous Amanda Knox case, with much of the action in the novel echoing it. We learn early on that Zoe is traumatized by the murder of her best friend Ivy, a ballerina who was unexpectedly stabbed by an unknown culprit — this is exactly what happened to Knox's roommate. Everything Zoe does is in an attempt to both honor Ivy's memory and try to move past her grisly murder.

Another major part of the novel is Zoe's internal struggle over her identity — a struggle familiar to many young people who are attempting to find their place in the world. She is still figuring out what it means to be wholly herself, how to detach her identity from that of Ivy's, and perhaps most importantly, how to define her own sexuality. Indeed, she abruptly comes out as gay to the patriarch of the family for which she nan-

nies when he attempts to make an advance on her. She also spends much of the novel dating a female musician named Holiday (although dating may be a premature word, as they are never completely exclusive). Ultimately Zoe spends much of the novel in a state of internal conflict.

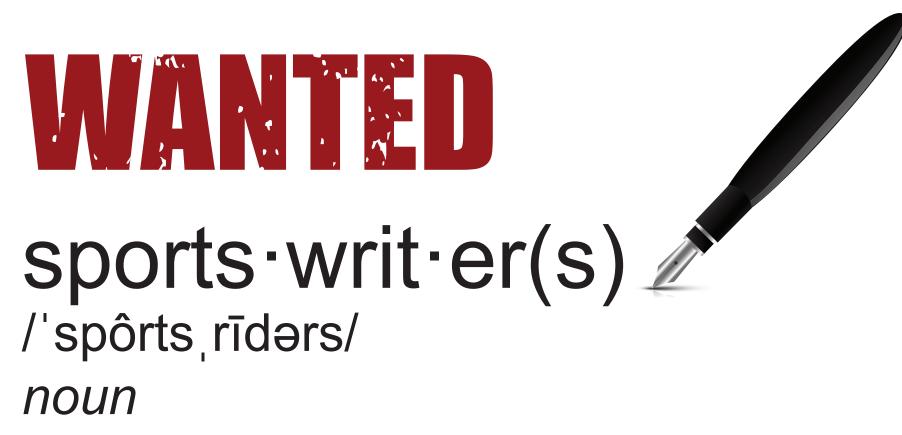
Hailey is a different figure altogether. A wealthy, pop culture-obsessed grocery store heiress, Hailey lives for adventure and fame. Masterminding the apartment nightclub idea, she is the one who is excited at the prospect of becoming a character in one of Beatrice Beck's books, which are described as the kind of literature one could find at an airport bookstore. However, Hailey comes off a little too over-the-top in her drive to be more "quirky" and "fun." She's the kind of person who would show up to class in "bright lipstick, either wearing Victoria's Secret PINK sweatpants or tight lowrider jeans—nothing in between." The description doesn't do Hailey justice - she is a far more nuanced character with complicated motives. We see this emerge when the nightclub begins to spiral out of control. Zoe tries to stay calm while Hailey is the first to snap. And after a few weeks of tension, Zoe comes home high on ketamine to find Hailey dead in her bed.

This is where *Other People's Clothes* begins to veer off its path. What had previ-

ously been a psychological thriller about superficiality and overindulgence suddenly becomes a murder mystery. Zoe is hospitalized after having a breakdown on live television, while also thrust into playing detective after being accused of murdering Hailey. The ending of the novel is an Agatha Christie mystery gone wrong — there are notecards in secret languages, confessions made by murderers, and gratuitous use of wigs. The one redeeming aspect, however, is the parallel between Beatrice and Janet, and Zoe and Hailey. It comes out that Janet had been living vicariously through her daughter Beatrice the entire time — writing her books for her, coming up with plotlines, and even once dressing up as Beatrice for a book signing. Janet was the one who murdered Hailey to provide material for her daughter's new book. Zoe herself acknowledges that both she and Hailey have aspects of Janet in them — Zoe with her desire to mold herself into first Ivy and then Hailey with her all-consuming, ever-burning desire for fame.

Ultimately, the novel is a recreation of Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* for the modern age — a champagne-bubble of a story with a fervent message about the dangers of depravity. Despite the issues in its latter half, *Other People's Clothes* is a thrilling debut with sparkling characters.

TSARTSARTS ARTS ARTS ARTS



noun: sports writers

journalists who write about sports.

No prior experience needed! Just an interest in sports. And probably writing.

For more information, please contact sports@the-tech.mit.edu

THE HOME PAIGE

Giant

Bigger on the inside

By Paige Bright

CAMPUS LIFE EDITOR

On the last day of sixth grade, my teacher sat us all down and gave his end of the year speech. "I hope the best for all of you," and "Seeing you grow over the span of a year has been amazing." Then, he told us the perfectly cliche quote:

"Dance like nobody's watching; love like you've never been hurt. Sing like nobody's listening; live like it's heaven on earth."

This felt like my own Mr. Feeny moment, my own "Believe in yourself. Dream, try. Do good." Except, for years I had an uncommon interpretation of this quote. In my mind, I heard: be confident, because everybody's watching.

In high school, I started to feel comfortable taking up space for myself. I didn't want to feel so small, and I was confident enough to make it happen. I became known at a local coffee shop; I got a job as a math tutor; I talked, and listened, and talked, and listened to anyone who would give me advice. "Why'd you decide to work here?" "Can I audit your class?" "What's your name?" My world slowly expanded around me. If everyone is watching, you better believe I am going to be

Then, I got into MIT. And everyone was watching.

"When I was on the train from Liverpool to Cambridge to become a student, it occurred to me that no one at Cambridge

knew I was painfully shy, so I could become an extrovert instead of an introvert." John

The first week of college, after struggling through a pset, I went to office hours. The problem I asked about was named after a well-known German mathematician I had never heard of. When I tried to say his name, the syllables fell out of my mouth to form a weird amalgamation of sound. And everyone laughed. Or at least, that's what it felt like. I was a bit embarrassed, but almost instantaneously I embraced this. I became the pset partner who wasn't afraid of asking the dumb questions.

I've been trying to take up space at MIT. On the fourth floor of Building 2, there's this little common space of tables and chalkboards where I just sit and work. Sometimes for a few minutes, sometimes for a few hours. I move one of the tables to be closer to an outlet, and I neatly write a to-do list on the board. And I get to work. I wave to students and professors walking by, and sip away at a Hayden coffee. I have been feeling so much more comfortable *existing* in this past year.

So why have I been feeling so large? Specifically in classrooms. One moment I'm just taking notes, and the next I feel like a giant. It started last semester (albeit, the first semester I had on campus) in 18.101.

There were at *most* 10 students who would regularly attend lectures. And yet, I was constantly looking over my shoulder to make sure I wasn't blocking someone's

Part of me chalks this up to internalized transphobia.

I found it difficult to do anything last spring. Between classes being online and not knowing many people on campus, I hardly ever left my room. But, on the few occasions when I would venture outside of the halls of McCormick, I would explore. I learned the building numbers of main campus, and I wandered around the tunnels. Every hallway I walked down, and every classroom I could enter was filled with wonder and excitement.

On one such exploring day, I took two pieces of fresh white Hagoromo chalk, went to 4-159, and wrote "Dr. Paige Bright."

And I thought to myself: one day, this will be true.

I like creating moments like this. Moments that, one day, will create a perfect little movie montage that overlooks all the pain and suffering I went through to get to where I am. They make me feel less small. Even if I don't know exactly where I am headed in the expanse of the cosmos. I would like to think that moments like this get me there. The moments I stumble across, however, are even more impactful — like the first time I walked down the hallway between Building 4 and Building 2.

In this hallway, there is a Wall of people in the math department: Professors, Academic Staff, and Graduate students. And just like when I wrote my name on the board, I had another thought that is going to stick with me: one day, I will be on this Wall. This was followed by the not so pleasant thought: "If I were on this Wall, I'd be taking away a spot for someone else."

For this smallest fraction of a second, I saw the Wall and thought "there are so few people here who aren't men. Why should I be among them?" As if being transgender makes me less of a woman.

Of course, this isn't what I believe, and I want there to be more transgender representation in education. But for this smallest moment, some cosmic force made me feel like I shouldn't get to take up this space. And I felt so small.

Promptly after telling us to dance like no one's watching, my teacher played the scene from Napoleon Dynamite in which the titular character dances in front of a huge auditorium. I sat there, letting the irony sink in. Everyone was watching. Everyone could see him. At its core, the quote acknowledges the fact that people will watch: so how would you like to be perceived?

I want to be confident, I want to be more than a speck in the universe. In pursuing this, I have taken up more space. And I like this; I like walking around, seeing people I know, and feeling confident. But with this comes the duality of sometimes feeling unbearably large, and occasionally feeling dismissively small.

Nonetheless, if everyone's watching, I am going to be seen.

Howdy! Have thoughts, questions, comments, concerns, feedback, opinions, feelings, hopes, dreams, aspirations, etc. you'd like to share? Email homeslice@the-tech. mit.edu.









GREY SARMIENTO—THE TECH

I constantly look over my shoulder to make sure I'm not blocking someone's view.

THURSDAY 10

SafeUp — Raffle Event

11 a.m. @ front of Stud (free cookies, either Insomnia or Levain)

Pleasure @ MIT - IFC SHARE Presents: I'll Make a Man out of You

12–1 p.m. @ 5-231 (free food)

MIT TechX — xFair Cubist Systematic Strategies Tech Talk 4 p.m. @ virtual

MIT TechX — xFair Atlas Devices Tech Talk

5 p.m. @ virtual

MIT Biotech Group - MBG Fireside Chat: An Insider Look at Life Sciences VC

6-7 p.m. @ virtual (RSVP required)

Pleasure @ MIT - Love, Sex, Faith & Ethics: Jewish, Christian, Hindu, and Humanist chaplains discuss the messy questions of life

6-8 p.m. @ W11 Main Dining room (free

MIT Asian Dance Team — Spring Workshop: Bicycle by Chungha

7-8 p.m. @ MacGregor Dance Studio

HackMIT — Healthcare Tech Talk 8-8:30 p.m. @ 3-133 (free boba, RSVP required)

FRIDAY 11

CAMPUS

Pleasure @ MIT - They/them **Pronouns**

3-4 p.m. @ 1-135 (free Mochinut)

BEAVER FEVER MIT Poker Club — Jane Street General

Body Meeting 6-8 p.m. @ 2-131 (free food, signup required)

Pleasure @ MIT — Pleasure in the Dark 7-8:30 p.m. @ 66-110 (free food)

MIT Vietnamese Student Association Song Lang screening 7-8:45 p.m. @ 2-105 (free popcorn and

hot chocolate)

Roadkill Buffet - 2.00BBL

MIT Symphony Orchestra - Spring Concert 1

8–9:30 p.m. @ Kresge Auditorium and virtual

MIT Shakespeare Ensemble Coriolanus

8 p.m. @ La Sala de Puerto Rico (tickets required)

MIT Lecture Series Committee - Gattaca screening 8 p.m. @ 26-100

 ${\bf SaveTFP-self\ care\ night!}$

9–11 p.m. @ Coffeehouse Lounge

SATURDAY 12

MIT Figure Skating Club — Limitless Spring Showing 1:30 p.m.

MIT IEEE/ACM — March Study Break 2-4 p.m. @ Stud Mezzanine Lounge (free Flour sandwiches)

MIT BrainTrust Brain Injury Symposium

4-7 p.m. @ virtual (registration required)

MIT Hillel — Purim On Ice

7:15 p.m. @ Johnson Ice Rink (free rentals)

MIT China Development Initiative The Wandering Earth (流浪星球) showing

7:30 p.m. @ 4-163 (free snacks)

MIT Shakespeare Ensemble

8 p.m. @ La Sala de Puerto Rico (tickets

MIT Lecture Series Committee — Gattaca screening 8 p.m. @ 26-100

MIT Cello World - Cello++ First Showcase

8–9 p.m. @ Kresge Little Theater (free)

SAAS and Nritya — Poetry Night 8–9 p.m. @ Lobdell (free sweets)

SUNDAY 13

Shakespeare **Ensemble** Coriolanus

2 p.m. @ La Sala de Puerto Rico (tickets required)

MIT Imobilare and MIT Ukrainian Folk Dance Ensemble - Fusion Dance Workshop 3–4 p.m. @ W20-407

MONDAY 14

MIT Prison Education Initiative -"Correctional" by Dr. Ravi Shankar Reading

12 p.m. @ virtual

MIT Asian Dance Team — Spring Workshop: 0X1=LOVESONG (I Know I Love You) by TXT

8–9 p.m. @ DuPont MPR

MIT Poker Club - General Body Meeting

9–10 p.m

TUESDAY 15

MIT Student Sustainability Coalition - Sustainability Midway

11 a.m. - 2 p.m. @ Lobby 13 and 10-105 (free Clover and boba)

Al@MIT - Fundamentals Reading Group

4-5 p.m. @ 2-146 (RSVP required)



To have your student group's event featured in The Tech, email cl@tech.

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

FUNFUNFUNFUNFUN **FUN**FUNFUNFUNFUNFUNFUNFUNFUNFUNFUNFU UNFUNFUNFUNFUNFU

12 |13

Tick

Solution, page 2

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

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.

Tock

Solution, page 2

| 120× | | 30× | i ! | 2÷ | |
|-------|-----|-------------|----------|-----|----------|
| | | | | | |
| ····· | 8× | | – | 6× | <u> </u> |
| | | | | | |
| 3+ | | 30× | 6× | | 4 |
| | | | | | |
| | 12× | | | 20× | |
| | | | | | |
| 15× | | | 40× | | 4- |
| ļ | | | | | |
| | 18× | | | 1 | |
| | | ! ! ! | | | |

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column and row contains exactly one of each of the numbers 1–6. Follow the mathematical operations for each box.

Counting the Seconds by Sally R. Stein

ACROSS

- 1 __ of measure (miles or pounds) 6 Vapor from a teakettle
- 11 "Let me think . . .'
- 14 Mount climbed by Moses
- 15 Pretentiously creative
- 16 Winning tic-tac-toe line
- 17 They buzz to wake people
- 19 Internet address: Abbr.
- 20 Actor __ Damon
- 21 Brief in one's words
- 23 Strong grasp of a subject
- 27 Comes out of hiding 29 People playing roles
- 30 Decorated with blossoms
- 31 Sandals and sneakers
- 32 Old __ (American flag) 33 Software download
- 36 Clumsy one's cry
- 37 Gray stocking shade
- 38 Largest continent
- 39 At this time
- 40 Traditional Indian dwelling 41 Lazy __ (revolving tray)

- 42 Has the same opinion 44 Tranquil
- 45 Surprise greatly
- 47 Umbrella to block the sun
- 48 Treaties
- 49 Play friskily
- 50 "What did you say?"
- 51 What the other three long answers all are
- 58 What glaciers are made of
- 59 Wipe off a blackboard
- 60 Still sleeping
- 61 _ Moines, IA
- 62 Missiles thrown in pubs 63 In a grouchy mood

DOWN

- 1 Nation north of Mexico
- 2 Nothing at all
- 3 Once while (occasionally)
- 4 Goo for paving
- 5 Keeps just below a boil
- 6 Tasting like many pretzels 7 Jogger's pace
- 8 And so on: Abbr.
- 9 Inquire

- 10 Suspense novel
- 11 Sand-filled counters of seconds
- 12 __ code (telegraphy system)
- 13 Burrowing lawn pests
- 18 Sedans and coupes
- 22 Historical period 23 Bricklaying expert
- 24 Sound of a sneeze
- 25 Counters of seconds for races
- 26 Tips of slippers
- 27 Run off to wed
- 28 "The __ the merrier"
- 30 Chimney ducts
- 32 Stared with dropped jaw
- 34 "Baby grand" instrument
- 35 Group of experts
- 37 Adolescent
- 38 Eerie glow
- 40 Had confidence in
- 41 Tempter of Eve
- 43 Obtained
- 44 By the __ token (similarly)
- 45 Rosebush pest
- 46 Marinara or pesto
- 19 21 22 23 |24 |25 |26 29 36 39 42 43 45 | 46 48 50 51 52 53 54 | 55 | 56 | 57 58 59 60
- 47 Finger jabs
- 49 Take a break

62

- 52 Keogh plan alternative 53 Scratch up
- 54 Edgar Allan __
- 55 Sci-fi beings, for short
- 56 Monotonous routine

63

57 Secret agent

[833] Convincing









MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT. I KNEW DATA WOULD CONVINCE YOU NO, I JUST THINK I CAN DO BETTER THAN SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T LABELHER AXES.

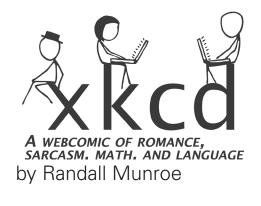
Pendulum

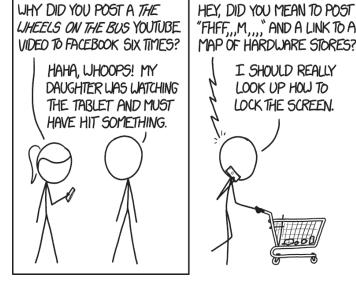
Solution, page 2

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

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

[1765] Baby Post

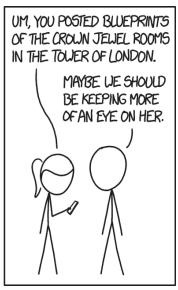






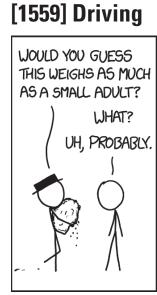


YOU JUST POSTED

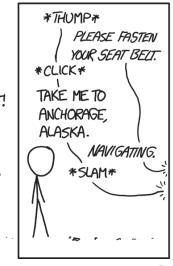


MINUTES."











Sadly, it probably won't even have enough gas to make it to the first border crossing.

Horologe

Solution, page 2

| 12x | | 60× | ! ! ! | | 24+ | | |
|------|----------|-----|--------------|------|----------|-------------|--------------|
| 9 | 2- | 16× | | 21× | | 24+ | |
| 28+ | | | 9 | | 5 | - | . |
| | 2× | | 29+ | | | | |
| 96× | | 22+ | | 30× | | 18× | |
| 180× | 7 | _ | · | | 3÷ | 2÷ | |
| 9+ | 378× | | | 8 | - | - 2 | <u> </u> |
| | 24+ | | - | 28× | | | 3 |
| 72× | <u> </u> | | | | 210× | | |
| | | 1 | | | | ; ! ! | : ! ! |

SPORTS BLITZ

Friday, March 4

- Women's Tennis lost against University of Chicago 3-6.
- Softball won against Transylvania University 5-4.
- Softball lost against Alma College 4-9.
- Men's Volleyball lost against Elmira College 2-3.

Saturday, March 5

- Sailing finished 3rd out of 6 at Harvard University.
- Sailing finished 7th out of 8 at the Sharpe Trophy.
- Women's Tennis won against Kenyon College 9-0.
- Softball lost against Emory University 2-4.
- Softball lost against Belhaven University 2-11 in 6 innings.
- Men's Lacrosse won against University of New England 17-7. Women's Lacrosse won against Johnson & Wales University 21-4.

Men's Tennis lost against Bryant University 4-5.

Sunday, March 6

- Women's Tennis won against Carnegie Mellon University 5-2.
- **Softball** lost against Randolph-Macon College 0-3.
- **Softball** lost against Virginia Wesleyan University 0-1.

Tuesday, March 8

- Baseball lost against Suffolk University 6-13.
- Women's Lacrosse lost against Endicott College 3-16.

Wednesday, March 9

- Men's Tennis against Colby-Sawyer College was canceled.
- Men's Lacrosse won against Roger Williams University 17-12.

Track and Field detailed results and recap can be found on mitathletics.com.

Join The Tech, Email us at join@tech.mit.edu You'd be a great

Upcoming Sports Events

FRIDAY 11

Men's Track and Field

NCAA Division III National Championship

Women's Track and Field

NCAA Division III National Championship

Men's Volleyball

vs. Lasell University 7:00 p.m.

SATURDAY 12

Men's Track and Field

NCAA Division III National Championship

Women's Track and Field

NCAA Division III National Championship

Sailing

Navy Women's Race

Sailing

Wood Trophy

Sailing

MIT Team Race Invite

Men's Lacrosse

vs. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute 1:00 p.m.

Women's Lacrosse

vs. Roger Williams University $1:00 \ p.m.$

Men's Tennis

vs. Colby College

1:00 p.m.

Men's Volleyball vs. Springfield College

2:00 p.m.

SUNDAY 13

Sailing Navy Women's Race

Sailing

Wood Trophy

Sailing

MIT Team Race Invite

Men's Fencing

NCAANortheast Championship $9:00 \ a.m.$

Women's Fencing

NCAANortheast Championship 9:00 a.m.

Regional

Regional

MONDAY 14 Baseball

vs. UMass Boston 3:00 p.m.

TUESDAY 15

Baseball

vs. Rhode Island College 3:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY 16

Men's Swimming and Diving NCAA Championships

Women's Swimming and Diving NCAA Championships

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