thetech.com

Volume 142, Number 6



Thursday, March 31, 2022

WEATHER, p. 2

FRI: 61°F | 36°F Partly Sunny. SAT: 52°F | 37°F



The MIT Asian American Initiative displayed posters and art-

work in Lobby 7 to announce their list of Institute recommendations for improving Asian American inclusivity at MIT, Tuesday.

IN SHORT

The voting period for the Undergraduate Association president and vice president and Class Councils is April 1-5. The UA presidential debate will be held April 4 at 8:30 p.m. in the Stratton Student Center.

Eligible graduate students may vote whether to form a union with the United Electric, Radio and Machine Workers of America in-person April 4 and 5 at Walker Memorial, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 2:30-3:30 p.m., and 5:30-8:30 p.m. on both days.

Campus Preview Weekend is in-person from April 7-11.

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

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

MIT AAI recommends more supportive programs for MIT Asian American environment

Plans include more courses, greater mental health support, increased staff and cultural representation

By Srinidhi Narayanan NEWS EDITOR

The MIT Asian American Initiative (AAI) publicly launched a set of recommendations to Institute senior leaders so MIT may provide a better environment for Asian American students earlier this week.

The recommendations, detailed on the AAI website, were written by undergraduate AAI members. According to the website, members spoke to and incorporated feedback from various Asian cultural student groups at MIT and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) representatives of student groups to "make this list as relevant and representative as possible." AAI also reportedly collaborated with over seventy other Asian American student organizations from around the country through the Intercollegiate Asian Pacific Islander Desi American Coalition.

AAI began thinking about the recommendations in response to the rise in anti-Asian hate beginning in 2020, Alana Chandler '22 wrote in an email to The Tech. Amelia Dogan '23 added that they began drafting appointing response to the March 2021 Atlanta Spa shootings."

While many of the core recommendations have remained the same throughout the last year, conversations with staff, students, faculty, and other stakeholders have allowed for refinement, Dogan said.

The recommendations are as follows:

MIT must hire culturally competent mental health professionals for the Asian American population.

AAI calls on MIT to improve mental health resources for Asian American students by citing a 2019 enrolled student survey and a 2021 AAI-run survey of members of Asian American student groups. The first survey states that 24% of 1,500 undergraduate respondents reported using counseling services in the past year and 18% reported feeling so depressed it was difficult to function, and the second found that 81% of 87 respondents rated their perceived level of support from MIT mental health resources to be a two or three on a five-point scale, where one indicates "no support" and five indicates "complete support," and a

majority of respondents indicated the importance of having therapists that "share their ethnic background" (70%) and are "culturally compe-

Specifically, AAI urges MIT to commit to hiring multiple full-time clinicians in Student Mental Health and Counseling Services that reflect the diversity of the Asian American student body, implement an online scheduling system for MIT Student Mental Health and Counseling, and increase Asian American representation in MIT Medical as a whole.

MIT must create a permanent, physical space for Asian American students and increase cultural representation.

According to the AAI website, 'several" Asian cultural student groups on campus have "expressed difficulty in finding and booking a space in which to hold events," and that "beyond serving as a primary location for Asian American community meetings, events, or socials, a physical space dedicated to Asian American students corporealizes and centers the common ground

MIT AAI, Page 2

MIT Admissions reinstates SAT/ ACT score requirement for class of 2027 applications and beyond Admissions office concluded standardized testing to be least

discriminatory and best predicts academic success at MIT

By Srinidhi Narayanan

NEWS EDITOR

MIT will reinstate the SAT/ACT requirement for future admissions cycles, Dean of Admissions and Student Financial Services Stu Schmill '86 announced March 28. Schmill detailed the reasoning behind the decision in a post on the MIT Admissions blog and in a Q&A with MIT News.

Schmill wrote that "our research shows standardized tests help us better assess the academic preparedness of all applicants, and also help us identify socioeconomically disadvantaged students who lack access to advanced coursework or other enrichment opportunities that would otherwise demonstrate their readiness for MIT."

According to Schmill, throughout the pandemic, the research and analysis team within the admissions office attempted to understand how best to evaluate academic readiness for all students, especially those impacted by pandemic-related disruptions.

The admissions office's research reportedly found that standardized testing "significantly" improved the office's ability to predict academic success at MIT, even when controlling for socioeconomic factors that correlate with testing.

The office also found that other exams besides SAT/ACT — such as Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate tests, the International General Certificate of Secondary Education, and mathematical olympiads - predict readiness, but access to such exams is even more socioeconomically restricted than the SAT/ACT.

The office concluded that not having SAT/ACT scores thus tends to "raise socioeconomic barriers to demonstrating readiness for our education" relative to having them, given these other inequalities.

While the admissions office re-

search doesn't explain why this is the case, Schmill wrote that "we believe it is likely related to the centrality of mathematics - and mathematics examinations - in our education."

Schmill concluded by saying that while in future admissions cycles applicants will be expected to report an SAT or ACT score, if an applicant is unable to take the tests "because of a disaster or disruption," they may explain their circumstances, with the admissions office granting them "a full and fair review." In such cases, MIT Admissions "will not make any negative presumptions regarding [an applicant's] academic readiness based solely on the absence of SAT/ACT scores, but will instead draw upon the lessons [the office] has learned during the pandemic to make the best, most informed decision [possible] by rigorously assessing other academic aspects of [the] application," Schmill wrote.

MIT Pharmacy to close permanently on April 29

MIT Medical announced that MIT Pharmacy is closing, effective April 29, in an email to the MIT community March 9.

Medical wrote that the "difficult decision" was made after an "extensive review of the clinical, financial, and operational risks and benefits" of a "retail pharmacy" within MIT Medical.

They noted in their Pharmacy FAQ that the "number of community members using the pharmacy dropped substantially" during the pandemic. The "lower rate" is expected to be permanent, as MIT transitions prefer other methods to "fill their 617-253-0202. prescriptions."

Over-the-counter sales will "continue in a new sales kiosk" on the "first floor near Urgent Care" and feature "deeply discounted pricing." Medical will also still handle "vaccinations, infusions, and medication consultations" by Ambulatory Care Pharmacists, according to the

No new prescriptions have been accepted since March 25, and refills will be processed until

In the meantime, individuals with general questions or concerns can send an email to into hybrid work and patients pharmacy@med.mit.edu or call

—Shelley Choi



A hand-painted wall stands on Kresge lawn to raise awareness for the hardships and violence experienced by Palestinians.

TO UNIONIZE OR

Seven takes on the question of unionization.

OPINION, p. 9-11

MIT PHARMACY

A community comfort closed with no communication. OPINION, p. 8

ASIAN AMERICAN INITIATIVE

Five recommendations, ranging mental health and curriculum, for the Institute. OPINION, p. 9



ROCHAMBEAU

Unsatisfactory French bread is pain. ARTS, p. 6

CRUMBLY CUP-CAKE

Falling apart but sweet. CAMPUS LIFE, p. 7

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2 The Tech
Thursday, March 31, 2022

WEATHER

April showers... and March tornadoes?

By Maria Geogdzhayeva

Were you hoping that all your friends returning from Puerto Rico would bring the warm weather back with them? Too bad. You're stuck in Boston, and there's nothing you can do about that except to graduate. Until that happens, though, you're going to have to bear with the New England flavor spring weather — light on the warmth, heavy on the April showers. Things will look up briefly today and tomorrow, with temperatures climbing up to the 60's, but the cold front passing through the area this weekend will keep us in the 40's and 50's for a while yet.

Meanwhile, the South and Midwest are experiencing their own flavor of spring weather as tornado season

comes into full swing. Driven by a cold front, a system of severe storms is raging through the region, with strong rain, wind gusts of up to 70 mph, and a high chance of tornadoes. Tornadoes have already broken out in Texas and Arkansas, causing significant damage (and catching a pickup truck near Austin that miraculously drove straight through the vortex). The system will have passed through Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi by this morning, leaving them on high alert. Although March is a little early for such a series of tornadoes, it is not unprecedented, and we are likely to see many more tornadoes pop up in the region through June. Here in Boston, we'll be feeling the remnants of this storm system in tonight's rain — and feeling grateful to be on the tail end.

Extended Forecast

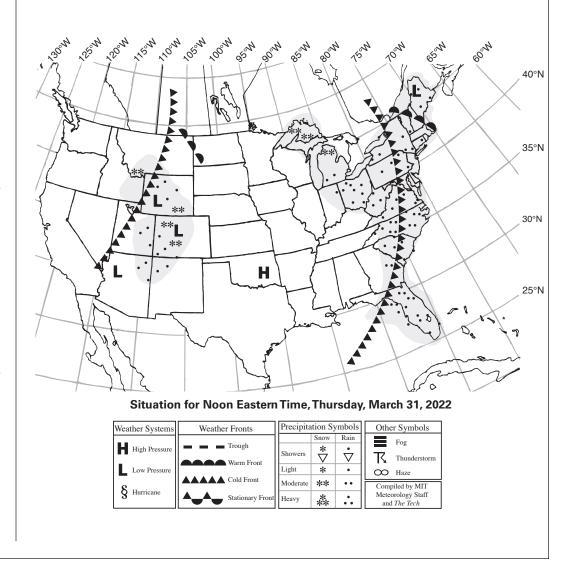
Today: Fog with a chance of showers. High around 63°F (17°C). Southwest wind around 9–17 mph.

Tonight: Likely rain. Low around 54°F (12°C). Southwest wind with gusts up to 33 mph.

Friday: Chance of rain in the morning, otherwise partly sunny. High around 61°F (16°C) and low around 36°F (2°C). West wind around 9–15 mph.

Saturday: Sunny. High around 52°F (11°C) and low around 37°F (3°C). West wind around 15 mph with strong gusts.

Sunday: Partly sunny. HIgh around 53°F (12°C) and low around 38°F (3°C). Variable wind around 7 mph.



AAI writes MIT will take time in responding to student recommendations

MIT AAI, from Page 1

we find among ourselves, borne of shared experiences."

The website points to MIT's fiveyear DEI plan, specifically commitment four, which states that the Institute will "work with student and administrative leaders to identify and create opportunities and mechanisms for cultural student groups to convene, such as shared spaces and events, including signature annual events."

AAI also believes that MIT can do more to promote Asian cultural events, such as "improving Asian food representation in campus dining halls."

To that end, AAI calls on MIT to dedicate a physical, permanent community space for Asian American students and groups as well as promote greater representation of Asian and Asian American literature, cultural celebrations, and food both within the space and beyond.

MIT must offer courses in Asian American studies, expand the level of Asian language classes, and install ethnic studies programs. AAI writes that "it is essential that MIT students have the opportunity to take a variety of ethnic studies, language, and cultural immersion courses so that our university can matriculate students with the skills and cultural sensitivity to understand people of different backgrounds."

The website also notes that "these are not new demands," and states that the global language programs "have had high student demand and have been requesting more funding for many years, yet recently, MIT restructured GSL [Global Studies and Languages]" (GSL faculty were reassigned to other Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences departments in 2019, though GSL majors, minors, and concentrations remained in place).

AAI calls on MIT to create an Ethnic Studies program that can offer a concentration by 2024; offer an Ethnic Studies minor and major as a Course 21 Interdisciplinary Minor/Major by 2026; offer a minimum of five Asian American studies classes per term; offer a larger variety of Asian languages beyond Chinese, Japanese, and Korean; and offer higher-level courses in

the languages that are already part of the established programming. "MIT only offers only up to third-year proficiency in many languages programs, which is inadequate for effective business use and insufficient for those who wish to converse fluently with community and/or family members in a particular language."

MIT must hire more Asian American faculty, staff, and senior-level administrators.

The AAI website states that according to the Institutional Research (IR) Diversity Dashboard, "the composition of MIT staff and faculty is only" nine percent "and 12% Asian or Asian American, respectively." These "statistics prove to be disproportionately low compared to MIT's Asian student population," which makes up 32% of the undergraduate population, failing to "effectively reflect the diversity of the Asian community at MIT."

AAI asks that MIT "make more of a concerted effort to recruit, retain, and promote more Asian American-identifying staff, faculty, and administrators."

MIT must disaggregate data of Asian American enrollment,

graduation, and admissions by ethnicity.

Per the AAI website, MIT's IR Diversity Dashboard does not break down Asian American groups. AAI calls for data disaggregation to "show how MIT serves different Asian American communities as they come into and journey through MIT."

AAI writes that "data disaggregation can shed light on patterns or trends in factors that deeply affect a student's journey through MIT in different ways, including performance, sense of belonging, development, and more, within different pockets of the incredibly diverse Asian American community."

AAI calls on MIT to disaggregate data of Asian American enrollment, graduation, and admissions by ethnicity, in a way that preserves the confidentiality of individuals belonging to the smallest demographics, and release a report on patterns or trends in the performance, sense of belonging, and development in the Asian American community specific to different ethnicities.

The AAI website displays artwork pertaining to the five recommendations, each accompanied by an artists' statement. The featured artists are Alana Chandler '22, Emily Huang '22, Mulan Jiang '23, Yijun Yang '24, Sammi Cheung '22, and Audrey Cui '24. The website also includes a link to a petition that MIT students may sign to endorse the recommendations.

AAI credits the Black Students' Union's 2015 recommendations for "paving the way" and serving as inspiration for the AAI recommendations, as well as several cultural groups for "time and input."

Dogan said that while AAI has "certain timelines in mind" for some recommendations, they "understand change, especially around course offering and hiring, takes time." Dogan referenced MIT's activity on the BSU recommendations when stating that the AAI has also "seen how the Institute has taken its time though with student recommendations."

AAI plans to work with a variety of offices around these recommendations such as MIT Mental Health; Institute Community and Equity Office; School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences; and many other stakeholders.

Tweet the best tweets?
Post the best posts?
Get a million likes on both?

Join Social Media @ The Tech!

join@tech.mit.edu



Thursday, March 31, 2022

It's Dangerous to Go Alone!



Take This.

photo@tech.mit.edu

SUBMIT YOUR BEST WRITING 2022 KARMEL WRITING PRIZES

WIN
CASH PRIZES
IN 20 CATEGORIES

OPEN TO MIT UNDERGRADS AND GRADUATE STUDENTS

Essays, poetry, short stories, academic papers
Science and technical writing
Writing on the visual arts

Writing for the public First year writing

Science fiction, and more...

Info: cmsw.mit.edu/writing-prizes
Submission deadline: April 11
Winners announced: May 10



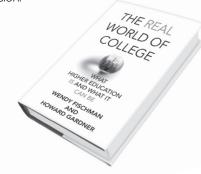


The Real World of College with Howard Gardner and Wendy Fischman in conversation with Deb Roy

Wednesday, April 6, 5:30 pm • MIT Hayden Library

Howard Gardner and Wendy Fischman discuss how higher education lost its way and how universities and colleges can focus on their core mission.





Volume·VVV,·Number·NNNN

Want a Front Page Byline?

Join News at The Tech.#

Join at join@tech.mit.edu

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Solution to April from page 4

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Solution to Fools'

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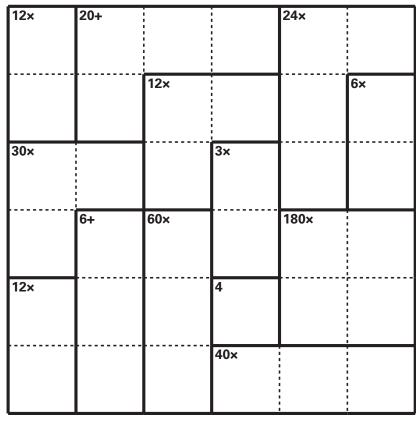
Solution, page 3

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

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

Fools'

Solution, page 3



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

Camping Stuff by Doug Peterson

Solution, page 3

ACROSS

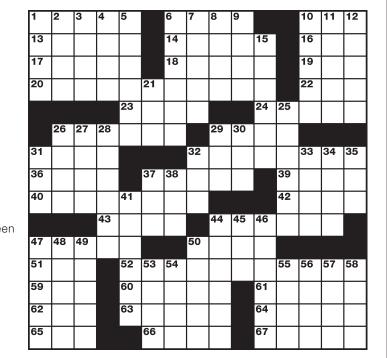
- 1 Colorado ski resort
- 6 Nimble
- 10 Feeling of amazement
- 13 Prolonged military attack 14 Earlier
- 16 Soup pot topper
- 17 Two-toned sandwich cookies
- 18 Specialized vocabulary
- 19 Raw metal in rocks
- 20 Box with aspirin and bandages
- 22 Barnyard cackler
- 23 Low-cal, on labels
- 24 Apple tablet computers
- 26 Daily print publications
- 29 Author Quindlen
- 31 Mobile phone, for short
- 32 Fruit-and-nuts snack
- 36 Neighborhood
- 37 Beef __ (dried meat snack)
- 39 Top-rated
- 40 Aerosol that repels mosquitoes

- 42 Argue the pros and ___
- 43 Sailboat's pole
- 44 Light-colored beers
- 47 Mountain lions
- 50 __ and hearty (in great shape)
- 51 Find a purpose for
- 52 Roll-up bedding
- 59 Dog's hair
- 60 Deserves to get 61 Completely silly
- 62 Distant
- 63 Pig or hog
- 64 Painter's wooden stand
- 65 Crafty
- 66 Salty bodies of water
- 67 Slow-cooked meaty meals

DOWN

- 1 __ yet (so far)
- 2 Apple's digital assistant
- 3 Social equal
- 4 Swelled heads
- 5 Get cozy
- 6 Divides in two
- 7 Feeling of self-respect

- 8 Ice hockey venue
- 9 Cartoon bear or baseball great Berra
- 10 Hawaiian greeting
- 11 Did electrical work
- 12 Blissful locales
- 15 Corkscrew pasta
- 21 What fills an auto tire
- 25 Royal castle
- 26 Lima's country
- 27 Shake __ (hurry) 28 Type of flat-panel TV screen
- 29 Boat built by Noah
- 30 Negative Senate vote
- 31 Taxi
- 32 Give it a shot
- 33 Tie up at a dock
- 34 Rural hotels
- 35 Tic-tac-toe symbols
- 37 Eleventh graders: Abbr.
- 38 Have a meal
- 41 Free tickets
- 44 Runs out, as a subscription
- 45 Boxing great Muhammad
- 46 Magic-lamp occupants



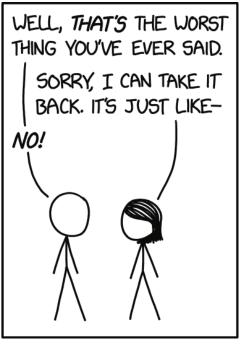
- 47 Cream-filled pastries
- 48 Customary
- 49 -go-round
- 50 Reddish hair dye 53 Legal regulations
- 54 A Great Lake 55 Pesky flying insect
- 56 Military outpost
- 57 For a second time 58 Types of toothpastes

[2521] Toothpaste



I CAN'T BELIEVE SHE SAID THAT. SHE APOLOGIZED. BUT YOU CAN'T PUT THE TOOTHPASTE BACK IN THE TUBE.





"eavilto nieth mort am benned ever strifted of to tue 6"

SPORTS BLITZ

Thursday, March 17

- Women's Swimming and Diving finished 8th out of 33 teams with 104 points at the NCAA Championships
- Men's Swimming and Diving finished 6th out of 37 teams with 138.5 points at the NCAA
- Men's Volleyball won against Concordia University 3-0

Friday, March 18

- Women's Swimming and Diving finished 8th out of 39 teams with 132 points at the NCAA Championships
- Men's Swimming and Diving finished 7th out of 42 teams with 186.5 points at the NCAA Championships
- Men's Tennis won against Holy Cross 8-1

Saturday, March 19

- Sailing finished 8th out of 10 teams at the Southern New England Team Race
- Sailing finished 6th and 8th out of 8 teams at Harvard University
- Sailing finished 1st out of 8 teams at the Geiger Trophy
- Women's Swimming and Diving finished 8th with 190 points at the NCAA Championships
- Men's Swimming and Diving finished 6th with 275.5 points at the NCAA Championships
- Women's Openweight Crew obtained 1st of 4 (V8), 2nd of 4 (2V8), 4th of 4 (3V8), 3rd of 4 (V4), and 2nd of 4 (2V4) at United States Coast Guard Academy
- Women's Lacrosse won against Mount Holyoke College 18-6
- Men's Tennis lost against Bates College 3-6
- Baseball lost against Pomona-Pitzer 9-15 and 7-14
- Men's Lacrosse won against Clark University 23-9

Sunday, March 20

- Softball lost against Luther College 0-5 in the Spring Break Trip
- Softball lost against Trinity College 1-3 in the Spring Break Trip
- Baseball lost against Pomona-Pitzer 3-6

Monday, March 21

- Softball won against Grinnell College 7-0 in the Spring Break Trip
- Softball won against Lawrence University 9-1 in the Spring Break Trip
- Women's Tennis won against Caltech 7-2

Tuesday, March 22

- Women's Lacrosse won against Skidmore College 13-11
- Baseball lost against Chapman University 2-12

- Wednesday, March 23
- Softball won against Allegheny College 5-3 in the Spring Break Trip Softball won against Elmhurst University 11-3 (5 innings) in the Spring Break Trip
- Women's Tennis won against Williams College 8-1
- Baseball lost against University of Redlands 11-14

Thursday, March 24

- Softball against Williams College in the Spring Break Trip was canceled
- Baseball won against California Lutheran University 13-11

Friday, March 25

- Softball won against Colby College 5-4 in the Spring Break Trip
- Softball won against Hope College 8-0 in the Spring Break Trip
- Softball won against University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point 3-0 in the Spring Break Trip
- Men's Volleyball lost against St. John Fisher College 1-3

Saturday, March 26

- Sailing finished 2nd out of 6 teams at the Staake Trophy Team Race
- Sailing finished 5th out of 8 teams at the Duplin Team Race
- Sailing finished 1st out of 11 teams at the St. Mary's Women's Team Race Sailing finished 6th out of 6 teams at the BU Team Race
- Women's Swimming and Diving finished 8th with 190 points at the NCAA Championships Men's Swimming and Diving finished 6th with 275.5 points at the NCAA Championships
- Women's Openweight Crew obtained 4th of 7 (V8), 5th of 6 (V4), and 7th of 8 (2V) at the
- San Diego Crew Classic
- Men's Lightweight Crew obained 3rd (V8) and 4th (2V8) at the San Diego Crew Classic
- Women's Lightweight Crew obained 5th of 7 (V8) at the San Diego Crew Classic Men's Track and Field obtained 2nd of 22 at the Emory Thrills in the Hills Open
- Women's Track and Field obtained 4th of 22 at the Emory Thrills in the Hills Open
- Men's Fencing finished 25th of 27 in the NCAA Championship
- Women's Lacrose lost against Babson College 16-17 overtime
- Men's Volleyball lost against Nazareth College 0-3
- Men's Lacrosse won against Springfield College 19-9

Sunday, March 27

- Women's Openweight Crew obtained 7th of 7 (V8), 7th of 8 (2V8), and 3rd of 6 (V4) at the San Diego Crew Classic
- Men's Lightweight Crew obained 1st (2V8), 1st (Light 8+), 2nd (3V8) and 4th (V8) at the San Diego Crew Classic
- Crew obained 4th of 7 (V8) at the San Diego Crew Classic Women's Lightweigh
- Men's Fencing finished 22nd of 27 in the NCAA Championship
- Men's Tennis lost against Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute 2-7
- Baseball won against Endicott College 11-10

Wednesday, March 30

- Men's Volleyball won against Endicott College 3-0
- Women's Lacrosse lost against Tufts University 3-22
- Men's Lacrosse won against UMass Boston 17-11

Upcoming Sports Events

FRIDAY 1

Baseball

vs. University of Southern Maine 3:30 p.m.

Men's Volleyball

vs. Springfield College 6:00 p.m.

Women's Lacrosse

vs. Emerson College 7:00 p.m.

SATURDAY 2

Women's Track and Field Snowflake Invitational

Men's Track and Field

Snowflake Invitational

Women's Openweight Crew vs. Boston University, Williams, Wellesley and Simmons

Women's Lightweight Crew vs. Simmons and Wellesley

Sailing BU Trophy

Sailing Dellenbaugh Team Race - Women's New England Team Race Championships

Sailing

Marchiando Trophy Team Race

Men's Lightweight Crew

Lightweight Invitational 8:10 a.m. (3V8)

8:30 a.m. (2V8) 9:00 a.m. (V8)

12:20 p.m. (3V8) 12:40 p.m. (2V8) 1:10 p.m. (V8)

Men's Heavyweight Crew

Alumni Cup 10:40 a.m. (V8)

10:50 a.m. (2V8)

11:00 a.m. (3V8) 11:10 a.m. (4V8)

Softball

vs. Wellesley College 12:00 p.m.

Baseball

vs. United States Coast Guard Academy 12:00 p.m.

Women's Tennis

vs. Emerson College 12:00 p.m.

Men's Lacrosse

vs. United States Merchant Marine Academy $1:00 \ p.m.$

Men's Tennis

vs. Wheaton College 1:00 p.m.

Men's Volleyball

vs. New York University 2:00 p.m.

Softball

vs. Wellesley College 2:00 p.m.

Baseball

vs. United States Coast Guard Academy $3:00 \ p.m.$

SUNDAY 3

Sailing

BU Trophy

Sailing

Dellenbaugh Team Race - Women's New England Team Race Championships

Sailing

Marchiando Trophy Team Race

Men's Lightweight Crew

vs. Bates and Boston College 8:30 a.m. (V8) 8:40 a.m. (2V8) 8:50 a.m. (3V8)

Men's Heavyweight Crew

vs. Marist College 8:45 a.m. (V8) 9:00 a.m. (2V8) 9:15 a.m. (3V8)

TUESDAY 5

Softball

vs. Tufts University 3:00 p.m.

Baseball vs. Springfield College

3:30 p.m. Women's Tennis vs. Smith College

3:30 p.m. Softball

vs. Tufts University 5:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY 6

Men's Tennis

vs. United States Coast Guard Academy 3:00 p.m.

Baseball

vs. Tufts University 3:30 p.m.

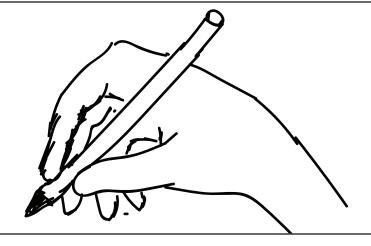
Women's Lacrosse

vs. Framingham State University



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6 THE TECH
THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 2022

Rochambeau Rochambeau

Beau and beaucoup but not outstanding

By Arun Wongprommoon and Mindy Long

EDITORS

The journey to Rochambeau was a long one. The Tech was initially invited to a guest chef popup brunch, and we agreed to attend. When we arrived, however, we found an empty restaurant. A staff member, Tyler, came to greet us and informed us that the chef canceled at the last minute. Allegedly, there was not enough time for him to inform us of the change. Instead, he offered us some breakfast burritos and matcha latte. It turned out that because the chef was not present, Rochambeau was closed save for three employees, including Tyler. Clearly, they were very unprepared for this unexpected circumstance. Not unexpectedly by that point, the breakfast burrito was tiny and wrapped in tinfoil, barely comparable to even a store-bought burrito, and its taste matched its appearance. The matcha latte lacked both flavor and depth.

Rochambeau apologized for the incident later in the day and invited us back for lunch on a day of our choosing. We made the trip across the bridge once again the following afternoon and were greeted by Tyler to the scene of a wildly different Rochambeau than we saw the day before. We were seated on the second floor and admired the lively Art Deco decor.

For a beverage, we ordered a glass of NV Quady Orange Muscat, a vin doux or dessert wine. It was exactly what it sounds like: a sweeter taste, almost grape juice, with a very small kick of wine. The wine opened our appetite, so we were somewhat prepared for the flood of food that followed. Our first round, two plates of hors d'oeuvres, arrived quickly. Since Rochambeau is a French restaurant, we were compelled to order the escargot. The snails were chewy and buttery but not as flavorful as we

expected. The bread served with it was hard and dry, prompting us to rate the Parisian classic a 3.5 out of 5. Our other appetizer was the basil avocado smash, essentially a fancier version of avocado toast with an egg we requested over hard. We also rated it a 3.5 out of 5. The lox was of good quality but we couldn't taste any basil in the dish. The avocado was not creamy and very salty. The bread was, once again, hard and dry. In short, the dish tasted like an average avocado toast for more than double its usual price point.

Then the entrées came, and they came big. Mindy ordered the steak frites, a medium rare filet mignon with sauce and garnish plus fries and ketchup. The cut was average and stringy. Overall, we gave the dish a 3 out of 5. Arun ordered the croque monsieur, a French classic. The bread of the croque monsieur made up for the other breads we had — it was buttery, soft, and toasted just right. The restaurant was very generous with the ham, which was rich and salty. We could count up to four layers of ham in the dish. The cheese did not stand out as much. What elevated the dish from being a glorified ham and cheese sandwich was the Béchamel sauce and garnish on top, which was a bit sour, glutinous, and stretchy. As for the fries, we were satisfied with the crispy and golden outside, and they were salty enough for our liking. We gave the croque monsieur a 4 out of 5.

Just as we were finishing our meal feeling stuffed, the restaurant surprised us with a complimentary soup, the french onion soup gratinée. In a characteristic brown ceramic pot, the stretchy burnt cheese oozed, making us hungry once again. Underneath the dairy layer laid an extremely rich base of soft meat and crispy croutons. We appreciated the presentation, but more importantly, the taste was near perfect. Our sample size of French onion soups is small, but we would say Rochambeau's is the best either of us has had so far, so we rated it a 4.5 out of 5.

Rochambeau
Restaurant, \$\$
900 Boylston St
Boston, MA 02115
Hours:
Monday-Thursday 4
p.m.–10 p.m.
Friday-Saturday 11 a.m.–
11 p.m.

Sunday 11 a.m.-9 p.m.

Even though we were beyond full by this point, we couldn't miss dessert. We ordered the profiteroles to end our meal: cream puffs stuffed with vanilla ice cream and topped with chocolate ganache. The dough that sandwiched the ice cream was rather dry, hard, and bland, but the vanilla ice cream and chocolate ganache were sensational. Dessert earned an average 3 out of 5.

Rochambeau offered us a taste of Boston French cuisine. As Mindy recently returned from a trip to France, our judgment may be harsh but is certainly honest. Rochambeau left more to be desired, considering their initial mishap and lack of quality ingredients, especially the bread, a staple of French cuisine. Be warned that Rochambeau will not be as kind to your wallet as your taste buds. Rochambeau is an above-average Boston restaurant but while it is beau and beaucoup, it should not top your list of restaurants to visit in Boston.



ARUN WONGPROMMOON—THE TEC

The croque monsieur, a French classic, with fries at Rochambeau.

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Falling apart

Like a cupcake

By Wenbo Wu EDITOR IN CHIEF

I laughed and hurled my snowball. It hit the back of your dark PVC-woven coat and crumbled like a vanilla cupcake. "Rude!" You pitched your exclamation, hitting me squarely in the face. I was never good at dodgeball (before the school district overlords banned the sport, that is). You laughed. All formalities went out the metaphorical window — there was no one around to witness our tomfoolery anyway.

The snow was pristine, like the snow on your porch, the snow that landed on our froyo that night we drove down into the city for a stroll. I wish that everything could stay this way, frozen in a snowglobe: pristine.

My breath drifted away and faded into the overcast sky. The ice on the lake we'd just passed was frozen solid. I used to have dreams of skating as a kid, but now I fear the cold, the possibility of falling in, the possibility of drowning. But if I still had my childlike ambition, I certainly would've dabbled in skating.

When I still lived in Texas, my local mall had an ice rink, and every time I went, I'd sit in front of the glass and watch for hours while taking sips of free smoothie samples from the food court. Okay, I lied. I don't think I would've skated. I probably would've made a living drinking smoothies or becoming a free samples foodie or something.

The ground hurtled itself at me. It happened so fast. I think I lost my vision, just for a second, but my senses quickly came flooding back. I felt dizzy with a faint but painful ringing in my head. You reached out a hand, a look of worry on your face. Man, the ice on this trail was thicker than I thought.

I'm fine. I'm fine. I reassured you. We took the rest of the trail slowly. I really do have two left feet, not that I've ever doubted being a lefty before.

The first few came that evening. I finished showering, making sure to get all the dirt out of my hair. A strange mosquito bite of some sort on my collarbone. No there was another on my chest. I scratched at the one on my collarbone before deciding that maybe it wasn't the night to give into the instant gratification of itch relief.

Morning came around, but the bites hadn't gotten smaller, not even a little. By Monday evening, I couldn't fall asleep. I finally gave up on the prospect and got up. To my dismay, these "mosquito bites" were everywhere. There were so many now that I lost count. As it turns out, they weren't insect bites at all but rather a case of hives.

I went to MIT Medical the following day and was prescribed medication. When that didn't work, I got a more prolonged dose of the same prescription. One month in, still no relief. The medication had seemingly stopped working, and I still couldn't get more than a few hours of sleep at night. I also developed intense stomach pains that would last hours on end.

Today, I'm still suffering — now almost two months in.

But I can't just take time off and take care of my health. How could I? I have commitments — I can't drop the ball on my classes, my lab, my clubs. I still have to write all my essays and study for all my exams. I'm trapped in a room with its walls closing in and no way out.

My life is disintegrating like a cupcake right before my eyes. I smile sweetly to everyone I meet, but the instant my room door closes and the wrapper peels away,

Being at MIT is so often emotionally crushing as-is. So when I couldn't rely on the wellness or consistency of my feelings, I always took comfort in at least being able to control my destiny, my outcomes, or at the very least, if only as a distraction, the amount of work I put into everything I did. Some called it workaholism. I called it dopamine and serotonin.

I'd been fueled by nothing but work for so long that the mere prospect of relaxation was a chore. A box on a to-do list to check off. I wanted to finish all my work, sure, but I also always wanted more work

A few weeks ago, I felt so completely empty. I felt like my center had been scooped out of me. What remained was a scorched shell of pure apathy. I wasn't even miserable. Life meant going through the motions each day until I inevitably passed out at 6 a.m and the pain faded away.

The tiny amount or illusion of control and power that I had over my own life was deteriorating between my very fingertips. And like a baker trying to rescue a crumbling pastry, the more I tried to hold it together, the more it fell apart. I was too weak. I hadn't slept in over a month. I was

How could I expect to keep up with all of my academic and external commitments when it was a struggle to simply stay alive?

But as easy as it would have been to let these thoughts consume me, they never did. You never let them. Neither did my other friends.

You were there as we drove to the emergency room; you were there when they admitted me into the ward where I spent the next few days; you never took any time for yourself, just stayed with me, even though I didn't deserve it. I want to be as kind as you.

I am now on a new medication and seeing two specialists with a flashy new chronic diagnosis. I am far from cured, and the cause of my illness remains a mystery. But at least things are more under control, on a good day.

While this medical journey has been grueling to say the least and its end is unclear, I have realized that my deliberate avoidance of my own emotions in favor of exerting control over everything I did was unhealthy and ultimately, by even a small perturbation, unstable.

I've also gained a greater appreciation for the people around me as I continue to deal with my health problems. Most of my professors and mentors have been generous, my friends have been supportive, and you have been there every step of the way. I'll pay it forward, I promise.

I sit here and actually enjoy a vanilla cupcake for the first time in a long time. It's falling apart a little, but that's okay. It tastes no less sweet.

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OTE APRIL 4 & 5

THE VOTE

Do you wish to be represented by the United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America (UE) for purposes of collective bargaining?

WHO

Eligible voters include graduate students enrolled in MIT degree programs who are employed to provide instructional or research services, including research assistants, teaching assistants, and instructor G's who were employed during the payroll period ending February 15, 2022.

For additional information about voter eligibility, please see the Notice of Election available at grad-union.mit.edu.

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Morss Hall, Walker Memorial (Bldg. 50)

9:00 am - 1:00 pm | 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm | 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm ET







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GUEST COLUMN

The disgraceful end of the beloved MIT Pharmacy

A flawed decision process?

By Betty Lou McClanahan

In our everyday world at MIT, there are interdisciplinary task forces, collaborations, and requests for feedback (such as the Quality of Life Survey) announced almost every week. These undertakings produce brilliant and innovative solutions to difficult problems because the participants bring diverse opinions and expertise to the table.

Thus, it was mystifying, even shocking, to receive a nameless and vague email

OPEN LETTER

An open letter on the closing of the MIT Pharmacy

On March 9, an email went out to those who have filled a prescription at the MIT Pharmacy (located inside the MIT Medical building) in the past year. This email announced that the pharmacy will close on April 29. It also stated that "no new prescriptions will be accepted at the MIT Pharmacy after March 25," and that "existing refills will be processed until April 8." In addition, the reduced prescription copayment rates offered by the MIT Pharmacy will only continue at other in-network pharmacies until Dec. 31, 2022. This decision, which will negatively impact staff, students, faculty, and other MIT affiliates, was made without adequate input from the MIT community

The pharmacy staff themselves were informed of the closing only the night before this email went out.

The email links to an FAQ page on the MIT Medical website. It lists the reason for the closure as a reduced customer base during the pandemic due to hybrid schedules and an increase in use of alternatives, including mail order and same-day delivery services for prescriptions. This does not take into account that hybrid work schedules for staff are not guaranteed to be permanent. After only one semester of hybrid schedules in Fall 2021, followed by an Independent Activities Period in January 2022 during which institute administrators encouraged staff to work from home as much as possible, closing the pharmacy because of hybrid schedules is not justified. It is not known how much longer hybrid work will continue, and essential staff as well as students, retirees, and others who are

March 9 from MIT Medical announcing the abrupt end to the MIT Pharmacy, a much loved and precious resource on the campus. What?! How could this be?

Believe me, there is no more comforting feeling than sprinting from MIT Medical's Urgent Care to the warm environment of the Pharmacy and having an antibiotic or antiviral resting on your tongue in less than 15 minutes.

No more.

But who made this decision? What data was used?

not on this kind of schedule were not even considered.

The pharmacy staff themselves were informed of the closing only the night before this email went out. These staff members were not consulted at all during the actual decision-making process. A pharmacy staff member at MIT Medical who wished to remain anonymous said this about the pharmacy's closing:

"There are no Pharmacy people, for lack of a better term, in MIT Medical management and decisions about how to run the pharmacy and ultimately to close it and how to close it, were made without our input. As a result of the rush of it all there are, unsurprisingly, a lot of unexpected problems presenting themselves to management. The Pharmacy, as the place drugs are received and distributed through Medical, provides a lot of connective tissue that is being removed and replaced with two pharmacist positions yet to be filled or trained. It is unclear if they intend to hire any extant Pharmacists from here, not that how they have treated folks here engenders a lot of trust.

Morale in Medical in general seems very bad, with people wondering who is going next. It is very hard to work for some folks who are willing to mislead you while setting up to get rid of you.... It feels pretty bad. There has been a huge outpouring of support from our patients, and we deeply appreciate it.... It is nice to know you made a difference and MIT Pharmacy itself was one of the best, most wholesome places I have ever worked.

It feels like...Medical [leadership] was handed a beautiful antique watch and, rather than learn how it works and how to maintain it, banged it against the desk a few times and, fundamentally incurious, tossed it away."

The news of the closure was slow to trickle through the wider MIT community, as some staff who use the MIT Pharmacy regularly did not even receive the initial announcement. As the news did start to circulate, many staff members, ourselves included, were shocked to hear about the abrupt announcement, the treatment of the pharmacy staff, and the loss of easy access to a pharmacy just as more people are expected to return to

What is the larger plan?

And most importantly, why does it seem that no one on campus nor any patient at MIT Medical was asked for their input?

My sense is that many on campus may feel that the opaque decision-making process behind the fate of the MIT Pharmacy was improper and flawed and does not correspond to MIT's oft-stated values of transparency and strong concern for each other.

It's just a shame, that's all...

Betty Lou McClanahan is a staff member in
the Department of Chemistry.

campus. Concerned staff members wondered why the broader MIT community was not consulted and if there was a way to stop the closure on such a tight timeline, pointing to the still-in-development MIT Values Statement that declares a commitment to collaboration, transparency, and trust in each other as pathways to solve problems.

"It is nice to know you made a difference and MIT Pharmacy itself was one of the best, most wholesome places I have ever worked."

Questions around the closure also brought to light additional issues about how the decision was made and who had a say in the process. Neither pharmacy staff nor pharmacy customers were asked for feedback. The decision came down as final without much communication or clarity about why the community who uses this campus resource was not made aware that a closure was even under consideration, much less imminent. MIT has a wealth of eager community members ready to solve major community problems. The sheer number of task forces, committees, working groups, and employee resource groups on department, lab, center, school, and institute-wide levels testify to a deep commitment to preserving what makes MIT so exceptional and making it an even better place to study, research, live, and work.

The closure of an on-site pharmacy may initially seem minor when there are retail pharmacies to be found on every corner (though still not in Kendall Square), but it does prompt the question of: What's next? What will be the next convenience, perk, benefit, or job to be abruptly ended?

Sharona Bollinger

Marketing and Admissions Assistant in the MIT Leaders for Global Operations Program

Ximena Hasbach Alliance Program Coordinator for the Department of Material Science and Engineering

CORRECTIONS

An article published three weeks ago stated that the graduate student union vote April 4–5 would be held from 9 a.m.–1 p.m. and 2:30–3:30 p.m. in Walker Memorial's Morss Hall and from 5:30–8:30 p.m. in room 56-154. Since then, the locations have changed and the election will now be held at the same times but all at the Walker Memorial location.

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GUEST COLUMN

Recommendations towards a better MIT for Asian Americans

One year after the Atlanta spa shootings, the MIT Asian American Initiative presents five recommendations for the Institute

By MIT Asian American Initiative

Last March, six Asian women were killed in the Atlanta spa shootings. The assailant admitted to having been motivated by a "sex addiction," a symptom of American imperial sexual attitudes and a long history of gender-based violence against Asian women. For many of us in the MIT Asian American Initiative (AAI) and the Asian American community, the Atlanta spa shootings came after an already long rise in hate crimes against our community. Only after these shootings did others start to acknowledge our pain. When asked by MIT administration to assist in planning a vigil space for the community, we did so, despite our grief and anger. The vigil that MIT held did not live up to the commitments the administration had made to us. This included not announcing the event to the entire MIT community, centering religious voices, failing to plan long-term support for the Asian American community, and not following through on events for Asian American heritage month. After this, we at AAI understood that we require and deserve better from our school. Over the past year, we have been working on these recommendations for MIT.

The Asian American community at MIT is one of the largest marginalized groups on campus, encompassing over 21 Asian American cultural groups. However, we still do not have enough culturally competent

OPEN LETTER

An open letter on

stands for cannot

graduate students

Fellow MIT Graduate Students,

we wish for the United Electrical, Radio

and Machine Workers of America (UE) to

represent us. Voting yes would bind us for

years to come to UE, an organization that,

in addition to being a fiscally irresponsible

choice, holds many positions that are unrepresentative of MIT graduate students.

They do not support nuclear power.

allies such as Israel and Japan.

in *The New York Times*, the

They support Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela, claiming that "the U.S.

government and media continue to

vilify his government as a 'dictatorship." Needless to say, there is no

media conspiracy. According to a piece

administration has been responsible

humanitarian crisis. ... He has also

attempted to crush the opposition

for... plunging the country into a deep

They denounce collaborations with U.S.

Editor's Note: The sources for the infor-

mation presented in this letter are linked in

On April 4-5, we will vote on whether

represent MIT

the online version of the article.

To list just a few:

why UE and what it

mental health professionals, representation within faculty, staff, and senior-level administration, or a physical community space. Additionally, few classes are offered for Asian Americans to explore, and the broader MIT community to learn about the histories and languages of our heritage. Lastly, the monolithic term "Asian American" fails to acknowledge our vastly different cultures, socioeconomic backgrounds, and experiences, necessitating the disaggregation of data. All of these steps are essential for MIT to provide a truly inclusive and supportive environment for Asian Americans.

The global COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically affected all of our lives in different ways. Our Asian American community has also had to manage the burden of a surge in anti-Asian violence and rhetoric, fearing for ourselves, our families, our friends, and our communities. Between March 2020 and Sept. 2021, over 10,370 hate incidents against the Asian American and Pacific Islander community were reported in the United States. Given that Asian communities are one of the communities least likely to report hate incidents due to systemic barriers such as language or distrust about outcomes of reporting, this number is staggering.

However, this is nothing new. American history is littered with anti-Asian racism. We remember the 1871 Chinese massacre in Los Angeles, the 1907 Bellingham riots, and the surveillance of South Asian Americans

by jailing or exiling critics, and using

lethal force against anti-government

NATO and Obama's support of the 2014

Ukrainian revolution, which overthrew

They were against the expansion of

protesters."

post-9/11. Anti-Asian racism has been magnified by the settler American government throughout our country's past, from the Chinese Exclusion Act to Alien Land Laws to World War II Japanese internment camps. The continuation of state-sanctioned anti-Asian violence has resulted in the deportation of Southeast Asian refugees and the killings of Christian Hall and Angelo Quinto. Recently, we witnessed the unprovoked killings of Michelle Go and Christina Yuna Lee in New York City. These more recent attacks are symptoms of deeply entrenched anti-Asian racism that has long festered in the U.S. — a manifestation of the white supremacy that this nation relies on.

American history is littered with anti-Asian racism.

As a result, AAI presents five recommendations for the Institute below, in no particular order. Our student organization does not claim to be the sole voice for the Asian American student population. However, AAI's members are all Asian American undergraduate students who have come together to write these recommendations based on our experiences. We have spoken to and incorporated feedback from various Asian culture student groups at MIT to make this list as relevant and representative as

possible. AAI has also collaborated with over 70 other Asian American student organizations from around the country, through the Intercollegiate Asian Pacific Islander Desi American Coalition, to call on our respective universities to act on many of the following recommendations.

- 1. MIT must hire culturally competent mental health professionals for the Asian American population.
- 2. MIT must create a permanent, physical space for Asian American students and increase cultural representation.
- 3. MIT must offer courses in Asian American studies, expand the level of Asian language classes, and install ethnic studies programs.
- MIT must hire more Asian American faculty, staff, and senior-level administrators.
- 5. MIT must disaggregate data of Asian American enrollment, graduation, and admissions by ethnicity.

Read our full statement, learn more about each recommendation, and sign your support at http://asianamerican.mit.edu/

This article was written by Amelia Dogan '23, Jason Li '24, and Sophia Zheng '24, members of the MIT Asian American Initiative, a student-run organization for Asian American advocacy, allyship, and civic engagement. Contact them at aai-recs@mit. edu or on their Instagram @mit.aai.

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OPEN LETTER

An open letter on graduate student unionization

Dear MIT collaborators,

I am writing to share my thoughts about the proposed unionization of our graduate students. I have read and carefully considered the issues and vision advocated by those supporting graduate student unionization. I respect the viewpoints being offered. There are valid concerns expressed and things we can work together to fix. However, I remain sincerely opposed to having a graduate student union and am writing to express my perspective in this letter.

The most basic reason I am opposed to unionization of our graduate students is simple: in all our best work, we are collaborators working together to expand the limits of knowledge into new territory and to contribute to solving many important problems. This creation of new understanding is very challenging, but it is something that MIT already does incredibly well. I assert that on the whole, MIT is one of the best places for this on the planet. Let's expand the circle to identify things that need fixing and find innovative ways to make MIT work better for all of us. Let's engage in this together.

My reason for sincere concern is that I see a graduate student union as a mechanism for opposition between students and MIT. If we are opponents, then how do we continue to be full-on collaborators? Who can regulate or require, specify or delimit the energetic engagement and passion we

bring to this community? I am certain that a union organization such as the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America cannot possibly understand how we really work together, nor contribute to our pursuit of excellence in so many areas. Blunt tools such as one-way demands or threats of strikes will not enable our mutual progress.

We have the privilege to work together in an incredible and exciting learning community, enabled by the flow of insights and efforts among all the team members. Our creativity and excellence flow from these collaborative resonances. I am very concerned that adding prohibitions and layers of rules and requirements associated with a union will attenuate these resonances and threaten our mutual engagement with excellence, leading to a diminished MIT for all of us.

A bit of context so you understand where I'm coming from: I have all three

of my degrees from MIT in Course 6, so I know this place well from the perspectives of undergraduate life (alas, too long ago!) and from the perspective of life as a graduate student. I care deeply about our students and want MIT to be an excellent experience that challenges and stretches abilities for all of us. I am writing to make my contribution to this upcoming important decision.

I urge all graduate students to carefully read about and understand the issues and viewpoints being presented on unionization and to think carefully about how a graduate student union might contribute to or detract from our learning community. Then, be sure to vote in the upcoming April 4–5 election so that your view is counted.

Sincerely,

David L. Trumper Professor of Mechanical Engineering

Putin's puppet government in Ukraine. Even after Russia invaded Ukraine, they have maintained their anti-NATO sentiment. These positions range from ill-advised to downright abhorrent; even more concerning is the way in which their documents (some of which are linked above) distort facts, history, and context in order to advance their propaganda.

Regardless of how much autonomy we may or may not have as a local chapter, we cannot in good conscience affiliate with or financially support such an organization (we would be paying them approximately \$2 million per year, nearly half of their current annual budget). We urge all graduate students to carefully consider not only whether they are willing to financially and reputationally strengthen UE, but also whether they are willing to force their fellow graduate students and graduate students for years to come to do

If the vote passes, it would be extremely difficult for us to divorce ourselves from UE in the future, as our relationship with MIT would legally be through UE. A vote no is not a vote against unionization in general but merely against our unionizing with UE and would preserve our ability to unionize in the future, either as an independent union or as part of a different national one.

UE is morally, financially, and intellectually bankrupt. Whether we join them will be determined by a simple majority of those who vote. Regardless of your opinion, share this letter or otherwise inform your fellow graduate students about UE's policy positions so that everyone can cast an informed vote.

If you would like to sign our open let-

If you would like to sign our open letter, please do so at https://tinyurl.com/ NotWithUF.

Signed by (as of press time):

Alexander Siegenfeld, Physics PhD Candidate

Akiva Gordon, Chemical Engineering PhD Candidate

Bernardo Aceituno, Mechanical Engineering PhD Candidate

Tal Sneh, EECS PhD Candidate

Adina Bechhofer, EECS PhD Student

Sabrina Corsetti, EECS PhD Student

Ethan Klein, Nuclear Science and Engineering PhD Candidate

Adam Block, Mathematics PhD Candidate

 $Navid\ Abedzadeh,\ EECS\ PhD\ Candidate$

Duc Hoang, Physics PhD Student

Jeff Krupa, Physics PhD Candidate

Charlotte Dai, Chemical Engineering PhD Student

GUEST COLUMN

Our union empowers our research and teaching in ways that are impossible with the GSC

By Madeleine Sutherland

This is Madeleine Sutherland, fifth year Chemistry PhD candidate. It was my honor to serve as the MIT Graduate Student Council (GSC) President in 2020-21 and as chair of the Ashdown House Exec Council in 2019-20. My time serving in these roles offered me a bird's-eye view of both the lives of graduate students and the work being done to improve our working conditions. I am sending this memo above all because I love MIT, and I am so grateful to be part of this fabulous community. As Ufuoma Ovienmhada recently illustrated with such crystalline elegance, this love requires me to speak plainly and join my colleagues in collective action to bring about a more just reality.

Many faculty members, including administrators, view us graduate workers as MIT's most valuable asset.

Many faculty members, including administrators, view us graduate workers as MIT's most valuable asset. I share their belief that the greatest thing about MIT is our community of scholars, who advance works of immense value to humanity, from discovering and predicting how biological molecules interact, to understanding how organizations of humans can best collaborate to solve problems, to building sustainable and climate change-fighting technology. It's because MIT attracts such high caliber graduate researchers that we make such an impact on the world, and that makes me want to fight for all of us.

Labs, field sites, offices, and other research environments are workplaces where graduate workers produce tremendous value for MIT, doing the work that earns the Institute prestige, patents, and grants. When negotiating with an administration that refuses to recognize what we do every day as work, I had little power to meaningfully address problems and make improvements in our conditions and compensation. For example, when I needed to discuss the "Research Ramp-Up" plan for campus spaces that failed to account for grad workers' human needs to eat and drink somewhere, I had to establish a whole new set of connections with parties the GSC doesn't normally deal with, such as the Vice President for Research (and the Lightning Committee) and Associate Provosts. Nobody on the GSC Officer team really had time to do that, and we were already stretched thin. So, the research I actually came to MIT to do suffered.

A former GSC President's call to unionization

Multiple bodies across the Institute refuse to respect the GSC's democratic processes for choosing representatives to high-impact committees. Further, many administrative offices simply inform GSC officers of a decision mere hours or days before announcing it and then act as though they'd gained our consent. In the same breath, they ask us to do work for them, then fail to act upon the information and insight we generate. In short, we have not been treated like a professional organization of people who are carrying out MIT's core mission every

MIT's current administration asks us to place our trust in a purportedly collaborative process in which they ultimately have all the decision-making power and we can only provide recommendations and suggestions. But my interactions with our administration and what I saw during my tenure as GSC president undermined that

Multiple bodies across the Institute refuse to respect the GSC's democratic processes for choosing representatives to highimpact committees.

I cannot trust the administration that agreed to research assistantship extensions for PhD students whose thesis research was delayed by COVID, then waited for eight to nine months (and many emails from us) to actively inform grad students across campus that such funds were available. I cannot trust the administration that doesn't appear to address the frequency or pattern of lab accidents at MIT and meanwhile creates an environment wherein the grad students and postdocs working in the labs are sleep-deprived and stressed and thus prone to accidents. I really can't trust the organization within which Campus Planning and Housing administrators promised the City they'd create 950 new beds of grad student housing in the spirit of broadbased demands for affordable housing, then refused to share cost details of Site 4 planning with the GSC until it was too late to avoid "Efficiency" rents equal to 67% of the base 12-month doctoral research assistant stipend.

This administration pats themselves on the back for including the GSC in the annual stipend adjustment process, but those of us who have been on the Stipend Working Group know that process is flawed. We knew that we had a predetermined amo'unt of money and could only make suggestions as to its allocation. The participants consisted of those who read GSC recruiting emails and could take an inordinate amount of time away from their research and teaching work to follow a predetermined process. And the scope of this committee kept growing as we tried - struggled - to address other aspects of our life and work beyond our base

Successive administrations continue to treat Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) like a "problem" or "issue" to "solve" on a "committee" or "task force." They fail to recognize that lack of DEI is a roadblock for the whole Institute, one that fundamentally limits our capacity to achieve our mission. That is what happens when skilled and talented people can't fully participate because of racism, sexism, ableism, and xenophobia. That is the reality our fellow grad workers have documented profusely, methodically, and scientifically, time and again. Many professional and advocacy organizations of grad workers, especially the Black Graduate Student Association, have proffered explicit and well-researched recommendations, which haven't been prioritized or acted upon. As a union, we set the agenda for improving our institution. We can build on our past victories to secure meaningful institutional change.

My experience taught me that it's MIT grad students I can trust to fact-check, think critically, and plan inclusively on all levels.

The only way to change this status quo with national law behind us is to form a collective bargaining unit — in other words, a union.

As GSC President, I didn't only work with the administration. I also collaborated with dozens of graduate workers whose innovations and discoveries are changing the world. My experience taught me that it's MIT grad students I can trust to fact-check, think critically, and plan inclusively on all levels. After all, it was fellow graduate researchers who joined me in documenting the tremendous impact the pandemic has had on our

By unionizing, we empower ourselves to use these very skills to shape our working conditions. When it comes to getting you the resources you need to succeed, an organization of your peers is far more trustworthy than an administration which refuses to recognize the basic facts of your position, your daily reality. Make no mistake — the Graduate Student Union is us. Through forming a union, we give every graduate worker a literal vote in who represents us, and with what agenda, and how we wish to get our voice heard.

That's why I hope to vote yes the moment we overcome MIT's attempt to lock us Fellows out of our bargaining unit. I hope vou'll join me!

Madeleine Sutherland is a fifth-year PhD candidate in Chemistry and served as GSC President in 2020-21.

GUEST COLUMN

We have genuine love, strength in numbers, and unity on our side

Reflecting on the GSU on the eve of our historic election

By JS Tan, Ki-Jana Carter, and Maddie Derry

A year ago, many graduate workers hadn't even heard of our union. Now we're only a week away from having a real voice

When I first heard about the unionization effort three years ago, I was immediately on board. I had been at MIT long enough to know that most people here don't have a real say in how the un works, and having a union to change that for grad students made a lot of sense. But I didn't know the first thing about organizing. I met with the other grad students who wanted a union — there were only a few dozen of us then — and I learned pretty quickly what it looked like to build a union: talking to people, finding out what mattered to them, and taking collective action to move forward together.

I wasn't a very outgoing person; I didn't like meeting new people, and I was afraid of embarrassing myself in conversations with people. But I wanted to try anyway, because I felt like I couldn't just stand on the sidelines while other people did the work to build this thing that I really wanted. So I started talking to my friends and coworkers, and they started talking to their friends and coworkers, and in September 2021, we had over 1,000 people at our launch rally.

24 hours after we launched our union, 25% of graduate workers had joined. Just a few weeks later, a clear majority had signed their union cards. In workplaces with more worker-friendly labor laws, that would have been enough to win recognition. Now, over 2,000 graduate student-workers have signed our vote yes petition to publicly support our union.

Reaching this point has taken a lot of hard work, and MIT's administrators haven't made it easy. Unfortunately, they have a lot of advantages over grad workers. They use a dozen different soapboxes to scare grad workers from taking a single step out of line. They hand out talking points to confused faculty whom they order to do their dirty work for them. They have a war chest to nay for fancy lawyers so they can try to disenfranchise a fifth of grad workers. But we've overcome every single one of those

For every anti-union administrator, there's a thousand grad workers who can't afford rent, who can't take time off to see their families, who can't get access to the equipment they need to do their research. And those grad workers have shown that they are ready to vote YES for our union. MIT has money and cheap tricks on their side — we have genuine love, strength in numbers, and unity on ours.

Making our hopes a reality

When deciding to come to the Media Lab, I was told that we were about to embark on a radical research experience different from any other research institution in the country. I was told that research was going to be fun and flexible and that we would have the agency to freely explore our passions in our work. However, once I joined the Media Lab, I found that these had been false promises. My principal investigator (PI) was chronically late to meetings or would miss them entirely without warning. At the same time, he micromanaged me meticulously, sporadically calling me to ask why I wasn't appearing online on Slack during the workday. It quickly became clear that I was nothing more than a code monkey for a PI who

didn't care at all for my development. I repeatedly brought these issues to a Media Lab administrator. She was nice and supportive, but the interventions she could offer were limited. My situation continued to worsen, so we escalated the issue to my department's academic head — who was not only good friends with my PI, but also the very man who had hired him. Eventually, every single research assistant (RA) in my group raised concerns about my advisor, but our working conditions remained unchanged.

If I wanted to continue at MIT, I needed to change my PI. I quickly found that this wasn't an easy thing to do in my department, which was especially cagey when it came to funding. The department went back and forth for months, and with each passing month, I felt more and more precarious. Ultimately, out of luck, I was able to join a new lab with a PI who actually cares about

No one on this campus should have to face the anxiety I felt during these long months. Our union has since fought for and won guaranteed transitional funding for RAs in precisely the same situation I was in. Had this change come one semester sooner, my security at MIT would never have been left to the whims of my department. This is why we need a union: so we can secure this kind of institute-wide policy change in a union contract.

As I started to organize with our union and have conversations with fellow graduate workers at tabling sessions, office walkthroughs, and dorm visits, I learned firsthand that funding security was just the tip of the iceberg. From having a fair grievance procedure and affordable housing to simple things like dental care and proper parking access, we have so much to fight for and so much to win.

Changing MIT for the better is just the tip of the iceberg; we are organizing a union for a better world.

Over the last six months, we've been inpired by the incredible organizing that has taken place on this campus. We have learned so much from being part of this campaign. We've built a vast network of union reps, created a broad and inclusive organization by reaching out to workers from every corner of this campus, and supported each other in the face of MIT's aggressive anti-union

For many of us, these lessons won't end at MIT. We are scientists, technologists, designers, artists, writers, and tinkerers, and we will spend our post-MIT careers working at cutting edge technology institutions all over the world — from global biotech firms like Moderna or Pfizer to bootstrap startups building the future of the internet. We're inspired by all of our colleagues who will move forward together not only to win our election, but also to bring the community and solidarity that we've built over the course of this campaign to workplaces all over the world.

JS Tan is a second-year graduate student at the Media Lab.

Ki-Jana Carter is a fifth-year graduate student in Materials Science and Engineering.

Maddie Derry is a fifth-year graduate student in Chemical Engineering.

Why I'm voting 'no' to the graduate student union

I care deeply about improving the MIT graduate experience, but UE is not the right path

By Georgia Van de Zande

In recent years, many problems with MIT's graduate programs have come to light. We need solutions, but I believe that unionization is not the right path. In writing this op-ed, it is my hope that students do not feel ostracized if they choose to vote "no." My "no" vote does not mean I'm invalidating the need for change or the presence of major issues. Rather, voting "no" means I believe unionization, as it is proposed today, is not suitable for MIT or its graduate students.

Representatives from the Graduate Student Union (GSU) have claimed that graduate workers at MIT "currently lack a well-defined job description, leaving the boundaries of our responsibilities extremely ambiguous." Instead of viewing the ambiguity of research as a freedom, the GSU claims that in the face of "an inappropriate lack of investment in support staff and research infrastructure, [graduate students] are forced to pick up the slack." They list a number of tasks they think graduate researchers should not do, including scheduling visitor agendas, manufacturing testing apparatuses, ordering supplies, and maintaining equipment.

To me, these tasks can be key elements of a graduate student's research process. For example, I've learned a lot from maintaining the laser cutter I need to build my experimental setups. Some students may consider these tasks grunt work, but in fact, menial tasks provide a critical aspect of learning in academia and industry, especially for students who have chosen a school with a "mens et manus" motto. It is immensely helpful when staff are available to offer assistance, but as graduate students, we should feel ownership over our own work and learning. To become more effective researchers, we must want to do what we need to do to answer our individual questions. Learning to balance all of this will make us better researchers, engineers, and scientists.

The ambiguity and flexibility of academia is its appeal. It is why many of us chose a graduate education at MIT over other opportunities. As students conducting research, we answer questions that no one has answered before, meaning that one cannot possibly foresee all the tasks that may be involved. Furthermore, our questions vary greatly across departments, labs, and even within advisor groups. Each individual graduate student's journey requires a unique set of steps to create new knowledge.

How do the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) and GSU imagine they will write a singular representative contract that accounts for the thousands of possible and unpredictable paths that might be taken to solve the tough problems we tackle at MIT? (Remember, the UE's experience comes primarily from working with very predictable labor roles, not academic research roles.)

I am concerned that a union contract will greatly reduce the flexibility MIT currently affords students and their advisors as they collaborate to answer novel research questions. This rigidity would ultimately reduce the quality of research MIT graduate students are able to conduct. Isn't this quality of research and the freedom to work hard to solve unanswered questions what drew us all to MIT in the first place?

The GSU has also claimed that a union would improve education at MIT through better-defined expectations of teaching assistants (TAs) and professors. I have been a TA, lab instructor, or team mentor for several classes, including 2.009, 2.007, and 2.00b, during my six years as a graduate student. Through these experiences, I developed a strong sense of what it takes to run a great class at MIT. Sometimes it requires thoughtful, teaching-focused work like developing

assignments and grading criteria; other times, it requires less exciting tasks, like updating a class's Canvas page. However, all of these experiences served to make me a more involved and engaged instructor who better understands my students' learning needs.

As students conducting research, we answer questions that no one has answered before, meaning that one cannot possibly foresee all the tasks that may be involved.

If UE defines a TA role, it could overconstrain MIT courses and diminish their quality. For example, if 2.009 were obligated to observe UE-defined, UE-limited TA responsibilities, many iconic elements of the course (such as Build Challenge and the Final Presentations) would not be possible. These course activities require flexibility and devotion from all course staff, including TAs, and they make for some of the best learning experiences one can find on a college campus. Many other courses could suffer similarly. Like research, teaching responsibilities vary from department to department, course to course, and year to year. Each year, MIT is rated one of the top schools for undergraduate and graduate education. I foresee that over time, this quality will diminish due to UE's overconstrained definition of a

Additionally, the GSU has failed to mention the potential immediate harm of potential TA strikes on undergraduate education. I personally care too much about the students in my classes to strike and leave them

stranded. A strike could also have lasting harm on graduate students and their degree timelines. Because I care about my thesis, I could not support a strike that would slow my research progress. I imagine many graduate students feel the same.

I believe that generalizing graduate students' diverse experiences in a union contract has the potential to disrupt the many, many students who have found demanding vet healthy situations at MIT. The GSU has identified several problems in the graduate community, but I believe many are specific to certain departments, communities (e.g., graduate students with families), or advisoradvisee relationships. Instead of a generalized graduate student union that has the potential for harm, I would rather see solutions that focus specifically on those situations that need more scrutiny or these students who would benefit from increased university support.

It worries me deeply that choosing UE to represent MIT graduate students is a legally binding and permanent decision that will impact the Institute for decades to come. As an engineer and designer, I only know how to solve problems through iteration. MIT is a community unlike any other. We haven't tested a graduate student union at MIT or any kind of partnership with UE, so we have no way to evaluate their effectiveness.

Many holes have already been poked in some of the GSU's claims, so I am skeptical of the rest. I realize MIT students have been attempting to address the issues we face for years and that many are frustrated to have seen few results. I have been one of them. Even so, I favor a methodical, collaborative, and iterative process with the Graduate Student Council and departmental advocacy groups over a permanent, legally-binding fix with UE.

Georgia Van de Zande '15, SM '18 is a sixth year PhD student in the Department of Mechanical Engineering

GUEST COLUMN

The risks and costs of unionization

Before voting April 4–5, graduate students should carefully consider the potential risks, losses, and costs that a union can bring

By Melissa Nobles and Ian Waitz

On April 4 and 5, many of MIT's graduate students will participate in a confidential election to decide whether the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) will represent them for collective bargaining.

We've previously described our position, the limits of unionization and labor bargaining in graduate education, and the gains won for all MIT graduate students through our current collaborative processes. Today we share some of the risks, losses, and costs that graduate students might face if a union is elected:

The risk of strikes and disruptions:
 Strikes and delays can occur during contract negotiations. In fact, the UE's policy book 2021-23 calls for "the continued use of the strike as the primary weapon against the employer."

It took Columbia's student union more than five years to reach a first contract following its election, and students were on strike for a total of 132 days during this period. In all cases, between 475 and 1,504 days elapsed before a first contract was reached between student unions and private universities, and strikes are

very possible during negotiations, putting academic progress at risk and important financial and policy improvements on hold.

- The likely loss of a nimble, responsive, and student-driven stipend process: Harvard and Columbia's students are now locked into multi-year, union-negotiated contracts with 3% increases in the out years. By contrast, our student-led process considers cost-of-living increases on an annual basis and is responsive to high-inflation pressures such as those that exist today. As a result of this process, MIT's stipends are already higher than those at nearly every private university that has a graduate student union.
- Costly union dues: Union members may pay dues of up to \$550 per year, without any guarantee of better benefits or compensation.

The UE and its supporters in the MIT Graduate Student Union argue that a union would change campus for the better. It may also change it for the worse:

 The UE would introduce a third-party entity on campus: The UE is a national organization with its own political and financial interests, which may or may not align with graduate students' interests. The UE can use member dues to advance these interests, including supporting its broader national organization, which is something students opposed to the UE have raised concerns about. In addition to the UE's national political agenda, the new local union leadership would likely have its own priorities that students may or may not agree with.

The UE would be able to pressure students and may continue to use students' personal information, even after a victory: We've received reports during this campaign of students feeling pressured by union supporters. Unfortunately, behavior like this is likely to persist if the UE is successful. The union would need to seek new student members, garner student support for their bargaining and political positions, and likely persuade students to strike. And it would still be able to access personal contact information that MIT was required to produce last month. (Students may contact our Institute Discrimination & Harassment Response Office or Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards if they have experienced any conduct that violates MIT policy).

The UE will impact student-advisor relationships: We know that the overwhelming majority of graduate students have a positive view of the quality of academic advising and guidance as well as their interactions with faculty.

Institute Professor Phillip Sharp and Professor Alan Grossman have authored an op-ed in *The Tech* about the consequences a union would have on student-advisor relationships. Among their observations: "a unionized environment ... reduces flexibility in favor of a highly structured relationship between manager and workers. We believe that such industry-framed relationships are ill-suited to the nature of and rapidly evolving opportunities in graduate education, where individuality and flexibility are necessary to foster a dynamic trajectory for graduate students."

Every eligible student should critically assess the different positions in this debate and vote on April 4 or 5 in Morss Hall in Walker Memorial. This election's outcome will be determined by a simple majority of those who vote but will be binding on everyone in the proposed bargaining unit — even for students who don't vote or who don't want a union.



Got a lot on your mind?

Share some thoughts with us! Write for Campus Life. join@tech.mit.edu

OPEN LETTER

Harvard Graduate Student Union solidarity statement: vote yes to MIT graduate student unionization

Dear MIT Graduate Student Union (MIT-GSU) voters,

Leading up to the certification vote for your graduate student union, we at the Harvard Graduate Student Union (HGSU) wanted to share some of our experiences as a union, to help inform your decision.

Unions are, at their core, workers joining together to collectively articulate and advocate for the rights, benefits, and dignity they want. While our union is only a few years old, we are proud to have created an organization where student workers coordinate to advance our common desire for a safe and productive working relationship with our University. We're not full-time "activists" or "organizers" — we are all students enrolled in difficult and consuming programs, like you. But we organize together as a union because we recognize that we are not only students, but also student workers who run courses, conduct world-class research, and devote countless hours to mentorship and scholarship. Without graduate student labor, how many of your labs and classrooms would run as well? We are proud that our work helps make our University what it is, and we are proud to have a collective voice to ensure that our efforts get appropriate recognition.

We organize together because we know we often deserve better than the *status quo*. During the years we spend earning our degrees, we're told to accept conditions and pay that leave most of us chronically stressed, trusting that eventually we'll get cushy jobs where things will be better. But prestige and promises don't pay the bills; we're living our lives *now*, not just preparing for our lives to begin — whether or not the cushy jobs ever materialize. We're told to play nice when course heads and

principal investigators (PIs) bully or harass us or to accept that we'll get paid when they get around to it at rates that, for many of us, fail to cover the cost of living. "Grad school is tough," we're told. But we know it doesn't have to be this way.

While you decide how to cast your ballot April 4–5, consider what unionizing has won us in just a few short years:

- Better pay. Before we had a contract, the University decided if we received raises any given year. Historically, they usually increased our pay in line with inflation, but in years of supposed economic austerity, they could choose to freeze our pay (as they did in 2017 and tried to do in 2021-22, citing pandemic-related concerns while boasting an \$11.3 billion increase to the endowment in that same year). With a union and a contract, we now have a say in what we are paid. As a result, we got a 3% raise in 2020 while faculty took a pay freeze, and a 5% raise this year while the university tried to impose 2.8% on students they claimed were outside our agreement. Through our union organizing, we were also able to bring pay parity to an entire school of student workers: thanks to our contract negotiations, graduate researchers at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health are no longer paid at two-thirds the rate of everybody else at Harvard while performing the same work.
- Benefits. We won benefit funds for copays, out-of-pocket and dental costs, dependent premiums, child care, and emergencies, putting approximately \$500,000 in the pockets of student workers last year. In our recent contract battle, we won even greater funds, a total of \$1.55 million for the first year, \$2.15 million for the second year, and \$2.75 million for the third and fourth years. Starting in September, for the first time in the history of the University, we will have dental insurance (75% premium coverage) included in our health care $plan. \ \textbf{For many members, these benefit}$ wins are life-changing.
- Job clarity, security, and materials.

 Before our contract, student workers often knew little of what was expected of them, even regarding their basic hours and responsibilities. Course heads and PIs could set unreasonably intense ex-

- pectations, and there were no guardrails student workers could point to. Now, we receive appointment letters delineating expected tasks prior to starting work; guaranteed pay for cancelled job appointments and if workers leave a work environment because of harassment, discrimination, or abuse; workload limits; remote work accomodations; guaranteed work materials; and private
- Rights for all members. Graduate school is difficult for everyone, but can be especially difficult for parents, people with disabilities, people of color, international students, low-income and first-generation students, women and nonbinary people, and others who don't fit the historical mold of what a graduate student looks like. We have fought hard to mitigate the unequal treatment that often falls on these groups, and have won established protected categories in employment (including caste and class background in 2021), reasonable accommodations for pregnant student workers and those with disabilities, funds (\$30,000 per year) for immigration expenses, guaranteed increases to stipends for births and adoptions (\$7,000 per working parent, increasing)2.25% annually for the next three years), and sick and bereavement leave. We have also created working groups that have issued final recommendations for University-wide policies on Anti-Bullying (including power-based harassment) and Non-Discrimination and Harassment - soon to be implemented to create the first University-wide policies on these issues.
- A community that cares. Our union has brought together thousands of people committed to creating a fair and equitable workplace for student workers. One way we show up for one another is through enforcing our rights and benefits via our grievance procedure. But more broadly, we have, for years now, shown up to fight alongside and for one another over hundreds of meetings, rallies, protests, polls, petitions, and direct actions. It hasn't always been easy, and we still have lots to learn. But we know one thing: if you're facing an issue in your workplace, a union provides

you a concrete place to go where you will be met with support, care, and solutions.

We know you may have heard a different story about our contract from MIT, so we encourage you to view the agreement in full (harvardgradunion.org/our-contract) and judge it for yourself.

Not all of our battles are finished — it turns out negotiating with a \$53 billion institution takes more than one contract fight. Our fight for Real Recourse, in particular, has been met with disappointing resistance by a University not incentivized to hold tenured harassers and abusers accountable. We were able to secure a legal fund for survivors going through the Title IX process and guaranteed pay for researchers who leave a lab due to harassment or discrimination, but this is far from enough. Since ratifying our contract, we have continued to organize around Real Recourse, and it is at the forefront of our union's current efforts.

But our decision to ratify a contract without all our original demands is not proof that unions aren't worth your time, as MIT admins would have you believe. It's evidence that unions are democratic organizations whose goal is to empower workers to decide how and when to fight for what matters most to them, not to impose some external agenda. HGSU hosted a lively debate in daily email digests on whether to accept our most recent contract or to keep fighting for more, with union leaders and rank-and-file members arguing both sides of the issue. The decision to ratify the contract was then made by a democratic vote of our members, who judged for themselves whether the deal was good enough to accept - as you will be able to do with every future contract, if a majority of voters vote to certify MIT-GSU.

Ultimately, the choice to unionize is yours. If we could go back in time, we'd do it again in a heartbeat, and we hope you make the same choice April 4–5.

From up the river in solidarity, HGSU-UAW Local 5118

The HGSU Executive Board consists of President Koby Ljunggren, Vice President Amulya Mandava, Recording Secretary Tina Wei, Financial Secretary Steffan Paul, Guide Mark Wright, Sergeant-At-Arms Margaret Czerwienski, and Trustees Zeke Benshirim, Rachel Petherbridge, and Denish Jaswal.

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