



MAXIMO MACHADO—THE TECH

The MIT Asian American Initiative displayed posters and artwork 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 recommendations “after MIT’s dis-

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 competent” (86%).

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 aca-

demic 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 into hybrid work and patients prefer other methods to “fill their prescriptions.”

Over-the-counter medical 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 FAQ.

No new prescriptions have been accepted since March 25, and refills will be processed until April 8.

In the meantime, individuals with general questions or concerns can send an email to pharmacy@med.mit.edu or call 617-253-0202.

—Shelley Choi



CADY BORONKAY—THE TECH

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

TO UNIONIZE OR NOT

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**

SECTIONS

Fun Pages 4
Sports 5
Arts 6
Campus Life 7
Opinion 8
















April showers... and March tornadoes?

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.

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.

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



Weather Systems	Weather Fronts	Precipitation Symbols			Other Symbols
H High Pressure	 Trough		Snow	Rain	 Fog
L Low Pressure	 Warm Front	Showers			 Thunderstorm
		Light			 Haze
S Hurricane	 Cold Front	Moderate			
	 Stationary Front	Heavy			
					Compiled by MIT Meteorology Staff and <i>The Tech</i>

AAI writes MIT will take time in responding to student recommendations

MIT must offer courses in Asian American studies, expand the level of Asian language classes, and install ethnic studies programs.

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

MIT must disaggregate data of Asian American enrollment,

The AAI website displays artwork pertaining to the five recom-

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.

A hand holding a smartphone with various app icons visible on the screen, including Adobe Acrobat, Behance, Facebook, and others. The phone is tilted, and the background is a light, textured surface.

It's Dangerous to Go Alone!



Take This.
photo@tech.mit.edu

CM

SW

Comparative Media Studies | Writing

MIT

SUBMIT YOUR BEST WRITING

2022 KARMEŁ

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

It would be *turtley* awesome if you join **The Tech**



Email us at join@tech.mit.edu

authors

@mit

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.

register now

THE REAL WORLD OF COLLEGE

WHAT HIGHER EDUCATION IS AND WHAT IT CAN BE

WENDY FISCHMAN AND HOWARD GARDNER

Volume VVV, Number NNNN

Want a Front Page Byline?

Join News at The Tech.

Join at join@tech.mit.edu

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, con-
sectetur adipiscing elit. Duis quis
turpis in ipsum ornare sodales ut eu
ex. Donec vel mi egestas leo moles-
tie placerat. Sed arcu urna, facilisis
id risus et, scelerisque placerat urna.
In odio mauris, feugiat at faucibus
non, facilisis non purus. Curabitur
consequat fringilla sem ac tristique.

dui. Praesent ullamcorper hendre-
rit dui, a auctor diam elementum
a. Quisque bibendum elit sit amet
felis euismod facilisis. In conval-
lis enim vitae accumsan venenatis.
Integer accumsan cursus est, eget
mollis nunc. In lectus lorem, cursus
vel neque at, vestibulum commodo
ex. Vivamus imperdiet ligula non
libero sollicitudin auctor. Praesent
sagittis, tellus ac cursus scelerisque,
risus mauris iaculis eros, sed sodales

Etiam imperdiet pellentesque
tellus, at ornare sem tincidunt vel.
Morbi porta tempus sem, vitae con-
vallis augue feugiat non. Mauris ut
tincidunt metus, vitae consequat ve-
lit. Suspendisse non facilisis enim, in
laoreet mauris. Pellentesque eu auc-
tor ante. Integer egestas nulla orci.
Maecenas ultrices nisl orci, fringilla
congue libero eleifend vel. Suspend-
isse potenti. Phasellus consequat ex
a feugiat laoreet. Mauris scelerisque

Solution to April

from page 4

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

Solution to Fools'

from page 4

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

Solution to Camping

from page 4

A	S	P	E	N	S	P	R	I	O	R	A	W	E		
S	I	E	G	E	S	P	R	I	O	R	L	I	D		
O	R	E	O	S	L	I	N	G	O	O	R	E			
F	I	R	S	T	A	I	D	K	I	T	H	E	N		
					L	I	T	E			I	P	A	D	S
	P	A	P	E	R	S		A	N	N	A				
C	E	L	L				T	R	A	I	L	M	I	X	
A	R	E	A		J	E	R	K	Y	A	O	N	E		
B	U	G	S	P	R	A	Y			C	O	N	S		
					M	A	S	T		L	A	G	E	R	S
P	U	M	A	S			H	A	L	E					
U	S	E			S	L	E	E	P	I	N	G	B	A	G
F	U	R			E	A	R	N	S		I	N	A	N	E
F	A	R			S	W	I	N	E		E	A	S	E	L
S	L	Y			S	E	A	S		S	T	E	W	S	

Fools'

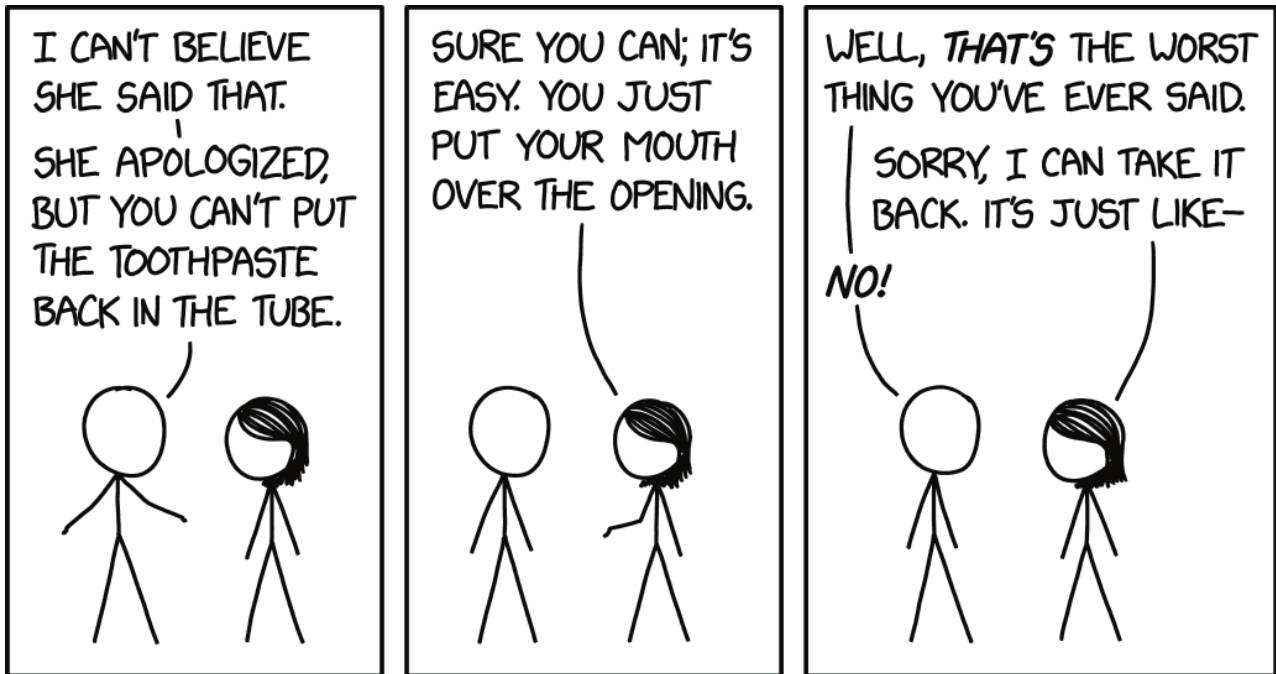
5			6			1	9	8
					1			3
		8	2					
2	9			5	4			7
		5				9		
3			7	9			5	2
					2	4		
7			9					
6	3	2			5			9

12x	20+			24x	
		12x			6x
30x			3x		
	6+	60x		180x	
12x			4		
			40x		

Camping Stuff by Doug Peterson

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9			10	11	12
13						14				15		16		
17						18						19		
20						21						22		
				23						24	25			
	26	27	28					29	30					
31							32					33	34	35
36					37	38					39			
40				41							42			
			43					44	45	46				
47	48	49					50							
51				52	53	54					55	56	57	58
59				60						61				
62				63						64				
65					66					67				

[2521] Toothpaste



"9 out of 10 dentists have banned me from their offices,"

Beau and beaucoup but not outstanding

EDITORS

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.

WENBO'S WALKS

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, I fall apart.

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 to do.

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 of 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 overbaked.

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.

CAMPUS LIFE CAMPUS LIFE CAMPUS LIFE CAMPUS LIFE

Like Alexander Hamilton?

See him in your wallet
every week!

Join the Business Department of
The Tech and earn \$12/hr!
Email join@tech.mit.edu



Paid for by the Office of the Vice Chancellor

VOTE 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.

WHERE

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



grad-union.mit.edu



The disgraceful end of the beloved MIT Pharmacy

By Betty Lou McClanahan

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

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.

But who made this decision?

What data was used?

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 at large.

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

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 MIT 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.

OPINION POLICY

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

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

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

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

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

Guest columns are opinion articles submitted by members of the MIT or local community.

TO REACH US

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

GUEST COLUMN

A former GSC President’s call to unionization

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 crystal-line 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 improve-

ments 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 *some-where*, 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.

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 day.

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 trust.**

Multiple bodies across the Institute refuse to respect the GSC’s democratic processes for choosing representatives to high-impact 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 broad-based 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 amount 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 stipends.

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 research.

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 you’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 on campus.

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 university 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 pay for fancy lawyers so they can try to disenfranchise a fifth of grad workers. But we’ve overcome every single one of those obstacles.

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 my work.

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 walk-

throughs, 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 inspired 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 campaign.

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 TA's role.

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 yet 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 advisor-advisee 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*

OPINION

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. **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 accommodations; guaranteed work materials; and private workspaces.

- **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 Czerwinski, and Trustees Zeke Benshirim, Rachel Petherbridge, and Denish Jaswal.

When you join Production at The Tech and get paid to advertise The Tech in The Tech



join@tech.mit.edu