

Duke Provost Sally Kornbluth named MIT's 18th president

Kornbluth has been provost at Duke since 2014 and will assume MIT's presidency at the start of 2023

By Kristina Chen
PUBLISHER

Sally Kornbluth has been named MIT's 18th president and will assume the role Jan. 1, 2023. Kornbluth was elected to the post this morning by members of the MIT Corporation. She will replace President L. Rafael Reif, who has led the Institute for over a decade, since July 2, 2012.

Kornbluth is the second woman to serve as MIT's president, after President Emerita Susan Hockfield.

Once Kornbluth assumes presidency, all three of MIT's highest leadership positions — president, provost, and chancellor — will be held by women, for the first time in Institute history.

Kornbluth is currently provost at Duke University, a position she has held since July 1, 2014. She was the first woman to hold the position of provost at Duke. Prior to serving as provost, Kornbluth was Vice Dean for Basic Science at Duke University School of Medicine from 2006–2014. Kornbluth is also the Jo Rae Wright

University Professor of Biology at Duke.

Kornbluth was welcomed by Diane Greene SM '78, chair of the MIT Corporation, at a press conference held at the MIT Welcome Center today.

In her address at the press conference, Kornbluth said "For someone who enjoys enabling the success of other people. It was impossible to resist the opportunity to do that for

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FRANKIE SCHULTE—THE TECH

Members of *The Tech* interview President L. Rafael Reif before he steps down from his position.



MICHELE GABRIELE—THE TECH

The MIT Taekwondo team won the Eastern Collegiate Taekwondo Conference (ECTC) tournament, the second largest in the USA, Saturday.

IN SHORT

A community reception and celebration for **President-elect Sally Kornbluth** will be held Oct. 27 from 3:30–5:30 p.m. on Hockfield Court.

Family Weekend is Oct. 28 and 29.

Halloween is Oct. 31. **Happy haunting!**

The **Spring 2023 building switch**

lottery application is available on the Starrez housing portal until Nov. 2 at 12 p.m.

All students are **required to receive flu vaccines** before Nov. 18 in order to access buildings and register for Spring 2023 and IAP.

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

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

President Reif reflects on 10 years of presidency and 40 years at MIT

Reif advises students, 'I don't think there is a place like MIT anywhere else on the planet. Take advantage of it fully'

By Alex Tang, Eunice Zhang, and Eva Ge
STAFF REPORTERS

President L. Rafael Reif announced in February that he would step down at the end of the year after serving ten years in the office. Before assuming the role of MIT's 17th president, Reif was first a professor of electrical engineering at MIT and later served as provost at the Institute for seven years.

The Tech spoke with Reif as he both reflected on his time as president and discussed plans for the future. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

***The Tech*: Could you give us a quick look into how you spend a typical day?**

President Reif: I think as president, you're responsible for everything.

There are many operational things that have to be handled every day to keep the place moving. Anything I think others can do, I like to

delegate. Prior to the pandemic, and now in recent weeks, I meet in-person every week with the senior leaders of MIT, and every one of them is in charge of something. Everybody is aware of everybody else, because everything here is connected.

I meet with every one of them individually every week as well to discuss what issues they're facing. I'm aware of the issues only as much as I am told. I assist and discuss decision-making that requires my participation. Very often, decisions are not made by me.

A good chunk of my time is being spent on fundraising. Where do you need money? Who can give us money for one thing or the other? That's part of the job. Nobody wants to give a good chunk of money to MIT unless they meet the president.

The part of the day that I enjoy the most is strategic. Where are we going? What's the future? What's needed? What does the country need?

Strategies are important to me

and I spend a good part of the day thinking about issues of that kind. This is the part that gives me fun in the job. I've dealt with a lot of the operational detail and that consumes a lot of time but that is really working to make sure everything goes forward. But if all we do is just make the machinery work forward, and forget where we're going, all the effort goes to naught. I worry about looking at the landscape, as much as everything else.

***TT*: What do you believe to be your seminal accomplishment during your tenure as MIT's president?**

Reif: There are several ways to think of an answer to that. I mean, there are many things that we did that I'm very proud of, but I don't think I would use the word 'seminal.' Among the things that I'm extremely happy about are the tent parties; I loved them, but I don't think those are seminal.

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MIT's assets drop 5.3%, marking largest decrease in seven years

Endowment plunges 10.2%, offset by philanthropic gains raised through the Campaign for a Better World

By Alex Tang

MIT reported a loss in net assets for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022. According to the Report of the Treasurer, the Institute's return on pooled investments saw a 5.3% loss in the fiscal year.

MIT's endowment fell by 10.2% or about \$2.8 billion, from \$27.394 billion in 2021 to \$24.6 billion in 2022. The endowment is the largest component in MIT's overall investments.

Executive Vice President and Treasurer Glen Shor wrote in the report that MIT concluded the year with a net result of \$271.8 million.

MIT's endowment is composed of assets that either have donor restrictions or do not. According to the Report of the Treasurer, assets with donor restrictions typically include purpose restrictions for how the assets are to be spent or time restrictions. For fiscal year 2022, Shor wrote that "net assets without donor restrictions decreased \$1,430.1 million, or 9.1%, to \$14,295.6 million."

Despite these losses, Shor wrote that MIT has been able to progress with "initiatives prudently with an eye toward maintaining fiscal resilience." Shor stated that the "efforts to achieve impact have also been

buoyed by continued strong support," citing the Campaign for a Better World, which raised \$6.2 billion.

In the report, Shor wrote about the continued "focus on the needs of students." He added that undergraduate financial aid was expanded to "enable students with family incomes less than \$140,000 per year (and with typical assets) to attend MIT tuition-free for the 2022–2023 academic year."

In addition, Shor highlighted the MIT's Climate Grand Challenges initiative which supports "flagship research projects" as well as "solutions to climate change." He wrote that campus net emissions have

been cut "by more than 20 percent from a 2014 baseline through investments in campus utility and other infrastructure to markedly improve energy efficiency."

In the report, Shor wrote that "challenging economic conditions affected the performance of our pooled investments." However, he added that the net result was a sign of revenues and expenses "rebounding from the pandemic" and "generosity of alumni and friends."

MIT reported the largest loss in returns at 5.3% compared to similar institutions, including Harvard University whose returns fell 1.8% and Yale University at 0.8%.

According to MIT News, MIT's endowment is meant to "support current and future generations of MIT scholars." The funds are appropriated for purposes such as "education, research, campus renewal, faculty work, and student financial aid."

In a letter sent to the MIT community in the fall of 2021, outgoing President L. Rafael Reif wrote that the endowment is "made up of thousands of individual funds" which are primarily "gifts from our alumni and friends." The endowment, as well as other assets, are managed by the MIT Investment Management Company.

UNIONIZING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Graduate student workers are stronger when they fight together for their common needs.

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THE ART OF DOING NOTHING

Wanting to press pause on life.

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XKCD

Before the Internet.

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WEATHER

Seasonable weather treats us to 40 degrees of spookiness

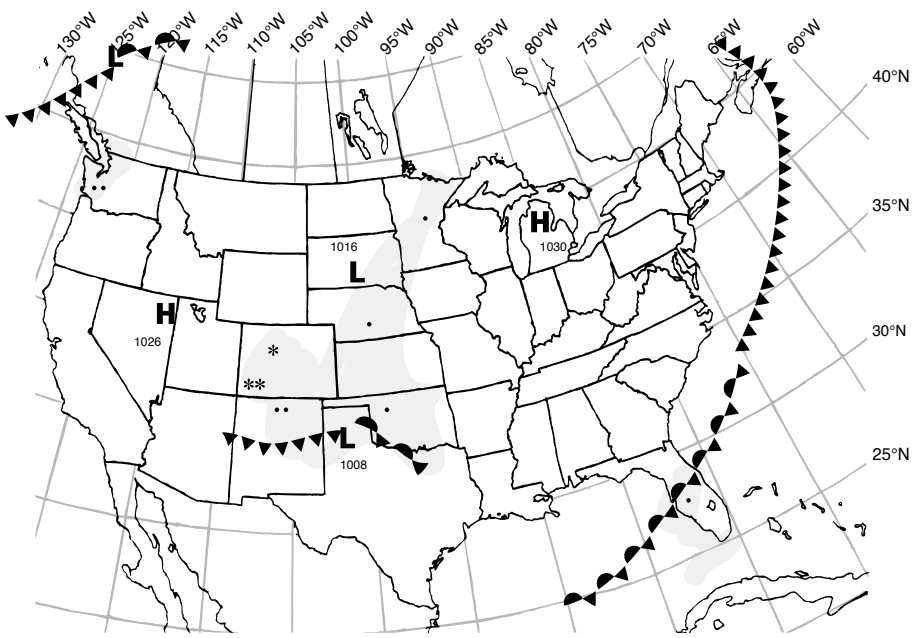
By Phoebe Lin
STAFF METEOROLOGIST

Dry, mild weather is coming our way this weekend as high pressure moves into the region to bring clear days and sunny afternoons. Some lingering clouds may stay around to haunt us come closer to Halloween night.

Nights could drop as low as the low 40’s as the days continue to grow shorter. As you’re gearing up for festivities, be mindful of staying warm enough for the spooky weather! The weather may be playing some tricks, but we can be prepared by wearing warm scarves and having umbrellas on hand.

Extended Forecast

Today: Sunny. High around 64°F (18°C). West winds 15-18 mph.
Tonight: Clear. Low around 42°F (6°C). North winds 12-15 mph.
Tomorrow: Mostly sunny. High around 53°F (12°C) and low around 40°F (12°C). Northeast winds 10-15 mph.
Saturday: Sunny. High around 58°F (°C) and low around 40°F (14°C). North winds 5-8 mph.
Sunday: Sunny. High around 60°F (16°C) and low around 50°F (10°C). South winds 5-7 mph.



Situation for Noon Eastern Time, Thursday, October 27, 2022

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

Kornbluth intends to “be out and about listening” to student concerns

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the extraordinarily talented people of MIT.”

“And maybe above all, I was drawn here because this is a moment when humanity faces huge problems, problems that urgently demand the world’s most skillful minds and hands,” Kornbluth continued. “In short, I believe this is MIT’s moment. I could not imagine a greater privilege than helping the people of MIT seize its full potential and I can’t wait to get started.”

Kornbluth also thanked her family and Williams College Professor Bill DeWitt, who taught Kornbluth’s first undergraduate biology class and inspired her to pursue science.

When asked how she plans to learn about student life and student concerns, Kornbluth responded that intends to “be out and about listening” and to talk to student groups and committees about their concerns.

Kornbluth dubbed MIT the “center of intellectual fun” and said she “can’t wait to get here and ... see it in action, participate, and learn a lot more from the students.” “I love a group of students who think that building rollercoasters and catapults is fun,” she added.

Kornbluth remarked on MIT’s potential for collaboration when asked what aspect of MIT has made her more excited to start her role. “Everybody I’ve talked to affiliated with MIT has been not only excited about their place at MIT, but about their colleagues, their ability to collaborate, and their ability to interact.” She also noted that in addition to being a premier science and technology university, MIT has “great strengths in arts, social sciences, management, and architecture.”

Kornbluth also said that she plans to prioritize fostering a diverse community at MIT, particularly emphasizing the importance of recruiting and creating a pipeline for underrepresented minorities for

faculty and graduate students. She proposed providing seed money for faculty and students to create “programs that they feel will increase an inclusive environment.”

Additionally, when asked how she would encourage women to pursue science and engineering, Kornbluth suggested creating open programming to explore these areas, modeling representation of women in classrooms and labs, and providing encouraging mentors.

“MIT is one of the few places where the scientific and technical expertise can be brought to bear but also the humanistic and social perspectives,” Kornbluth said when asked how MIT can become a better institution. Kornbluth posited that MIT “can be a leader ... and is a leader already” in societal problems such as climate change that “require multiple collaborative perspectives to move forward.”

In response to a question about the role of the new College of Computing, Kornbluth said that the College of Computing can “be a convener and a nexus where different disciplines can interact in the service of moving computing forward to address society’s greatest problems.”

Kornbluth also acknowledged the large number of computer science majors at MIT, saying “I want to make sure that they learn what they need to know to be successful” in computer science, “but also touch on multiple other fields while they’re here.”

In an interview with *The Tech*, Kornbluth said that to encourage exploration for students at MIT, she would work to create low-risk opportunities for students to discover different fields, whether through curricular or extracurricular activities or Independent Activities Period offerings.

Kornbluth also emphasized the importance of community education on social issues outside of usual curricula, saying that she would ask “what students should know as

citizens when they leave MIT.”

Greene said at the press conference that Kornbluth was selected from a pool of 250 candidates and unanimously chosen by the presidential search committee from four final candidates.

Greene also described Kornbluth as “an exceptional administrator who creates an environment that breaks barriers and enables every student, faculty, and staff member to contribute at their highest level” and “who comprehends the considerable importance of basic science, technological innovation, and entrepreneurship.”

As provost at Duke, Kornbluth oversees Duke’s 10 schools and six institutes, in addition to being responsible for research, admissions, financial aid, and other aspects of academics and student life.

During her time as provost, Kornbluth has led the development and implementation of the Together Duke academic strategic plan, which aims to invest in faculty, enhance the educational experience, strengthen Duke’s capacity to address global challenges, and create a supportive environment for educational activities.

The plan has helped to grow Duke’s faculty numbers in science and engineering and strengthened the faculty hiring pipeline for underrepresented minorities and women through an Office for Faculty Advancement.

The plan also included efforts to create a new experiential orientation program for all first-year students, which is tied to the newly-introduced QuadEx residential living and learning program at Duke. Kornbluth has also worked to make Duke more accessible through scholarships for first-generation students and increases in financial aid.

While provost, Kornbluth also facilitated the introduction of Duke’s university courses in fall 2021. The courses, titled Let’s Talk About Race and Let’s Talk About Climate Change, are available for all

students and faculty at Duke.

Kornbluth received a bachelors of arts in political science from Williams College in 1982. She then became a Herchel Smith Scholar at Emmanuel College at the University of Cambridge, where she received a bachelors of science in genetics. Kornbluth graduated with a PhD in molecular oncology from The Rockefeller University in 1989. After receiving her postdoctoral training at the University of California, San Diego, Kornbluth became a faculty member at Duke in 1994.

Kornbluth is a member of the National Academy of Medicine, the National Academy of Inventors, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Kornbluth’s research focuses on cell proliferation and apoptosis; her research has led to insights on cancer and other degenerative disorders. She has also mentored 31 PhD students.

Kornbluth has also received the Basic Science Research Mentoring Award from the Duke School of Medicine and the Distinguished Faculty Award from the Duke Medical Alumni Association.

Kornbluth was selected following a eight-month long search process, performed by a 20-person presidential search committee. The committee included nine Corporation members, eight faculty members, one staff member, one undergraduate, and one graduate student. This marks the first time the presidential search committee has included staff and student members.

At the Sept. 22 faculty meeting, John W. Jarve ’78, SM ’79, search committee chair and MIT Corporation member, presented attributes that the committee hoped to identify in presidential candidates, based on feedback from MIT community members.

Jarve said that the committee sought an “exceptional strategic leader”; “a good listener with an open mind”; “someone bold, principled, courageous, trustworthy,

intellectually curious, broad, and synthetic”; and someone possessing “high integrity.”

The committee performed outreach by holding meetings with faculty from every department and program, as well as separate office hours with faculties. A presentation at the Sept. 22 faculty meeting wrote that over 300 faculty participated in the outreach.

Additionally, the search committee’s student advisory committee conducted 12 student engagement sessions for undergraduates, graduate students, identity-based groups, international students, and student veterans. The committee also conducted focus groups for staff, including one for instructional and research staff, and several one-on-one meetings with individuals and groups.

The search committee also consulted alumni by meeting with MIT Alumni Association leadership and soliciting feedback via a community survey. The committee also held listening sessions with the Corporation, MIT’s Executive Committee, and the Corporation Development Committee.

The committee also performed 36 thought leader interviews with 15 MIT thought leaders and 21 external thought leaders. The leaders included eight current and former university presidents, such as Reif, Hockfield, and Harvard President and former MIT Chancellor Lawrence Bacow ’72.

Jarve said at the September faculty meeting that interviews for candidates would take place in October. The interviews were planned as full-day interviews with four focus areas: leadership, research and education, university administration, and external relations.

An MIT community introduction for Kornbluth will be held today at 3:30 p.m. in room 10-250. MIT is also planning an all-community reception and celebration for Kornbluth Oct. 27 from 3:30–5:30 p.m. on Hockfield Court.

Reif: “Every student here is very intense, passionate about what they love”

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I think ‘seminal’ to me means something that will survive the test of time, so I have to think of the answer that way. Some things that should be included in that list are: the development of MIT.nano; the creation of the Schwarzman College of Computing; the Morning-side Academy of Design.

Also the whole area that I have pushed for quite a while: access to education through the MITx and MicroMasters initiatives. What we are doing in climate change: track one, track two and track three ap-

proaches, the Grand Challenges and a big consortium of companies working together. That will produce significant benefits.

In the innovation space, I think The Engine [a venture firm located in Central Square] will make a big difference and continue to deliver that difference.

An area that I would also like to think survived the test of time is what I’ve tried to convey not in an announced way, but by constantly speaking about it — in public, at Convocation, at Commencement — is a caring community.

When I came to MIT and before

I took this office, MIT had a reputation of being a thankless place in which you sink or swim. I felt that that was not the right way to describe us, [that] there is more to us than that. So I continuously spoke about the caring community and the MindHandHeart initiative.

I would like to think that that part will survive the test of time. While it remains to be seen, I would like to think that once you create that, it’s going to be here to stay.

TT: After serving as professor, provost, and president: what are the changes and continuities you’ve observed at MIT through-

out your time here?

Reif: Well, the continuity is easier to answer so let me start with that.

I came here because I visited at the insistence of people at MIT. When I saw MIT, I just didn’t believe that a place like this existed quite frankly.

But one of the elements is the intensity of the student body. Every student here is very intense, very passionate about what they love. It’s an amazing place from that standpoint. When I talk to others that are not MIT people, particularly when I go to fundraise from non-alum-

ni, and people ask me to tell them about MIT, what I say to them is, I tell them to go back to their high school years. Go back to your senior class, I say. And you will remember that in your senior class, there is always a small group of students that are very intent on something, doing a little bit of an experiment, or building something, or writing some code.

The rest of the students are doing something else — going into the backyard, playing at recess, but some students are intent on doing

Reif on his future plans: “Even though I’m a little older, I’m still growing”

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something. So I asked the audience, ‘how many of you were among those that were intended to be doing something?’ and I don’t see any hands being raised.

How many of you were those who were out playing? Everyone raised their hand. So I said to them, well, the people who apply to MIT are from that little group that are very interested in something. We choose among that group.

Every campus in America has a fraction of students like that. We have them all. So they finally recognize, “I get it, that’s MIT.” So I think that has not changed. I give credit to the deans of admissions, who really know how to choose the right students for MIT. It is amazing.

Every fall, before COVID, I went to meet first year students in their dorms and I asked them “After five or six weeks here, what is it that [you like] the most about MIT so far?” Nine out of ten students? They tell me, “each other.” So what you like about this place is yourself. This to me is the wonder of the place.

So, in terms of continuity, that has not changed. It may always be the same.

What has changed the most, I’m going to extremes. 40 years ago to now, there is a much more diverse student body. When I came here, there were not that many women, female students, you know; not that there weren’t any, but they were underrepresented.

Right now, at least a quarter of the student body and the graduates are underrepresented minorities, and more than half are minorities. So that is a change, a change for the better in my view.

TT: You are one of three MIT’s presidents not born and raised in the United States. How do you think your international background impacted your presidency?

Reif: I don’t know how to answer on how it has influenced the presidency. I can tell you how it influences me and how I think. I traveled extensively and engaged with different countries and things representing MIT.

The image people have about MIT from other countries — to see that a place as important to the world has a president that was not born in the U.S. They are blown away by that. It has done something to MIT’s image to see that MIT would have somebody not born here to represent them.

That is a very hard thing for them to understand, because everybody views MIT as what it is: the jewel of this country. So to be led by somebody from somewhere else is something that they just take a while to get.

I have benefited from a more global perspective of things. My parents came from Eastern Europe, so I have an appreciation of that way of thinking. I can put myself in those shoes and see America. But I was born in Venezuela, and I was educated there as well. So I can easily put myself in those shoes, and see the rest of the world from there. And then I spent the rest of my life, a little over half of my life here. I can also put on the shoes of a U.S. citizen and look at Eastern Europe or South America.

I’m blessed by that experience. I don’t speak only one language. So I can see, I can read things and read the translation and understand what the writer is saying. That gives me a window that I think has allowed me to see things in a more global way.

Now, how that has influenced what I do, I don’t know. But this is how it influences who I am. It gives me another perspective, hopefully a good one in my job.

TT: What do you think are the most promising opportunities for MIT to grow toward in the next decade?

Reif: I think the opportunity of the College of Computing is immense, in how that can be used to educate the graduates of the future. People are realizing that future graduates have to be educated in this particular way. You have to have your discipline of choice, but you have to understand how to use these tools. I just want all of us [faculty and administration] to deliver to you the kind of tools you need to learn if you want to start.

The online sphere and the access will continue to be important. The sky’s the limit in terms of creativity, but it’s important to figure out how to use that tool. I think the whole metaverse that people are making fun of, I think there is something there. The whole space of virtual reality, the virtual environment, there are opportunities there, and in the online stuff we started.

What we have started in working on climate change will make a big difference, and I would like that to continue. The students are very into it. We just have to provide students with more tools and resources for them to do more in terms of research and education.

I think the whole area of quantum space, information, and computation is extremely promising, and we have spectacular faculty working on that. It is a very nascent area, and the next 10 years will be crucial in that space. What we do, we do very well. The areas that I’ve mentioned are areas in which if we don’t pay attention to it, others will. I want us to make sure we are always on top.

TT: What was some of the most memorable criticism you received as president and how did you respond to it?

Reif: Oh, that’s a very good question. The ones that have surprised me the most: I’m going to repeat what I’ve heard. I have not seen anybody come up to me to tell me, “This is what you’re doing wrong.”

One thing I’ve heard is that I go and ask for money from anyone, and I can do whatever somebody provided me money for. The biggest one that I’ve heard is that I created the College of Computing because somebody said if you create the College, I’ll give you the money. Well, that’s not true.

Another one that I’ve heard is that I am very top down: that I decide what to do and everybody has to do it. That’s also not true. I’ve heard criticism that I don’t believe in freedom of expression as well. I think that criticism has less legs than the other two.

How do I respond to that? Well I didn’t. I don’t know anybody who has said that or who’s produced any evidence to say, “Look, why did you do this?” I mean, it’s rumours.

And when something like that happens, let me just explain one thing: because one of you, hopefully more than one of you, may become college president or may become a leader of a company.

In academia, you will have surveys of how the community feels about things. By and large, close to 70 or 80% of our faculty are happy. But 20 to 30% are not. And that’s just the way it is.

It’ll be a miracle if everybody will be happy all the time. So one has to understand that decisions that are being made are always perceived to be made by the top, and I can assure you the president doesn’t make all the decisions here. There is a whole administration of people working and making decisions.

But those who don’t make decisions view decision makers in a way that if they agree with them is good, but if they disagree with them, it’s not good. That’s always going to be the case, and you’re always going to have faculty who are going to be unhappy with a decision being made.

And when they aren’t happy about something, they manifest unhappiness in some other ways, like criticizing things that they just don’t know. So there is nothing that I think I can or should do about it. People think whatever they want to think. We have many people in this country, 40 or 50 million people in this country, who believe that the last election was stolen. What do you do about that if they choose to believe that? There is nothing to be done.

I chose to do nothing simply because I’m moving forward. If I start spending time defending myself from attacks, I don’t even know where they are coming from.

TT: Do you have any advice for your successor, President-elect Kornbluth?

Reif: I met her yesterday. She seems to be pretty smart. I think she’ll do quite well. I don’t think she needs any advice, quite frankly.

TT: What will you miss the most upon departing from your role as president?

Reif: All of it. I’m going to miss a lot.

When I was in Course Six before coming to this beloved corridor, I was always engaged with students of Course Six. I came to the presidency, and I started meeting students and leaders from all of MIT. In all my conversations with visiting students, and going to dorms, sports, and other activities, I will miss being engaged.

I enjoy seeing how students think and how their thoughts change. I have the perspective of 40 years, but only in the last 17 have I seen all of MIT. I want to have the convening power to talk to all of you. It won’t happen anymore. I will miss that. Once you enjoy that, it’s something you don’t want to stop enjoying.

TT: The last few years of your presidency coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic. How do you feel the experiences of your time as president helped you to grapple with the huge challenge of the pandemic?

Reif: It has been a huge challenge, and I think MIT has done, in my very humble opinion: if not extremely well, certainly much better than almost any other institution. But I don’t think it has a lot to do with me or my experience.

There are so many people who came together to handle this at MIT. Certainly, the whole administration was involved. Everyone rolled up their sleeves and got to work. But so many other parts of MIT get together to work on this as well: the Emergency Response Team, the MIT Medical Team.

There are just so many parts of MIT, and I think the massive amount of people that are required to pay attention in a coordinated way so that we are focused on solving the problem. That was the important part, that the whole place came together seamlessly just to figure this out.

I think it is because we have had crises in the past, and we solved them by creating Institute-wide task forces. In 2008, we had a task force under budget with people from all over MIT involved. Shortly after I took office, we also had a task force for the future of education.

MIT is a big place and lots of things interact. But when you work in this office 24/7, you don’t connect

with people in other offices. Sometimes, you don’t even know who to call to help you solve a problem. No single office is self-contained, you can’t do everything alone — it’s all interconnected.

By creating these task forces, people from different parts of MIT get to meet like this and know each other and know how they can contribute to each other by solving a focus problem. When there is a crisis, then you already know who to call or who to work with because you already worked with those people, you know who they are.

Personally, I think it’s not the presidency that did much here. It’s that people came together, and they came together very quickly because they all knew each other from every part of MIT.

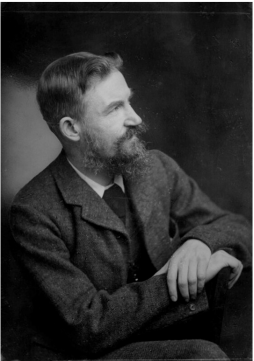
TT: Do you have a message that you would like to share with the student body before you depart?

Reif: I honestly think that MIT is like a playground for grown-ups. It’s a place where you can learn and do almost anything you’re interested in. The undergraduates are going to be here for four years. Just learn as much as you can during those four years. Experiment as much as you can. Learn from each other as much as you can. Experience this place fully because you don’t know it. You cannot possibly know it, but there is no other place like this. I don’t think there is a place like MIT anywhere else on the planet. Take advantage of it fully, take advantage of being with each other, because each other has a lot to contribute.

TT: Can you tell us more about your future plans, career wise or personally?

Reif: I have announced that I’m going on sabbatical for 2023. I plan to come back to the faculty in 2024. Even though I’m a little older, I’m still growing. Every moment of my life I’ve been dedicated to learning, always trying to learn how to be a better person, how to strengthen MIT and to make sure that MIT fulfills its tremendous purpose to make the world a better place.

The connection between intense passionate smart people in one place is unparalleled. What we can do for the world here is so powerful. You can learn your discipline, degree, and research, so why not learn to do it in a way to help the world? MIT is a terrific place. I spent all my years focusing on how I could be better to make all of us better. I won’t have that kind of connection with MIT anymore, and I’m not going to be driving it, but my plan for 2023 is to find out how I maintain or satisfy my intellectual curiosity and my desire to always use my skills to contribute towards making the world better, but now on my own. That’s a new experience. That’s my quest for 2023.



“All censorship exists to prevent anyone from challenging current conceptions and existing institutions. All progress is initiated by challenging current conceptions and executed by supplanting existing institutions. Consequently, the first condition of progress is the removal of censorship.”
— George Bernard Shaw



<https://www.mitfreespeech.org>

It’s hard standing up to bullies.
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101 THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU GRADUATE

32. Take a stroll through Little Italy in the North End

Join the Arts department at *The Tech* and write restaurant reviews.

(And get reimbursed for your meal!)

Chloe McCreery '23

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A union made a difference for me

DEI means supporting and empowering minority workers

Graduate student workers at the MIT-Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution Joint Program (MIT-WHOI) decided overwhelmingly to unionize when a huge majority of us signed union cards over the last few weeks. After seeing what unionization did for my community growing up, I am confident unionization can be a tool for building a graduate experience of greater stability, security, and support for all of us, regardless of our backgrounds.

I arrive at WHOI as a first-gen student in 2020, 3,000 miles away from my friends and family, in the middle of a global pandemic and a national reckoning with police brutality and institutional racism. As I tried to find my bearings in an unfamiliar environment, feeling isolated and insecure, I came across a statistic on graduate student attrition rates (rates at which students leave the program without a degree) in the earth, atmospheric, and planetary sciences (EAPS) department: a shocking 25% average and an incredibly disheartening 42% for under-represented minorities like myself.

I then realized that I felt not only isolated and insecure but also completely powerless to do anything about it on my own. These sentiments deepened when I took part in departmental diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) discussions on racism in academia, where I noticed that although my life experiences were useful contributions to the conversation, they alone were nothing when stacked against the institutional legacies and cultures that maintained the status quo. Despite all of the rhetoric and emails on DEI, I didn't see anything changing to give people like me the support we needed.

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It wasn't until I got involved in building our union that I felt welcome at MIT. For context, I grew up in a relatively small town adjacent to the Port of Los Angeles called San Pedro. Much of my community is working class and non-academic — hardly any of the adults I looked up to as a kid had a college degree. The only doctor I knew was my pediatrician, and yet my community was full of families of diverse ethnicities who lived with dignity, with the means to support themselves and each other. The reason for this? A strong union.

Walk in any direction in San Pedro and you are bound to see union posters in the windows of small businesses and houses: **"We support the ILWU & they support US!"** Many members of my family are part of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, Local 13. They work tirelessly every day to move thousands of shipping containers full of goods through the largest port in the country. Since the 1930s, their union has been "dedicated to the idea

that solidarity with other workers and other unions is the key to achieving economic security and a peaceful world."

Join them at the dinner table or downtown at the bar and you would hear conversation on topics ranging from the next jobs coming in to the union meeting coming up later that night or the upcoming contract fight with the Pacific Maritime Association. Parked outside, you might see a family SUV with a window decal declaring "Union Strong," "An Injury to One is an Injury to All," or (I finally understand this one now) "Organize or Die."

Despite all of the rhetoric and emails on DEI, I didn't see anything changing to give people like me the support we needed.

Of course, being a worker in a union is more than aesthetics and talk. What was clear to me was that the adults who I looked up to had agency in their workplace and that they were proud because this meant that their families had intrinsic access to good healthcare, vacation time, school supplies, housing, and every other basic material need that a family needs to thrive. Whenever a contract expired and those things came under attack, they didn't have to beg for better working conditions because they weren't alone in fighting for their dignity as workers — not only did they have each other, but they had the broader community backing them as well.

Of course, being a worker in a union is more than aesthetics and talk.

Unfortunately, only a small portion of workers in San Pedro were unionized when I was growing up, so many did not experience the security my family did. Like almost all Black and brown working class neighborhoods in the country, ours was not unfamiliar with the issues of poverty, addiction, housing and job insecurity, police harassment and violence, underfunded public education, and so much more. While I made it to MIT, I have had many friends who I know are just as deserving of such an education but simply faced too many obstacles along the way. I can say with confidence that without growing up in a union family and the stability it offered us, I would likely not be here today.

Even so, making it all the way to graduate school was a struggle. I often think about the EAPS attrition statistic referenced above and how often I have come close to personally contributing to it were it not for a bit of luck. After using up my savings to make the cross-country move, I struggled to find housing that I could afford on my stipend for my partner and myself. I don't know what we would have done had someone reasonable not answered our desperate, urgent Craigslist

ad for housing. Like many other first-generation students, my family was in no position to assist me, financially or otherwise. Immediately, I found myself alone in having to learn how to adapt to an environment characterized by individualism, prestige, affluence, and whiteness (both within the institution and outside of it). I felt extremely isolated, and my mental health plummeted as a result.

I chose to study the ocean at MIT and WHOI because the ocean has always played a significant part in my life. I know many other kids who grew up like me would love to do the same, would have so much to contribute to the future of marine science as well as the strength of their communities at home.

It doesn't need to be like this. Why should we have to rely on luck to be successful even after we make it through the trials of academia and into a grad program? Why should we have to beg administrators to take into account our experiences, to prioritize the things we know we need to survive in this environment?

Why should we have to beg administrators to take into account our experiences, to prioritize the things we know we need to survive in this environment?

We know that WHOI and MIT say they are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. However, we do not know if they are actually in a position to listen seriously to their most marginalized and vulnerable workers. Like with the ILWU workers from my home community, our union gives us a vehicle to stand in support of each other as graduate student workers of many different backgrounds, advantages, and disadvantages. We can fight to guarantee all grad workers at WHOI live a dignified and comfortable life, where our needs are met and we are treated with respect, so we can focus on our academic and research goals.

Together we can sit down at the table with the administration and make sure not one of our voices is left out and discounted. Together we can make WHOI an institution that is truly welcoming of everyone.

Together we can sit down at the table with the administration and make sure not one of our voices is left out and discounted.

We all have a story, and we're all in this together. Join your fellow graduate student workers by signing a union card and sharing your story today!

Jacob Partida is a third-year graduate student in the MIT-WHOI Joint Program and an organizer for the GSU-UE.

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.

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VIVIAN'S REFLECTIONS

Il dolce far niente: the art of doing nothing

What I miss

By Vivian Hir
STAFF WRITER

I have to admit that I was looking forward to the fall semester a week or two before the first day of classes, as strange as that may sound. I spent my summer doing a chemistry UROP and directing Summer HSSP, an educational program for middle and high school students. Sure, the return of the fall semester meant that I would go back to living a busy and stressful life full of problem sets and midterms, but I believed that my three-month summer break had to come to an end. I didn't mind going to the chemistry lab to work on my UROP, but I wanted to learn by taking classes. I enjoyed experimenting with cooking new dishes in East Campus during the summer, but I missed eating dinner at French House. I liked that I got to spend a lot more time reading books before going to bed, but I wondered how long I could go on living a solitary life every day. As much as I relished the weekend excursions I went on alone, I missed the random, interesting conversations I had with friends in New House late at night.

When I started seeing the new French House residents move in and other parts of campus coming back to life during FPO and orientation, I was genuinely excited about the new school year. I couldn't wait to attend department seminars and other special events. I was even happy with my registered classes. Although I had heard 5.13 (Organic Chemistry II) was a hard class, as a Course 5-7, I looked forward to learning more organic chemistry. I didn't find 7.03 (Genetics) as interesting as 5.13, but I was much more willing to learn genetics over a Course 6 class. 17.407 (Chinese Foreign Policy) sounded dry on the surface, but I couldn't think of what other class to take since I was so keen on pursuing an Asian Studies minor with a focus on China. Surely the fall semester wouldn't be as torturous as my freshman spring, a semester in which I did not like any of my classes except for

Business Chinese. There would be no more painful statistical mechanics lectures in 5.601 (Thermodynamics) or 6.0001 problem sets that took me a long time to finish. I would not have to sit in the dreadful 26-100 lecture hall and feel lost as the professor wrote complicated equations in 18.03. I was certain that the fall semester would be better than the spring.

My unwavering optimism lasted until the start of October. When midterm season rolled around, my academic well-being took a nosedive. I once had a sense of agency over my schoolwork, but I now felt like the opposite was happening: looming deadlines were controlling me. Not only did I begin to procrastinate on major assignments like lab reports, but I also had trouble motivating myself to study and do work. Within a month, I went from being a bright-eyed and bushy-tailed student to a jaded and cynical one. I started questioning what the point of life was when it involved working nonstop for many weeks while the real world didn't evaluate people based on problem sets or midterms. Coupled with my growing doubts about my major and future career plans, I exhibited obvious signs of the sophomore slump without knowing it in the first place. The college life that I experienced in freshman fall no longer felt novel and thrilling. The confidence that I used to have in pursuing research at graduate school unraveled over time as I wondered if other career paths like education or consulting were more suited for me.

Now, caught up in the whirlwind of the hectic school year, I sometimes look back on small yet meaningful memories of my summer that I miss. Summer ended only a few months ago, yet that time now feels so far away and foreign. I miss how my summer days shared the aspect of *dolce far niente*: an Italian idiom that means “the sweetness of doing nothing.” *Dolce far niente* is a concept that I find hard to embrace during the academic year, even on weekends. While I could devote an entire afternoon or day to

exploring places like the Blue Hills Reservation or the Mount Auburn Cemetery on a Saturday, it isn't the same because of the upcoming assignments that swirl around my head. Time spent on long periods of fun means time taken away from doing schoolwork.

For instance, I originally signed up to do apple picking with my club, but after I started to calculate the time it would take me to study for the 5.13 midterm, I decided not to go to the event. While I could have chosen to spend most of Saturday apple picking and Sunday studying, I couldn't bear the thought of having to cram in even more studying into a single day.

While the personal anecdote I used may sound like I am advocating for all work and no play, in reality, I'm not. I know that it is important to have an even balance of work and play, yet I don't know how to cultivate *dolce far niente* during the semester. Sure, I am captivated by the mystic's mysterious voices at the end of Holst's *The Planets* as I sit quietly in Symphony Hall. Yes, I live in the moment when I admire the changing colors of leaves as I jog along Memorial Drive. But these periods of relaxation aren't enough and don't feel the same as my summer weekends.

I often reminisce about how I spent my summer afternoons during the weekend, going on spontaneous trips to places outside Boston every week. I miss the rambling walks I took that had no clear destination, with the singular goal of walking for hours and exploring quiet towns from Lincoln to Rockport. I long for the unparalleled stillness I experienced when I walked on peaceful nature trails, from the dense woods of Middlesex Fells to the unspoiled Walden Pond. Even the act of reading a book on the train feels nostalgic, as I think back to the time I leaned my head against the chair and read James Baldwin while the lazy afternoon sun shone on me. I still remember the time when I took a break from reading *The Artist of the Floating World* and stared outside of the window, watching the

golden-green fields whiz by me as the sun
started setting.

At that time, I knew that these memories were random yet significant, but I wasn't sure why they felt so important to me. Nothing eventful happened; all I did was wander around with no particular goal and idly relax or let myself get lost in a piece of fiction. Now that I am in the middle of the semester, however, the reasons become much more apparent. It's the magical feeling of time slowing down when I live by *dolce far niente*, taking things one at a time and experiencing my surroundings using my five senses. My current life is now the total opposite: walking in the busy Infinite Corridor, checking my email many times, and the list goes on.

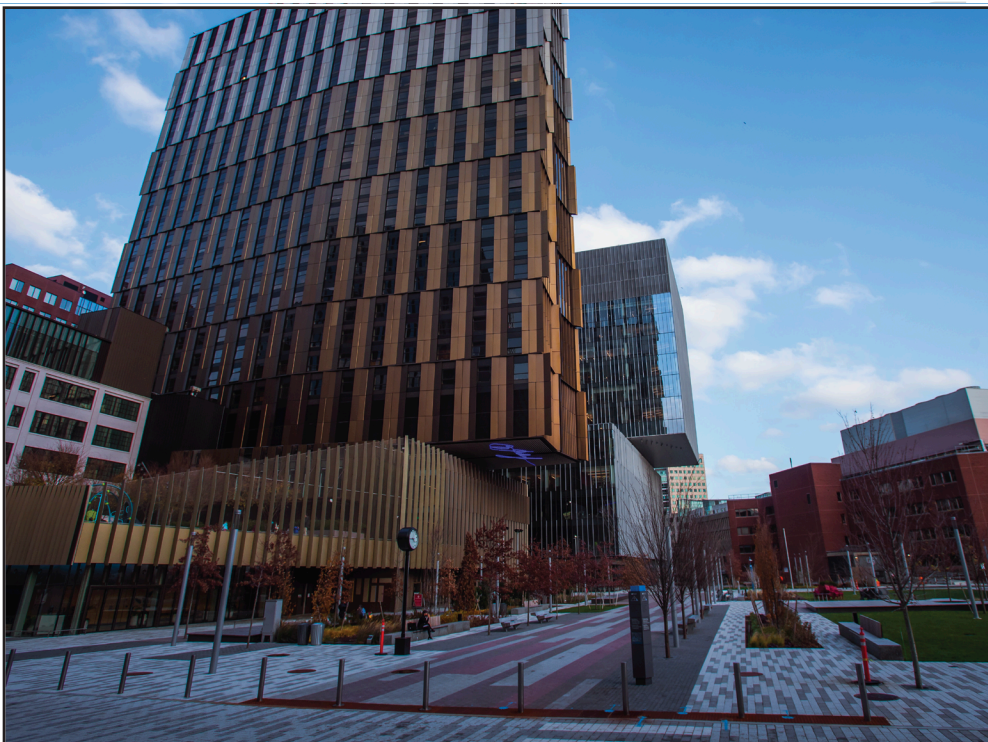
Week after week of hating this never-ending cycle of schoolwork, the only solution seems to be a compromise. Constantly avoiding assignments until the last minute is not sustainable, but neither is doing work all the time. Therefore, I have decided that it is in my best interest to have better time management so that I can devote more time to activities I have been putting off, like writing and running. I have been doing things that I find to be fun during the school year, whether it is going to the next Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO) concert with other classical music enthusiasts or running along the Charles River on a sunny, beautiful day.

These activities bring me closer to *dolce far niente*, but they somehow can't replace what I did in the summer. I like breathing in and out as I run and see the Boston skyline in front of me, but I long for the slow, steady long walks in unfamiliar places. I love the rare state my mind enters when I listen to a moving piece at BSO, but it is different from the mental clarity I gain from being in nature that I miss. Maybe it's the ability to press pause on my life and not live under time pressure that I miss the most. So I still yearn for the Italian lifestyle of *dolce far niente* — the act of simply doing nothing but being present and relishing the small things in life.

Biz pays the billz

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The Mind and Hand Book is the official guide to MIT's expectations of all undergraduate and graduate students, including the policies on academic integrity, alcohol, drugs, hazing, and sexual misconduct.

2022-2023 MIND & HAND BOOK

handbook.mit.edu



Solution, page 8

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

Solution, page 8

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

Solution, page 8

- 1 Infant
- 5 Proclaim to be true
- 9 Zodiac sign of the ram
- 14 Chocolate sandwich cookie
- 15 Rant and ___ (show anger)
- 16 Fencer's thrust
- 17 Brunch or breakfast
- 18 Applaud
- 19 Mirror ___ (reversed reflection)
- 20 Secure room for safe deposit boxes
- 22 Acknowledged applause
- 23 Poem of praise
- 24 Weary
- 25 Soup-serving utensil
- 28 Chimps, for example
- 30 Accountant's inspection
- 31 School near Hollywood: Abbr.
- 32 ___ a hand (help out)
- 36 Handheld music player of the '50s
- 39 Brief office note
- 40 Flow in slowly

41 Having debts
42 Three-foot measure
43 December sleigh driver
44 Wander off the path
47 Public transit vehicle
48 Workers' organization
49 Stove device with a bell
55 Unacceptable
56 Oil-drilling structures
57 Capital of Italy
58 Very angry
59 Color of a clear sky
60 Numbered musical work
61 Feeling nervous
62 Mailed out
63 Baby bird's home

- 1 Unsuccessful film
- 2 Square footage
- 3 Garbanzo or lima
- 4 Yellow part of an egg
- 5 Mall tenant with video games to play
- 6 Financial worth
- 7 Presidential office shape

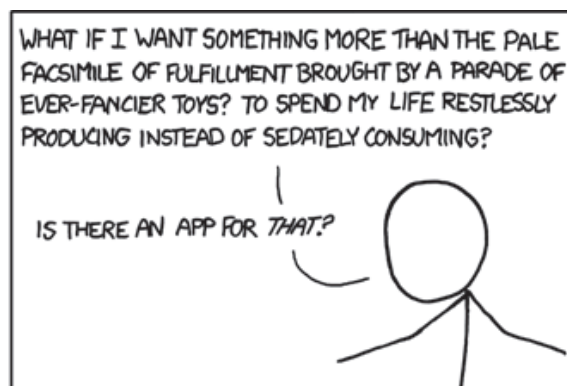
- 8 Sobbed
- 9 Blame-avoiding stories
- 10 Bit of gossip
- 11 Extremely amazed
- 12 __ on (encouraged)
- 13 Edible sunflower bit
- 21 Electrical measures for
batteries
- 24 Rip up
- 25 Angler's artificial bait
- 26 Eve's spouse
- 27 T. Rex, for short
- 28 Performed onstage
- 29 Raindrop sound
- 30 24-hour cash source:
Abbr.
- 31 Software customer
- 32 Grass around a house
- 33 Revise, as an article
- 34 Ship of 1492
- 35 Poodle or beagle
- 37 Brit's "My, my!"
- 38 __ beef (sandwich mea
- 42 Big Apple baseballer
- 43 When daylight ends
- 44 Be a noisy sleeper

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			

45 Giant of industry
46 Underground parts of a tree
47 Gotten started
48 __ of measure (quart or mile)

49 Spheres, in poems
50 Extremely evil
51 Wrinkle-removing appliance
52 Act sulky
53 Australian flightless birds
54 Take a break

[662] iPhone or Droid

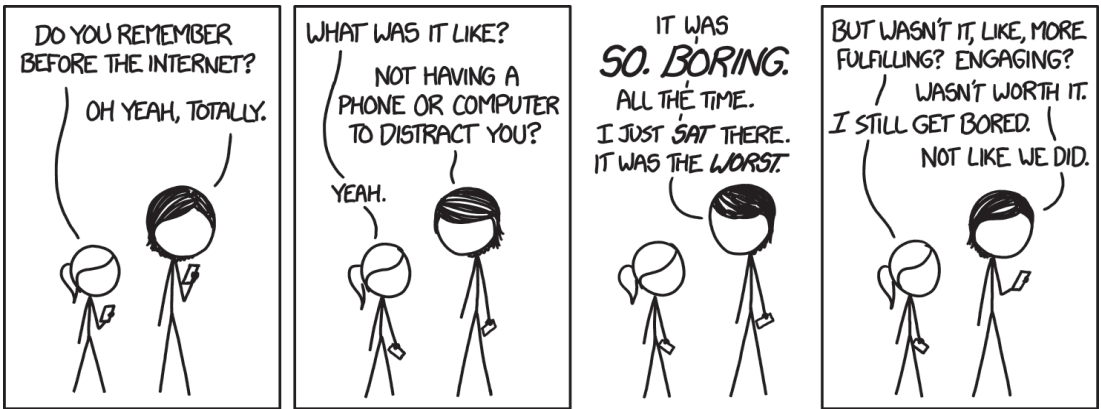


it may be a fundamentally empty experience, but holy crap the Droid's 265 ppi screen is amazing.

Solution, page 8

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

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.



We watched DAYTIME TV. Do you realize how soul-crushing it was? I'd rather eat an iPad than go back to watching daytime TV.



ALEXA SIMAO—THE TECH
Students protest one of the companies at the Energy and Climate Career Fair in the Stud, Friday.



MELISSA JIMENEZ CAMEJO—THE TECH
UA Sustain holds a Pop-up Thrift Shop with sweaters, shoes, and more for less than \$5 outside the Stud, Friday.



KRISTINA CHEN—THE TECH
President L. Rafael Reif gifts President-Elect Sally Kornbluth a blue glass pumpkin at a community welcome event, Oct. 20.



FRANKIE SCHULTE—THE TECH
MIT's Men's Lightweight 8+ Team competed in the annual Head of the Charles rowing race, Sunday.

Capture the Moment



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at The Tech
join@tech.mit.edu

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



Email us at join@tech.mit.edu

Wanna make columns?

Not an architect?

Join Campus Life at *The Tech*!

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Solution to Apple Pick
from page 6

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

Solution to Halloween
from page 6

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

Solution to Devices
from page 6

B	A	B	A	R	I	E	S
O	R	E	O	L	U	N	G
M	E	A	L	C	I	M	A
B	A	N	K	V	A	L	T
				O	D	E	T
				L	A	D	L
				A	U	D	I
				T	R	A	N
				M	E	M	O
				Y	A	R	D
				S	T	R	A
				U	N	I	O
				N	O	T	O
				I	R	A	T
				T	E	N	S

Solution to Fall Foliage
from page 7

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