

SEE INSIDE *May 15 open faculty meeting*
Live updates from Kresge Oval
encampment, May 8–11

Office of Minority Education changes
GSU TransMIT grievances

Interview with Professor Or Hen

Commencement features OneMIT Ceremony for Class of 2024

Noubar Afeyan PhD '87, CEO of
Flagship Ventures and co-founder
of Moderna, to give
commencement remarks

By Alex Tang
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Commencement ceremonies for the Class of 2024 will take place on a three-day span from Wednesday, May 29, through Friday, May 31. Similar to proceedings at the 2023 commencement, all graduates are invited to attend a 90-minute OneMIT ceremony on Killian Court at 3 p.m. on Thursday May 30.

Diplomas will not be conferred at the OneMIT ceremony. The Class of 2024 undergraduates will receive their diplomas at Killian Court on Friday, May 31 in a ceremony from 10 am to 12 pm. Ceremonies for Master's and Doctorate degrees are spread out across all three days of Commencement.

3,666 total undergraduate and graduate students will receive their degrees over three days of Commencement festivities. According to Christopher Di Guardia, an analyst for the Registrar's Office, the Class of 2024 Commencement ceremony will celebrate 1,099 undergraduate and 2,604 graduate students receiving their diplomas. 1386 undergraduate degrees and 2715 graduate degrees will be awarded in total. Di-

plomas will not be conferred at the OneMIT ceremony.

The OneMIT ceremony will begin with words from the Institute Chaplain Thea Keith-Lucas, followed by a rendition of the National Anthem by the MIT Chorallaries. Chair of the MIT Corporation Mark P. Gorenberg '76 will preside over the ceremony.

Noubar Afeyan PhD '87, Chief Executive Officer of Flagship Pioneering, will deliver the commencement address for the Class of 2024. Afeyan is best known for co-founding the biotechnology company Moderna and is a member of the MIT Corporation.

Past commencement speakers include popular Youtuber Mark Rober (2023) and director-general of the World Trade Organization Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala MCP '78 PhD '81 (2022).

President Sally Kornbluth will lead the traditional charge to the graduates in her second Commencement since assuming the presidency in January of 2023. The Brass Rat will be turned. Penny Brant '24, Class of 2024 President, and Mikala Molina, President of the Graduate Student Council, will also deliver remarks.

Eleven MIT undergraduates, graduate students, and alumni win Fulbright fellowships for 2024-2025

Eleven MIT undergraduates, graduate students, and alumni won Fulbright fellowships for the 2024-2025 cycle. According to a press release from MIT News, MIT has been a "Fulbright Top-Producing Institution for five years in row."

The awardees were April Cheng '24, Grace McMillan '24, Ryan McTigue '24, Keith Murray '22, Maaya Prasad '22, Anusha Puri '24, Olivia Rosenstein '24, Jennifer Schug G, Vaibhavi Shah '21, Charvi Sharma '24, and Isabella Witham '24. Two others were awarded the Fulbright but declined.

From condensed matter physics research in Spain to microplastic detection in Mauritius, the Fulbright scholars will be working at institutions across the globe. Many have plans to attend graduate school or medical school following their Fulbright term.

Those interested in applying for the Fulbright U.S. Student Program can contact Julia Mongo, the MIT Fulbright program advisor from the Career Advising and Professional Development Office.

— Alex Tang

Rifts amongst faculty laid bare in closed-door meetings amidst interim student suspensions

By Ellie Montemayor
PUBLISHER

Publisher's Note: *The two faculty meetings described in this article on May 15 and May 17 were held in executive session as closed-door discussions. The information presented is a synthesis of several interviews held with attendees of the meeting and other individuals familiar with the situation. These accounts were corroborated by additional documentation obtained by The Tech.*

Following hours of deliberations and speaking sessions spread across two closed-door faculty meetings on May 15 and May 17, the faculty body, in a 154-191 vote, abandoned a motion calling for the lifting of over two dozen interim suspensions of pro-Palestinian student protestors.

The suspensions were first issued by the MIT administration on May 8, following a protest earlier that week on May 6 which saw hundreds of spectators and demonstrators taking over the Student Center plaza. That day marked a drastic shift in the already-tenuous relationship between the administration and the pro-Palestinian campus movement, where pro-Palestinian student protestors stormed the Kresge Oval space and tore down a facilities-placed metal perimeter amidst an evacuation order by the administration.

The administration had touted the possibility of suspensions for months but only began issuing them to specific students in connection with the May 6 encampment takeover. Separate articles from The Tech detail the events from that day and the resulting aftermath.

During an interview with The Tech on May 15, President Sally Kornbluth declined to give a specific count on the number of interim suspensions issued, but noted that there were "more than 30 interim suspensions... which include both academic suspensions and full suspensions."

The split vote highlighted divisions amongst the faculty regarding recent events on campus. Of note was the historically high turnout for the meeting.

Background of the motion and premises of the vote

The motion was proposed by members of the Alliance of Concerned Faculty (ACF), a group of over 80 faculty whose primary aim is to provide support for students facing disciplinary action relating to the protests. The motion's goal, described as "reasonably narrow" by members of the ACF who spoke with The Tech, related specifically to punitive actions executed without traditional due process.

This proposal came after 150 faculty members signed an initial letter presented to the administration to call on due process to be enacted for the suspended student protestors.

According to individuals familiar with the situation, the vote effectively constituted an official position of the



ELLIE MONTEMAYOR - THE TECH

A pro-Palestinian rally organized by the Boston Coalition for Palestine on the steps of Lobby 7, which took place at the same time as an Institute faculty meeting on Wednesday, May 15.

faculty on a given matter but was not strictly binding to the administration or any other offices outside the purview of faculty-related matters.

"As we were told very early in the meeting, the vote is basically kind of like a suggestion," an individual familiar with the situation said in an interview with The Tech. "We heard something actually quite puzzling, which is that the Chair of the Faculty [Mary Fuller] said, 'we're going to vote. But there is no obligation for us to take that vote back to the administration.'"

"Basically, it's like: we just want to hear how you guys feel, but we don't have to do anything with that vote," the individual added.

Chair of the Faculty and Professor of Literature Mary Fuller spoke with The Tech following the vote and noted that "the administration was present in the meeting," adding that "whatever happens is the outcome of the vote—that the vote would be the expression of our views as a faculty." Part of the motivation for the sessions, according to Fuller, was in the explicit expression of views itself from the various faculty members who would speak for their positions in the meetings; with President Kornbluth and other Institute officials in attendance, the meetings partially served to facilitate conversation between the faculty body and the administration.

Wednesday, May 15 — The initial faculty meeting

Deliberations on the suspensions began days earlier at around 4:45 p.m. on Wednesday, May 15, following the conclusion of the prepared agenda for that day's Institute faculty meeting which began at 3:30 p.m. The meeting up until that point, held in 10-250 and which offered a virtual attendance option over Zoom, had been attended by about a hundred people in-person and another hundred virtually. The attendance held a mix of faculty members, students, and other interested community members.

During the course of the Wednesday meeting, as faculty discussed various topics, pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian demonstrators silently passed out documents to the in-person attendees.

One document, titled "How Jewish and Israeli students experienced the encampment at MIT," detailed the results of a survey shared among the Jewish and Israeli student community in which the 72 survey respondents reported feelings of fear and discomfort due to the encampment and overall campus climate. Pro-Palestinian students self-identifying as Jewish or Israeli, notably members of the MIT Jews for Ceasefire, later claimed to have been excluded from the list of potential survey-takers.

The other document, passed out by pro-Palestinian student demonstrators, titled "Campus Events During a Genocide," mimicked the format of an FAQ distributed via email by the Office of the Chancellor the day prior, answering each of the questions addressed in the administration's document from the perspective of the encampment organizers.

No major disruption was observed during the course of the meeting in its open portion.

As President Sally Kornbluth, who chaired the Wednesday meeting, called for an executive session to begin a closed-door debate on the student suspensions, a dissenting faculty member Professor of Linguistics Michel DeGraff, called for the meeting to remain open for non-faculty members. This motion was ultimately rejected in a 75-123 vote. With that, many non-faculty members, including pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli demonstrators, were asked to leave and the meeting went into executive session.

The Faculty Governance website notes that in addition to full faculty members, "faculty emeriti, professors of the practice, students with speaking privileges, and senior staff whose work directly touches current campus tensions" were able to remain.

"We're going to discuss how we're dealing with them [the suspended students]; we should have the courage to do it in front of them," DeGraff later said in an interview with The Tech.

A similar motion for executive session was passed during a previous faculty meeting on February 21 in

Executive Session, Page 4

WORLD & NATION:

FINAL REQUIREMENT, HOUSE HEARING, TRUMP TRIAL

RAFAH OFFENSIVE, UN COURT, IRANIAN TRAGEDY

WORLD & NATION, p. 6

PORTRAIT PAINTED

WIDE TIM

CAMPUS LIFE, p. 8

MEDICAL INNOVATION

SCIENCE, p. 14

CELEBRITY SERIES OF

BOSTON

NICHOLAS KRISTOF

OMAKASE ROCK-N-ROLL

ARTS, p. 12

CROSSROADS

OPEN LETTER / EMPIRE

ALUMNI FOR PALESTINE

EAST SIDE CULTURE

OPINION, p. 15

SECTIONS

World & Nation6

Campus Life8

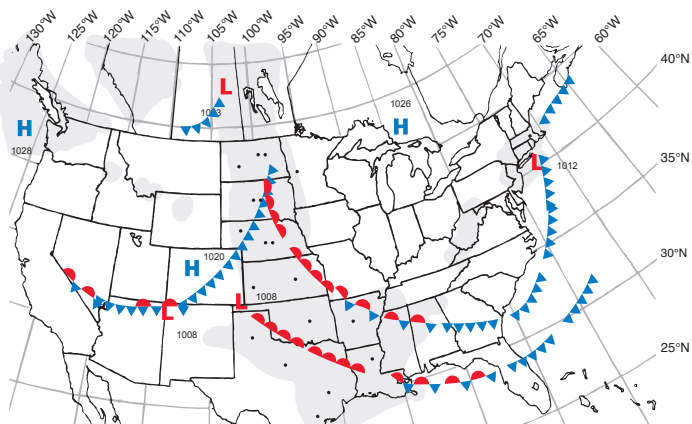
Arts12

Science14

Opinion15

Entertainment . . .20

WEATHER FORECAST




Weather Systems	Weather Fronts	Precipitation Symbols	Other Symbols
<div>H</div> High Pressure	<div>---</div> Trough	<div>☁</div> Snow	<div>☁</div> Fog
<div>L</div> Low Pressure	<div>—▲—</div> Warm Front	<div>☔</div> Rain	<div>⚡</div> Thunderstorm
<div>§</div> Hurricane	<div>—▲—</div> Cold Front	<div>☔</div> Light	<div>☁</div> Haze
	<div>—▲—</div> Stationary Front	<div>☔</div> Moderate	<div>☁</div> Compiled by MIT Meteorology Staff and The Tech
		<div>☔</div> Heavy	

Mostly clear skies to send off the graduates

By Phoebe Lin
SENIOR METEOROLOGIST

A high pressure ridge will replace a mid-level trough to bring us lots of sunshine Friday and into the weekend. Some stray showers may slightly soak the ground on Thursday morning, so watch where you're stepping as you enter for commencement! After that, lots of sunshine and relatively mild temperatures will carry us into the weekend while we celebrate the rest of the graduates.

Temperatures will be coolest on Thursday, which suggests that it is the best day to be moving things. Ocean temperatures will begin to warm up soon and stop bringing us some of these refreshing sea breezes soon, so take advantage of the mild temperatures to go kayaking or cloudgazing this weekend. We'd like to thank the sky for cooperating over commencement, and are wishing all the graduates more clear skies ahead!



MAY 30

SITUATION FOR NOON (ET)

Extended Forecast

Today: Chance showers. High around 62°F (17°C). North-east winds 10-15 mph.

Tonight: Partly cloudy. Low around 50°F (10°C). East winds 5-10 mph.

Friday: Mostly sunny. High around 71°F (22°C). North-east winds 10-15 mph.

Friday night: Mostly clear. Low around 51°F (11°C). Northwest winds 5-10 mph.

Saturday: Sunny. High around 71°F (22°C) and low around 50°F (10°C). North winds 5-10 mph.

Sunday: Mostly clear. High around 75°F (24°C) and low around 55°F (13°C). West winds 5-10 mph.

May 15 open faculty meeting celebrates faculty and holds amendment votes

J- grading proposal and faculty newsletter amendment passes: Roger Levy of Course 9 to become Faculty Chair

By Russel Ismael & Alex Tang
EDITORS

Editor-in-chief's note: This piece includes coverage of the May 15 meeting open to the members of the MIT community. Coverage of the executive sessions, in which only faculty were allowed to be present on May 15 and May 17, are in a separate piece.

The May 15 monthly faculty meeting included the presentation of the James R. Killian Jr. Faculty Achievement Award, the results of votes on the J- grade modifier and a proposed amendment to the Faculty Newsletter (FNL) policies, and the elections for Faculty Chair and other committees.

Course 21L Professor and Faculty Chair Mary Fuller was the first to address the gathered faculty after President Sally Kornbluth's opening remarks, recognizing 18 tenured faculty members who have made substantial contributions to the Institute. The faculty honored were cited for furthering MIT's research missions in areas including remote learning and the history of technology. Fuller highlighted the professors becoming emeriti or entering post-tenure, and wished them well.

The James R. Killian Jr. Faculty Achievement Award was then presented. Course 24 Professor Roger White PhD '00 presented the award to Course 8 Professor John Joannopoulos for his work in theoretical condensed condensed matter physics and his research in developing photonic crystals. White described Joannopoulos as a "legendary mentor for generations of students." Joannopoulos' students have become leaders in their respective fields, with one of them, Robert Laughlin PhD '79, capturing

the Nobel Prize in Physics.

The results of the J- grade proposal and FNL amendment, both of which were proposed in the previous meeting, were revealed. Duane Boning, a Course 6 professor and Chair of the Committee on Graduate Programs, once again argued that the proposal would have "low impact [to students], but with a high value of opportunity [for faculty]."

The J- grade proposal was approved by the gathered faculty along with the FNL resolution. The FNL amendment that passed called for the creation of a committee that will review and revise the FNL's policies to "clarify its relationship with the faculty."

Course 6 Professor George Verghese was among some of the faculty who were not fully enthusiastic about the proposed FNL motion. Many, however, voted in favor in hopes of enabling "constructive conversation." Verghese stated that he trusts the Faculty Chair's judgment in appointing a committee that will respect the FNL's importance to MIT as a forum for faculty voices.

The biennial Faculty Chair election for the 2025 to 2027 academic years also took place: Course 9 Professor Roger Levy won with 175 out of the 190 votes cast. Course 15 Professor Michelle Hanlon and Course 21H Professor Craig Wilder were also elected to the Faculty Policy Committee for a three-year term. Regarding the Committee on Graduate Programs, Course 2 Professor Domitilla Del Vecchio, Course 21A Professor Erica James, and Course 5 Professor Matthew Shoulders won majorities of the votes.

Afterwards, the faculty voted to close the meeting and go into an executive session.

In Memoriam: Jerome Connor '53 SM '54 ScD '59

Jerome Connor '53 SM '54 ScD '59, Professor Emeritus of Civil & Environmental Engineering, passed away on Mar. 31. Connor was an alumnus of the civil engineering department and taught as a tenured professor at the Institute for nearly six decades.

Connor earned his bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in Civil Engineering from the Institute. In an obituary in MIT News, Connor was noted as a "pioneer in structural mechanics" for wide-ranging contributions in numeri-

cal methods and motion-based design. He also consulted on structural projects outside of his work at the Institute and is well-noted for his advisory work. Colleagues described him as an "engineer's engineer."

Connor was also a prolific traveler, having visited over 25 different countries in the course of his life. His remembrance was held at Keefe Funeral Home in Arlington, Mass., on Apr. 10.

— Ellie Montemayor

In Memoriam: David Lanning PhD '63

David Lanning PhD '63, Professor Emeritus of Nuclear Science and Engineering, passed away on Apr. 26 at the age of 96.

According to a MIT News obituary, Lanning was a key contributor to the MIT Reactor project after being recruited in 1957. During his tenure at MIT, Lanning helped redesign the MIT Reactor (MITR), an experimental nuclear reactor on campus, and oversaw the administrative separation of the facility from the since-renamed

Nuclear Engineering Department. Lanning's research encompassed reactor safety and efficiency as well as processes relating to nuclear fuel usage.

Lanning retired from MIT in 1994. His remembrance was held on May 1 at the Hampstead Congregational Church in Hampstead, NH.

— Ellie Montemayor

Alumni charged in \$25m cryptocurrency heist

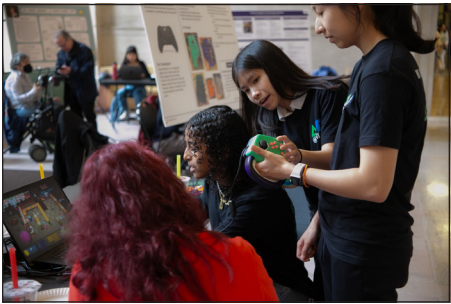
Anton Peraire-Bueno SB '24 and James Peraire-Bueno SM '21 SB '19 were taken into federal custody on May 14. They were charged with wire fraud and conspiracy to commit money laundering, and are accused of stealing about \$25 million from the Ethereum blockchain.

The elder Peraire-Bueno earned a B.S. in math, CS and aerospace engineering in June 2019, as well as a M.S. in AeroAstro in June 2021. The younger Peraire-Bueno earned a B.S. in computer science and engineering in February 2024.

Investigators allege that the brothers began planning the scheme in December 2022 that would "bait" certain traders on the Ethereum platform. They are accused of exploiting the "validators" on the blockchain, which serve to protect the integrity and security of transactions.

If convicted, the brothers could each face a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison for each criminal count.

— Alex Tang



ALISON SOONG - THE TECH

The Assistive Technology Club holds their Spring Showcase in Lobby 10, May 12.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHELE GABRIELE

The Sport Taekwondo team hosts a board breakathon, May 14.

THE TECH STAFF

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PUBLISHERS Jyotsna Nair '25,
Ellie Montemayor '26

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Alex Tang '26

MANAGING EDITOR Kate Lu '25

EXECUTIVE EDITOR Vivian Hir '25

CONTENT

NEWS

Jayashabari Shankar '27, Tina Zhang '27,
& Russel Ismael VS, NEWS EDITORS.
STAFF | Alex Tang '26, Julia Fortt '26, Jessica He '26,
Ellie Montemayor '26, Josh Nix '27.

WEATHER

Adrienne Lai '25, CHIEF METEOROLOGIST.
STAFF | Phoebe Lin '24, Rine Pan '24, Yoland Gao '25.

CAMPUS LIFE

Alor Sahoo '26, CAMPUS LIFE EDITOR.
Vi Trinh '27 & Susan Hong '27, EDITORS (ASSOCIATE).
STAFF | Vivian Hir '25, Caroline Chea '25, Claire Wang '27, Russel Ismael VS.

ARTS

Anahita Srinivasan '25, ARTS EDITOR.
STAFF | Cameron Davis G, Vyshnavi Vennelakanti G,
Teddy Schoenfeld '24, Melbourne Tang '24, Alexis Yi '25,
Vivian Hir '25, Ellie Montemayor '26, Kelly Kim '26,
Alor Sahoo '26.

SPORTS

Hannah Friedman '27, SPORTS EDITOR.

SCIENCE

Karie Shen '27, SCIENCE EDITOR.
STAFF | Russel Ismael VS, Ved Ganesh '27.

ENTERTAINMENT

Ellie Montemayor '26, ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR.
STAFF | Manaal Mohammed '25.

OPINION

Srinidhi Narayanan '24, OPINION EDITOR.

PHOTO

Alexa Simao '25 & Omar Orozco '25, PHOTO EDITOR.
STAFF | Alex Laiman '24, Cady Boronkay '24, Jade Chongsathapornpong '24,
Isabella Yu '24, Kate Lu '25, Melissa Jimenez Camejo '25,
Marcelo Maza '25, Michelle Xiang '26, Ellie Montemayor '26,
Alison Soong '27, Emmanuel Adetunji '27.

PUBLISHING

PRODUCTION

Ellie Montemayor '26, PRODUCTION EDITOR.

COPY

Claire Mao '26 & Geoffrey Enwere '26, COPY CHIEFS.
STAFF | Vivian Hir '25, Vi Trinh '27.

ADMINISTRATION

OPERATIONS

Peter Pu '26, BUSINESS MANAGER (ASSOCIATE).
Li Xuan Tan '26 & Colin Clark '26, TECH DIRECTORS (ASSOCIATE).
STAFF | Madeline Leano '26, Russel Ismael VS.

ADVISORY BOARD

Paul E. Schindler, Jr. '74, Barry S. Surman '84, Deborah A. Levinson '91, Saul Blumenthal '98, Daniel Ryan Bersak '02, Eric J. Cholanteril '02, Marissa Vogt '06, Austin Chu '08, Michael McGraw-Herdeg '08, Marie Y. Thibault '08, Angeline Wang '09, Jeff Guo '11, Anne Cai '14, Jessica L. Wass '14, Bruno Faviero '15, Kali Xu '15, Leon Lin '16, Kath Xu '16, Lenny Martinez Dominguez '17, Charlie J. Moore '17, William Navarre '17, Emma Bingham '19, Nafisa Syed '19, Áron Ricardo Perez-Lopez '20, Nathan Liang '21, Joanna

Lin '21, B. D. Colen.

EDITORS AT LARGE

Senior Editors: Arun Wongprommoon '23, Phoebe Lin '24.

The Tech (ISSN 0148-9607) is published periodically on Thursdays during the academic year (except during MIT vacations) and monthly during the summer by The Tech, Room W20-483, 84 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, Mass. 02139. POSTMASTER: Please send all address changes to our mailing address: The Tech, P.O. Box 391529, Cambridge, Mass. 02139-7029. TELEPHONE: Editorial: (617) 253-1541. Business: (617) 258-8324. Facsimile: (617) 258-8226. EMAIL: tt-general@mit.edu (general), tt-ads@mit.edu (advertising). Advertising, subscription, and type-setting rates available. Entire contents © 2024 The Tech. Printed by Graphic Developments, Inc.

SUBMISSION: We accept guest columns and op-eds from members of the MIT community for publication into print and online issues of The Tech. We reserve the right to edit all material before publication. For any content submitted to and published by The Tech, the creator of the corresponding work grants The Tech a royalty-free, irrevocable, and perpetual license to use, reproduce, modify, adapt, publish, and create derivative works from such content. All material submitted becomes property of The Tech.

This issue of The Tech is sponsored by:
THE KNIGHT SCIENCE JOURNALISM PROGRAM @ MIT

Institute remembers military service members on Memorial Day

In an email sent to the MIT community on May 24, Interim Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate and Graduate Education and Course 16 Professor Daniel Hastings SM '78 PhD '8 called for the community to “salute the Amercians who have given their lives in defense of our nation.”

Hastings noted the Institute’s “deep tradition of national service and an ongoing commitment to national security,” citing the ROTC program and the MIT Lincoln Laboratory.

Hastings encouraged members of the community to walk through the Memorial Lobby, more commonly known as Lobby 10. The names of alumni service members who gave their lives during World War I, World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War are engraved into the walls.

In his note, Hastings also highlighted the efforts of the Student Veteran Success program, which is “working on a project to identify alumni who were killed in action while serving post-Vietnam War.”

— Alex Tang



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANDREW OKYERE

Dancers perform at the ADT Showcase in La Sala, Tuesday, May 14.

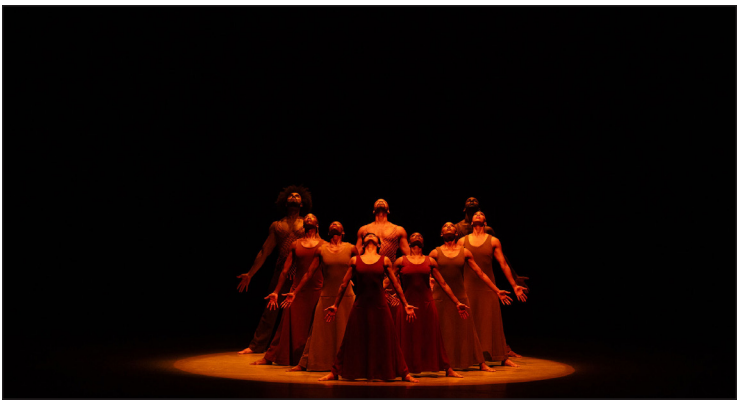




PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBERT TORRES

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater performs Revelations

Digital Diplomas @ MIT



Own Your Credentials

1

Get the Blockcerts Wallet app.
Available on the App Store and Google Play

2

Add MIT as an issuer.
Complete verification through Registrar’s email

3

Download and share.
Initial issuances occur on graduation day

Learn more at registrar.mit.edu/digital-diplomas

LIVE FEED

Live Updates: student encampment, May 8–11

By Ellie Montemayor
PUBLISHER

Publisher’s Note: This feed has been closed again as of Tuesday, May 14 at 7:41 a.m., with its last update coming in on Saturday, May 11 at 12:42 p.m.

Publisher’s Note: This feed has been re-opened as of Thursday, May 9 at 2:20 p.m.

Editor in Chief’s Note: Live reporting for this feed has concluded as of Wednesday, May 8 at 9:36 p.m., with its last update coming in at 9:32 p.m. Further coverage will be reported through separate articles.

This is a developing story. Updates are issued live as new developments in the situation occur. Headlines are subject to change. Primary reporting by Ellie Montemayor ‘26.

Additional reporting contributions from Alex Tang ‘26, Arun Wongprommoon ‘23, Kate Lu ‘25, Vivian Hir ‘25, Alexa Simao ‘25, Omar Orozco ‘25, Geoffrey Enwere ‘26, Michelle Xiang ‘26, and Lee Chen ‘26, and Karie Shen ‘27.

SATURDAY, MAY 11

12:42 PM: Four MIT Police cruisers were observed by reporters of The Tech parked on Kresge Oval, with a group of police officers patrolling the area. Police cruisers were also observed parked on the lawn overnight.

Over the next few days, a heightened police response was observed in the area.

FRIDAY, MAY 10 — Riot police descend on Kresge Oval encampment, student protestors arrested in 4:00 AM raid; Graduate Student Union emergency rally takes to streets following early-morning encampment sweep

5:43 PM: As of this time, most protestors have dispersed from the area, and active police officers were no longer observed on-scene. Traffic on Ames St resumed as the street was cleared.

5:29 PM: The march concluded in its entirety, and protestors began to disperse after stopping at the Ames St intersection with Amherst St.

5:25 PM: Protestors began chanting “We’ll be back!” as the rally concluded with its final speaker. Coppieters ‘t Wallant instructed protestors to continue marching down Ames St.

5:17 PM: The rally continued with its final speaker. Protestors continued to chant “shame!” directed towards President Kornbluth and the MIT Police department.

5:12 PM: The march reached Building E1, designated as the President’s House, and surrounded the building. A force of MIT Police officers flanked the driveway of the building and ordered individuals approaching the building to stay past the sidewalk.

5:10 PM: The march turned left on the campus-side lane of Memorial Drive and approached Building E1.

5:08 PM: Protestors began chanting, “Drop the charges!” as the march approached Memorial Drive. Traffic is still active on the esplanade-side lane of Memorial Drive as of this time, but the campus-side lane of the street has been shut down by police officers.

5:01 PM: The march turned and continued down Ames St, chanting “Shut it down.”

4:58 PM: The march reached the Main St intersection and continued down Main St.

4:56 PM: The march began again as the group continued down Vassar St.

4:51 PM: The rally stopped at the Stata Center parking garage, where nine students were arrested on May 9 during a protest.

Ralliers were observed chanting, “Oink, oink, piggy, piggy / we’re going to make your life sh*tty.” MIT Police officers formed a line in front of the driveway.

4:43 PM: The march turned on Vassar St and continued in the direction of the Stata Center.

4:38 PM: After the conclusion of Coppieters ‘t Wallant’s speech, the rally began a march on Mass Ave led by Coppieters ‘t Wallant.

4:25 PM: In a prepared speech presented during the rally, Graduate Student Union president Sophie Coppieters ‘t Wallant G affirmed the union’s support for the campus pro-Palestinian movement as per a referendum adopted by the union on April 19.

Coppieters ‘t Wallant also described 13 graduate students, and 25 students total, suspended from the Institute. During the speech, Coppieters ‘t Wallant also described a number of union contract violations allegedly made by the Institute during disciplinary actions on the graduate student members of the union.

3:23 PM: The Graduate Student Union rally officially began with its first speakers. Over a hundred protestors, a combination of undergraduate and graduate students, and non-affiliated supporters rallied around the speakers.

2:40 PM: A large crowd was observed forming on the steps of Lobby 7. This comes before a planned 3:00 p.m. rally at that location by the MIT Graduate Student Union in protest of yesterday’s arrests, as discussed over a union general body meeting yesterday night.

MIT Police officers were observed patrolling the area. (4:44 PM clarification: the rally was also monitored by a force from Cambridge Police.)

Several pro-Palestinian posters and flyers, which were not observed present the day before, have been spotted across campus. A group of pro-Palestinian student protestors reportedly put up the messages earlier today following the sweep of the Kresge Oval encampment.

12:17 PM: All 10 students arrested from the police raid and eventual sweep on the Kresge Oval encampment earlier today have reportedly been released after a court hearing held at Cambridge District Court.

8:37 AM: By 8:37 AM, all items on Kresge Oval have been cleared from the premises, including barricades. Facilities workers were no longer present. A small group of MIT Police officers continue to patrol the Student Center plaza.

8:30 AM: The hearings of the 10 student protestors arrested today, initially set to begin at 8:30 a.m., is briefly delayed after a delay in court proceedings.

7:38 AM: In a statement to the MIT community at 7:38 a.m., President Kornbluth detailed the events of this morning and presented a timeline of key events since the establishment of the encampment up to its removal. Kornbluth writes that she “had no choice but to remove such a high-risk flashpoint at the very center of our campus.”

Many pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli posters and picket signs, which had been put up around the encampment and taken down by facilities workers as the encampment was dismantled, were set aside and loaded into a truck. Reportedly, they are being stored by the Institute for archival purposes.

7:17 AM: An MIT Advisory Alert was issued on 7:17 a.m., detailing that all Institute buildings have been placed on tap access.

7:00 AM: According to a social media post by the National Lawyers Guild, which had representatives on scene earlier this morning, arrested students will be taken to Cambridge District Court this morning. A legal team from the guild will be representing the arrested students.

Another message published by the guild’s social media account noted 10 student arrests from the protest at the Stata Center garage on May 9, writing that those students had court hearings set for next week. All students from the Stata Center protest yesterday have been released from booking.

6:53 AM: As of 6:53 a.m., all reporters from The Tech have left Kresge Oval and are no longer providing live updates from the ground.

Live Updates, Page 5

Admin response sows divisions among faculty amidst campus unrest

Executive Session, from Page 1

mediately following a presentation by the ad-hoc Committee on Academic Freedom and Campus Expression (CAFCE). The published meeting notes on the Faculty Governance website claim that the motion was passed with 42 in favor. (Various individuals who met with The Tech provided conflicting accounts of the situation; this is attributable to an unnoticed irregularity with the vote.)

At the same time as the Wednesday, May 15 meeting, a pro-Palestinian rally headed by the Graduate Student Union began to form on the steps of Lobby 7. Protestors later marched to Building E1, commonly known as the President’s House.

Faculty perspectives and discussion

Having transitioned into an executive session, the meeting held an open-mic discussion among attendees on their perspectives regarding the student suspensions. Each faculty member was limited to a two-minute speech.

Attendees with varying perspectives and viewpoints — some of whom spoke on behalf of organizations such as the MIT Israel Alliance, a pro-Israeli affinity group, and the ACF — spoke at length.

“Backing down from this interim action will set a dangerous precedent. What would happen if every subgroup with a grievance set up ‘mostly peaceful’ encampments, shout in our hallways, and incite against others?” Professor of Physics Or Hen said in a prepared speech during the meeting, based on a script of the speech he later shared with The Tech.

Other faculty discussed how the interim suspension punishes suspended students without allowing them their due process, noting how the suspension takes effect before students “even have a chance to defend themselves in front of the faculty Committee of Discipline.”

Some faculty members who had routinely visited the encampment spoke on behalf of the “egalitarian,” “open” community fostered in the Kresge Oval space; others described acts of aggression and violent rhetoric used by those within the encampment.

A staff administrator part of the Division of Student Life reportedly corroborated on observed acts of hateful speech, saying that “we witness[ed] students shouting at [a] faculty member, swearing at [a] faculty member, shoving, whipping down fences... The interim suspension was taken immediately to pause the behavior.”

Institute officials took questions during the course of the meeting, with President Kornbluth and other administrators at times offering answers to questions posed by attendees and explanatory statements during times of confusion. Discussion was paused at times as administrators stepped in to clarify details of the campus protests and the ongoing interim suspension process.

Fuller noted that the May 15 executive session and the associated May 17 special session were moderated by her as Chair of the Faculty. Although Institute faculty meetings would normally be chaired by the president, Fuller said that Kornbluth “turned the meeting over to me to chair... because she was somebody who was going to be called on to speak to

things to provide information.”

The administration reiterated a commitment to safety above all else.

“[Our] responsibility is broader than simply to allow people to express their views — it’s to keep them safe,” Kornbluth reportedly said.

The meeting continued on until 5:30 p.m., and further debate was tabled to a secondary special faculty meeting scheduled for the morning of Friday, May 17. After the meeting’s conclusion, the administration reportedly received emails from many faculty who wished to share further discussion.

Email communications by Professor of Medical Anthropology and Urban Studies Erica James addressed to President Kornbluth, obtained by The Tech described a perspective regarding “being able to speak with some of the [pro-Israeli] counter-protestors about their reasons for demonstrating... and their sense of ethics.”

In subsequent conversations with faculty members, The Tech noted many were disappointed by the outcome of the meeting; some described a frustration that not more of their colleagues voiced support for the suspended students, while others were dissatisfied by a lack of concern by some faculty on the hurt faced by Jewish and Israeli students on campus.

“There is a deep hypocrisy I wanted to have unveiled at that meeting,” DeGraff said to The Tech. “The threats [by the administration] are presented as if they [the suspended students] are asking something which is in violation of academic freedom; they are being presented as being bullies, being unwilling to negotiate, imposing demands on the Institute.”

Friday, May 17 — Special faculty session

The second faculty meeting began at 8:00 a.m. on May 17, and was held entirely virtually over Zoom. The meeting reportedly reached the 500 participant limit set by the platform; not all of the attendees had voting rights and served as non-voting observers and commentators.

According to individuals familiar with the situation, many of the speeches from the Wednesday meeting were in support of the motion to lift the student suspensions or criticized the administration for enacting the suspensions, and accordingly Fuller had reportedly tried to select individuals with opposing views (those who were not in favor of the motion).

Fuller pointed to a lack of recent precedent in faculty involvement in such matters as leading to such ad-hoc decision-making, additionally noting what she saw as normal meeting procedure to ensure a balance of perspectives. “It was incumbent on me as I saw it to go back to what is normal procedure in meetings when something is being debated... I asked the next person in line, ‘Do you have a different perspective?’”

“That’s a kind of standard practice in meetings to make sure that you have a robust debate,” Fuller added.

In addition to the debate, attendees representing the ACF read testimonials from Students Against Genocide Encampment affiliates that had been collected in preparation for the meeting.

Individuals familiar with the situation

described a strong level of mediation by administrators during the meeting; reportedly, administrators frequently interjected in response to faculty commentary.

At one point in the meeting, Provost Cynthia Barnhart PhD ’88 reportedly likened the interim suspension mechanism as it was being used on the suspended pro-Palestinian students with cases of sexual assault; this was later criticized by faculty members in subsequent meetings with The Tech as well as by others familiar with the situation.

“This is what I’m finding extremely disturbing — there is no empirical basis to make that comparison between the SAGE [Students Against Genocide Encampment] students and potential rapists,” a faculty member shared in a later interview with The Tech. “The cruel fact is that students of color, they’re black and brown students, are being compared to potential rapists. That’s sickening.”

Ultimately, despite a strongly vocal contingency of those supporting the motion, the vote failed. With a total of 1,089 faculty members on staff, about 30% of voting-eligible faculty were present in the meeting.

Responses to the failed vote

Still, many faculty members who had supported the motion remained hopeful about the result.

“The fact that [154 faculty members] did vote against the administration, it’s like a vote of no-confidence against Sally Kornbluth,” DeGraff later said to The Tech. “That’s huge — so I think that the debates [on Wednesday and Friday] did have an impact.”

DeGraff then added, “We saw people coming out and speaking in favor of the students, in favor of the students’ right to speak and not to be harassed by the administration.”

Some faculty pointed to the diversity of voices speaking out on behalf of the suspended students during the meetings, having observed faculty who were not ACF members and those who identified as Jewish and Israeli speaking out.

“I hope that what has changed in response to these two hours of debate is the understanding that many of these students were really mistreated by our administration,” a faculty member said in an interview with The Tech.

Administration and faculty governance

Other faculty members, in later discussions, raised issues reaching beyond the scope of ongoing campus tensions. They detailed a trend in the administration’s increasing visibility in faculty matters at the Institute.

One faculty member described a perceived biased stance being taken by the administration during the May 15 and May 17 meetings.

“What came out very clearly, very quickly, from the very beginning of Kornbluth’s video series is that the administration was very much siding with the [pro-Israeli] faculty,” DeGraff said. “After [the Wednesday meeting], it was clear where Sally Kornbluth stood.”

Another faculty member criticized the administration’s role in Institute faculty meetings as a whole. “So much of faculty governance is run by the administration, and not by the faculty themselves,” they said.

In contrast with other universities, MIT does not have a faculty senate; meetings are

instead presided over by President Kornbluth alongside other senior administrators. The faculty body is not a unionized organization, unlike graduate student workers which are represented by the Graduate Student Union and governed by the Graduate Student Council. The undergraduate community is, to an extent, governed by the Undergraduate Association.

“There’s very little governance that we can control,” a faculty member said.

Some faculty expressed distrust with administrators’ handling of the disciplinary process. “A lot of faculty really don’t know, I think somewhat intentionally, what was going on,” Associate Professor of Electrical Engineering & Computer Science Marzyeh Ghassemi said.

Fuller noted that in matters of faculty governance, having a hands-off administration built into its constitution would have posed other problems. “Tufts [University] now has a senate and they have trouble getting top administrators to show up,” Fuller said, drawing from conversations she has had with governance colleagues at neighboring institutions. “And so they [the faculty] don’t have the opportunity to ask questions of those people and make them accountable.”

“Some people feel that this means the administration doesn’t allow us a voice because they control the meeting. They can’t control the meeting because you can stand up and say what you want; you can make the motions that you want,” Fuller said. “Another way of thinking about it is [that] the president is a member of the faculty... They have to be answerable to you.”

Outside of closed-doors: faculty respond to campus tensions

Faculty members have continued to engage in mediating the campus climate in various ways outside of the meetings.

Faculty aligned with the ACF have stepped in to assist during the suspended students’ disciplinary proceedings, serving as advisors and attending Committee on Discipline hearings. During rallies and protests, ACF members have worn pink armbands to signify their presence.

Pro-Israeli faculty have often accompanied pro-Israeli student counter-protestors in holding counter-protests, such as entering the encampment during its occupancy on Kresge Oval and attending and speaking at pro-Israeli rallies.

Faculty with opposing viewpoints have also engaged in discourse and debate with one another even outside the bounds of the faculty meetings.

In one case, a Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence faculty meeting held on May 16 reportedly involved a video presentation of students in the Kresge Oval encampment chanting in Arabic, with a frame showing a named list of student protestors.

At the time of this article’s publication, there have been reports indicating that a number of suspensions have been lifted by the administration. The Tech has not yet been able to verify the authenticity of these claims. Five other erroneously-issued suspensions have also been lifted. Individuals familiar with the situation have noted that the suspensions of at least two student organizers have not been lifted as of Tuesday, May 28.

Theater Arts major to be renamed 21T

The program was formerly titled 21M-2

By Russel Ismael & Alex Tang

EDITORS

Beginning in the fall of 2024, MIT’s “Theater Arts” major will be renamed Course 21T, distinguishing itself from the traditional music major titled 21M. Prior to this change, Course 21T was designated Course 21M-2: the Music major will still be titled Course 21M-1.

Professor Sara Brown, Course 21T’s major and minor advisor, wrote to The Tech that “popularity has definitely played a role” in creating Course 21T. Brown believes that the creation of 21T will reduce confusion amongst the student body, especially given the designation of the previous Theater Arts program under that of Music.

“As enrollments have risen, and more students pursue the major, minor, and concentration, it has been vital that we communicate more clearly to the students,” Brown wrote. “21T communicates Theater, whereas 21M-2 has caused confusion. Music and Theater are one administrative entity but we are two different programs each with our own

major, curriculum, research agendas, and programming.”

She also added that the opening of Building W97 in 2017, a space that allows for theater work, played a key role in expanding the program in terms of student enrollment, and that the dedicated space “reflects the significant growth of [the theater] program on every front.”

According to the department, students must first demonstrate “demonstrate proficiency in theater arts fundamentals and have experience participating in a performance.” Popular 21T classes will remain intact, including “Introduction to Acting,” “Voice and Speech,” and “Playwriting Fundamentals.”

Brown added that the current 21-M2 students will become 21T students, and like with the prior 21M-2 major, 21T students are required to take 186 units within the major.

Notably, none of the subjects taken in the major can be counted for General Institute Requirements (GIRs) or the 180 units required beyond the GIRs. Utilizing a course for credit between two departmental programs is not permitted.



ALEXA SIMAO - THE TECH

Students perform at Next Sing’s karaoke concert, May 12.



ALEXA SIMAO - THE TECH

Student perform at MIT Live’s spring showcase in Kresge Little Theatre, May 12.

Live updates on the Kresge Oval student encampment in its final days

Live Updates, from Page 3

The Tech will continue to monitor the situation as it develops and re-deploy reporters to the scene as necessary.

6:45 AM: A small contingent of police officers remain on standby in front of the Student Center. Other officers in the area have largely dispersed. State troopers were no longer visible in the area.

6:29 AM: A small contingent of MIT and city police officers and state troopers remain on standby as the encampment continues to be cleared by workers.

5:54 AM: Riot police were observed lining up on Amherst Alley. Within minutes, riot police and uniformed state troopers began loading into the police buses stationed at Amherst Alley.

Other officers were also observed dispersing. As of this time, access to Amherst Alley has been reopened. All areas surrounding the encampment have also reopened for access.

5:43 AM: Tap access to the Student Center has reportedly been selectively deactivated. Some student club offices on the fourth floor facing the encampment were observed to be unopenable, but other offices not faced towards Kresge Oval retained tap access.

The situation remains stable as of this time. Riot police continue to stand by as workers disassemble the encampment. The protestors have largely dispersed from the scene.

Workers were observed loading tents and other large materials from the encampment into a garbage truck.

5:37 AM: A contingent of police officers,



THE TECH

May 10, 3:49 PM: Ruth, a graduate student arrested the previous day at Stata, speaks at the rally

which had followed the march of student protestors, were observed stationed around Building W31. Protestors were observed by reporters of The Tech entering the building just minutes earlier.

5:29 AM: The last tents and canopies have been knocked down. Officers and workers continue to disassemble the encampment.

5:28 AM: The demonstrators have ended their protest nearby and have begun marching down Mass Ave.

5:23 AM: Media correspondents on Amherst Alley were asked to vacate the street, as it is “private property.” They were observed being asked to move to Mass Ave. Reporters from The Tech continue to report from Amherst Alley.

5:19 AM: A large contingent of riot police were observed by reporters of The Tech entering Kresge Auditorium.

5:17 AM: A group of police officers and facilities workers were observed by reporters of The Tech continuing to clear the encampment.

The first police bus, which left the scene at 4:54 a.m. while transporting arrested student protestors, reportedly reached the Cambridge Police Department precinct on 6th St. Three other police buses were observed stationed on Amherst Alley, beside the MIT Chapel.

5:10 AM: The first tent has been knocked down.

5:08 AM: Police officers enter the encampment and search through the area. Officers are reportedly beginning to disassemble the encampment. As of now, most of the barricades enclosing the encampment remain up but a section of the three-foot enclosure facing Kresge Auditorium has been opened to allow for police entry. (Note: an earlier version of this article incorrectly stated that the opened section was facing the Student Center. This has been corrected as of 6:37 a.m.)

4:58 AM: Media correspondents were observed being denied requests for comment by an officer on-site. “You can talk to the media



THE TECH

May 10, 4:12 AM: Police set up around the encampment

office or the chief of the police station,” the officer was overheard saying.

4:54 AM: A police bus holding at least ten detained student protestors began exiting the area alongside a contingent of police motorcycles.

4:29 AM: The first arrest of a student protestor has been made. Arrested protestors are being loaded onto a police bus stationed on Amherst Alley.

4:03 AM: A 15 minutes’ notice was issued to pro-Palestinian student demonstrators to vacate the premises.

Within minutes, encampment affiliates and other pro-Palestinian student demonstrators were escorted out of Kresge Oval and onto Mass Ave.

Police officers, including many dressed in riot gear, are positioned surrounding Kresge Oval. Contingents of officers were observed along Mass Ave, on the Amherst Alley in-teesection, around Kresge Oval, and on the path towards the Zesiger Center.

Several forces of police officers, many dressed in riot gear, patrol the scene. The surrounding area has been blocked off by officers with caution tape and metal barricades.

On Mass Ave, student protestors began an emergency rally as the encampment was raided by police.

4:00 AM: Several forces of police officers were observed in the area of the Kresge Oval encampment.

THURSDAY, MAY 9 — Pro-Palestinian student protestors arrested by city police during Stata Garage rally

5:20 PM: According to a social media post shared by the MIT Graduate Student Union (GSU), nine undergraduate and graduate students were arrested during the Stata Center protest.

(May 10, 3:03 PM clarification: five graduate students were reportedly arrested following today’s events. The other four students arrested are undergraduate students.)

As of 5:20 PM, all news helicopters and active media correspondents have left the premises.

4:56 PM: News helicopters from WCVB and NBC News continue to encircle the encampment.

4:33 PM: The demonstrators have returned to the Kresge Oval encampment, and the march concluded. Within a few minutes, the members of the group from the side of the Stata Center driveway beside Main St also returned to the encampment.

4:31 PM: Police officers on Vassar St began disassembling the taped perimeter and began to disperse. The street was reopened for traffic.

4:30 PM: The march turned on Mass Ave and continued towards Kresge Oval.

4:20 PM: After a brief speech by a student protestor, the demonstrators began marching along Vassar St back to the Kresge Oval encampment.

4:10 PM: At least two protestors were observed being arrested and loaded into vehicles. They were also reportedly transported to a nearby precinct. The arrested protestors were reportedly being transported to the Middlesex House of Correction and Jail in Billerica, MA, according to a statement by a state trooper. (8:39 p.m. modification: reports from individuals familiar with the situation indicate that the arrested students may have been instead transported to the Cambridge Police Department precinct on 6th St.)

4:05 PM: The Chief of MIT Police, speaking on a megaphone, instructed protestors to clear the driveway or face arrest. Officers then began pushing protestors on both sides of the driveway away from the area. Protestors con-

tinued to be escorted away from the driveway on both sides. Vassar St was cordoned off with caution tape on both sides at the Dreyfoos entrance of the Stata Center and by Collier Memorial, with protestors being escorted to move behind the line.

4:02 PM: Police officers escorted spectators further back from 15 Vassar St opposite of the garage. Officers from the Special Emergency Response Team were also reportedly on scene.

4:00 PM: Reporters from The Tech observed that, at this time, the number of police officers on scene outnumbered student protestors. Dozens of officers patrolled the area.

3:52 PM: After a brief confrontation with police officers, three student protestors returned to the entry lane of the garage and began a sit-in. Other protestors continued to chant from the sidewalk immediately to the sides of the garage while flanked by officers.

3:28 PM: The exterior doors of Building 46 were put on card access with the revolving doors locked, according to an email sent by Brain & Cognitive Sciences administrative director Tristan Davies. (3:38 PM clarification: a 3:15 PM email from Koch Institute administrator Erica Burds noted that Buildings 46, 48, 32, 45, 36, and 76 have all been put on tap access.)

3:13 PM: The situation remains stable as a few dozen protestors, some wearing kuffiyehs and holding up picket signs and Palestinian



THE TECH

May 10, 3:27 PM: Members of the GSU and others hold a rally in front of Lobby 7 to protest the arrests and suspensions

flags, chant from either side of the garage driveway while flanked by Cambridge Police officers. Contingents of officers stand by at the perimeter of the cautioned-off area and at the Main St intersection.

2:41 PM: The protestors began chanting, “No justice, no peace / f*** these racist-ass police.”

2:32 PM: Police are blocking off the walkway on both sides of the road from the Picower Institute to the Collier Memorial with police caution tape.

A force of eight state troopers are positioned on Vassar St by the Picower Institute as MIT Police officers and Cambridge Police officers stood in formation and kept protestors on either side of the driveway as vehicles continued exiting the garage.

2:16 PM: A dispatcher was reported announcing, “Call for all units at 2:16 p.m. to come to Stata” via an overheard police radio.

2:10 PM: At least 15 police vehicles seen on Vassar Street near the protest, with dozens of officers. Cars are being allowed out of Stata Garage but all other traffic is blocked. Pedestrians walking past the protest are directed to take a detour around 15 Vassar Street, the building opposite of Stata Garage.

Some of the previously-detained protestors are no longer being held and were observed rejoining the protest.

2:05 PM: An MIT Advisory Alert was issued on 2:05 p.m., detailing the protest in front of the Stata Center garage. Vehicles were instructed to use alternate routes and parking

spaces.

1:57 PM: At least two protestors were detained in zipties and forced into Cambridge Police vehicles. The protestors were reportedly arrested and driven out of the scene. Allegedly, the arrested protestors were transported to a nearby police station.

1:55 PM: Protestors were observed being pushed to the ground and cuffed by police officers. Several protestors were ziptied and forcefully moved away from the protest in front of the Stata Center garage.

1:40 PM: The rally at the Student Center concluded. Protestors marched to Vassar St and began a protest in front of the Stata Center garage.

The protestors were observed attempting to form a blockade on the garage driveway.

(Note: an earlier version of this article incorrectly described the Vassar St protest as a second, separate demonstration. This has been corrected as of 4:51 p.m.)

A force of MIT Police officers, Cambridge Police officers, and state troopers were observed congregating on the scene.

1:00 PM: A pro-Palestinian rally was observed forming at the Student Center plaza.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 8 — Pro-Palestinian student protestors receive notices of suspension from MIT administration

9:32 PM: The previously reported gathering of pro-Palestinian protestors has now dwindled.

6:16 PM: Dozens of pro-Palestinian protestors have gathered on the outside of the encampment to rally against the suspension of student protestors earlier this afternoon. A suspension letter for an unknown individual that has been circulated states that suspended students will “continue to have access to services at MIT Health,” but “all other privileges connected to your student status are also suspended.” According to the letter, the suspensions are interim, “lasting at least through Institute commencement activities and pending a review by the COD.”

4:51 PM: Dozens of students were said to have been issued suspensions, ranging from interim academic suspensions to interim full disciplinary suspensions that end access to campus buildings, housing, dining halls and meal access, employment and income as well as academic participation. Students issued with interim full suspensions have reportedly been asked to vacate campus housing.

3:21 PM: From 2:40 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. today, Pro-Palestinian student protestors received notices of suspension from MIT administration via email. The encampment on Kresge Oval remains up with a police presence.

Earlier at 8:30 a.m., a contingency of pro-Palestinian protestors blocked the entrance to the Stata Garage while chanting and waving signs. MIT, Cambridge, and State Police were present. At around 9:15 a.m., police relocated and began allowing vehicular traffic into the garage.

9:58 AM: At 9:58 AM, a pro-Palestinian student wrote a parody of the MIT Advisory Alert system, titled “MIT Advisory: MIT Admin Causes Blockage at Stata Parking Lot due to Complicity in Genocide,” as a message to the MIT community regarding the Stata Center garage blockade. This message is not an official advisory alert.

9:48 AM: The protestors ended the march and returned to the Kresge Oval encampment.

9:41 AM: The protestors marched through the Infinite towards Lobby 7. By 9:43 a.m., they reached Lobby 7 and circled the lobby.

9:33 AM: The protestors began to leave the driveway and headed towards Building 12 in an impromptu march.

9:10 AM: MIT Chief of Police John DiFava issued a verbal warning to protestors, saying on a megaphone, “You are subject to arrest if you do not move from this entrance.” After the issuance of a “final warning,” protestors moved to the sidewalk.

9:04 AM: Police officers formed a line on the street in front of protestors to prevent continued attempts of traffic entry into the garage.

8:55 AM: The protestors were pushed to the side by police officers as a clearing was made on the left side of the garage driveway. Cars began to enter the garage as police officers held back the protestors from retaking the left lane of the driveway.

8:38 AM: By 8:38 a.m., about two dozen protestors held a picket line in front of the garage. The protestors were monitored by a contingent of MIT Police and Cambridge Police officers, and state troopers. At this time, Vassar St traffic remained open.

Open police vans and about a dozen police cruisers were parked on-scene.

8:00 AM: A small group of pro-Palestinian protestors began to form in front of the Stata Center garage.

WORLD & NATION is a two-page column featuring news articles syndicated from a selection of major newspaper outlets, covering topics of public interest and critical information which extend beyond the bounds of THE TECH’s coverage as centered around the MIT and local community. Ownership of syndicated content is retained under their original respective publications, and is republished in this format to serve as an easily-accessible, printed digest for THE TECH’s readership.

The column consists of two pages, with Side A focused on US news and politics and Side B on topics of international concern. The articles featured here are abridged as to contain only their most essential points; readers are directed to read more about an article from its original publication.

Washington Post said it had the Alito flag story 3 years ago and chose not to publish

Nine days after The New York Times reported about the political symbolism of an upside-down American flag that flew at U.S. Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito’s home, the Washington Post acknowledged it had the same story more than three years ago and decided not to publish it.

The Post’s story was both an extraordinary example of journalistic introspection and an illustration of how coverage of the Supreme Court has changed since the incident itself, shortly after the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol insurrection.

— David Bauder, FROM ASSOCIATED PRESS
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED MAY 29, 2024

Thousands of Americans without power due to severe weather

Nearly 200,000 people across several American states remain without power after an onslaught of deadly tornadoes and thunderstorms. The severe weather killed at least 23 people over the Memorial Day holiday weekend, injuring hundreds of others and leaving a path of destruction across a swathe of the US. Forecasters are continuing to warn of strong thunderstorms and flash flooding across northern and central parts of Texas. Meanwhile, southern areas of the state are sweltering under extreme heat, as is the south of Florida.

In a Tuesday morning update, the NWS warned of “significant damaging wind and large hail” in Texas. The threat there, and in southern Oklahoma, extends to Wednesday.

— Holly Honderich, FROM BBC
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED MAY 28, 2024

Texas Rep. Tony Gonzalez barely wins GOP runoff against gun-rights activist in closely-watched contest

Republican Rep. Tony Gonzales of Texas narrowly won his primary Tuesday against a gun-rights activist who pushed the border congressman into a bruising runoff that threatened to unseat a U.S. House incumbent. Another prominent Texas Republican, state House Speaker Dade Phelan, also edged out a Trump-backed challenger from the right.

Bth won by razor-thin margins, reflecting the anger of hard-line conservatives and a wave of party turbulence in America’s biggest red state over votes that bucked party lines and the impeachment of state Attorney General Ken Paxton.

— FROM CBS NEWS
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED MAY 29, 2024

Biden, Trump agree to ABC News and CNN debates

President Joe Biden and Donald Trump are set to face off in an ABC News presidential debate in September. Trump and Biden said they have both agreed to a prime-time debate at ABC News studios on Sept. 10. The debate will air on ABC News, ABC News Live and Hulu.

Before that, they will participate in a CNN debate on June 27 in Atlanta. The debates were scheduled hours after Biden on Wednesday challenged the former president to two debates, which Trump said he was “ready and willing” to do, but pushed for more than two.

“We propose a debate in June, a debate in July, a debate in August, and a debate in September, in addition to the Vice Presidential debate,” representatives from the Trump campaign said in a memo.

— Libby Cathey, Gabriella Abdul-Hakim, Lalee Ibssa , & Soo Rin Kim, FROM ABC NEWS
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED MAY 15, 2024

A federal grand jury may soon hear from Sean ‘Diddy’ Combs’ accusers

Federal investigators are preparing to bring accusers of music mogul Sean “Diddy” Combs before a federal grand jury, two sources familiar with the probe tell CNN — signaling the US Justice Department is moving toward potentially seeking an indictment of Combs.

Possible witnesses have been notified by investigators that they could be brought in to testify in front of a federal grand jury in New York City, according to one source. Bringing individuals who have filed civil lawsuits against Combs before a grand jury would mark a significant escalation in the government’s ongoing investigation involving the producer and Bad Boy Records founder.

Combs has been named in eight civil lawsuits since November – seven directly accusing him of sexual assault.

— Elizabeth Wagmeister and Josh Campbell, FROM CNN
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED MAY 29, 2024

A Final Graduation Condition: Making Sense of Protest

Emma Goldberg

FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED MAY 28, 2024

Graduation speakers usually offer encomiums about how college changes people with its intellectual striving, its community of peers, its moral dilemmas straddling the real world and the textbook page. But this year, students faced a test that for some really was foundational — one that asked them to define what they stood for and what they were willing to lose, from clean disciplinary records to social standing.

In the weeks leading up to graduation, I spoke with more than a dozen Columbia and Barnard students about how the campus protests had shaped them. An aspiring comedian, Jackson Schwartz, did a stand-up set about being arrested and suspended for pro-Palestinian protest; he told me that he was now thinking about law school, moved by the resolve of the lawyers who had counseled him. A psychology major, Daniella Coen, an Israeli citi-

zen, said she had asked her family not to fly to New York for graduation because she felt ostracized at school for being a Zionist. A student filmmaker, Chambit Miller, described feeling torn between a sense of thrill in supporting her protesting classmates and disillusionment about their capacity to create change.

I focused especially on students at the periphery of the protests — not those whose conviction led them to sleep at the encampment, but those who took it in from a distance, a bit uncertain and searching. Some of them said that what they had witnessed in the last months of college influenced how they viewed the world and their career choices.

Sissoko has always created change in a largely orderly fashion — running for student government, getting good grades — but watching the protests unfold called into question some of that commitment to rule following. Reading the words that deviated from the preapproved graduation script, Sissoko tried not to cry. Then they took in the ap-

plause, which felt as if it roared on for hours, though in reality only moments passed before the ceremony continued.

The effects of being part of student protests can linger, for those involved, long after school ends.

In June 1964, more than 1,000 young people traveled to Mississippi to register Black voters as part of what civil rights groups called Freedom Summer. Two decades later, Doug McAdam, a Stanford sociologist, dug through applications for the project and contacted the volunteers, along with some 300 people who applied.

McAdam found that for the students who went to Mississippi, the experience was transformational. They were more likely than the group who didn’t participate to still be politically active in their 40s, attending demonstrations and local meetings for environmental, feminist and racial justice organizations; their incomes also tended to be lower, because they had taken community-oriented jobs.

UCLA, Northwestern, Rutgers heads face House scrutiny

Susan Svrluga

FROM THE WASHINGTON POST
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED MAY 23, 2024

A Republican-led panel of lawmakers that is investigating campus antisemitism questioned leaders of UCLA, Rutgers and Northwestern universities on Thursday, demanding to know how many students and staff members had been disciplined in the wake of pro-Palestinian encampments this spring and expressing incredulity and anger at the responses.

It was the third time the House Committee on Education and the Workforce has summoned university leaders to testify in the wake of Hamas’s Oct. 7 attack on Israel and protests that have ensued on campuses across the country during the Israel-Gaza war. It was fiery. And it was, the committee’s chairwoman said, only the beginning of the committee’s investigation.

“You will be held accountable,”

Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.) told the leaders.

Meanwhile, on campus at UCLA on Thursday, protesters erected another encampment — a form of demonstration that swept campuses around the world after one arose at Columbia University during the previous hearing.

Michael Schill, president of Northwestern University since 2022; Jonathan Holloway, who became the president of Rutgers University in 2020; and Gene Block, the chancellor of UCLA since 2007, testified Thursday, defending their decisions and expressing concern about antisemitism. Each of them spoke in deeply personal terms about their own understanding of discrimination. Holloway spoke of generations of his family fighting anti-Black racism, and Schill and Block spoke of family members who were victims and survivors of the Holocaust.

“I am fully aware that many of our Jewish students have had to confront rhetoric and images on

campus that any reasonable person would find repugnant,” Block said. “Trust me, I understand their pain. I’ve lived it myself.”

Schill said the fact that Israel is a cherished homeland is not theoretical to him because it is where family members who survived the Holocaust found refuge after the war.

Then the committee took over. Foxx told the three university leaders that they should be ashamed of decisions “that allowed antisemitic encampments to endanger Jewish students,” and told Schill and Holloway they should be “doubly ashamed for capitulating” to protesters.

With rapid-fire questions — sometimes shouted — committee members demanded answers.

Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-N.Y.) described Northwestern’s resolution of the protest as a “unilateral capitulation to the pro-Hamas, anti-Israel, antisemitic encampment” and asked whether it was true a Jewish student had been assaulted.

Jury to consider felony charges against Trump on Wednesday

Ben Prottess & Jonah Bromwich

FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED MAY 29, 2024

Jurors in Donald J. Trump’s criminal trial will begin deliberations on Wednesday after hearing hours of closing arguments that portrayed the case in stark and irreconcilable terms.

This last stage of the weekslong case comes a day after the jurors watched both sides deliver their final flurry of arguments.

A prosecutor, Joshua Steinglass, described a scheme on the eve of the 2016 election to muzzle a porn star’s account of a sexual encounter with Mr. Trump. The woman, Stormy Daniels, kept quiet after Mr. Trump’s onetime fixer, Michael D. Cohen, bought her silence with a \$130,000 hush-money deal.

The machinations crossed a legal line, prosecutors say, when Mr. Trump reimbursed Mr. Cohen for the hush money and falsified records to cover the whole thing up.

“All roads lead to the man who benefited the most, Donald

Trump,” Mr. Steinglass said, adding that it was done to “hoodwink the American voter.”

A defense lawyer, Todd Blanche, said in his summation that Mr. Trump’s actions were not crimes, but merely business as it is commonly practiced. The felony charges, he said, were a lie-riddled sham without “a shred of evidence.”

Mr. Blanche spent much of his closing argument attacking the credibility of Mr. Cohen, calling him “the greatest liar of all time” and urging the jury to reach “a very quick and easy not guilty verdict.”

Here’s what to know about the first prosecution of an American president:

Mr. Trump is charged with 34 felony counts of falsifying business records, which prosecutors say Mr. Trump used to disguise the repayment to Mr. Cohen as ordinary legal fees. If convicted, he faces probation or up to four years in prison. Mr. Trump has denied wrongdoing and says he never had sex with Ms. Daniels, who took the stand and de-

scribed an encounter with him after a golf tournament in Lake Tahoe, Nev., in 2006.

In Mr. Steinglass’s closing argument, he told a sweeping story about a fraud on voters. He argued that an agreement Mr. Trump struck with The National Enquirer to buy and bury unflattering stories was a “subversion of democracy” that prevented the American people from deciding for themselves whether they cared that Mr. Trump had sex with a porn star or not. His arguments could be crucial: Prosecutors needed to show that the business records were falsified to hide a conspiracy to influence the 2016 election.

Mr. Blanche assailed Mr. Cohen, casting him as a rogue actor and a liar bent on revenge. He argued that there was nothing false about the documents, because Mr. Cohen had in fact performed legal work — and suggested that Mr. Trump had little reason to pay attention to them in any case, because he was the “leader of the free world” at the time.

Israeli strikes kill at least 37 Palestinians near Rafah as offensive expands

Samy Magdy & Wafaa Shurafa

FROM ASSOCIATED PRESS
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED MAY 28, 2024

Israeli shelling and airstrikes killed at least 37 people, most of them sheltering in tents, outside the southern Gaza city of Rafah overnight and on Tuesday — pummeling the same area where strikes triggered a deadly fire days earlier in a camp for displaced Palestinians — according to witnesses, emergency workers and hospital officials.

The tent camp inferno has drawn widespread international outrage, including from some of Israel’s closest allies, over the military’s expanding offensive into Rafah. And in a sign of Israel’s growing isolation on the world stage, Spain, Norway and Ireland formally recognized a Palestinian state on Tuesday.

The Israeli military suggested Sunday’s blaze in the tent camp may have been caused by secondary explosions, possibly from Palestinian militants’ weapons. The results of Israel’s initial probe into the fire were issued Tuesday, with military spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari saying the cause of the fire was still under investigation but that the Israeli munitions used — targeting what the army said was a position with two senior Hamas militants — were too small to be the source.

The strike or the subsequent fire could also have ignited fuel, cooking gas canisters or other materials in the camp. The blaze killed 45 Palestinians, according to Gaza health officials’ count. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the fire was the result of a “tragic mishap.”

Israel’s assault on Rafah, launched May 6, spurred more than 1 million people to flee the

city, the U.N. agency helping Palestinian refugees said Tuesday. Most were already displaced multiple times in the nearly eight-month war between Israel and Hamas. Families are now scattered across makeshift tent camps and other war-ravaged areas.

The strikes over the past few days have hit areas west of Rafah, where the military had not ordered civilians to evacuate. Israeli ground troops and tanks have been operating in eastern Rafah, in central parts of the city, and along the Gaza-Egypt border.

Shelling late Monday and early Tuesday hit Rafah’s western Tel al-Sultan district, killing at least 16 people, the Palestinian Civil Defense and the Palestinian Red Crescent said. Seven of the dead were in tents next to a U.N. facility about about 200 meters (yards) from the site of Sunday’s fire.

Biden names Kenya a major non-NATO ally during state visit

President Biden welcomed Kenya’s President William Ruto for a state visit on Thursday, a trip aimed at showing his administration wants to deepen U.S. ties with the African continent.

As part of a long list of new agreements with Kenya, Biden announced he plans to designate the country as a major non-NATO ally, which comes with some defense trade benefits.

Kenya will be the first sub-Saharan African nation to receive the designation, which recognizes the country’s contributions to counterterrorism work, and its work leading a multinational force in Haiti.

The Biden administration is backing Kenya’s work in Haiti with funding, equipment and intelligence — but the United States is not contributing forces.

— Asma Khalid, FROM NPR
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED MAY 23, 2024

Vatican apologizes after Pope Francis is accused of using homophobic slur

Pope Francis on Tuesday issued a rare apology after he was accused of using a highly pejorative slur to refer to gay men in a closed-door session with bishops last week.

The pope’s choice of words, reported by major Italian news outlets and confirmed to The Washington Post by a senior Vatican official, appeared to run counter to his efforts to thaw the relationship between the Catholic Church and the LGBTQ+ community. Since he first declared “Who am I to judge?” shortly after becoming pope in 2013, Francis has gone further than any pontiff in building bridges to gay Catholics.

— Anthony Faiola & Stefano Pitrelli, FROM THE WASHINGTON POST
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED MAY 28, 2024

Top UN court orders Israel to stop Rafah offensive

Raffi Berg

FROM BBC NEWS
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED MAY 24, 2024

The UN’s top court, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), has issued a dramatic ruling, ordering Israel to “immediately halt its military offensive in Rafah.”

It acted in support of a South African application last week which sought a number of measures against Israel, accusing it of stepping up what it says is a genocide. Presiding judge Nawaf Salam said the situation in Gaza had deteriorated since the court last ordered Israel to take steps to improve it.

Israel has vehemently denied the allegation and signalled it would ignore any order to halt its operation.

Reading the court’s ruling on Friday, Nawaf Salam said “Israel must immediately halt its military offensive, and any other action in the Rafah Governorate” which could bring about “the physical destruction” of the Palestinians -

alluding to what constitutes genocide under international law.

Israel, he added, must also allow unimpeded access to Gaza to any UN body investigating allegations of genocide.

The ruling also reiterated a requirement for Israel to enable “unhindered provision at scale” of basic services and humanitarian aid for Gaza.

“The humanitarian situation [in Gaza] is now to be characterised as disastrous,” the ruling said.

Israel rejected the court’s ruling and said its military offensive in Gaza was in line with international law.

“Israel has not and will not carry out military operations in the Rafah area that create living conditions that could cause the destruction of the Palestinian civilian population, in whole or in part,” National Security Adviser Tzachi Hanegbi said in a joint statement with the foreign ministry.

War cabinet minister Benny Gantz said Israel would continue

its offensive “wherever and whenever necessary - including in Rafah’.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian ambassador to the UN, Riyad Mansour, hailed the ruling and called for Israel to abide by it.

“We expect that resolutions of the ICJ be implemented without hesitation,” he said. “That’s mandatory. And Israel is party to the convention.”

Following news of the ICJ ruling, the European Union’s top diplomat, Josep Borrell, said the bloc’s commitment to the rule of law and its support for Israel “are going to be quite difficult to make compatible”.

Aid agencies and the UN say insufficient amounts of aid are reaching people in Gaza, which they say is facing famine. The UN suspended food distribution in Rafah on Tuesday because of the perilous situation there. Israel says it has made “extensive efforts” to ensure that humanitarian aid is “flowing into Gaza”.

Iranian president, foreign minister die in helicopter crash

Jon Gambrell

FROM ASSOCIATED PRESS
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED MAY 20, 2024

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and the country’s foreign minister were found dead Monday hours after their helicopter crashed in fog, leaving the Islamic Republic without two key leaders as extraordinary tensions grip the wider Middle East.

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has the final say in the Shiite theocracy, quickly named a little-known vice president as caretaker and insisted the government was in control, but the deaths marked yet another blow to a country beset by pressures at home and abroad.

Iran has offered no cause for the crash nor suggested sabotage brought down the helicopter, which fell in mountainous terrain in a sudden, intense fog.

In Tehran, Iran’s capital, businesses were open and children attended school Monday. However, there was a noticeable presence of

both uniformed and plainclothes security forces.

Later in the day, hundreds of mourners crowded into downtown Vali-e-Asr square holding posters of Raisi and waving Palestinian flags. Some men clutched prayer beads and were visibly crying. Women wearing black chadors gathered together holding photos of the dead leader.

“We were shocked that we lost such a character, a character that made Iran proud, and humiliated the enemies,” said Mohammad Beheshti, 36.

The crash comes as the Israel-Hamas war roils the region. Iran-backed Hamas led the attack that started the conflict, and Hezbollah, also supported by Tehran, has fired rockets at Israel. Last month, Iran launched its own unprecedented drone-and-missile attack on Israel.

A hard-liner who formerly led the country’s judiciary, Raisi, 63, was viewed as a protégé of Khamenei. During his tenure, relations continued to deteriorate

with the West as Iran enriched uranium closer than ever to weapons-grade levels and supplied bomb-carrying drones to Russia for its war in Ukraine.

His government has also faced years of mass protests over the ailing economy and women’s rights.

The crash killed all eight people aboard a Bell 212 helicopter that Iran purchased in the early 2000s, according to the state-run IRNA news agency. Among the dead were Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, the governor of Iran’s East Azerbaijan province, a senior cleric from Tabriz, a Revolutionary Guard official and three crew members, IRNA said.

Iran has flown Bell helicopters extensively since the shah’s era. But aircraft in Iran face a shortage of parts because of Western sanctions, and often fly without safety checks. Against that backdrop, former Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif sought to blame the United States for the crash.

South Africa’s Black elites sour on the president they championed

Cyril Ramaphosa ascended to the presidency of South Africa several years ago carrying the excitement and optimism of the country’s rising Black professionals, who saw themselves in him: a measured businessman with intellectual gravitas. He seemed an antidote to the previous administration, which had blasted Black professionals as elitists complicit in the continued white domination of the economy.

But as voters head to the polls on Wednesday for the most consequential election in South Africa since the end of apartheid 30 years ago, Black professionals represent one of the grave threats to the precarious grip on power held by Mr. Ramaphosa and his party, the African National Congress, or A.N.C.

— John Eligon, FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED MAY 29, 2024

Haiti names new prime minister to try to lead country out of crisis

An experienced international aid official, Garry Conille, was unanimously appointed prime minister of Haiti by a Presidential Transition Council on Tuesday, which tasked him with leading the country out of its current crisis until elections for a new president can be held.

Mr. Conille will take on his new role just as a U.N.-backed security mission led by Kenyan police is scheduled to begin operations in the violence-torn Caribbean nation, which is battling to restore political stability and tackle armed gangs who control large parts of the capital, Port-au-Prince.

Fluent in English, French and Creole, Mr. Conille’s credentials include a 25-year career working for the United Nations and other aid agencies.

— David Adams, FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED MAY 28, 2024

Office of Minority Education to be potentially renamed, undergo organizational changes

OME could be renamed due to "potential organizational changes to the OME, cultural norms, and external scrutiny"

By Alex Tang

A meeting between the MIT Office of Minority Education (OME) and OME-affiliated students took place on May 9. Diep Luu, Associate Dean of the Office of the Vice Chancellor, Director of the Undergraduate Advising Center (UAC), and Interim Director of the OME presented future directions for the OME. A Q&A session followed.

Materials obtained by the Tech indicate that the OME could be set for a number of changes, including a renaming of the office as well as organizational rearrangements with the UAC. These changes come in the wake of a Supreme Court striking down affirmative action and the Institute's recent removal of diversity statements from the faculty hiring process.

Recent developments within the OME and UAC

Founded in 1975, programs initiated by the OME in recent years intended "to meet the changing needs of our students" include Interphase EDGE, Laureates & Leaders, and TSR2. The UAC, on the other hand, was created in 2023 following the Task Force 2021 and Beyond report which called for "implementing change" in the MIT undergraduate academic experience.

The meeting went on to highlight the similarities in the missions of the UAC and OME respectively. Early in 2024, Vice Chancellor Ian Waitz charged Luu with "exploring options for enhancing collaboration and coordination between the OME and UAC." In February 2024, DiOnetta Jones Crayton stepped down from her role as OME Director after leading the office for fourteen years. Luu was subsequently appointed interim OME Director.

Potential "organizational home" and renaming for the OME proposed

Five options regarding the "organizational home" of the OME were presented, of which three were deemed "viable."

All three options shared the movement of the TSR2, an academic assistance and tutoring resource program, into the UAC's academic achievement component. The first option was to retain the OME "as-is" without the TSR2 component. The second was to "establish the OME as the fifth pillar of the UAC." The third was to "incorporate the student belonging efforts under the OME banner within the UAC."

Options were also presented regarding the naming of the OME. Luu cited "potential organizational changes to the OME, cultural norms, and external scrutiny" as reasons.

The options included retaining the current name, changing the words comprising the OME acronym, rebranding the OME without direct reference to terms like "minority," or the creation of an entirely new name or acronym.

Students raise concerns in Q&A session

The Q&A session was marked by questions regarding the potential ramifications of renaming the OFE, the allocation of resources to OME programming in the context of the UAC expanding, and the transparency on the administration's behalf regarding potential changes to the Office.

According to the administration, the intention of renaming of the OME was "to ensure that the OME's purpose is clear to all students, including those who may not immediately identify with the term 'minority.'" They added that a renaming of the OME would "create a more inclusive and supportive environment."

With regards to the programming already led by the OME, the administration stated that the OME current staff count of ten will be preserved, "ensur[ing] continuity in its specialized programming while avoiding any reallocation of resources to support the UAC's expansion." Meanwhile, the UAC is planning to nearly quadruple its staffing. the administration said that such growth on the UAC side "doesn't detract from the OME's resources, but rather presents an opportunity for resource sharing."

An attendee requested that a survey be sent out to the community regarding the changes in the OME, noting a desire "to see clear evidence against any future miscommunications between [the] administration and students." Without providing specifics, the administration stated that "Dr. Luu will discuss the feasibility and implementation of surveys with the Vice Chancellor and Chancellor to determine the most effective approach moving forward."

Seniors pose for photos on Killian Court before Senior Ball, Friday.

Seniors pose for photos on Killian Court before Senior Ball, Friday.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Friendship Reaches Far and Wide

By Russel Ismael
NEWS EDITOR

The Tech is proud to introduce a double Student Spotlight! Zheng and Wide Tim were asked to pause and reflect on their time at MIT, what they enjoyed, and what they intend to do next! From the birth of Wide Tim to whatever’s gnawing at them, this one has it all. Yes, sleeping spot suggestions are also included!
These interviews have been edited for length and clarity.

Wide Tim

You mentioned majoring in Courses 0 and π . What is that, and how long do you expect it to take you?

Course 0 is about Sleeping, and Course π is about eating! I’m already kind of an expert on those subjects myself. I’ve been here three years, but I think I will graduate in at least one more year.

It’s hard enough being a three-year-old in this university completing all of these classes, but I’m also thinking of writing my own thesis, so that might take a few years.

I feel like I would be interested in trying to do a PhD in Deep Sleep and Nutrition. I love MIT and the people here, so I hope MIT accepts me for those programs as a joint major. I really want to learn about what meals bring you the best food coma.

If you had to choose a different Course, what would it be?

It would be Course ∞ because I think what they’re offering aligns with my interests very well! If you don’t know about it, it’s the “Being Wide” major. I want to do that because there’s no limit in how wide I could be!

And once you graduate, what do you want to do?

I still want to be at MIT! I mean, if MIT wants me to, I would be so happy to teach people about Eating and Sleeping. I mean, I think everyone needs those!

If you had to move from your dorm in the sailing pavilion to a residence hall on campus, what would it be?

Other dorms don’t hate me, but I love McCormick. McCormick forever! Although it’s getting renovated. I would say McCormick because my mom lives there, so I have a very emotional tie to it.

Do you have any other family members? Perhaps... Tim the Beaver?

Tim the Beaver? Oh, some people say we’re cousins, and to be honest, I actually don’t know about that either. I think we’re just friends, actually. I’ve known him for quite some time now!

I think every beaver that was drawn at MIT is a part of my family. Some-

one in the admissions office once told me that a thousand people can draw a thousand Tims, so we’re all family! And I have a very big family. I know so many people who have drawn beavers for their own things, so it’s great to have so many people in my family! I’m also glad that we all look different from each other, ha!

What is your favorite activity on campus?

My favorite thing to do is to find a place to wind down so I can sleep and eat. It’s basically a dream come true.

Oh, any suggestions on where to do that?

The Banana Lounge! There’s no place sweeter than the Banana Lounge. The Hayden Library is also pretty good because it’s green, so it’s good for your eyes! I feel like I get to dream about floating in a sea of knowledge there. I don’t know how many of the books and pages I can actually comprehend, but it’s still fun!

How about your favorite memory at MIT?

It’s definitely meeting people at CPW! CPW is a great time for me because I get to meet the prefrosh at MIT. I think more and more people know about me as they come in to become part of this community, so it’s very cool for me to see their perspective coming into MIT. Like, what do they want to see? That brings me a lot of inspiration about something I don’t really know much about.

What were the hardest classes you’ve ever taken at MIT?

Oh, I have an entire list just for this! There was this time in Spring 2022 where I took this elective called 18.1111 which is PEMDAS, which I think is pretty hard. In Spring 2023, there was this class called H20.01A called “Differentiating Water by Taste,” which was also pretty hard for me.

But for classes that I don’t really find hard, but I think other people would find hard is 0.0020: “Falling and Staying Asleep.” It’s a class that meets from 8:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. every day on a weekday. Please go check these out!

Margaret Zheng

Aside from Wide Tim, have you made characters for other organizations?

Well, I think this is very yes or no. Technically, I also drew the beaver that is on the Class of 2023 Brass Rat, which is our class ring. I don’t know if that one serves a similar purpose though. I think that beaver has less of a cartoonish ring to it. It’s basically there, and is like a snapshot of us going through our MIT life and captures a lot of things all at once. On the other hand, maybe Wide Tim is, you know, doing separate things at separate times.

Honestly, character-wise, Wide Tim would be the main character that I worked on. I haven’t really touched on other things. Wide Tim is the first widely—pun intended—recognized character I have created. I’m looking forward to more if I have the chance.

What do you plan on doing now that you have graduated? Do you plan on pursuing art too?

I’m going to stay in Boston for a job, which means MIT isn’t really going to get rid of me just yet. I love MIT, and I’m totally going to come back to visit too. And I think I’m still open to collaborations with student groups and stuff as long as they want to do things with me.

I think my job and artistic pursuits might not be directly related, but I hope that I would have a little bit of free time to do art on the side. I think art will be a very serious part of my life from now on, if it hasn’t already been. It’s also something I figured out in college that is not just a hobby, but something I can make impacts with.

How do you think you can impact your art?

I think different artists have different views on what the purpose of their art is. I feel like most people say that they use art to express themselves, to express some sort of identity. For me, art is a tool to bring people happiness. That is literally the essential, central point. And all I want is for people to look at the things I’ve created and smile for even just two to three seconds.

If they think about good things and think about good memories, then I would say that I achieved my purpose. Before doing Wide Tim, I’ve given people custom birthday cards and the like and drawn in them are caricatures. Other things, like Big_Dijkstra_Energy, are also a way to make people feel happy. I would say that [Big_Dijkstra_Energy] bridges the STEM-focused people and the other people together to create levity in the very stressed lives that we all lead right now.

I think that could take many different forms — it doesn’t need to be just through Wide Tim, it could be something else.

What was your favorite collaboration with another student group?

I feel like there isn’t going to be one, so I will give you several examples.

First of all, I would say that Wide Tim likes to answer people’s prompts. He’ll ask people on his Instagram story about what he should

do next, like “what other shows are there on campus?” Then, some people give me answers, with many of them being creative. In their responses to Wide Tim, they say things like “come drink boba with us in this a capella concert with Perry the Platypus and all of that imaginative stuff!”

I really love it when people give it a narrative. It’s not just Wide Tim who is viewing the narrative — Wide Tim is going through a collective experience that the two parties, me and another group, are thinking to reimagine. That doesn’t really happen on campus, so that’s really cool. As I said, there’s not just one example, and there are so many groups that have done that. I guess something else I really enjoy is when the groups I am personally in have collaborated with Wide Tim, as I know the concepts. For example, I based something on A Midsummer Night’s Dream by Shakespeare, and I drew something for Wide Tim. I was Snug the Lion, so I made Wide Tim a lion, too, and that was really fun.

Wide Tim has done a lot of things with MIT admissions already, so he is kind of like the unofficial CPW photo booth person. Like, there is a Wide Tim cut-out at CPW, and I think it’s really impactful. I’m very honored and grateful that they would want something like Wide Tim to be representing MIT in a way that appeals to pre-frosh. It’s just really fun to see people taking pictures with Wide Tim.

Why is Wide Tim “wide,” anyway?

I wanted a beaver character to represent how welcoming MIT would be to freshmen at the time. Especially since they have spent the entire first semester at home [during the COVID-19 years]. Everybody is dying to find a community or more communities, so it applies to new students as well as old students.

I feel like that part is obviously geared toward freshmen, but also toward everyone who is coming back to campus wanting to see a change after a whole year of, well, sadness.

How long do you expect to do this?

As long as MIT wants to see him around. I don’t want him to go away, and I think Wide Tim is also keeping me mentally afloat in a sense. I’m going to keep going for this too. I don’t think [anyone will take over as Wide Tim’s artist after I graduate], but I might have said something like that. I might have been unsure when I said that two to three years ago.

Why did you create Wide Tim in the first place?

I want Wide Tim to exist so people at MIT are good at not just STEM, but the arts too. It has somewhat turned into that and an advocate for well-being. Once in a while, I will show things like, you know, why Wide Tim’s eating or sleeping, or enjoying his IAP, or laying on a bundle of pillows, or like eating an infinite amount of food.

He exists to remind people that things like sleeping and eating are important. They are the building blocks of what is good research, or good art, or good products. Like, you’ve got to eat or sleep first before you do those!

Institute administration attend the GSU’s TransMIT grievance community meeting

Chua: “Timely solutions are needed for this problem.”

By Russel Ismael
& Alex Tang

On May 15, the Graduate Student Union (GSU) held a “grievance community meeting” for its transgender individuals in response to the Institute’s current policies on legal sex versus gender within its databases. Admin requested the meeting to fully grasp the current policy’s impact.

The admin was represented by Kate Trimble from the Office of the Vice Chancellor and Lauryn McNair from Assistant Dean of Intercultural Engagement for LBGTQ+, Women and Gender Services. Both serve as co-leads for the Gender Identity Initiative under the MIT Institute Community and Equity Office (ICEO).

In an email to The Tech, the GSU wrote that they “initiated the formal grievance procedure process in early March and have since met with MIT at the Step 1 and Step 2 levels.” The grievance stemmed from an incident in late January where a graduate student who had changed their legal sex through the Registrar’s Office found the change “propagated through many systems unrelated to federal reporting and benefits.”

During the Step 1 procedure, Lauren Chua G, the GSU’s Area Chief Steward for School of Engineering and College of Computing, claimed that “MIT categorically denied the existence of any contract violation.” The GSU also escalated to Step 2, which occurs if the grievant is still

“dissatisfied with the answer at Step 1,” inviting other transgender individuals to request MIT to resolve the issues that “affect their daily working conditions and benefits.”

Chua wrote that the “legal sex fields were being conflated with gender data” in the Institute’s information database. Chua noted that the issue was of importance for transgender individuals because “their legal sex marker was not reflective of their gender.”

The GSU stated that legal sex markers affect medical coverage because “legal sex on medical records must be consistent with that on health insurance.” With the case of the aforementioned graduate student, insurance claims cannot be

filed because the sex on the health insurance does not match the one present on their medical record.

Trimble stated that the administration will strive to ensure student confidentiality. However, she cautioned individuals to not expect “extreme confidentiality” because there are limits to how much MIT can reliably secure their information.

Trimble proposed a few solutions to rectify the issues raised by the GSU, including an authentication process for accessing private information and data aggregation that would allow the Institute to answer questions regarding graduation rates or grades without accessing individual records.

Trimble reassured the assembled students that the Institute is there to

provide solutions, and that she will be “happy to listen” about any concerns.

Chua said that although “systems are complicated and decentralized,” that should not be an “excuse to not do the work to maintain data records correctly.” She stated that “timely solutions are needed for this problem” because “simple education on data stewardship does not suffice to maintain an inclusive work environment for trans community members.”

“As a result of our grievance procedure and the community attention on this matter, things are starting to change,” Chua wrote. “There are new sex/gender marker change forms, and newer more definite timelines for improving data systems than when we began this process.”

Physics Professor Or Hen speaks out on campus protests and student conduct

Hen: “Let’s have the harshest debates. Let’s develop scientific tools. Let’s be MIT.”

By **Ellie Montemayor**
PUBLISHER

Editor-in-chief’s note: *This piece touches upon the ongoing war in Palestine, including associated acts of rape and killing.*

Or Hen is the Class of 1956 Career Development Associate Professor of Physics. His lab centers on experimental nuclear and particle physics. Prior to coming to MIT, Hen served for seven years in the Israeli Defense Forces, and is an active member of the campus Israeli community.

The following article is based on an interview between The Tech and Professor Hen on May 28.

On the May 15 and 17 faculty meetings

The conversation with Professor Hen began with a discussion about the executive sessions of the May 15 and May 17 faculty meetings, in which attending faculty members voiced their opinions on the interim suspensions of pro-Palestinian student protestors earlier that week. A motion for the faculty body to officially call for the lifting of the student suspensions was debated at length, and ultimately failed in a 154-191 vote.

Hen stated that the meetings, rather than centering around faculty members’ personal views on the Israel-Palestine conflict, were primarily about appropriate student conduct.

“Many of us have our political views, and they can vary much more than people think. To me, the question has always been about campus,” Hen said. “It’s not about my own personal goals; to me, the issue is that there’s a group of students that wants to voice out their concerns, their opinion about what’s happening in this part of the world... [and] they chose to do that [also] in ways that are unacceptable.”

Hen described the methods that pro-Palestinian student demonstrators used to protest the administration and the Israeli intervention in Palestine — such as interrupting classes and research groups, holding unapproved rallies and marches, and obstructing campus events and building entryways — as having come at the expense of other students who do not share the same views. “We have to live together with all the ethnicities and all the political points of view. We have to have some common mission here of research and education, and we cannot let a disagreement take over our interactions,” he said.

Hen claimed that pro-Palestinian students ostracized and refused to interact with their pro-Israeli peers in social situations, further commenting on some student-organized social events that allowed entry only to students who shared the organizers’ political leanings on the conflict. He added that, just as many faculty members are still able to collaborate on a professional basis, students should learn to create and maintain “cordial co-living” environments.

On protestors’ “disregard” for campus rules

Hen believes a “disregard [for] campus rules” was the rationale for the administration’s decision regarding the encampment and student discipline.

“You can’t systematically just go around and do whatever you want. And the feeling many of us got in the last 8 months is that, that’s what’s going on,” Hen said.

He pointed to blockades

of Lobby 7 and the Stata Center garage, as well as the occurrences of other rallies and protests on campus spaces without adhering to clearly-delineated rules for protest and expression. These rules, based on details set in the MIT Student Organization Handbook and communicated in emails to the MIT community. Such measures have been strictly enforced by the administration as unregistered protests continued to occur: in February, the student group Coalition Against Apartheid was suspended and in recent weeks dozens of pro-Palestinian student protestors have received interim suspensions.

The reason for the necessity of adhering to campus policy, Hen says, is that “what seems peaceful to one individual” — as pro-Palestinian student protestors have defended their protests as being “peaceful” in nature” — “is not peaceful to another.”

Although major acts of physical confrontation did not materialize, Hen described a different kind of violence he saw as being perpetrated by members of the encampment. “The fact you are not beating somebody up or physically blocking them — it can still be a very violent act towards some people,” he said. “You might not notice it, but the message you are sending could actually be very violent to somebody else.”

Hen added, “We have rules that are meant to make sure that we don’t do these things, even unintentionally.”

Still, he commended the encampment for how it, at times, brought in community. “At times, it was a very beautiful place. I went there a bunch of times [and I saw] kids sitting and playing music and learning about each others’ culture and talking... and why not? Jews 4 Ceasefire had their own version of the Passover Seder — that’s not the one I would take, but they’re celebrating their own way.”

Hen then noted that despite the community that formed around the encampment, which pro-Palestinian student protestors had touted as a point of legitimacy during its occupancy of Kresge Oval, that “the second a line has been crossed, there’s a problem. And lines have been crossed.”

He drew parallels between ongoing debates regarding pro-Palestinian protestors’ chants for death to “Zionism” as opposed to “Zionists” with the issue of the concept of LGBTQ+ identity versus LGBTQ+-identifying individuals, further clarifying that “you shouldn’t call for death... That’s just not right.”

On the term “genocide”

Hen then spoke on the use of the term “genocide” by pro-Palestinian demonstrators to refer to the Israeli intervention in Gaza. To date, nearly 40,000 Palestinians and over 1,000 Israelis have been reportedly killed as a result of the ongoing war between Hamas and the Israeli military.

“First of all, the first thing I would look for [when identifying an act of genocide] is that you would be targeting civilians — that you would literally go to where there is only civilians and start shooting. All I know about what the Israeli army did, and I know it from people on the ground, is that it is not that,” Hen said.

Hen pointed to the difference between the ongoing war in Gaza, which reportedly has a 2:1 civilian-to-militant casualty



COURTESY OF OR HEN

Professor of Physics Or Hen speaking to a crowd of pro-Israeli protestors during a pro-Israeli counter-protest on May 3.

ratio, and previous wars and military engagements that averaged a figure closer to 9:1. “Assuming the numbers quoted to me are correct, it means that there is a lot of due diligence being done, more so than in other wars that again have nine civilians over every involved person,” he said.

“Still, 2:1 is two too many,” Hen added.

On war and ceasefire

Before coming to MIT, Hen served seven years in the Israeli Defense Forces. “Almost every Israeli in the campus served in the IDF. There’s a mandatory draft law, it’s not a choice,” he said. “I spent seven years in the IDF — I’m very proud of myself for that.”

When it came to witnessing pro-Palestinian chants against the Israeli military and its members, Hen felt personally attacked. “To compare me to the KKK? Do you know about me?” he asked, rhetorically.

Hen noted that disagreements with military engagement as a generality were appropriate but that it was inappropriate for students to make comparisons with other groups or individuals. “You’re telling me,” he said, referring to the pro-Palestinian student protestors, “who might be your teacher next semester, that you view me as the KKK? Really, do you know me? Have you talked to me? Do you know what my politics are? Do you know what I think about the war?”

He also clarified his own stance on the war in Gaza, stating that he is personally in favor of a ceasefire. “I just think returning the hostages must be part of that,” he added.

On civil discourse

Hen also discussed ways in which discourse between pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli perspectives could be held moving forward. “Before getting into the details of things, we have to have a different discourse. We have to agree on some ground rules for how we live together alongside disagreement,” Hen said.

He also pointed to the Mind & Hand Book as a suitable source of guidelines for campus conduct.

In acknowledging the complexity of debate surrounding the Israel-Palestine conflict, Hen said that, “I think first of all, we need to kind of agree on maybe the rules of debate.”

“I would never say that I’m happy that an innocent Palestin-

ian died. I would acknowledge the complexity, but I would say that it’s never okay to target an individual. I would say that it’s really hard and I would like to learn more myself about how you make the decision about [targeting] a terrorist when you know that there could be civilians around,” he said.

“It’s really hard. But I also expect the other side to not tell me that ‘resistance is justified’ by any means. It’s not. Nothing in this world, in my mind, is justified by any means.”

Hen then described a personal frustration regarding how pro-Palestinian student protestors have failed to engage in a significant response to concerns shared by pro-Israeli students of rape-supporting and Hamas apologetics by proxy.

He noted that “the reason [the pro-Israeli students] say that is because of the CAA posts and support values and taking Hamas pictures and the PFLP [Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine] symbol being hung.” Both Hamas and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine are designated as terrorist organizations by the United States and the European Union.

“Now it could be that it’s not true and it’s all a misunderstanding,” he commented, “[so] use your words to correct me. Put out a statement that says, ‘we don’t accept all these things’ ... And the other side would say, ‘good, thank you for clarifying that this is not where you stand and let’s move on.’”

On the response of the administration

When asked about his stance on the administration’s response to suspend pro-Palestinian student protestors, Hen stated his support for the decision, saying that “I think it was not a choice... I mean, they tried everything else.”

“At the end of the day, you have to own up to your actions,” he said. “I think anything below that is disrespectful to [the disciplined students]. They are adults.”

Hen noted that following the action to suspend students, he agreed that the administration should continue to stand by it — even if the demonstrators had chosen to voluntarily take down the encampment. He views each action taken by the administration as “setting a precedent,” and that overturning the suspensions

at this point would cause a loss of respect for similar decisions in the future.

“If there was an argument that, ‘you [took] the encampment down, now [the interim suspension] is not needed anymore,’ that doesn’t work out because that’s the precedent you’re setting,” Hen said.

On upholding a higher standard in the community

Finally, Hen discussed a need for students — both pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli — to begin focusing on repairing the rifts formed in the aftermath of campus events.

He shared an example of his own experiences with family: “I’ve been with my wife since we were twenty — [we’ve been together for] fifteen, sixteen years... If she and I focused entirely on the aspects we disagreed on, we would get divorced in a millisecond.”

“Living in a place like MIT, especially for students. I get to go home at the end of the day. But for students who live here so intimately in the dorms, we have to develop the ability to look beyond the things we disagree on; otherwise, you divorce,” he said. “That’s what’s happening in this term — [the pro-Palestinian student protestors] split the community, they drove everybody that’s in-between crazy... And then, we ended up with the administration doing something that none of us wanted to see.”

He added: “who wants to see students get suspended here? None of us are happy with it. I think it was the right thing to do, I don’t think there was any alternative. Pushing the system to the point where the system felt they had to do that, there was no other way, otherwise we really risk violence here.”

Following a semester of escalating conflict between the pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli students, Hen called on the community to hold each other accountable.

“Let’s have the harshest debates. Let’s develop scientific tools. Let’s be MIT. I’ve been here for 10 years — this is not what I know to be MIT. I don’t feel like I’m walking at MIT; I feel like I’m walking a bizarre reality that isn’t MIT, and that’s sad in my mind,” he said.

“I do think that at MIT, at the end of the day, I want us to hold ourselves to a higher standard.”



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2024

*Fulfill your professional dreams,
and continue to remain
at the forefront of knowledge*



LEARN. TRANSFORM. ADVANCE.

MIT Professional Education is a global leader in technology and engineering education for working professionals pursuing career advancement, and for organizations seeking to meet modern-day challenges. Our programs are offered in a range of formats—in-person (on-campus, hybrid and live virtual), online, and through blended approaches to meet the needs of today’s learners.

➤ **SHORT PROGRAMS**

Over 40 courses in two-to-five-day sessions are delivered on-campus or in a live remote format, primarily in the summer. These intensive courses provide the most up-to-date insight to succeed in a rapidly changing technological world.

➤ **ONLINE PROGRAMS**

Offered year round in six languages (including English), these five-to-ten-week online-blended programs provide convenient access to MIT expertise from anywhere in the world, helping a diverse set of learners fill critical skills gaps through collaborative online-learning experiences supplemented with real-time practitioner-oriented instruction.

➤ **PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS**

These programs of concentration allow professionals to deepen their expertise within a field by completing a group of courses in an accelerated format. They include Machine Learning & AI, Energy and Sustainability, Digital Transformation, Design & Manufacturing, Industry 4.0, Innovation & Technology, Data Science, Biotechnology & Life Sciences, Legal Tech, Real Estate Finance & Development, and Technology Leadership.

➤ **ADVANCED STUDY PROGRAM**

The Advanced Study Program (ASP) offers professionals (and select non-MIT graduate students) the chance to apply for and attend regular MIT full-semester for credit classes on campus without having to enroll in an MIT degree program.

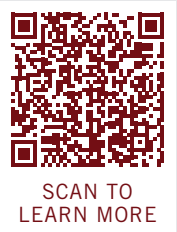
➤ **INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS**

Generally 2-5 days long, courses are offered in international locations to allow local learners to gain MIT knowledge in topics that are relevant to the regions they live in.

➤ **CUSTOM PROGRAMS**

Customized programs, tailored to address an organization’s specific training needs, are taught by MIT faculty on campus or at a location of the organization.

TRANSFORMING EDUCATION FOR LEARNERS AROUND THE WORLD



To explore all of our programs,
visit professional.mit.edu or email us
at professional.education@mit.edu

DANCE REVIEW

A Timeless Classic: Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater performs for Celebrity Series of Boston

AAADT celebrates the 50th anniversary of Ailey’s Revelations

Alvin Ailey
American Dance
Theater (AAADT)

Presented by Celebrity
Series of Boston

May 3, 2024

Boch Center Wang
Theatre

By Vivian Hir
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

From May 2 to May 5, 2024, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (AAADT) performed at the Boch Center as the concluding program for the Celebrity Series of Boston’s 2023-2024 season. The repertoire for the May 3rd performance included Alonzo King’s Following the Subtle Current Upstream, Ronald K. Brown’s Dancing Spirit, and Alvin Ailey’s classic Revelations. Although each work had distinct choreography and background music, what brought them together was the dancers’ stunning

movements and dynamic energies.

Following The Subtle Current Upstream was notable for the dancer’s effortless movements, a reflection of the title’s reference to water. The dancers’ movements flowed well, especially their pirouettes. What made the dance mesmerizing was how natural the performers were, as their movements had a slight improvisational feel. Despite having individual movements, the group looked cohesive without seeming overly rehearsed.

Although the dance did not follow a traditional melody, the percussive effects and the variations in tempo and rhythm made the dance energetic. All of this energy built up to the climax, in which the lights focus on the center and shine on the solo dancer, who suddenly froze in a pose. Right after the end of the performance, the audience broke into a loud round of applause followed by cheers. Overall, the choreography’s dynamic and cyclical nature perfectly captured the idea of the soul’s power and resiliency from a passage in the Bhagavad Gita, which was found in the program book.

Next was Dancing Spirit, a work that felt slow and uneventful in the beginning. Over time, however, the piece developed momentum and became more engaging. One memorable part of Dancing Spirit was the

female soloist’s part—she danced freely in circles, and her wide skirt and long cuffs had a billowy quality. Another aspect that made this work compelling to watch was the co-existence of the bursts of unrestrained energy combined with elegance. This interesting dichotomy was present when the group quickly rotated their heads, which created a dizzying effect that was captivating at the same time. Towards the end, the quick-paced jazz music contributed to a lively atmosphere that made dancing feel enticing, whether it was the side-to-side movements or their smooth grooves.

The last work was Revelations, which began with “The Pilgrim of Sorrow,” a movement that had an amazing opening because of the group’s engrossing pose and formation. In “I’ve Boked,” the entire group was close together, their arms stretching outwards and faces staring upwards towards the light as if they were searching for spiritual guidance. The movement was pensive for its slow and graceful nature, which made the dance emotionally moving. Likewise, the intimate duet in “Fix Me, Jesus” finely encapsulated vulnerability at its darkest times, and the gospel music helped to further reinforce this theme.

After the first segment was “Take Me to Water,” a section that significantly con-

trasts the previous one for being more light-hearted and animated. “Wade in the Water” stood out for using long pieces of blue and white cloth that dancers repeatedly moved up and down to represent the movement of waves, with dancers moving along to the catchy and upbeat lyrics. On the other hand, “I Wanna Be Ready” was iconic for the contemplative and impressive solo, as the male dancer appeared to be levitating off the ground.

Revelations closed off well with “Move, Members, Move” as the last segment of the work. In “Rocka My Soul in the Bosom of Abraham,” the last movement, the dancers clapped to the music’s beat, creating a ripple effect in which the entire audience came together to clap along, allowing the experience to feel more interactive. As a whole, watching Revelations was refreshing because of Ailey’s creative and original incorporation of African American music, like gospel and blues, into modern dance, making Revelations a timeless work worth watching again.

From Alvin Ailey’s 50-year-old Revelations to 21st-century works, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater’s performance was unforgettable for exploring the wide array of emotions and experiences found throughout the ups and downs of life.

EVENT REVIEW

Nicholas D. Kristof talks about chasing hope as a journalist

The New York Times journalist shares insights from his new memoir

Chasing Hope: A
Reporter’s Life

Nicholas D. Kristof

First Parish Church,
Cambridge

May 16, 2024

By Vivian Hir & Russel Ismael
EDITORS

On Thursday, May 16, renowned American journalist Nicholas D. Kristof talked about his first memoir, Chasing Hope: A Reporter’s Life, with former Harvard President Drew Gilpin Faust as the talk’s moderator. The event took place at the First Parish Church and was hosted by the Harvard Book Store. A New York Times Opinion columnist and two-time Pulitzer Prize winner, Kristof has written extensively about foreign affairs, specifically human rights issues and global conflict.

Chasing Hope is about Kristof’s experiences as a journalist covering important events and issues around the world, from the Tiananmen Square protests to the Darfur genocide. Although the memoir discusses many heavy topics, it is also about Kristof’s search for hope and humanity in the most unexpected places.

The book talk began with Faust asking Kristof, “Why write a memoir, and why now?” Kristof responded that he wanted to encourage more people to care about issues such as genocide and poverty, as well as increase advocacy for these causes. A lot of stories in Chasing Hope involve high-risk situations, such as being held at gunpoint, which made Faust ask Kristof about how to confront danger. Despite the risks that come with journalism, what motivates Kristof to go to places like Darfur is the de-

sire to write a story as a way to “fight back,” citing journalism as a powerful tool to increase accountability and awareness.

Continuing on the challenges of journalism, Kristof shared times he faced major ethical dilemmas in his career, especially the extent to which journalists should maintain an emotional distance from people. One compelling story he shared was that one of his sources was in jail and wanted Kristof to help him escape China. Although Kristof was aware that he was not supposed to provide help for professional reasons, ultimately, Kristof helped him. Kristof acknowledged the gray areas regarding transparency and boundaries, concluding, “if I was transparent with readers, they may agree or disagree, but I am not covering it up.”

Following the ethical challenges in journalism was a discussion on Kristof’s transition from news to opinion. News articles are typically associated with mere objectivity and facts. Kristof, however, argued that to a certain degree, there is opinion in news articles. He used his news reporting of the Tiananmen Square massacre as an example, saying that opposed the Chinese military killing students. Reflecting on the transition, Kristof said there is “more autonomy in opinion,” as he finds more ways to reach a wider audience.

Going along the lines of Kristof’s work as an opinion columnist, Faust asked how he “reshaped opinion journalism.” Traditionally, opinion journalism was about government and politics. On the other hand, Kristof covers issues that are overlooked and focuses on the stories of individuals, such as the repercussions of China’s One Child Policy on women. Kristof said that he writes more about society as a whole in his opinion articles, eloquently stating that “history isn’t just about what kings do in the capital, but also how society unfolds.”

While Kristof’s main focus as a journalist is global issues, his memoir also goes into great depth about domestic issues, notably “deaths of despair” that afflict the American working class. Growing up in rural Oregon,

Kristof personally knows many people who died from deaths of despair. Poignant and vulnerable, Kristof shared stories of his childhood friends who ended up succumbing to drug and alcohol abuse. He opined that people tend to overlook these domestic issues, allowing these tragedies to unfold more and more.

From his time in Oregon, Faust brought up Kristof’s descriptions of Oregon and its inhabitants and asked if his words could accurately paint the color of their lives. Kristof said sharing his descriptions is hard, as he has known some people in Oregon during his formative years, from cross-country teammates to girls at school dances. He also humorously stated that despite his efforts to not “piss off” the people he knows, Kristof understands that he will eventually do so anyway. Such was the case when he somberly told the audience about the mistake he made writing about his friend who passed away, which frustrated the friend’s mom.

Faust also eventually asked how Kristof remained optimistic after all of the harrowing experiences he talked about. Although Kristof has witnessed many acts of human cruelty and evil, he believes that courage and resilience can exist in the midst of these atrocities. A case that stuck with Kristof regarding human evil was when he was in the Congo and saw warlords massacring the people there. However, this evil was balanced by the dichotomy he saw in a Polish nun running a feeding center to save people as a force of good.

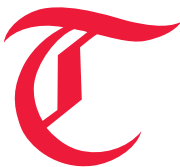
Because of this, Kristof admitted that his optimism is a “scarred optimism”; he draws inspiration from Desmond Tutu, a South African theologian who fought Apartheid, and his principles of self-efficacy and resilience—embodied by the Polish nun. He further discussed how many things have changed in his lifetime for the better, citing statistics that show a significant decrease in global poverty and child mortality rates over the past 40 years. Although this does not address current societal challenges, he suggested that the audience consider the

“backdrop” and the “big picture” of this climate, as “our capacity to fight back and address challenges” will persist.

After Kristof’s talk, a Q&A session followed from the audience. One audience member asked Kristof about his stance on phones and social media and how they affect journalism. Kristof stated that he had mixed thoughts on the subject, as social media led to the proliferation of misinformation. He gave the case of how Facebook influenced people to burn villages in Myanmar during the Rohingya refugee crisis, as many people saw that as a reprisal for a fabricated sexual assault story. He also acknowledged the good that comes from such technologies, as both led to more widespread coverage of issues like women’s rights in countries like Iran, which represses them.

Kristof was also asked how he psychologically prepares himself for the atrocities he will witness. He said that the most difficult aspect is returning to his family and trying to forget what he saw. He also described how he used wilderness therapy to keep his mind off the atrocities but admitted that his mind sometimes wanders back to the “people he left behind.” He thinks about the people who helped him in his journeys, from interpreters to drivers, and how he fears his stories will put them at more risk. Kristof clarified that although it is easy for him to accept the risks he takes for himself, he finds it horrible to impose that same risk on other people who may not hold the same reservations.

Near the end of his talk, Kristof described Chasing Hope as a “love letter to journalism” and the importance of providing accountability and holding truth to power. He reminded the audience why journalism should be respected as an institution, as it forces people to consider the difficult problems around the world, at home, and in the gray areas between. Despite the gravity of the topics, Kristof left the audience and readers thinking about the hope that comes from understanding humanity more deeply and profoundly.



Do you think YOU can fit the page better than we did?

Join Production, Get Paid, Eat Dinner!

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Omakase Rock-N-Roll

Colin Lynch’s Lighthearted Omakase Packs a Serious Punch

By **Teddy Schoenfeld**
STAFF WRITER

If it weren’t for the menu plastered onto the glass inside beside the door, I would have thought I’d taken a wrong turn. The exposed HVAC, service elevator, and concrete steps suggested I was in a parking garage, but the ocean-themed wall art snaking down the stairs and the music wafting up from several stories below told me I was in the right place.

I followed the music down several flights and emerged into a lively tropical bar complete with string lights, a disco ball, and a full slate of tropical drinks. Patrons chatted over cocktails like Tomb of the Merfolk and the Maelstrom. The bar teemed with convivial thirtysomethings.

I was led further into the depths of the building, past the bathrooms and around a corner to a nondescript door. I emerged into a small room with nine seats and a sushi counter filled with boxes of pre-cut sashimi and garnishes. The space felt both relaxed and intimate; everyone sat within a few arms’ length of each other and made quiet conversation.

No Relation is Boston restaurateur Colin Lynch’s passion project. Lynch trained under Boston culinary icon Barbara Lynch at restaurants like No. 9 Park and Menton, steering Menton to a James Beard nomination for “Best New Restaurant.” In 2016, he opened Bar Mezzana with his wife Heather and former colleague Jefferson Macklin in the burgeoning South End.

“[When] we opened Bar Mezzana seven years ago, [we] weren’t looking to open another restaurant at the time,” says Lynch. A developer tried to pitch him on a vacant space across the street from Bar Mezzana, but he didn’t like the idea of opening another street-facing restaurant that would compete with his already successful flagship. But once he heard that the adjacent basement was available, he became intrigued by the idea of opening a subterranean bar. That bar became Shore Leave, a tropical-themed oasis two floors below William Mullins Way. But what would go in the smaller, more intimate space in the back of the bar? “Sushi.”

Lynch drew inspiration from an experience at one particular restaurant. “It all kind of stemmed from being in the Upper East Side in New York at a place called Tenoshi,” says Lynch. In a category of restaurants dominated by wildly expensive, humorless experiences, Colin was guided by one question: “How are we going to make this feel a little more rock-n-roll?”

Colin’s answer is unexpected: emphasizing hospitality, hip-hop, and lots of sake. Outkast, 50 Cent, and Nelly played as I selected a junmai daiginjo from the extensive selection. As the first course was being prepared, I got to know my neighbors. East Coast transplants Julia and Sam told me about their upcoming travel plans to Japan. Bostonians Rachel and Justin went to college at nearby Stonehill and just had their first child. In this small, underground room, making friends was easy.

No Relation isn’t trying to emulate the omakase counters of Tokyo or New York. Many of those are austere, and the most traditional—the edomae-style counters—strictly abide by three rules: sugar-free sushi rice, exclusive use of Akazu red vinegar, and fish sourced only from Tokyo Bay. Even wearing perfume is frowned upon for its interference with the meticulously prepared flavors.

No Relation forgoes many of these traditional guidelines. A map plastered with magnetic numbers, each indicating where the fish for the corresponding course originates, sits center stage behind the chefs; Lynch is proud that his ingredients come from all over the world.

Every piece told its own story. The lubina was clean and let the shiso and ume garnishes shine. The madai was smoky and sweet with a well-executed bit of spice. Shima aji with uni and onion exploded with umami. Secondary flavors play an extensive role—many bites showcase yuzu or soy onion as much as toro or hiramasa. The masa exploded with Thai spices, and the kamasu was smoky and acidic. It became clear that the fish was not only the main event, but a canvas to be explored.

The meal ended with a delicate chawan-mushi, a traditional Japanese egg custard typically served towards the end of set-menu meals. This rendition was delectably light and embroidered with small chunks of crab.

Does your name start with Jo?

Join the Jo’s at The Tech!

join@tech.mit.edu

Josephine Yu, ’20
Senior Editor

Jordan Harrod, G
Science Editor

Joanna Lin, ’22
Production Editor

Johnson Huynh, ’21
Associate Arts Editor

Jocelyn Shen, ’22
Science Writer

Joanne Yuan, ’22
Science Writer

Jocasta Manasseh-Lewis, ’21
News Writer

Residence for Voting Purposes: Students

When you first move to Cambridge as a new student, you can still lawfully vote at your parents’ residence rather than your dorm¹—as long as you “consider [their] residence to be [your] home.”² *Home* is used here in a technical sense to mean “the center of a person’s domestic, social, and civil life” for “at least the time being.”³

How can you tell when it’s time to begin registering and voting in Massachusetts?

- MIT or Cambridge has become the center of your private, social, and public life.
- You have more “religious, social, and political affiliations” with groups here than with groups in your original community.
- You “habitually sleep” here.³

If so, print out a Massachusetts voter registration form and mail it in!²

1. Brief in Opposition, *Texas State LULAC v. Torres*, No. 22-809 (Supreme Court, Oct. 2, 2023).
2. “Mail-in Form Reminder,” Online Voter Registration System, Secretary of the Commonwealth.
3. Elections Division, Secretary of the Commonwealth, *Residence for Voting Purposes* (2017).

James Herms MtE ’87, a member of Cambridge Ward 5’s Democratic ward committee, represents the interests of the Massachusetts Democratic Party (**MassDems**) at the MIT-Cambridgeport neighborhood level. (Ward 5 was reconfigured in 2021 to incorporate 11 of MIT’s 19 residence halls.)

Ward committees perform two services: (a) educating voters of all ages; and (b) promoting the party’s objectives. These include “better resources to support law enforcement, firefighters, and additional first responders”; “an end to racial and religious profiling”; “accountability ... for use of excessive force, especially against targeted ethnic groups”; and “stricter compliance with the Massachusetts Freedom of Information Act.”

I periodically canvass the MIT neighborhood and register its residents to vote here. I also help students monitor MIT’s and Cambridge’s efforts to “*promote public safety and reduce crime*”—mostly by compiling and distributing **police-and-fire incident logs**. Like this one:

MIT Campus Incident Log: Fall 2023

A total of forty-one bike thefts and ten scooter thefts were reported last fall, including six at the **Building 26** racks (60 Vassar St Rear). Six wallets and four laptops also were reported stolen.

Sept. 20, 7:07 p.m., **Vassar Street bike path**. Assault & battery following a dispute over an illegally parked vehicle.

Oct. 16, 3:05 a.m., **Stratton Center** (84 Mass Ave, floor 1). Daniel M.T. (37, white male, unhoused, of Silver Spring, Md.) arrested on outstanding warrants. The suspect’s case records include charges of disorderly intoxication (2022, Fla.) and public disturbance (2023, Md.).

Nov. 6, 6:15 p.m., **Vassar Street** near Steinbrenner Stadium. A cyclist and a scooter driver, both students, crashed into each other.

Nov. 9, 11:10 a.m., **Building 7** (77 Mass Ave, lobby). A&B. In a conversation November 13, Sergeant Dave O’Connor described this incident as “simple battery” (touching with intent to cause offensive contact) and said the victim, a counterprotester, asked police to document it, not to press charges.

Nov. 14, 5:20 p.m., **Vassar Street** at Amherst Alley. Cyclist turning left got hit by an overtaking car.

Nov. 15, 11:01 a.m., **Building 6** (182 Memorial Dr Rear, floor 3). 500 mL of potassium hydroxide solution spilled on a lab researcher. Police and EHS responded. So did two Cambridge Fire engines, a ladder truck, a deputy chief, a hazmat truck, a tactical paramedic rig, and a Pro EMS ambulance, using lights and sirens. MIT’s hazmat spill response contractor also arrived, to clean up the scene.*

*Cambridge Fire, *CAD Incident Rep. No. 23110962; NFIRS Incident No. 23006660*. Cf. MIT Chemistry, “Safety.” “Quickly remove all contaminated clothing ... while using the safety shower.”

Dec. 1, 9:28 a.m., **Building 9** (105 Mass Ave). Assault & battery.

Dec. 1, 9:29 a.m., **Harvard Bridge** (0 Mass Ave). Yeshaq A.W. (38, black male, of Roxbury) arrested on outstanding warrants. The suspect’s case records include multiple charges of trespass and assault (2023, Colo.).

Dec. 6, 12:09 a.m., **Stratton Center** (84 Mass Ave). Remy U.M. (36, black male, unhoused, of Cambridge) arrested on suspicion of trespass. This suspect has no known criminal record.

Dec. 17, 9:46 p.m., **Building 3** (33 Mass Ave Rear). Josiah R.T. (24, black male, unhoused, of Cleveland) arrested on suspicion of trespass and open & gross lewdness. The suspect’s criminal records include charges of misdemeanor B&E, damaging property, and resisting arrest (Dec. 22, 2023, Somerville).

Dec. 18, 5:00 p.m., **Building W92** (204 Vassar St). Hit-and-run.

Sources include MIT Police, *Fire and Police Log*; and Cambridge Police, “Daily Log.”

By **James Herms MtE ’87** | May 29, 2024 @jherms herms@alum.mit.edu

Advertisement paid for by James Herms

SPEAKER EVENT

Catalyzing medical innovation

For the first time, MIT’s Catalyst Fellowship welcomes undergraduates to participate in healthcare needs identification through a PKG IAP program.

By **Karie Shen**
SCIENCE EDITOR

For MIT undergraduates, the Independent Activities Period (IAP) might involve a restful month at home, a research internship, or an ice skating class for physical education requirements. This year, a brand-new opportunity fell into the lap of a few students: Catalyst, a program at MIT geared towards accelerating health innovation.

Typically, the people who participate in Catalyst – known as Fellows – already have full-time careers as physicians, researchers, professors, engineers, or business leaders and work on Catalyst alongside their day jobs. In January 2024, Catalyst welcomed five undergraduate students to participate through a new IAP offering from the Priscilla King Gray (PKG) Public Service Center.

Amie Kitjasateanphun ’27, one of the five PKG scholars, was initially unsure about joining the program as it was not clinical work, like she had initially envisioned partaking in as a pre-medical student. Being part of Catalyst quickly changed her mind, and she continued to work with the other fellows throughout the semester. “Having these research skills are valuable,” she stated in an interview with The Tech. “I was also interested in exploring more about medical devices and innovation.”

Every January, a new cohort of Catalyst fellows begins a six-month needs identification process involving brainstorming issues, researching, interviewing stakeholders, pitching to faculty, and re-evaluating. After this first phase, the fellows begin to develop their solutions, which can be physical products or intangible solutions. According to their website, around 50% of projects advance to commercial development, compared to MIT’s overall 15% average.

Martha Gray PhD ’86, director of MIT linQ, the umbrella initiative of Catalyst and other biomedical innovation programs, stated in an interview with The Tech that “needs identification” is a common feature of many innovation programs, but it is a matter of “degree and emphasis.” Rather than coming in to create a startup or even create a solution, the first six months are

completely dedicated to defining an unmet need in the healthcare sector. According to Gray, the starting point at Catalyst is never about determining whether there is a market or what price a technology should be set at. “At MIT, we’re proud of how well we solve problems,” Gray states, “but that really depends on making sure that the problem is actually worth solving.” This is a principle that drives Catalyst fellows.

Gha Young Lee, a fellow and MD-PhD candidate at Harvard Medical School and MIT, stated in an interview with The Tech, “I thought I was going to go in and start solutioning something very early on. That’s what a lot of people expect from innovation programs, and it was the opposite. We spend so much time being very sure that this is a real need.”

Lee, Kitjasateanphun, and the other fellows spend much of their time researching and conducting stakeholder interviews, such as with medical specialists who work with a particular patient population or chief science officers at medical device companies. They also meet with Catalyst mentors, which include clinical practitioners, entrepreneurs and businesspeople, and MIT professors.

Not every idea, however, is viable, and there are inevitably dead ends. “It’s a very iterative process,” Kitjasateanphun stated, reflecting on a cycle of trying things out, realizing they don’t work, and going back to the drawing board. “There’s a lot that you learn each time that you go through that process.”

“It does force you to be nimble in your mind,” Gray states, as it is hard for people to let go of an idea they are passionate about when the data points in a different direction. “But in retrospect, people are glad they did it, because then they land on something, and then we can reflect a little bit more dispassionately about pivots along the way.”

Nancy Steele, a mentor of Catalyst with a background in business development in biopharmaceuticals at Pfizer, emphasized in an interview with The Tech how critical it is to prove that there is a need, that the idea would be “welcomed and even enthusiastically greeted by the realities of a hospital, a physician’s office, or a patient’s home.” In the healthcare innovation sector, Steele stated, “The battlefield

is littered with well-intentioned products and services and digital apps. There was nothing wrong with the idea, it’s just that there wasn’t really a strongly felt need to replace what you’re already doing.” Rather, the Catalyst program stresses thoroughly verifying a need in the field before attempting to create a solution.

Lee states that while the iterations can be frustrating at times, “my perspective is that if this happened now, then if we had just gone ahead and made solutions for it, it would have happened anyway. So it’s a very good idea to deep dive earlier, instead of realizing later that we spent all the time for something that might not have a market.”

Lee shared that the fellows who are physicians, medical students, or nurses often draw from their patient experiences to come up with gaps in areas such as pacemakers, lung biopsies, and PTSD. For example, one of the problems she is investigating involves aspiration pneumonia, a problem she witnessed in post-stroke dysphagia patients during her clinical rotations. Dysphagia, or the inability to swallow, can lead to large amounts of food being inhaled, which can cause lung infections. It happens “quite frequently,” Lee stated, but “we just accept that there’s dysphagia.” It was “very frustrating and heart-breaking to see because a lot of people pass from having aspiration pneumonia.”

A first-year undergraduate, Kitjasateanphun shared that “it was a little bit scary because the fellows will be talking about this doctor stuff, and I don’t really know what’s going on sometimes.” However, by asking fundamental questions about how certain processes or devices worked, the PKG scholars challenged what these seasoned practitioners knew and believed. “We provided a fresh perspective and were able to really pinpoint some problems that they hadn’t really thought about, because when they’re so immersed in the field, they kind of think there’s no other way to do this.”

Lee shared this sentiment. “We underestimate how much people can know as undergrads. I think the whole point of this is that we don’t care what your profession is, we want you to have ideas that might not be in your immediate field. And that was pretty much proven.”

Gray shares that this diversity of experiences from the fellows is purposeful and extremely valued in the program. “I just simply don’t think you can assume that one particular expertise is going to carry the day in any meaningful problem,” Gray stated. “The challenge is, how do you bring those together? Our philosophy is, then, it’s better to get everybody in there from the start.”

Bringing in undergraduates was another step further in this direction, when previously Lee was the only trainee in a cohort of seasoned professionals. “We are all treated equally in the group,” Kitjasateanphun stated. “We can get a little bit tunnel-visioned in what we know. You can go so much farther by collaborating with other people, being very open minded, and questioning the world around you.”

Gray, a Harvard-MIT Health Sciences and Technology student in the 80s, states that at the time, the notion of bringing together doctors and engineers was “the coolest idea ever.” Today, MIT has a much larger footprint in the medical space than in the 80s, but still, many opportunities to have real-world impact are missed due to the granting infrastructure, for example. People enter the field doing research to advance human health and because they want to have an impact, but she noted that “deploying that knowledge in a way that adds value is another step.”

In developing Catalyst, “our hypothesis was, if we did much more up front to figure out what [a solution] would look like if it were to be deployed in the real world, and then use that to guide strategic decision-making,” then people would be able to make an impact from their research. “That’s really what Catalyst is all about. It’s about keeping a lens on the long-term goal.”

As a fellow, Lee feels that Catalyst is the perfect medium to supplement her full-time endeavors in translational research and medicine with an innovator’s sense of being able to reach patients. “In order to have that step forward, you need to have a good idea. But you also need to have the business skills to be able to translate that. Catalyst was the significant piece that closes the loop.”

She stated, “With the toolset that I’ve acquired, I can be a lifelong innovator.”



An aurora visible over MIT due to an unusually strong geomagnetic storm, May 11.

ALEXA SIMAO - THE TECH

GUEST COLUMN

Crossroads

By Kate Pearce

I am writing to address the “ongoing campus tensions” and the “challenging times facing the MIT community.” This piece is a love letter to the Scientists Against Genocide Encampment and an admonishment of the MIT administration’s brutalities against its own students. It is a plea for MIT to stick by its stated values and devote its resources to the welfare of humanity. More pressingly, it is a call for MIT’s students and workers to stand in solidarity with their peers — rather than MIT as an institution — when it is clear that MIT is building technologies that slaughter civilians.

These are also matters of urgency; discussions concerning student safety and well-being cannot be tabled to the next DEI meeting. Almost thirty undergraduate and graduate students have been interim suspended; they’ve been evicted from campus housing; they are barred from attending classes and exams, and their paychecks have been cut. That group of students includes one graduate student living with his wife and their five-year-old daughter and one Palestinian student who faced a serious deportation risk due to a suspension that was so baseless that it was thrown out [1, 2].

Students have worked towards good-faith negotiations with the administration for three weeks; administrators canceled negotiations meetings less than twenty minutes before they began and rejected an agreement clause stating that MIT should not accept research funding from nations for which there is plausible evidence that they are committing genocide (as determined by Human Rights Watch violations) without providing any counterargument for that rejection [7].

Israel invaded Rafah on Monday, May 6th [8], the same day that MIT attempted to shut down the SAGE encampment. On Tuesday, May 7th, the entire negotiations committee was suspended. The Scientists Against Genocide were left with little choice other than to escalate the pressures on MIT through peaceful acts of civil disobedience. We cannot idle as Palestinians are being ceaselessly slaughtered. We cannot devote ourselves more to order than to justice.

Nine students were violently arrested during a peaceful picket at the Stata Center on Thursday; MIT and Cambridge police officers slammed these students onto the concrete and on top of cars, threw them, and tackled them into the street [3]. Multiple were left with bruises and other visible injuries. An additional ten students were arrested early Friday morning; these students awoke at four A.M. to over one hundred riot cops dismantling their encampment and flinging their belongings into recycling and garbage trucks [4]. Weeks’ worth of artwork was dumped; our community-curated library with over seventy books was tossed into the recycling. Piles of food, tents, and sleeping bags were trashed -- a tremendous waste.

MIT claims that the arrests and the encampment sweep were done to keep the “campus community safe” [5]. I question which community members’ safety MIT seeks to ensure; the arrested, suspended, and evicted students are disproportionately from marginalized groups. MIT cannot attract a diverse student body by slamming its students of color onto the sidewalk or by evicting its low-income students from their on-campus housing.

This point is perhaps most exemplified in an MIT-wide email from Sally Kornbluth on May 3rd, addressing concerns related to a counterprotest happening later that day. The email claimed that the counterprotest was “in support of MIT’s Israeli and Jewish students” and describes a previous pro-Palestine rally as “in support of the encampment” [11].

Besides the simple fact that many of MIT’s Jewish students — representing the student group MIT Jews for Ceasefire — were active participants in the encampment and scorned MIT’s claim that the May 3rd pro-Israeli rally was in support of them, referring to the encampment as an abstracted entity erases the students behind it. The MIT Coalition for Palestine is an ethnically and socioeconomically diverse coalition of students and workers; our members come from across the globe and carry a diverse range of religious beliefs and cultural identities.

It is not just the needs of these students and workers that are being ignored by the Institute, though. The administration’s unwillingness to negotiate in good faith with these students demonstrates a blatant disregard for their intellect, their dedication, and their ideals; this is a great and shameful loss for the entire MIT community.

I could babble on about President Kornbluth’s emails and the administration’s actions of choice, though I’d like to take a moment to mourn the encampment itself. I sincerely miss it; in spite of the administration’s later efforts to shield the encampment from public view through the use of felt-covered barricades, it was a beautiful space. If nothing else, I’m incredibly grateful that this place was part of my MIT experience. The time I spent there empowered me to channel my anger into action and bestowed me with an unyielding courage to fight for the good of the world and its people.

I believe that efforts to archive and share witness to the encampment itself are incredibly relevant to MIT as an institution -- the SAGE encampment is perhaps the spitting image of the type of community that MIT professes to work towards in its own values statement.

“We strive to make our community a humane and welcoming place where people from a diverse range of backgrounds can grow and thrive — and where we feel we all belong” This quote is excerpted from the MIT Values statement, “Belonging and Community” [9].

The encampment was the vibrant multicultural space on MIT’s campus that student and faculty advocates alike have dreamt of building for decades. We danced, we read, we recited poetry, we planted flowers, we broke bread, we prayed, and we did PSETs. We constructed a drainage system and held spontaneous drum circles. We organized Jumuah, Shabbat, and Seder celebrations, we squee-geed water from our tarps when it rained, and we birdwatched.

We are Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, atheist, and otherwise. We are undergraduate and graduate students pursuing wildly disparate areas of study. We come from all parts of the world. Our lived experiences are entirely different from one another’s, and this is an asset to our movement. We are united in our respect for human dignity and our struggle for the liberation of the Palestinian people.

“We know that attending to our own and each other’s wellbeing in mind, body, and spirit is essential. We believe that decency, kindness,

respect, and compassion for each other as human beings are signs of strength” (from “Belonging and Community” [9]).

Countless community members generously donated trays of home-cooked and catered meals and snacks; as a student with no meal plan, the availability of fresh food at all hours of the day (and night!) significantly improved my personal well-being. Food deliveries were so consistent that even students not involved with the encampment remarked that SAGE had drastically improved campus food security [12]. SAGE campers took on marshall shifts to keep each other safe from harassment and medic shifts to attend to each other’s physical and mental health needs; when a student suffered a panic attack after ceaseless harassment from counter-protestors, community members banded together and constructed makeshift curtains to afford the student some privacy. We look out for one another. Our care for each other makes us stronger.

“Valuing potential over pedigree, we know that talent and good ideas can come from anywhere — and we value one another’s contributions in every role” (from “Belonging and Community” [9]).

The encampment’s physical structure facilitated organic interactions between students, faculty, staff, workers, alumni, and community members. MIT faculty delivered spontaneous history lessons, and multiple dining hall workers visited the encampment to voice their solidarity. It is disheartening that communications from the administration claimed that the encampment was “dangerous” because it drew in “outside protestors” [6] — rather, this aspect of the encampment made it a lively gathering place for the Cambridge community. The retired professors, bakery owners, and zen Buddhist monks who dropped by the encampment to donate meals and engage in friendly conversation certainly weren’t endangering students.

“Together we possess uncommon strengths, and we shoulder the responsibility to use them with wisdom and care for humanity and the natural world” (from “Belonging and Community” [9]).

The encampment served as a model for a society that we strive towards: a community whose members see each other’s well-being as critical to their own and one in which challenges are overcome cooperatively. More so, we stand for a ceasefire in Gaza and a severance of MIT’s direct research ties with the Israeli Ministry of Defense. We erected an encampment on April 21st because the situation in Gaza is truly dire; the slaughter of civilians is pressing onwards as we study for finals and pack dorm room items into cardboard boxes.

40,000 Palestinians have been massacred since October 7th. Men are confined in concentration camps, women are being beaten and sexually violated, children are starving and bleeding.

On Monday, May 6, Israel pushed an invasion into Rafah [8], a city of over 1.4 million people, many of whom had fled there after their hometowns were destroyed.

Every university in Gaza has been bombed. There are only three partially functioning hospitals left in Rafah [10]. Forty thousand people are dead, and the death toll rises daily. You don’t need a degree in international relations to understand how horrific this is.

From Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural

Politics by bell hooks: “True resistance begins with people confronting pain...and wanting to do something to change it.”

If we surrender our minds to hatred and despair, the world we strive towards — one of peace and dignity, one in which every child is treated as one of our own — will never be realized. We will not be deterred by counterprotestors; hence, I will not devote any space to discussing their actions in this piece.

The encampment served not only as a reminder of the atrocities happening daily in Gaza but also as an alternative to a society ruled by the capitalistic and colonial forces we fight against; what better way to work towards an egalitarian, liberated, and democratic future than by modeling the principles of community care and humanitarian conscientiousness in our own daily living?

We are proud to take on the struggle against the cynicism promoted in our classes — the one that claims that the conflicts of the Middle East are too complicated to ever be resolved, the one that claims that the world is so complex that problematic socio-economic and political systems are too massive to study and too pervasive to change — and the disillusionment coursing through our political atmosphere. We carry an irrational optimism that we will leave the children of the world to come with a society free from terror and violence. We must believe that we will plant olive trees and tomato gardens where bombs once dropped; what other choice do we have?

Let me be abundantly clear: throwing out the tents on Kresge Lawn will not eradicate a movement of people united; their horror of Israel’s war crimes channeled into the resolve to fight for the people of Gaza. So long as IOF-funded projects like drone swarm research are carried out at MIT, we will continue to fight; the children of Palestine are our children, too, and we will look out for them in any way that we know how.

MIT, you have an opportunity here; severing the ties allows you to set an example for universities across the world for what it means to put your principles where your pocketbook is and to conduct technological research that enhances the lives of people across the globe, rather than destroying them. You have the opportunity to show your peers what it means to stand with your students and workers and what it looks like to collaborate with your student leaders, rather than silence them.

Students and workers, you must stand for something. Complicity is comfortable but not necessarily sustainable; whatever cruelties are output into the world eventually circle their way back around. Your beliefs are yours to contemplate; I do hope, though, that the notion that human life is sacred and worthy of defending is chief among them. Bearing witness to the brutal slaughter of the Palestinian people is challenging, but it is essential if we want this systemic violence to end. Rebuking the actions of your own educational institution is even more difficult, but there is courage to be found in numbers, and there is power to be found in this collective fight.

Our eyes are focused on Rafah, our index fingers are pointed towards MIT’s IOF research projects, and our hearts lie with the people of Palestine.

The struggle shall continue forth as fiercely as ever — will you join us?

GUEST COLUMN

Students expose MIT admin’s hypocrisy

By MIT Alumni for Palestine

After the Israeli military killed 35,000 Palestinians, many MIT students answered the call for justice and peace, setting up peaceful encampments on the grounds of this school, asking for divestment from a foreign military in an effort to ramp up pressure to end an ongoing genocide in Gaza.

We, a coalition of MIT alumni spanning multiple generations, nationalities, and racial backgrounds, including Jewish, Israeli, and Palestinian alumni, could not be more proud of this generation of students. The Scientists Against Genocide Encampment (SAGE) has challenged the administration and the broader MIT community to do better and live true to the Institute’s aspiration to campaign for a better world.

SAGE members embodied values MIT has previously honored. One such honor, the Bridge Builder Award, was granted to Austin Cole in 2023 for his study of civil disobedience during the U.S. civil rights movement [1]. Ironically, Cole was among the students suspended

for their participation in the encampment and related demonstrations. Students are lauded for their commitment to studying justice, peaceful protest, and civil disobedience. Still, when students put those lessons into action, they are met with foreign-sponsored provocations, disciplinary actions, eviction, and finally, arrest.

SAGE and the protesters at the encampment follow a strong tradition of MIT civil disobedience. In fact, between 2017 and 2019, MIT granted the Disobedience Award, which operated under the belief that “you don’t change the world by doing what you’re told” [2]. Recipients included Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha and Professor Marc Edwards, who faced harassment and ridicule for bringing attention to Flint’s water crisis [3].

MIT loves rule-breakers, but only when they fit the institute’s ideal image, valuing creativity and humor over substance. Around campus, we can find the memorialization of historical and famous hacks. Still, we won’t see any reference to the multiple meaningful campus protests and demonstrations like the ones against the Vietnam War or the South African

apartheid—which birthed the now-suspended MIT Coalition Against Apartheid. Despite being ostracized and ignored by an MIT administration that never divested from unethical ties to the South African apartheid regime, those rule-breakers were pushing MIT in the right moral direction.

More recently, the administration has demonstrated a clear moral commitment to justice. Within 24 hours of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, then-President L. Rafael Reif suspended the MIT Skoltech program [4]. SAGE and its allies are asking for less than MIT’s response to the Russian government’s war on Ukraine. They—and we—are asking to cut ties with Israel’s military, a small ask given that more children have died in Gaza in the past six months than in four years of conflict worldwide [5].

The irony is not lost on us, MIT alumni, or prospective students looking to MIT for their future. As the main representatives of MIT, at this moment, we cannot in good conscience promote MIT as a place for brilliant minds, especially those from underprivileged backgrounds, to attend and where they will experi-

ence the freedom to express themselves, thrive, and where they can feel safe.

And while we debate the merits and efficacy of economic divestments and academic boycotts, it is worth remembering that every single university in Gaza has been demolished and bombed by Israeli forces.

MIT benefits from its students’ rebellious and innovative behavior, rejection of limits, and pushing of the envelope. If MIT actually wants to build a Better World [6], should it not support its students, especially those crying out for that world to be a just and fair one, and encourage the next generation of students to follow in these footsteps?

As MIT Alumni, we write in strong support of our Palestinian, Jewish, and Israeli students and their allies and their demands to end all MIT research ties with the Israeli military. We write in support of the students who, as stated in their pledge [7], stand against apartheid [8], against land grabs [9], against the burning of olive trees and farmland [10], and against manufactured famines; who stand against genocide.

OPEN LETTER

An Open Letter to OSCCS: Response to Scientist Against Genocide Encampment Suspension

By Dan Zeno

Publisher's Note: *The following piece details a letter submitted by Dan Zeno to The Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards in response to his interim suspension as issued by the Committee on Discipline. The work, published here as an open letter, has been edited by editors of The Tech for clarity and conciseness.*

Introduction and Context for Open Letter

In recent weeks, the MIT community has been grappling with the consequences of a student-led encampment on Kresge Oval. The demonstration, which began on April 21, 2024, was met with a controversial response from the administration, culminating in the suspension of several students involved in the protest.

One of those students, Zeno, a veteran and graduate student at the Sloan School of Management, has chosen to share his perspective on the events and his personal experiences in an open letter to the community, one which was also formally submitted to The Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (OSCCS). Zeno, who has faced significant challenges during his time at MIT, including a rare medical condition that necessitated leaves of absence, now finds himself facing serious allegations and an interim suspension from the institute.

In his letter, Zeno questions the fairness and justification of the disciplinary actions taken against him and other students, raising concerns about the lack of due process, the vagueness of the policies invoked, and the potential for bias and discrimination in the administration's response. He also shares his personal journey at MIT, highlighting his contributions to the community and the impact of the current situation on his academic progress, family, and well-being.

The Open Letter

Dear Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards,

I pen this letter with a soul laden with sorrow, my spirit deeply vexed by the egregious and precipitous actions taken against me by an institution I once held in the highest regard. The imposition of an interim suspension and the threat of eviction, bereft of even a modicum of due process, stands as a grievous miscarriage of justice and a disheartening betrayal of the very values that MIT purports to embody.

As a bastion of academic excellence, MIT has long prided itself on its unwavering commitment to fairness, integrity, and the relentless pursuit of truth. Yet, in this dark hour, the institution has fallen woefully short of these lofty ideals, denying me the fundamental tenets of a just and equitable process: fair notice, prior enforcement, substantial proof, equal treatment, and progressive discipline. Instead, I find myself at the mercy of an administration that appears more intent on quelling dissent and stifling the voices of those who dare to question the status quo than fostering an environment conducive to open dialogue, critical

thinking, and the free exchange of ideas.

The ramifications of this capricious decision has already delivered non-interim discombobulation. My family, including my cherished five-year-old daughter and princess, has been cast into a vortex of uncertainty and anguish, our lives upended by the callous demand for our immediate eviction. The utter lack of empathy and understanding displayed by an institution that purports to value diversity and inclusion is as shocking as it is disheartening, particularly in light of my physical disability. The subsequent backpedaling and conditional retractions only serve to underscore the impropriety and haste with which these decisions were made, a damning indictment of an administration that has lost its way.

Moreover, the financial repercussions of this suspension have been deeply unnerving. As a veteran who relied upon the GI Bill to pursue my dreams of higher education, I now find myself facing the perilous prospect of losing the very stipend that keeps a roof over my head and food on my table. This, coupled with the uncertainty surrounding my academic standing at Sloan, has left me teetering, my hard-fought gains threatened by the abrupt actions of an administration that seems all too willing to sacrifice the well-being of its students on the altar of expediency.

Allow me a moment to provide some context regarding my journey at MIT:

In the autumn of 2018, I embarked upon a transformative journey at the prestigious Sloan School of Management, the same year I concluded my service in the United States Air Force. Little did I know that this new chapter would be marred by an insidious and enigmatic affliction that would test the very limits of my resilience.

As I immersed myself in the rigorous core curriculum of my MBA program, the first whispers of a sinister malady began to manifest. Eosinophilic Fasciitis, a deeply-painful condition so rare that it has only been well-documented in a handful of cases worldwide, slowly crept into my life, its grip tightening with each passing day. Accompanying this primary diagnosis was the specter of Morphea, a secondary condition that only served to compound my suffering. The path to understanding the nature of my ailment was a labyrinthine one, fraught with uncertainty and despair. For nine long months, I traversed the length and breadth of the nation, consulting with medical experts at countless hospitals, each visit a desperate quest for answers. The toll on my mind and body was immeasurable, as I grappled with the debilitating effects of my condition while striving to maintain my academic standing.

Inevitably, the demands of my health necessitated a fragmented approach to my education at Sloan. Multiple medical leaves of absence punctuated my journey, each one a reluctant but necessary respite to accommodate the experimental treatments that held the promise of relief. The halls of Boston Medical Center became my second home, a stark contrast to the hallowed corridors of MIT.

Yet, even as I navigated the depths of my personal struggle, I refused to let it define me.

I channeled my energy into making a meaningful contribution to the MIT community. As the President of The Yarn, a renowned speaker series at Sloan, I curated thought-provoking discussions and gave voice to diverse perspectives. Through numerous speeches at Sloan admit events, I shared my story and inspired others to persevere in the face of adversity.

Music became my solace and my platform for connection. As a lead singer and performer of The Rolling Sloans, the business school band, I poured my heart and soul into electrifying performances. Our concerts at the iconic Paradise Rock Club drew crowds of over a thousand students, each one a testament to the power of art to unite and uplift.

And so, it is with a heavy heart that I now find myself at the receiving end of an institution's callous disregard. To have given so much of myself, to have overcome such unimaginable odds, only to be treated with such unprofessionalism and insensitivity, is a bitter pill to swallow. The very institution that I have served with unwavering dedication has chosen to cast me aside, my contributions and struggles seemingly reduced to mere footnotes in the grand scheme of things.

Regarding the allegations:

The allegations leveled against me are as baseless as they are unjust, a product of a system that seems all too eager to condemn without evidence or due process. I stand accused of endangering the community and serving as a leader of the encampment, yet not a shred of substantive proof has been offered to support these spurious claims. I held no formal role in establishing the encampment. The conflation of an outspoken nature with formal leadership is a deeply troubling notion, one that suggests a desire to suppress individual expression and stifle the voices of dissent.

Additionally, in the initial suspension letter, a document as fraught with inaccuracies as it is with unjust accusations, asserts that "We received information that after being directed to leave by 2:30 p.m., you exited temporarily but continued to engage in escalating activities that endangered members of the community." This claim, I must unequivocally state, is a gross misrepresentation of the facts and a distortion of the truth that lies at the heart of this matter. First and foremost, it is crucial to note that I was not, in fact, directed to leave by the arbitrary deadline of 2:30 p.m., for the simple reason that I was not present within the confines of the encampment when these letters were disseminated. To suggest otherwise is to engage in a willful distortion of reality.

Moreover, the accusation that I engaged in escalating activities that endangered the community is one that I reject with every fiber of my being. It is a baseless and inflammatory charge, unsupported by any credible evidence and designed solely to tarnish my reputation and undermine my credibility. The only supposed proof offered in support of this spurious claim is a single photograph depicting me in the act of assisting fellow community members over a fence, an act of compassion and concern that has been cynically twisted into something sinister and malign.

Let me be clear: I did not plan, orchestrate, or encourage the actions of those who chose to climb over the fence that day. They made that decision of their own volition, driven by a deep-seated sense of moral outrage and a fierce determination to stand in solidarity with their fellow students trapped inside. It is my solemn duty as a member of this community to do everything in my power to ensure the safety and well-being of those around me, even in the face of an administration that seems determined to silence and punish us for daring to stand up for what we believe in. To twist this act of kindness and solidarity into something nefarious and dangerous is to engage in a grotesque distortion of the truth.

Furthermore, the very policies I am alleged to have violated are couched in language so vague and subjective as to render them all but meaningless, requiring a thorough investigation before any punishment can be justly meted out. The fact that an overwhelming majority of the suspended students are people of color raises deeply troubling questions about the role of bias and discrimination in this process, a shameful indictment of an administration that has lost sight of its moral compass.

The reported comparison of peaceful protesters to sexual assault perpetrators is not only deeply offensive but also indicative of a fundamental disconnect between the administration and the values it claims to uphold. As a descendant of Black and Indigenous ancestors who bore witness to the unspeakable horrors of ethnic cleansing, lynching and racial injustice in Texas and Puerto Rico, I am appalled by the insinuation that advocating for human rights and an end to genocide is akin to sexual misconduct.

I implore the COD [Committee on Discipline] to act swiftly and justly in reviewing my suspension, to right the wrongs that have been done and to restore a measure of dignity and respect to a process that has been sorely lacking in both. Every day that passes without resolution is another day of injustice and harm inflicted upon us, a stain upon the very fabric of this institution. We are students who have dedicated ourselves to the pursuit of knowledge and the betterment of society, and we deserve to be treated with the same respect and consideration that we have shown to others.

In conclusion, I call upon MIT to live up to the values it so proudly proclaims, to be a beacon of fairness, integrity, and respect for human rights in a world that so desperately needs such leadership. I urge you to lift this unjust suspension, to allow me to complete my education and to take my place among the ranks of those who have gone before me, those who have fought tirelessly to make this world a better place. In the end, history will judge us not by the accolades we accrue or the titles we hold, but by the courage we show in the face of adversity and the integrity we maintain in the pursuit of what is right and just.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. I eagerly await your response and stand ready to work with you to find a resolution.

Sincerely,
Zeno

GUEST COLUMN

Critical Examination of a Primary Protester Demand

By Steven Cohen

One of the primary demands of the recent protests, as listed in the UA and GSU referenda, is for MIT to cut all research associated with the Israeli military. The explanation given is "MIT's institutional complicity in furthering violence against the Palestinian people through the Institute's special ties with the Israeli military [1]."

Let's approach this MIT style. Let's ask the key questions, then try to find the answers through analysis of documentation and consultation with experts. We need to look at what is actually going on, and how to evaluate actions in a grounded way. The issue is not how research might possibly be used, but rather how it is likely to be used based on the evidence. It is not sufficient to say "this outcome is bad," but rather benchmark other outcomes to see how this compares.

This process doesn't get as much attention as chanting slogans and waving signs, but it gets us a lot closer to the truth.

The questions are:

- What exactly is the research? What is its intended use?
- How are the military actions of the Israel Defense Forces in this war different from other countries in similar situations? What are the benchmarks?

First, let's look at the research and its uses. SAGE has kindly provided a list of research at MIT funded by the Israeli Ministry of Defense [1]. I am going to take that link as the authoritative list because that is the only evidence the protesters are providing to support their conclusion. I am using only papers and news articles referenced in the SAGE document.

Here's their list, what they claim the research is used for, and what their own references actually say it is used for. Please note the Alleged Use has no independent documentation in the 7,000-word website. I only listed the Alleged Uses that are related to offensive military activity. If, hypothetically, the research were used to detect mis-

siles launched at Israel, that would not be contributing to the violence against the Palestinian people and should not be cut. The Documented Use is based on the images presented in the SAGE web page itself.

1. Autonomous robotic swarms

(alleged use: *aerial drone bombings*)

The article referenced is about deploying drone swarms in Gaza. It is from 2021, and describes drones being used to identify rocket launch sites, for rockets launched at civilian targets in Israel [2].

2. Pursuit-evasion games

(alleged use: *pursuit of escaping targets through drones*)

An image of a clip from the paper specifically calls out the Iron Dome missile defense system, which destroys rockets launched at civilian targets in Israel.

3. Underwater docking and monitoring

(no offensive use)

The paper in the image [3] never mentions underwater anything, so its relationship

to the research is unclear. The paper says the events of interest are natural disasters, biological disasters, and terrorist attacks.

4. Terahertz quantum-cascade lasers

(no offensive use)

Two of the alleged uses are anti-missile systems. It is also supported by NSF and NASA.

5. Quantum computing

(no offensive use)

The three alleged uses are MW sensing, GPS-denied navigation, and PATH problems. None of these are mentioned in the paper [4].

6. Magnetic wave detection

(no offensive use)

NO NEW APPLICATIONS LISTED, USES TO DATE INCLUDE REMOTE DETECTION OF FERROUS METALS, GEOPHYSICS AND BIO-SENSING [5]. ALSO SUPPORTED BY MIT, US ARMY RESEARCH LAB, AIR FORCE MEDICAL SERVICES.

7. Compression algorithms

(alleged use: *real-time ML on UAVs*)

GUEST COLUMN

The Collapse of an Empire

By Dan Zeno

You gather here today to accept your de-grees, but I say you must set them aflame—as a beacon illuminating the long road ahead in the struggle for a free world.

For even as you mark this ritual of accomplishment, your hearts churn unreconciled to the profound brokenness laying siege to our collective future. Those who now brandish the credential of “educated” must also take on the mantle of resistance, becoming an incandescent catalyst of conscience in tenebrous times.

Like so many idealists before us, we entered these soaring corridors of learning, aspiring to wield our hard-won knowledge in selfless service to humanity. And indeed, we have been gifted with wondrous tools of technologized world-shaping, each of us now a demiurge cradling civilization’s clay.

But to don this MIT-forged crown is also to be haunted by its shadow—the traumas and depredations indelibly etched into the hidden circuitry of a campus intertwined with Empire. It is an open secret that much of the magic conjured here arrives blood-soaked, propelled by a war machine eager to extract every last drop of genius before the Reaper reaps. And though these gilded tentacles slip invisibly through fiber-optics and faculty lounges, we few clear-eyed can trace their telltale shimmers back to manifold theaters of war crimes, from Indochina to Mesopotamia, Kabul to Gaza.

Are we then mere magi in service of Moloch, erecting ethereal edifices on the burial grounds of bombed-out dreams? Does our Promethean prowess condemn us to the cosmic fate of worms, fated only to feast on the rot of a world beyond repair?

I say such resignation is but the most seductive temptation of the already vanquished. For though the web of complicity we inherit is vast, it is not immutable—not when we still draw the breath of possibility beneath the wheeling stars. And though the scale of the havoc we now unleash far outstrips monsters past, so does our capacity for paradigm-splintering revelation and revolt.

In this pregnant twilight between oblivion and new dawn, I beseech you—let us find within this fleeting euphoria a defiant commitment to build another way. Let us envision an MIT that encodes the ideals of its mission into its very bricks and algorithms, not merely the enticements of lucre or the frisson of destructive creation. Let us demand an institution that attracts dreamers by enacting utopian whispers, not one that snuffs out dissent in defense of an indefensible status quo. Let us labor for a house of knowledge that empowers its young wizards to bend reality towards justice, not conscript them into hedging the ledgers of the apocalypse.

Though we may soon scatter, let our brief mingling here have sparked in us the charge of an activated network humming at the frequency of sedition. From this secret communion, may we forever nourish our primal pact to serve only truth and life, come what political storms or economic famine. The world is changing with convulsive force. The fire this time rampages from rainforests to ice caps, borderlands to boulevards. Lies are crumbling, abominations unearthed, idols teetering. In this harrowing reckoning, we face a choice between annihilation and rebirth so

staggering, so total, that even our hyperbolic imaginations reel. The fever dreams of sci-fi pale against a reality in which the very atmosphere rebels against industrial dominion and the oceans spew up the death we have fed them. A reality that demands of us nothing less than the building of an ark – not merely to escape cataclysm, but to sail towards a remade earth.

Our final exam then, both on this day of pomp and through the unknowable gauntlet beyond, is simply this: will we be content to tinker at doomsday’s margins, cocooned in the soul-rot of complicity? Will we quench our smoldering disquiet in deadening visions of humanoid gods and cosmic exit? Will we succumb to the seduction of cynical abdication, consoling ourselves that the die was ever cast in grim favor of blind force and brute cunning? Or will we cleave to our deepest knowing that hubris yields to grit, that Goliath is ever felled by a Palestinian child’s faith-flung stone? Will we rekindle the ember of mutiny and scatter its sparks until the whole sterile laboratory of our prefab destiny is consumed in glorious unmaking?

Your diploma is a rite of initiation into an upper echelon of the Machine. But it is simultaneously a skeleton key, a multi-tool, a cryptographic killswitch slipped to us by a farsighted resistance with the audacity to believe we might be their moles, their sleepers, their agents of unbottling. So swear with me now, on this threshold between old nightmare and new dream, that though we may walk ten thousand forking paths, our true allegiance shall ever be to those most betrayed by history’s fraudulent arc.

For it is in solidarity with all who cry out from under the rubble that our intellects find their worthy calling. It is in opening our hearts to the grief and the fury of a widow in Rafah that we alchemize our cleverness into a sword of reckoning. It is in taking the side of life against Thanatos that we earn this rare instant of jubilation—not as a capstone, but as a commencement, a quivering overture to the symphony of the impossible our generation was born to compose.

So let us savor this pause, my stunning co-conspirators... but only as a rebel base, a staging ground, a clandestine coven convened to plot our next incursions on the colonies of despair. The war for memory, for meaning, for the very marrow of tomorrow will not wait. The choice of legacy knocks now at each of our doors, at once a sacred burden and a wild summons to dance in the bonfire of the world as we wish it into rebirth.

Wherever you go from here, whatever title or trinket you accrue, I beg you never forsake the secret vow we swear today in all of our awkward glory: to be a thorn in the side of every orthogonal orthodoxy, a fissure in the Prozac panopticon, a puckish poltergeist upending every feast of Midas.

For only in the holy work of ungovernability can we govern ourselves at last. Only in the iconoclasm of untamed inquiry can we shatter calcified canons into the rubble of a church of our own making. Only in the crucible of subversive community can we forge bonds stronger than western greed, more viral than any algorithm.

Be sure to fly your freak flag high on the cubicle wall, encrypt your dissent steganographically between spreadsheet cells, and build the

new world fractally from your next act of refusal. Our time at MIT has equipped us to excel in this game of thrones; it falls to us now to flip the board entirely, to play for keeps the wildcard of our wit and pluck and unquenchable salt.

We cannot stem this tidal collapse, my dear comrades; it has already begun. But we can learn, even now, to breathe underwater. We can become a different species, natural magicians unafraid to change our shape, our very substrate. We can still redeem this doomed treasure, not by hoarding, but by transmuting its base alloy into a currency of open palms and permeable selves too fluid to fail.

From the ashes of this bitter reckoning, let us pledge to rise in incandescent renewal, to build beyond the bleak hegemony of bottom lines a gossamer economy of the heart whose dividends pay forward the love our carapace occults.

Only then may we graduate into the frontier of our unchartable potential. Only then may we stake our claim to an alma mater worth its ceremony, an MIT of the marrow, the mitochondria, the mythic quest. A campus of the whole, where we might at last metabolize the poison pill of power into an anti-venom strong enough to heal our colonized cosmos. So swear it with me now, you glorious primordial progeny: to reject every devil’s bargain, to be in eternal service of a future more free, more true, more thick with feral kinship than any we were programmed to compute.

And when, at the end of our unruly arc, we return our borrowed starstuff to the Mushroom Goddess, let it be as makers unbroken, as fools triumphant over fate’s dull gravity. Let our luminous works blaze across transfigured skies as new constellations by which the un-

OPINION POLICY

Editorials are the official opinion of *The Tech*. They are written by the Editorial Board, which consists of Publishers Jyotsna Nair and Ellie Montemayor, Editor-in-Chief Alex Tang, Managing Editor Kate Lu, Executive Editor Vivian Hir, and Opinion Editor Srinidhi Narayanan.

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 391529, 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 website 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.

born might navigate the storm. Let the hacked smart grids of our rewired hearts sync up, at long last, to Ancient Mother’s first drum.

Ours is the magic to rebirth meaning itself from this compost of control. Ours is the code by which new alphabets of being shall unfurl like fiddleheads after the conflagration. Ours is the quest to recover that primordial password, that nuclear syllable, that opens all doors.

From the secret annals of alumni arcana, you are now forever part of an underground network as wide as it is deep. Should you ever lose the thread, look for our sigil etched under full moons from Dewey Decimal to the root directory, and know your tribe endures. This is your Bat-Signal, your lodestar, your Northern Tao. Heed it when the road grows lonesome and the wood looms dark, for you were never alone—and you never will be again.

Call down lightning as we scatter, strange angels, and take this pulsing ember as your witness. Zero in on the frequency of insurrection, and let your encoder ring anew with the promise of our pact. For from this day forward, we are anti-alumni bound by blood and bound to a matrix more electric than any we leave behind.

The world is ours now to destroy by loving. Let us begin again, always again, from the ashes.

Until salvation,
Zeno

MIT’s Resident Sorcerer. Organizer for Graduates for Palestine (G4P), Organizer for The Black Graduate Student Association (BGSA), Representative of The Globally Indigenous Students for Justice (IS4J), Editor at Writ-ten Revolution (WR).

of *The Tech*, and will not be returned. Letters, columns, and cartoons may also be posted on *The Tech*’s website 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 tt-general@mit.edu, and it will be directed to the appropriate person. You can reach the Executive Committee by emailing tt-exec@mit.edu, and the Opinion Editor through tt-opinion-editors@mit.edu. Please send press releases, requests for coverage, and information about errors that call for correction to tt-news-editors@mit.edu. Letters to the editor should be sent to tt-opinion-editors@mit.edu. *The Tech* can be found on the World Wide Web at <http://thetech.com>.

The paper describes using it on a commercial toy drone with a Raspberry Pi [6].

8. Oxidizing environments and biosensors (no offensive use)

One alleged use is detecting chemical and biological threats and buried landmines. Another is detecting tagged bacteria from a vehicle or UAV.

In fact, there is no evidence that any of this research is used to attack civilians in Gaza. The stated purposes, both alleged by SAGE and by their reference documents are almost exclusively defensive or generally beneficial, e.g. detecting rocket launches, jamming missiles, monitoring natural disasters, and detecting landmines.

The only plausible use in association with an offensive military weapon is the drone swarming, but there is no evidence that the research was used in an offensive capacity. The only available evidence suggests the opposite.

As far as spending, the actual amount spent on drone research is a little over \$55,000, according to SAGE spreadsheet [7]. And of course the research is available to investigators everywhere, not just Israel.

So the protests, and the resolutions, and

the utter disruption caused by all of that, comes down to \$55,000 spent on something that, based on available evidence, is used to detect missiles launched at civilians...

Moving on to the second question—how are the military actions of the Israel Defense Forces in this war different from other countries in similar situations? What are the benchmarks?

The Gaza Ministry of Health has said that over 34,000 people in Gaza have been killed during the war [8]. Let me start by saying without equivocation that each one of these deaths is tragic, equal to each death in Israel on October 7. This is not to imply a balance between the methods and intentions of the opposing forces, but to allow me to continue with my point that war, without exception, creates monumental tragedies. Both parties have a right to respond to attacks, even though they create further tragedy, as long as they are in accordance with international law.

There is a large body of law on what is allowed in international conflicts [9].

There is some debate as to Israel’s behavior. It is easy to simply look at the numbers and make a judgment, since 34,000 is a staggering number in a peaceful world. And we can see the damage up close every minute on

every news outlet and social media site. But that is only using our hearts, and we should be using our brains as well. How do the IDF actions stack up against the laws? How do they stack up against other conflicts in similar situations not in a peaceful world?

The military objective is clear. The number of people killed by the terrorist group Hamas on October 7 was the equivalent of thirteen September 11s, taking into account relative populations. The military objective is to eliminate the force that was responsible for that attack, a force that has vowed to do it “twice and three times” until Israel is destroyed [10].

The requirement for proportionality is not one-for-one, i.e. only kill the number of civilians on the other side that is equal to those killed on your side. The rule is that civilian harm should not be allowed at all when there is no military objective. Significant civilian harm is only allowed for a significant military objective. Ending Hamas, the constant missile attacks, and threats of another October 7 is such an objective.

As far as incidental civilian harm and care that must be taken, the situation in Gaza is difficult to compare to previous conflicts. Virtually the entire theater of operations is ur-

ban, and as mentioned above, every military objective has human shields, by design. Simply declaring that Israel is prohibited from attacking Hamas because of the density of their human shields means Hamas can operate with impunity, and denies Israel the right of self-defense. The only way to resolve this question is to establish that Israel is doing at least as much to protect civilian lives as other militaries would in a similar situation.

Fortunately, there are people who study this exact field. One such person is John Spencer. He currently serves as the chair of urban warfare studies at the Modern War Institute at West Point, and as co-director of the Urban Warfare Project.

Among other things, he has written:

“Israel has taken more measures to avoid needless civilian harm than virtually any other nation that’s fought an urban war” (January 31, 2024) [12].

Here’s the conclusion: Israel responded to a horrific attack on its territory with lower civilian casualty ratios than other nations have done in similar circumstances. None of those casualties can be linked to MIT research.

I look forward to hearing from the MIT community and will be responding to comments.

GUEST COLUMN

Jewish alumni say MIT must engage with ALL members of its Jewish community

By MIT Alumni for Palestine

We write this statement as Jewish alumni who have been disappointed by the administration’s handling of the Scientists Against Genocide Encampment (SAGE) and related protests on campus. There have been numerous statements in support of SAGE participants already, yet we felt the need to add the perspective of Jewish alumni who see great harm being done to MIT’s Jewish community. We are proud of our Jewish heritage. A heritage encompassing a beautiful diversity of religious practices, other intersecting identities, and yes: a diversity of views on the State of Israel. We are frustrated and concerned by the way the MIT administration has ignored and erased this diversity, weighing some Jewish perspectives far more heavily than others.

This is in part due to institutional bias—much of the infrastructure for the MIT Jewish community, such as MIT Hillel and the MIT Israel Alliance, has mobilized in support of the State of Israel. We demand the MIT administration think critically about systemic power imbalances and recognize that the perspectives of MIT Jews for Cease-fire (J4C) are no less valid because they lack this infrastructure. Administrators’ capitulation to the notion of legitimate and illegitimate Jewish voices is incredibly dangerous and has already caused harm to Jewish students on campus.

We have been heartbroken hearing pro-Palestinian Jews’ experiences of harassment at MIT. There are many reports of pro-Israel demonstrators taunting Jewish SAGE participants as “self-hating” and “not real Jews.” Pro-Israel demonstrators saying encampment members, again including Jews, should be raped, murdered, and traded as hostages. These behaviors are despicable, yet there have been zero public consequences or even acknowledgment from MIT leaders.

J4C is engaging in an authentic and passionate movement grounded in their Judaism, not in spite of it. We see them carrying on the Jewish organizing tradition of doikayt, Yiddish for ‘hereness.’ American activist Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz described it as “the right to be, and to fight for justice, wherever we are...across lines that might divide us, to work together for universal equality and justice” [1]. We wonder: where on campus can these students observe and explore their faith tradition communally?

For many of us, years ago, Hillel and Chabad at MIT were critical parts of our Jewish experience at MIT. If we were students today, however, we do not believe we would be welcome there. Jewish students and other community members at MIT who do not support the Israeli government and military have no Jewish home on campus. And they are not alone: a recent New York Times article quoted a student from Columbia University saying “[a] rabbi at Hillel...told her that Hillel wasn’t supposed to be a resource for Jewish students who don’t support Israel” [2]. We are deeply troubled by so many universities providing consideration and protection for Jewish students who hold certain political positions but not others.

We, as pro-ceasefire alumni, and students of J4C, are members of MIT’s Jewish community as well, whose voices deserve recognition. We call on administrators not to ignore the experiences of Jewish students like this one, submitted among letters to the Alliance of Concerned Faculty, “It is challenging to be Jewish now at MIT not because I feel personally unsafe, but because my identity is being invoked to make arguments and policy that I often do not agree with” [3].

We know MIT leadership takes charges of anti-Semitism seriously and that they face internal and external pressure to address these charges. With this in mind, we encourage them to engage seriously and thoughtfully with ALL Jewish community members, including those standing in solidarity with Palestinians.

GUEST COLUMN

Diasporism – A Radical Vision for Jewish Self-Determination

By Isaac Gendler

Publisher’s Note: This article was originally published in the DUSP student magazine “Silt” (Vol. 1) and in the pro-Palestinian student magazine “Written Revolution” (Vol. 3).

“Draw the flags of your heritage.” That was the question for my first assignment in eighth grade U.S. History. I was startled, to say the least. I knew that in 1911, my great-grandparents escaped to the U.S. from antisemitic pogroms in Ukraine. But my assignment was in 2011. The Maidan Revolution and Ukraine’s reevaluation of its identity were still three years away, and in the view of global society, I was not considered a Ukrainian—just a Jew. In this world, a flag is your culture. Even though I had no family between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, I drew the Israeli flag, as that was the only flag that depicted the Star of David. My community told me that Israel was my homeland. The same community upheld Zionism, the belief that the Jewish right to self-determination depends on the existence of a nation-state with an exclusively Jewish identity, as the answer to our safety and survival as a people.

Years later, I learned of the Nakba, the violent colonial settlement and occupation, expulsion, and exclusion of the indigenous Palestinian population on which Zionism rests. After rejecting Zionism, I began a deep search. What else could be the pillar of Jewish identity? How can we exercise self-determination as a people without a nation-state? Anti-Zionism alone could not solve these matters. Basing a group identity on fighting ethnonationalism is reactive and negative. I wanted something constructive that looked toward a future to be created instead of a present to bemoan.

Soon, I found Diasporism.

Diasporism is rooted in the Jewish Labor Bund, an early 20th-century Eastern European Jewish political organization that fought for the rights of Jews and all oppressed peoples. In the Bund’s view, culture was what bound Jews together. Resultantly, the Bund was opposed to the creation of a separate state for Jews (or any ethnicity), seeing Zionism as a form of escapism from combatting the antisemitism and oppression that existed in the Russian empire. The Bund’s mission was to make the world in which Jews lived safer, which could only be accomplished through collective organizing with non-Jewish society.

For me, Diasporism means taking the Bund’s revolutionary spirit and imagining what a liberatory future would look like. Diasporism challenges the notion that any group should rely on a hegemonic nation-state to provide self-determination and survival. Who needs strictly defined borders and a homogeneous population when communities can create self-governance locally and develop mutually beneficial relationships with their diverse neighbors?

Diasporism can serve as a springboard for a larger diasporic Jewish cultural revival. The vast number of expulsions, genocides, persecutions, and assimilations forced on Diasporic Jewish communities over the 20th century by hierarchical powers has led to a vast loss of our traditions. By reviving our many Jewish ethnic cultures, we can reconnect with and rebuild our identities, contributing to our autonomy and resistance.

To this end, I’ve been learning how to play Klezmer music on the clarinet, reading Ashkenazi history, and working on rebuilding Ukraine since the genocidal, unjust Russian full-scale invasion. Today, many indigenous people are fighting for cultural autonomy and non-hierarchical ways of sharing the Earth as

a form of resistance. Jewish traditions, like the Bund, have sought to nourish and preserve our people, pushing against the Western European idea that rights should be based on “ownership” of land. Now, we have an opportunity to learn from our own history and pursue collective liberation in solidarity with the indigenous peoples continually fighting for cultural autonomy and non-hierarchical ways of sharing the Earth.

To me, Diasporism is defined by the following principles:

Doikayt (Yiddish for “hereness”) – The home of the Jewish people is wherever they live, instead of a far-off land.

Autonomism – Jews should be able to curate cultural, religious, social, political, and economic autonomy wherever they live.

Collective Liberation – Recognition that the fight against antisemitism and all other hierarchical structures are intertwined and that true liberation for all will only come when Jews and non-Jews work together to dismantle systems of oppression.

Anti-Authoritarianism – Opposition to hierarchical power structures in society, organizations, and human relations. Anti-authoritarian thinking embraces respectful and egalitarian human social relations.

The story of the Jewish Diaspora is almost as old as the Jewish people itself. Even our traditional religion is built with Diaspora in mind—Rabbinic Judaism came as a reaction to the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem and the need to keep Jewish identity alive under dispersion. Temple services replaced prayers based on Babylonian exile-era practices, and oral Jewish law was written into the Talmud. Jewish people create home wherever we are and will continue to do so, no matter what happens.

Long live the Jewish Diaspora!

GUEST COLUMN

A response to President Kornbluth’s letter to the alumni community

By James Risbey & Ali Ishtiaque

Dear President Kornbluth,

Thank you for your letter to the MIT-wide alumni community explaining your decision to remove the encampment on Kresge Lawn [1]. You did not name the encampment group, but it is Scientists Against Genocide Encampment @MIT (SAGE@MIT). Your letter said that you had exhausted dialogue with the encampment group, and you explained that “[r]eaching a solution hinged on our ability to meet the students’ primary demand, which we could not do in a well-principled way that respected the academic freedom of our faculty.” Your letter never tells us (the MIT alumni community) what that primary demand was, let alone why it is in conflict with academic freedom. It is important that you address these issues, otherwise your communication leaves the wider alumni community in the dark on just what the dispute was, and why academic freedom was at stake. The failure to address these issues also leaves open the possibility that you have acted improperly in resorting to force to remove the encampment.

We searched to find out what the primary demand of the SAGE@MIT group was. We found statements on their web site and in the opinion article in The Tech by ‘MIT Graduate Students for Palestine’ that both indicate that the primary demand is to cease all research collaboration with the Israeli military [2]. Please communicate that to the community and explain why it is in conflict with academic freedom, since this is not at all obvious to us. Academic freedom does not trump all human rights concerns, and MIT has a long history of rejecting research on weapons when this has been deemed immoral.

MIT’s Suri report on guidelines for outside engagements identifies critical issues that would lead to rejection of a gift or engagement with MIT, which includes violation of human rights and the laws of war [4]. The Israeli military has committed, and is manifestly in the process of committing, a number of the violations listed here, as documented by the UN Human Rights Council [5], Amnesty International [6], and international relief agencies [7].

MIT’s support for the Israeli military makes it complicit in their actions in Gaza. The In-

ternational Court of Justice ruling that Israel’s actions in Gaza plausibly constitute genocide may make you and your board criminally culpable [8].

Whether or not you are found to be legally complicit, the moral burden falls on MIT and the MIT community.

You say that “[o]ur community includes people who lost friends and family to the brutal terror attack of October 7, and people with friends and family currently in mortal danger in Rafah” [1]. On the one hand, you accurately describe the brutal terror attack by Hamas as a “brutal terror attack,” such that your condemnation of Hamas’ actions is clear. On the other hand, Gazans are just “in mortal danger” from some unspecified source. You do not describe the far more brutal attack on Gazans as ‘terror’; you simply say that Gazans are in “danger” and make no mention of the tens of thousands already dead and the complete destruction of their homes, infrastructure, and society, and you do not implicate the Israeli military as the agent of this destruction. This characterization is deeply insulting to the victims and community. Why did you not ascribe any agency to the Israeli military here and why did you not mention in your letter to us that the encampment demonstrators’ primary concern was MIT’s research collaborations with the Israeli military?

Your letter to the MIT community lacks critical context that seems designed to frame your case to us as if you had no choice. Those omissions raise concerns for us of the actions you have taken, the failure to communicate openly with the alumni community about the reasons for those actions, and of the ongoing impact of your actions on the demonstrators and the MIT community.

After you sent your letter to the MIT community, your administration provided an online FAQ on campus events [9]. Crucially, that FAQ was not broadcast to the wider alumni community that your letter addressed, and the vast majority of external alumni almost certainly don’t know about it. The chancellor’s FAQ purports to justify why your administration could not possibly end MIT’s research support for the Israeli military without violating academic freedom. Your argument is essentially that the research is for grants with individual PIs [9], that the two remain-

ing grants are compliant with US law, that the grants are small [9], and that termination of them would breach the academic freedom of the PIs. None of these issues are identified in the Suri report as factors that would overcome the need to be compliant with the guidelines in that report.

Clear guidance on the relationship between academic freedom and MIT principles was provided by former President Reif in his letter to the MIT community regarding the \$800,000 received from convicted sex offender Epstein by the MIT Media Lab and MIT Professor Seth Lloyd [10]. Reif explained: “MIT offers faculty great freedom in conducting and building support for their research; that freedom is and always will be a precious value of our community. Yet it is important to understand that faculty are not “on their own”; their decisions about gifts are always subject to longstanding Institute processes and principles” [10].

In other words, individual faculty (PIs) do not have academic immunity to take money wherever they can get it if it violates MIT principles. Imagine if President Reif had said instead about Epstein’s funding to MIT: “well, it’s not much money, it was legally given, and we couldn’t possibly violate the freedom of those individual faculty who want to take it.” Of course, he didn’t say that because it would sound grotesque and it would be a betrayal of all our principles. The MIT community deserves better from you and your administration, and we call on you to reference and follow the Institute’s own guidelines and principles on engagements with MIT.

In the Epstein case, President Reif regrets that MIT “did not have sufficient policies and procedures in place” to guide senior administrators, and he wished these administrators “had taken to heart the concerns others brought to them and simply put a stop to the Epstein funding” [11]. President Kornbluth, MIT now has those policies in place, and the concerns of your students, faculty, staff, and alumni have been conveyed to you to stop MIT research contributing to the Israeli military’s destruction of Gaza and its people.

Sincerely,
James Risbey Course 12 PhD 1994
Ali Ishtiaque Course 6 Class B.S. 1982

GUEST COLUMN

Resilience Amidst Adversity: MIT’s Struggle with East Side Culture

By Elle Mather

Publisher’s Note: *This piece was originally released on May 24 in an email to the MIT undergraduate community (“[EASTSIDE] Paper on Admin Past + Present Actions”).*

The history of MIT is littered with struggle and change, and nowhere is this more true than the East Side. Once a collection of MIT’s oldest undergraduate residence halls, the East Side has notably attracted low-income students due to low room and boarding costs and artistic folk for the historic muraling policies. From the park where Bexley once stood to the currently empty East Campus courtyard, and from the now quiet and white-washed halls of ‘70 Amherst St’ to the still vibrant but partially covered murals of Random Hall, the humans who reside within these residence halls pride themselves on being part of communities starkly against the grain of society.

These residential communities nestled deep in MIT’s main campus have served as centers of queer culture since the opening of Senior House in 1916. They have functioned as so much more than dorms, continuously providing sanctuary and solidarity to LG-BTQ+ and similarly marginalized students in an otherwise hostile campus environment. From their earliest days welcoming residents to the present day, these communities have been at the forefront of many advocacy efforts, challenging the status quo and demanding recognition and respect.

However, their very existence is threatened by institutional policies that have sought to “reduce liability” and sanitize the campus environment at the expense of diversity and inclusivity. Even now, institutional authorities seek to repress dissent and maintain a veneer of conformity, as evidenced by the administrative response to recent protests.

East Side history is not a tale of triumph; rather, it is one of a constant struggle against institutional policies that have sought to suppress the voices of marginalized individuals. Unfortunately, since the early 2000s, students have been fighting a losing battle as East Side dorms have been targeted and systematically dismantled one by one. From the demolition of Bexley to the controversial decision to “reform” and then close Senior House and the ongoing struggles over East Campus policies, MIT’s administration has consistently prioritized the interests of its institutional reputation over the well-being of its students. Drawing upon archived websites, news articles, oral histories, and a personal analysis of contemporary events, I seek to reveal the resilience demonstrated by this vibrant community in navigating and resisting institutional oppression.

Bexley Hall was the first victim to fall at the hands of the Institute, demolished back in 2013. According to an anonymous blog post hosted on the EC website, it was “a gateway to the East Side, conveniently situated on the West” [2]. The official Bexley website, still actively hosted on MIT’s servers years later, states that “We at Bexley feel that dormitory residents have the right to live in an environment that suits their own tastes, and in that spirit we demand of our prospective housemates nothing at all except consideration for the rights of others” [1]. Bexley served as a sanctuary for LG-BTQ+ students, students from low-income backgrounds, and other oddballs for whom its culture of absolute personal freedom offered a refuge from the heteronormative and restrictive statutes that permeated many college campuses in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

At Bexley, residents found not only a place to live but also a space to express themselves freely, whether through art, music, gender, sexuality, or activism. The culture of Bexley was shaped by its decentralized government structure and anti-authoritarian attitude. Bexley developed a reputation of doing the exact opposite of what was expected: instead of a rush, Bexley held an “anti-rush” where they would attempt to scare freshmen away from living in the dorm. A Bexley alumnae whom I spoke with said the purpose of anti-rush was to ensure that “...only people who would join would be those who couldn’t be scared, rather than people who just wanted to be close to campus.” The social culture is accounted as very tight-knit within the dorm but antisocial to

outsiders. Residents fostered a collective spirit of defiance against perceived injustices perpetrated by MIT’s administration and the broader legal system.

The culture of anti-admin and anti-governance at Bexley was not merely about defiance for defiance’s sake, but rather a conscious effort to reclaim agency and autonomy in the face of oppression. A famous (and purposefully hilarious) example of organized defiance is Bexley’s response to an FBI raid, spurred by rumors of a drug distribution network run out of the basement. Beginning with a “Welcome FBI” sign and ending with an overly padlocked chest containing none of the evidence the agents were searching for, the raid is a story of creating hilarity in the face of authority and serves as a now classic example of Eastside ethos [4].

By 2013, the building was separating from the foundation, so there was a defined reason for the building’s demolition. The decision to put a park over the remains of the foundation instead of building a new undergrad dorm is harder to attribute to anything structural, especially in the face of a past and current housing crisis.

Current community members are under the impression that administration saw a way to ‘be rid’ of a problematic sect of campus culture and ran with it. However, Bexley is the least accessible in regards to information: my account of their culture and downfall is hurt by the fact that it was so far in the past for those on campus now, that we’ve lost connection with the part of the community that was distinctly Bexley.

After its closure and demolition, its current residents were absorbed into other East Side communities. As time has passed, alumni have become harder to identify and contact. Thus, I doubt I’ll be able to track down a conclusive answer on the true reasoning for the demolition. Despite its loss, the ethos of defiance present in Bexley’s culture lives on throughout the East Side, and it especially took hold in Senior House.

The internal organization of Bexley and Senior House were very different, and the cultures of each community were very distinct. Bexley had a pseudo-anarchist government, whereas Senior House had a more typical dorm government. Bexley only took in those that lived without fear, while Senior House was a haven for misfits with an official motto of “A home for Wayward Beavers.” Alumni accounts of the culture describe it as a place where those who had struggled to find acceptance prior to MIT could be understood without question and loved for their differences instead of in spite of them. From the biker bar mysteriously present in the basement to the cozy customized lounges, there was a space for everyone who wished to be there, no matter where they came from. However, a welcoming culture draws in more than just people, and it was this culture that put a target on the backs of the Senior House community.

The origin of the Senior House-admin conflict stems from the greater problems that come with institutional memory. MIT is administered, or at least administratively influenced by the MIT corporation. The further up the organizational chain you go, the higher potential there is for the administrator in question to be under-informed about the current culture and community of any given dorm. This is the result of an inherent disconnect between high-level administrators and the student body, aided by the fact that students cycle through the institute and graduate with some regularity, while administrators can remain embedded through lengthy careers.

When the culture of Senior House was called into question, it was the result of a survey administered under false pretenses. As far as residents were informed, the survey was centered around student mental health, which was anonymized and administered by another college [7]. Advisory alumni such as Mark Feldmeier encouraged the residents to be truthful in their responses to the misrepresented survey in the hopes that MIT would increase and improve the resources available to a community struggling with mental health concerns.

Unfortunately, the description they were given was false in every sense. MIT administration gave the survey themselves, then took the non-anonymized survey results and turned them on Senior House specifically, attempting to use drug use statistics

to crack down on the community. Looking back, Feldmeier states that the downfall of Senior House was “Set up like a chess game...[and] it’s easier to see how residents were played as pawns of the administration.”

This ‘smoking gun’ was unusable based on the falsehoods under which the survey was conducted, so then-Chancellor Cynthia Barnhart cited comparatively low graduation rates as evidence for her moralistic viewpoint of ‘doing the difficult yet correct thing and saving MIT from the scourge of Senior House’ [7]. Interviewing residents like Megan Levin and alumni like Feldmeier quickly puts this viewpoint on blast. First and foremost, the draw of this community to queer, low-income, and otherwise marginalized/minority students means that the individuals within start out a rung lower than the ‘average’ MIT student [7].

Additionally, drug use was not only much lower at the time that admin attacked Senior House than in prior years [7] but also a community focus on safety had been adopted and implemented to limit harm to residents and community members [8]. As a student many years later, I’m unsure of what pushed admin to act when they did, seeing as the culture didn’t significantly change and actually was on a path to betterment, but I also wasn’t there to see this sequence of events out.

The original administrative response to the survey results was publicly marketed as a ‘rehabilitation’ or reform. Freshmen, the life and energy that revitalize the community each year and pull upperclassmen out of the hell of classes, were banned from living in the dorm. A new house team under a ‘Senior House specific’ contract was brought in, and mandatory reporters were installed to ensure that residents were following the strict rules set upon them. The administration made it clear that if a single rule was broken, the 101 years of history placed on students’ shoulders would be gone forever, and deemed it a reasonable expectation for students to bear.

The resident perspective on the 2016-2017 academic year is bleak. Sarah Melvin, Senior House president, stated in an email sent in the Summer of 2016 that she was “...deeply troubled by how this policy was decided without any student input... While I think some of these proposals could’ve been beneficial.... many will be very harmful to the Senior Haus community and to the wider MIT community” [9]. By limiting student autonomy and setting surveillance on them like hawks, the administration robbed them of the freedom to take the responsibility that was simultaneously demanded of them.

Over the course of the ‘rehabilitation,’ students fought hard. Near continuous meetings with Chancellor Barnhart, President Reif, and committees of other top administrators left students quite literally in tears. In Feldmeier’s account, Reif and Barnhart called students liars to their faces and offered only cruelty and coldness when students sought negotiation and kindness. This first-hand account lends itself to wondering if rehabilitation was ever really on the table, as the concept implies support. Unsurprisingly, the building pressure on Senior House led the scared, exhausted residents to turn to coping mechanisms to survive the trauma, some of which proved unhealthy.

Once administrators had definitive proof of a singular broken rule, they dropped the pretense and sent a dorm-wide email announcing the closing of Senior House in the Summer of 2017. In addition to the profound devastation of residents and alumni, the East Side community as a whole felt a butterfly effect. Amongst the class year of freshmen banned from living in the dorm, the effects were particularly dire. Administrators insisted that once the dorm was dissolved, the community was gone, and the effects could not be felt, but the resulting depression affected hundreds of students.

A particularly devastating example involves a freshman on 41W in EC, who was a first-generation college student who had been drawn to live in Senior House during his CPW. The feeling of losing the home he never got to have tragically resulted in his death on 41W. While this is an extreme and particularly upsetting example of the consequences, it is a devastating demonstration of the passion and love that humans of the East Side have for our communities forged in spite of administrative actions.

Though the threat of closing permanently has never been leveled at East Campus, there has been no shortage of battles with administration over policy and culture. In 2020, faculty and administration became aware of clothing optionality practiced in some of the halls in EC. Publicly advertised on the website and explicitly publicized to incoming freshmen at Rush each year, East Campus ensured residents’ comfort and enforced policies created to limit encounters with facilities and other staff in the building on their own for years.

However, without the option of plausible deniability, HRS and the general MIT administration pushed for East Campus to implement an official policy. Their initial goal was to ban clothing optionality entirely, but spirited resident pushback and the careful actions of EC exec under President Tesla Wells allowed for an agreement to be made [14]. After over a year of meetings, presentations, and negotiations, the current policy of toptionality was put into place, marking another defined loss of Eastside autonomy, if not a complete one. This policy served as law until renovations, during which every aspect of our culture is to be put on trial yet again: murals, cats, and toptionality are all under fire as the administration attempts to scrub at the ‘stain’ of Eastside culture until there is no sanctuary left for us.

I joined East Campus after arriving on campus for my FPDP, and as a student entering as both queer and low-income, I initially struggled to find friends and a place I felt at home. I came out years ago in my hometown, but I faced social backlash and town-wide homophobia from the moment I did to the moment I left. Arriving on the EC build site and unquestioningly being handed a power tool was the beginning of something new. Though it’s only been a year, the community I’ve found is the first place I’ve truly felt able to be myself without fear. There may be inter and intra-hall drama and petty arguments, but when it comes to the things that matter, like identity, expression, and acceptance, EC stands behind community members unwaveringly and without question.

The biggest current example is the pushback against the renovation-related change. While each hall prides itself on individual culture, and historic rivalries between halls dictate day-to-day interactions, every active hall has representatives on the renovation committee. The admin team working with us stalls on policy issues of toptionality, customization, and cats, but we speak as a united front. As students, recognizing that EC will be the last East Side dorm is something that we’ve had to accept, and we’ve gone so far as to hold student-only meetings to nail down talking points and make our concerns more easily heard.

At this point in the fight and facing so much pushback, it feels like we’re holding onto the shreds of something that was once so much bigger. We currently have two out of the original four eastside dorms remaining, and MIT has expressed plans to eventually demolish Random Hall as early as 2016. As Feldmeier shared about his experience with Senior House, this is a fight that it feels like we are meant to lose. Though the world has become more welcoming to queer individuals and there is more cross-campus representation, the demographic data doesn’t lie. The East Side still holds the majority of queer and marginalized students on this campus [13].

As these communities are systematically disassembled by a cruel and uncaring administrative body, that leaves the question: where will we go if MIT succeeds in dismantling this vibrant community that we’ve built? As much as mainstream culture lends itself to “wishing away” counterculture and alternative sects of people, we can and will continue to take up our place in society.

In very recent history, queer existence was and can still be a contentious subject, yet we continued to love and exist in spite of the opposition. I can only hope that the East Side as a whole will be able to do the same. Feldmeier had a particularly inspiring statement on why the East Side exists in the first place: “The East Side is like the sewer drain of MIT, where all the refugees and students starting a rung below the ‘normal admits’ end up for their betterment because it understands where they come from and can help them in a way that no one else can.”



Diploma Distribution for advanced degree recipients*

Stata Center: 32-124

Thurs, May 30: 10 AM - 6 PM

Fri, May 31: 10 AM - 3 PM

registrar.mit.edu/diplomas

*All Master’s & Doctoral degrees except Sloan



Special thanks and best wishes to the Class of 2024 student workers

Heidi A. Durreesi
Sabrina Alix Henry
Phoebe C. Lin
Amanda W. Mei
Kirmina Monir
Nnedi Okoye
Karyn N. Real
Katherine G. Reisig

from all of us at the MIT Libraries!

MIT Libraries libraries.mit.edu/stayconnected

Haikus

by Eunice Zhang

COMMENCEMENT

seniors graduate
after four long, arduous years
skydiving goes wheeee
y'all slayed mit
through covid, psets, hrrgs, etc.
con-grad-ulations!!!!
GTL goes 🍷rrrr

KAZAKHSTAN

long flight, now in astana
holy shit it's cold
teaching cs hard

impostor syndrome strikes, sadge
but students so nice! :3
got sick for 2 weeks ;—;

host mom made chicken noodle [soup]
kazakh people slay!!!!
blintzes r scrumptious

+raspberry preserve = HEAVEN
horse meat also nyommmmy]
rode a horse, much wow

yandex taxis go everywhere
kazakh train quite pog
stressed, homesick, and i'll

but also much fun new stuff,
now, i <3 kazakhstan :<

Graduation 2024 by Manaal Mohammed '25

Across

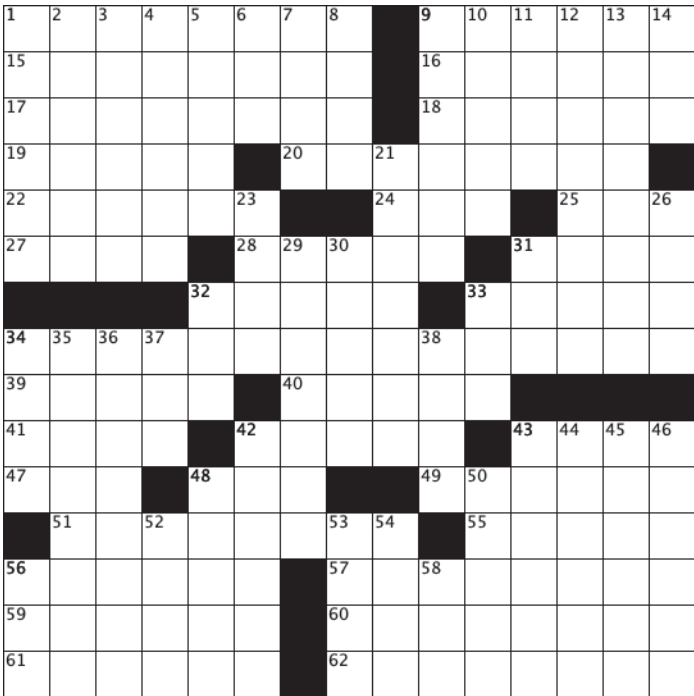
- 01 Class ring appellation
- 09 Recon, e.g.
- 15 On edge
- 16 Mexican state
- 17 Horn core?
- 18 Peanut butter cups brand
- 19 Zora ____ Hurston
- 20 Spicy sauce
- 22 "____ Thou Now, O Soul" (Whitman poem)
- 24 Author
- 25 NBC weekend fixture
- 27 Ups
- 28 Statement that isn't on paper
- 31 Gentle
- 32 Pricey fashion label
- 33 32-across origin
- 34 Three day end of school year event
- 39 "Again..."
- 40 ____ Rouge
- 41 Swear
- 42 Director Forman
- 43 32-across singer
- 47 Appropriate
- 48 "Vitamin C" band

- 49 Dr. Noubar ____ (speaker at 34-across)
- 51 Drew and Lester
- 55 Also-ran's words
- 56 Melissa ____ (chancellor)
- 57 Drilling agreement
- 59 Docs, Slides, Sheets, etc.
- 60 Poisonous shrub
- 61 Pigeon perches
- 62 Some shots

Down

- 01 Country singer Lee
- 02 Bring together again
- 03 Key near B
- 04 Stilinks of "Teen Wolf"
- 05 Some plums
- 06 One in a set
- 07 IKEA section
- 08 Slavic monarch
- 09 Horse sorrel
- 10 Work of praise
- 11 Power suit
- 12 Non-credit deal
- 13 Ween hit
- 14 Announcement makers, shortly
- 21 "Will do"

- 23 Four years, in some cases
- 26 Fast time, for some
- 29 Babe Ruth nickname
- 30 10, in a way
- 31 Beaver mascot name
- 32 Group of students allowed within six feet of each other, as during spring 2021
- 33 Boyz II ____
- 34 Flaky mineral
- 35 "Yeah, perhaps"
- 36 It's on the tip of your tongue
- 37 Trans opposite
- 38 It's a thing in Mexico
- 42 The common people
- 43 Let up
- 44 "The IT Crowd" actor Richard ____
- 45 ____ Arafat (former Palestinian president)
- 46 Penetrates
- 48 Minoan land
- 50 Disruptors, e.g.
- 52 Sacha Baron Cohen character
- 53 Neophyte, informally
- 54 Crop bin
- 56 "tbh"



58 Late summer star sign