

# TRUMP WINS

*Former President Donald J. Trump is to assume the nation's highest office once more as its 47th president, alongside Vice President-elect and U.S. Senator J.D. Vance (R-OH).*



GRAPHIC BY ELLIE MONTEMAYOR;  
PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLY  
TRIBALLEAU/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

*The newly energized Republican party has clinched control of the presidency and the Senate and is also on track to take control of the House.*

*Trump has powered through impeachments, convictions, and the chaos of a divided nation to win back the Oval Office.*

*Read the statement from our Editorial Board inside this issue.*

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6.** 5:04 pm EST: Trump wins Alaska with 55.6% of the popular vote • 4:19 pm EST: Harris wins statewide vote in Maine with 52.2% of the electoral vote • 12:54 pm EST: Trump wins Michigan with 49.8% of the popular vote • 5:35 am EST: **Donald Trump is elected as the 47th President of the United States** • 5:34 am EST: Trump wins Wisconsin with 49.7% of the popular vote • 2:47 am EST: Harris wins Minnesota with 51.1% of the popular vote • 2:24 am EST: Trump wins Pennsylvania with 50.5% of the popular vote • 1:51 am EST: Trump wins 2nd Congressional District in Maine with 52.8% of the popular vote • 1:16 am EST: Harris wins New Hampshire with 50.9% of the popular vote • 1:01 am EST: Trump wins 1st Congressional District in Nebraska with 56.3% of the popular vote • 12:58 am EST: Trump wins Georgia with 50.7% of the popular vote • 12:08 am EST: Harris wins 2nd Congressional District in Nebraska with 51.2% of the popular vote • 12:00 am EST: Harris wins Hawaii with 61.1% of the popular vote.

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5.** 11:42 pm EST: Harris wins Virginia with 51.8% of the popular vote • 11:33 pm EST: Harris wins New Mexico with 51.6% of the popular vote • 11:23 pm EST: Harris wins Oregon with 54.9% of the popular vote • 11:18 pm EST: Trump wins North Carolina with 51.1% of the popular vote • 11:00 pm EST: Harris wins Washington with 58.6% of the popular vote • 11:00 pm EST: Trump wins Idaho with 67.3% of the popular vote • 11:00 pm EST: Harris wins California with 57.3% of the popular vote • 10:40 pm EST: Trump wins Iowa with 55.9% of the popular vote • 10:39 pm EST: Trump wins Kansas with 57.4% of the popular vote • 10:20 pm EST: Harris wins District of Columbia with 92.4% of the popular vote • 10:08 pm EST: Harris wins Colorado with 54.4% of the popular vote • 10:00 pm EST: Trump wins Utah with 58.9% of the popular vote • 10:00 pm EST: Trump wins Montana with 58.9% of the popular vote • 9:49 pm EST: Trump wins Missouri with 58.5% of the popular vote • 9:25 pm EST: Trump wins the 3rd Congressional District of Nebraska with 76.3% of the popular vote • 9:12 pm EST: Trump wins Texas with 56.3% of the popular vote • 9:08 pm EST: Trump wins Ohio with 55.2% of the popular vote • 9:00 pm EST: Trump wins Wyoming with 72.3% of the popular vote • 9:00 pm EST: Trump wins Louisiana with 60.2% of the popular vote • 9:00 pm EST: Trump wins North Dakota with 67.5% of the popular vote • 9:00 pm EST: Trump wins South Dakota with 63.4% of the popular vote • 9:00 pm EST: Harris wins New York with 55.8% of the popular vote • 9:00 pm EST: Trump wins the Nebraska statewide vote with 60.2% of the popular vote • 8:38 pm EST: Harris wins Illinois with 53.4% of the popular vote • 8:34 pm EST: Harris wins Delaware with 56.6% of the popular vote • 8:30 pm EST: Harris wins New Jersey with 51.5% of the popular vote • 8:30 pm EST: Trump wins Arkansas with 64.2% of the popular vote • 8:01 pm EST: Trump wins South Carolina with 58.2% of the popular vote • 8:01 pm EST: Trump wins Florida with 56.1% of the popular vote • 8:00 pm EST: Harris wins Rhode Island with 55.6% of the popular vote • 8:00 pm EST: Harris wins Massachusetts 61.5% of the popular vote • 8:00 pm EST: Harris wins Connecticut with 55.5% of the popular vote • 8:00 pm EST: Trump wins Tennessee with 64.2% of the popular vote • 8:00 pm EST: Trump wins Oklahoma with 66.2% of the popular vote • 8:00 pm EST: Harris wins Maryland with 60.2% of the popular vote as of 4:43 pm EST 11/6 • 8:00 pm EST: Trump wins Alabama with 64.8% of the popular vote • 8:00 pm EST: Trump wins Mississippi with 61.2% of the popular vote • 7:30 pm EST: Trump wins West Virginia with 70.2% of the popular vote • 7:06 pm EST: Trump wins Kentucky with 64.6% of the popular vote • 7:06 pm EST: Harris wins Vermont with 64.3% of the popular vote • 7:05 PM EST: Trump wins Indiana with 58.9% of the popular vote



# Live Updates: Trump emerges victorious in 2024 presidential election

By Ellie Montemayor & Alex Tang  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Note from the executive committee:** *This piece is pulled from the most recent version of a live page on The Tech's website that is being continuously updated as new developments concerning the 2024 presidential election are reported. The Tech continues to publish statements and perspectives sourced from across the MIT community. All times listed are in EST.*

## THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7

**12:00 AM:** Former President Donald J. Trump is elected the President following convincing victories in the swing states of Georgia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Michigan. Arizona and Nevada remain the final states to be called: Trump holds leads in both states. Trump claimed 50.9% of the popular vote to Vice President and Democrat Candidate Kamala Harris's 47.6%. Harris made her concession speech yesterday afternoon, saying "while I concede this election... I do not concede the fight that fueled this campaign."

The Republican Party has regained control of the Senate with 52 seats at the time of writing to the Democrats' 44 seats. Four races have yet to be called. In the House of Representatives, the Republicans stand with 206 seats to the 191 belonging to the Democrats. The threshold for a majority is 218 seats. 38 races have yet to be called.

## WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6

**10:10 PM:** The Associated Press estimates that over 200,000 ballots in Nevada still need to be counted: the election will not be called for at least another day. Trump currently leads Harris 51.5% to 46.7%.

**9:40 PM:** The Associated Press estimates that over 700,000 ballots in Arizona still need to be counted: the election will not be called for at least another day. Trump currently leads Harris 52.1% to 46.9%.

**9:00 PM:** As of this time, two states are left uncalled for the presidential ticket: Nevada and Arizona, both of which are still in the midst of counting ballots with 88% and 69% of votes in, respectively. Both states are too close to call as of now, but are currently being led by Trump (both by five points).

98 of the 100 Senate seats have also been called, with 52 under Republican control (with three of those seats flipped from the Democrats), 43 under Democratic control, and one seat handed to an independent. (Many news outlets report the Democrats holding 44 seats as Bernie Sanders, the unaffiliated senior senator from Vermont, maintains close relationships with the Democratic party.) Four states (Arizona, Maine, Nevada, and Pennsylvania) remain up-for-grabs. But regardless of the outcome of those four states, the Republican Party now has majority control of the Senate, wresting the majority from the Democrats.

In the lower chamber, 39 seats have yet to be called, according to the Associated Press; 190 seats are under Democratic control with 206 handed to Republicans. Both parties require 218 seats to win the majority of the House. Republicans, with a lead of 16 against the Democrats, are better positioned to win the House and keep their control of the chamber. But news outlets report that, with many of the ongoing races remaining too tight to make accurate projections, it may take days to get final results.

**6:13 PM:** In a statement posted on X, President Joe Biden broke his silence on this year's presidential election, writing in support of Harris in light of her striking loss in her bid for presidency.

An hour earlier, former president Barack Obama issued his own statement on X to congratulate president-elect Trump and vice president-elect Vance on their win, adding that Harris's loss has followed suit from incumbent losses worldwide in the wake of global mass inflation and pandemic-era challenges.

**5:50 PM:** Four states had marijuana on their state tickets this year. Voters in Nebraska passed a measure that would allow for the use of medical marijuana and the establishment of a regulatory commission for the drug, while voters in three other states (Florida, North Dakota, and South

Dakota) voted against their respective proposals to legalize recreational marijuana.

**4:27 PM:** The New York Times reports worldwide shifts in global stock markets in the wake of Trump's presidential win, with American stocks and government bond yields, cryptocurrencies, and the U.S. dollar's value surging in the past day; world indexes have dipped in the same period, as global investors react to Trump's win. In his second presidency, Trump has promised major levels of financial isolationism, proposing major tariffs on imported goods alongside his well-known hard-line stance on immigration and its role in the American workforce. Analysts say that, while market shifts are common in the days following presidential elections, this year's disturbances are looking to be stronger than normal.

**4:26 PM:** Harris delivers a concession speech at Howard University, her alma mater, after privately calling Trump to concede to his win. Incumbent president Joe Biden also called both candidates earlier in the day.

**3:42 PM:** Voters in seven states (Maryland, Missouri, Arizona, Colorado, New York, Montana, and Nevada) passed ballot measures to protect abortion rights, out of a total of ten states that had abortion rights on the ticket this year. The measures also lifted the current abortion ban in Missouri and cut down the existing restrictions in Arizona. The measures failed in three states (Florida, Nebraska, and South Dakota), where abortion bans will remain in place.

**3:30 PM:** Dept. of Justice special counsel Jack Smith is to shut down the two active cases he oversees against president-elect Donald Trump, as per a department policy that bars prosecution of sitting presidents. There are currently two cases against Trump: one on charges of conspiracy to obstruct the results of the 2020 presidential election (which is based in Washington), and a second on charges of mishandling classified documents that he had kept in his home in Mar-a-Lago and obstructing efforts to retrieve them.

**11:46 AM:** National election security officials assured voters across the country that this year's elections remain secure. This comes in the wake of mass fears of major election interference leading up to the elections, concerns that proved unfounded on Election Day as limited attempts to tamper with the elections (including ballot-box burning, the flooding of social media with conspiracy theories from both American and foreign sources, etc.) ultimately did not incite an expected wave of interference en masse.

**5:34 AM:** The Associated Press declared former President Donald Trump the winner of the 2024 Presidential election, following his winning of the state of Wisconsin. Trump took the critical battleground states of Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Georgia with average margins of victory over Democrat candidate Kamala Harris of nearly two percent. He leads Michigan by 1.6% with 97% of votes counted, according to the Associated Press.

The Republicans also took control of the Senate, with Ohio incumbent Sherrod Brown losing to Bernie Moreno, a Republican. Jim Justice, the governor of West Virginia, handily won the spot that opened following the retirement of Senator Joe Manchin. In Montana, Democrat Senator Jon Tester lost to Tim Sheehy and in Nebraska, incumbent Republican Deb Fischer fended off a challenge from Dan Osborn, an independent.

Senate and House seats continue to be in play as race calls will slowly trickle in throughout the day.

**2:41 AM:** Minutes after winning Pennsylvania, Trump addressed supporters at his watch party in Palm Beach and claimed victory of the presidency, as well as the popular vote. The race has not yet been called by major news outlets, but he is predicted to secure the win.

**2:25 AM:** Trump has won Pennsylvania, securing 19 electoral votes and delivering a major blow to Harris's campaign. The state was widely seen as the key to the presidency, and previously leaned Republican but was flipped by President Joe Biden in the 2020 elections. Trump won with 50.5% of the popular vote in the state, clinching support from 3,457,784 voters.

**12:22 AM:** The Republican Party has taken majority control of the U.S. Senate, flipping the Democratic Party's previous 51-49

control of the upper chamber of Congress. The party was favored to take control even before polling, as Republican challengers pushed against seven Democratic seats in swing and conservative states; the Republican party had only needed to win two states if Harris wins the presidency, or just one if Trump wins it. (The vice president serves as a tie-breaker in the event of a deadlock in the chamber.)

**12:00 AM:** As of this time, former President Donald J. Trump of the Republican Party leads current Vice President Kamala Harris of the Democratic Party 230 to 205 in the electoral college, with the threshold of victory being 270. The Associated Press declared Trump victorious in North Carolina, and he holds leads in Pennsylvania, Georgia, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

Republicans also picked up key victories in Senate races, and are now poised to take control. Jim Justice of West Virginia was declared the winner in a seat formerly occupied by independent Senator Joe Manchin, formerly a Democrat.

The final polls have closed in Alaska and Hawaii.

## TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5

**11:42 PM:** Per the Associated Press, Harris wins Virginia (13).

**11:33 PM:** Harris wins New Mexico (5). Missouri, the first state to make abortion illegal after the overturning of Roe v. Wade by the U.S. Supreme Court, approved a measure to protect abortion in its Constitution.

**11:23 PM:** Harris wins Oregon (8).

**11:18 PM:** Per the Associated Press, Trump wins North Carolina, a critical battleground state with sixteen electoral votes. Trump also won the state in 2016 and 2020.

**11:00 PM:** Harris wins California (54) and Washington (12). Trump wins Idaho (4).

**10:45 PM:** Harris wins one electoral vote in Maine.

**10:40 PM:** Per the Associated Press, Trump wins Kansas (6) and Iowa (6).

**10:36 PM:** Colorado approves a state constitutional amendment to protect abortion rights.

**10:20 PM:** Per the Associated Press, Harris wins the District of Columbia (3).

**10:08 PM:** Harris wins Colorado with 10 electoral votes.

**10:00 PM:** Trump wins Montana (4) and Utah (6). Polls closed in Montana, Nevada, and Utah.

**9:49 PM:** Per the Associated Press, Trump wins Missouri with 10 electoral votes.

**9:47 PM:** In North Carolina, the Associated Press reports that Harris trails Trump by 4 percent with more than half of the expected votes counted.

**9:38 PM:** New York approves a state constitutional amendment to protect the civil rights of those seeking or have had abortions.

**9:25 PM:** Per the Associated Press, Trump wins another electoral vote in Nebraska. 9:19 PM: State senator Sarah McBride wins Delaware's only House seat, which makes her the first openly transgender individual elected to Congress.

**9:15 PM:** Republican North Carolina gubernatorial candidate Lieutenant Governor Mark Robinson loses his race. A CNN investigation earlier this year uncovered racist and explicit messages on a pornography site purportedly posted by Robinson. The race was among the most closely watched this year.

**9:12 PM:** Per the Associated Press, Trump wins Texas. Florida rejected the abortion measure on the ballot: it had a steep 60% threshold to pass. Florida currently has a six-week abortion ban.

**9:08 PM:** Trump wins Ohio (17).

**9:00 PM:** Per the Associated Press, Trump wins two electoral votes in Nebraska and the statewide vote. He also won North Dakota (3), South Dakota (3), Louisiana (8), and Wyoming (3). Harris wins New York (28).

Polls have closed in Arizona, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, South Dakota, Texas Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

**8:38 PM:** Harris wins Illinois with 19 electoral votes.

**8:34 PM:** Harris wins Delaware with 3 electoral votes.

**8:30 PM:** The Associated Press calls Arkansas for Trump with 6 electoral votes. Harris won New Jersey with 14 electoral votes. Polling has closed in Arkansas.



OMAR OROZCO - THE TECH

Sigma Nu hosts a live election watch party in 32-155.



THE TECH

Kresge Auditorium serves as a polling location on Election Day, November 5, 2024.

As the ballots continue to be counted, The Tech has sought the perspective of graduate students within MIT's Political science department.

On Nov. 4, in a written statement to The Tech, Joe Loffredo, a graduate student affiliated with the MIT Election Data and Science Lab, said: "Four years ago, the US held an election during a global pandemic, yet miraculously, this country saw record turnout. In the aftermath of the 2020 election, however, levels of voter confidence in the electoral process diverged between Democrats and Republicans. In response to claims of a 'rigged election,' officials and policymakers nationwide have spent the past four years working to increase transparency, refine procedures, and counter misinformation. Tomorrow, their efforts face a critical test."

On his role as an academic researcher during the election, Loffredo stated that he will be focused on two themes central to election integrity. He said: "First, what sorts of rumors gain steam and how do election officials respond to them? Second, Donald Trump was the first losing presidential candidate to not deliver a concession speech in 2020. There are suggestions that Trump will declare himself the winner, even before the outcome of the election is made clear. How do the media and the American people respond to this? How does such an action shape America's conversation about the performance of election administration in this election?"

**1:50 PM:** U.S. Capitol Police report that a man was arrested at the US Capitol while trying to enter with a torch and flare gun. The arrest occurred during a screening at the Capitol Visitor Center.

**11:52 AM:** Former President and Republican candidate for President Donald J. Trump and his wife Melania Trump cast their votes in Palm Beach, Florida. Speaking about his campaign, Trump said, "It seems that the conservatives are voting very powerfully." When asked about regrets he had on the campaign trail, Trump said, "I can't think of any."

**11:50 AM:** President Biden has no public appearances scheduled for Election Day: his press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre will not be holding her usual daily briefing.

**10:22 AM:** Flooding in Missouri has disrupted election day proceedings. It has since been reported that two poll workers were killed, with at least five dead overall.

**9:24 AM:** JD Vance, a Senator (R-Ohio) and the Republican vice presidential candidate, voted in Cincinnati.

**8:11 AM:** Attorney generals from 47 states and three U.S. territories released a statement urging peace and preemptively "condemn any acts of violence related to the results." The exceptions were Indiana, Montana, and Texas. They wrote, "We call upon every American to vote, participate in civil discourse and, above all, respect the integrity of the democratic process."

**7:00 AM:** Polling stations across Massachusetts have all officially opened for voting.

**6:10 AM:** Dixville Notch, a tiny New Hampshire resort town has a split 3-3 presidential vote on the first Election Day Vote. The town has had the tradition of being the first in the nation to finish in-person voting. The town has six voters and the vote count was completed in fifteen minutes.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GRACE ZHENG

Freshmen in Simmons Hall host a live election watch party in the third floor lounge, one of many in the dorm.

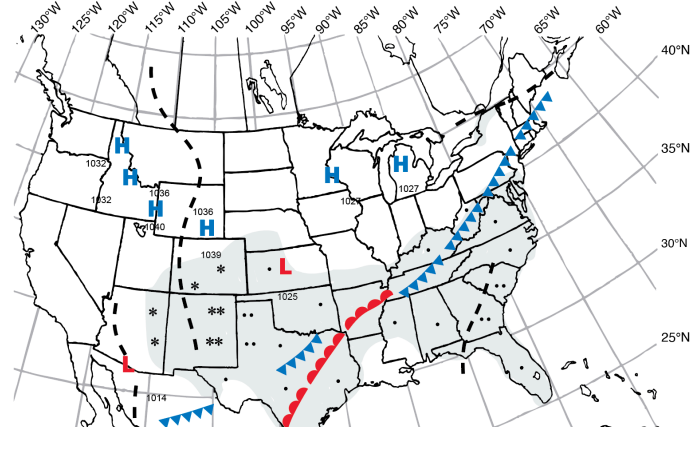


PHOTO COURTESY OF GRACE ZHENG

MacGregor D Entry hosts a national election watch party in their lounge.



WEATHER FORECAST



By Adrienne Lai  
CHIEF METEOROLOGIST

The leaves are falling, the clock moved forward, and the days are shorter, all signaling the beginning of the end of Fall. While the optics suggest the move towards Winter, the temperatures do not with the highs being around 60°F. For those who are spending their first Winter here, heads up, this is not normal. Enjoy the sunny weather before the biting cold and brutal winds emerge.

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

### Undergraduate Association Voting Closes for Participatory Budgeting Proposals

On Oct. 24, the Undergraduate Association (UA) opened up voting for various proposals that utilize the \$25,000 set aside for participatory budgeting in the fall semester. The vote, which was conducted through rank choice, closed midnight Nov. 6. An additional \$25,000 is set aside for the spring semester, during which there will be another round of funding.

The proposals included the following: Bouncy House Extravaganza, Exploding Kittens for All Living Groups, Free Menstrual Products for Undergraduates, Free Stamps for All, MIT Poster Archive, The Newspaper Project, Project GOAT aka Goat Petting Zoo, Undergraduate Swings, and Waffle Wednesdays.

— Alex Tang

### Human Insight Collaborative holds launch event on Oct. 28.

The Institute launched the MIT Human Insight Collaborative (MITHIC), an initiative seeking to promote intersectionality between faculty in the humanities, arts, and social sciences and their peers across MIT in a formal kickoff event on Oct. 28.

Anantha Chandrakasan, Dean of the School of Engineering, the Institute's chief innovation and strategy officer, and Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science and Agustín Rayo, Dean of the MIT School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences are MITHIC co-chairs. According to an article by MIT News, support for MITHIC comes from all five schools of MIT, the Schwarzman College of Computing, the Office of the Provost, and philanthropic support from Charlene Kabcenell '79 and Derry Kabcenell '75. Ray Stata '57 was also a benefactor. The centerpiece of the event was a conversation with Min Jin Lee, author of the bestseller Pachinko, hosted by Linda Henry SM '05, co-owner and CEO of Boston Globe Media. The opening line of Pachinko is a thesis: "History has failed us, but no matter." She highlights how society's understanding of history depends on documentation, which was often reserved for the elite. "I put the human being at the center," Lee said. "Even if documentation didn't prove that we existed... regular people persisted. So I thought, 'I'm going to recenter the people that history has left out, and I'm going to try to build this history.' That's why I write all my books."

According to the MITHIC website, faculty can apply to receive funding for projects and initiatives that bring together faculty and encourage cross-pollination across the Institute.

— Alex Tang & Karie Shen

Hands Down by Manaal Mohammed '25

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Across

01 Print maker?

10 Party mix?

15 Hot topic in 2024 presidential election

16 Spiro \_\_\_\_ (former vice president)

17 In-depth examination

18 Common car accident type

19 Stanford mascot

20 Show grp.

21 Sweetheart

22 Common operator instruction

25 \_\_\_\_code (interview prep tool)

26 Hard core?

29 Administrative, as work

31 Mucho

33 Rascal

37 Head waiter, shortly

40 Museum known for its many Goyas

41 Ambled

43 Menstrual cramp reliever

44 \_\_\_\_acid diethylamide (popular psychedelic)

47 Extremity

48 Black Friday sign letters

51 Visual representation of concepts

53 Electronic music genre

55 Rev (up)

56 Erykah Badu do

60 Relating to the kidneys

61 Equivocal

63 Puccini work

64 Quiet

65 British stuffed pie

66 Local

Down

01 Trivia bit

02 Letter-shaped beam

03 \_\_\_\_ goes!"

04 Gordon Gekko says it's good

05 UFO members

06 Ceremonial

07 Ruffle, as hair

08 Where one might spend their staycation

09 "Gangnam Style" artist

10 Fruit known for its high fat and sugar content

11 "Crash" author

12 Sleep sound

13 "Beet & \_\_\_\_"

14 Sound of morning?

21 Transfer

23 Popular Nickelodeon show starring Miranda Cosgrove

24 "Sweet!"

26 Charity

27 Trawler, e.g.

28 Ado

30 Andes animal prized for its hair

32 Missing work?

34 Thing to surf

35 Score after deuce

36 Spandau Ballet hit

38 Actress Fisher of "Eighth Grade"

39 Title page?

42 "You wish!"

45 Chess play

46 As a 33-across, perhaps

48 Sharpen, as a razor

49 Venezuelan flatbread

50 Alley selections

52 \_\_\_\_'s Choice (popular skincare brand)

54 Man's composition, as in the Islamic canon

57 "Everything is

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11Illuminated" author

58Scheme

59Mount in Greek myths

61Singer DiFranco

62"Golly!"

Meet 2024 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences winner Simon Johnson

Johnson: "You have to be looking for something. You have to be dissatisfied. You have to be wanting to take that risk."

By Alex Tang, Vivian Hir, and Alor Sahoo  
EDITORS

Professor Simon Johnson PhD '89 of the MIT Sloan School of Management shared the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences with Institute Professor Daron Acemoglu of the Department of Economics.

James A. Robinson from the University of Chicago on Oct. 14 for their research on how institutions are created and how they affect prosperity.

The Tech sat down with Johnson to speak about his reactions to winning the Prize, the impact of his research, and his career journey thus far. This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity.

TT: What keeps you motivated to continue your work after achieving such a high level of recognition?

I recommend that everybody should articulate to themselves a career goal. What is your career ultimate stretch goal? You should do it in your 20s, not give yourself a few more years to see which way your career is going to go. You should tell one person, but only one person, because it should be a stretch goal.

I have a very good friend at Duke, and he was the best man at my wedding. I told him my mad end of career goal would be to become chief economist at the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Through various twists and turns, because the world is a funny place, I ended up getting the job when I was 44. I'd achieved my stretch goal. I told him and thought, "I'm done right?" So, I did that job for a while, and it was a great job. Everything since then has been kind of icing on the cake.

I remain very active and do a lot of research. Last year Daron and I published our book, *Power and Progress: Our Thousand-Year Struggle Over Technology and Prosperity*. We worked on the direction of technological change, where this innovation comes from, how AI could become really beneficial to most people, but also we articulate why we think it might not be so advantageous. There's a straight line from the work that won the Nobel to the book.

I've been incredibly lucky in my career, and the Nobel Prize far exceeded my expectations. I think we'll work on this research for as long as we can. I feel very committed to MIT and MIT's mission. I know that MIT has a very big profile and responsibility in the world because people look to us as for what should be built, how it should be built, and so on.

TT: Who do you think your research has the most direct tangible impact on? Is it like policymakers? Is it the general public with these books, or is it an amalgamation of the two?

When you do research, your first audience is always their colleagues, and you're trying to influence them and trying to persuade them to think about things a certain way. [The Nobel Prize committee] did a 57 page review of our 25 year-old work, and explained in their assessment that it was influential.

But I think that the point of doing this work is not just to persuade other academics. It's also to link it to more practical solutions, which certainly can be policy, but the book [Power and Progress: Our Thousand-Year Struggle Over Technology and Prosperity] is very oriented towards the private sector and the public in general, and trying to get people to think about innovation in a slightly different, or maybe substantially different way.

Ideas from this type of work were taken up in the 2022 CHIPS and Science Act. But they were taken up not just because we recommended them—it helped, but when COVID hit, people were reminded that science really matters. So we're saying, look, do more science, but spend that money in a way and in places around the country that are more likely to create good jobs for more people, so we're connecting the scientific agenda with an economic development agenda for the United States.

TT: Describe to us a specific time when you encountered a setback in your research and how did you overcome them?

Yeah, many. I think when you do empirical research, which is almost entirely what I do, there are many dead ends you don't know exactly. You know, is the data going to be there? You think there's a phenomena that's interesting, but can it really be measured? Are those measures convincing? Does it stand up to statistical analysis, and so on?

I think the major pivot I made in my career was I was very deep into understanding the post-Communist transition. I was a post-doc at Harvard 1989 to 1991 and I worked in Poland, Ukraine, and Russia, and it was extremely interesting. I'm glad I spent time immersed in those places, but I came to realize that if I wanted to succeed academically and also reach broader audiences, I needed to not just know deep things about those specific countries. I needed to branch out and study other areas with shared commonalities. If you want to get tenure at a top place, or if you want to become IMF chief, people look for more general knowledge. I worked on the East Asian financial crisis in 1997 to 1998; that was one way I transitioned. I also worked on some other broader issues, but then I met Daron and Jim, and because I spent all this time looking at weaknesses in Eastern Europe, including corruption, economy, and so on, I understood why institutions could be so important to global economic development.

Together, we looked at the global distribution of diseases, from yellow fever to malaria. Once we connected those pieces, which was a big pivot, that was the breakthrough. This historical take on institutions was important, and I think the fact that these points of speculation didn't emerge earlier is the reason we had an impact. These ideas were simply not firmly established in mainstream economics. In fact, I don't think it was an idea that was in economics at all, what we proposed at the time.

Pasteur supposedly said, 'chance favors the prepared mind.' But I think it's a bit stronger than that. I think you have to be hungry. You have to be looking for something. You have to be dissatisfied. You have to be wanting to take that risk. And I put a lot of time on the first project we did. I didn't have tenure. Some people thought it was a crazy idea, but you have to really stick to it.

TT: Talk about how you balance a thorough study of the trends of history with an understanding of a technologically advanced and dynamic present.

I'm always interested in the backstory. I planned on going to university to study history and economics, and I was really interested in history, but I thought I couldn't get a good job with history, so that didn't seem very practical. I liked math and physics in high school and thus took specialized math, physics, and history subjects. But I didn't figure out what somebody told me that economics would be a good combination of math and physics. Ultimately, during my degree, I switched from history and economics to an economics and politics degree. But I realized that whenever we sit down to study technology policy or ask the question of how do we generate more good jobs, I set out explicitly to try and write modern history

TT: Is there advice you would give to your past self or to people in general at MIT?

It would be nice to find some shortcut! It took me 13 years from a PhD to getting tenure. That's a long time, much longer than what we usually expect or want. The funny thing is, I didn't feel stressed. Life was not hard when I initially came to MIT, and work really started to come together. I was enjoying it, you know, I was working with my friends, and I was working very hard, but it was all interesting questions. Some of the work was controversial. People would push back. But that was a lot of fun, too.

We set these tenure clocks, including MIT, but I think as long as you do the work that you're interested in and you care about, and as long as you're being productive in a way that raises your market value. We at Sloan ask junior faculty to do almost nothing that is institution specific, meaning that they should be spending the vast majority of their time on things that are widely marketable to other universities that will raise their value on the academic job market, including publications and teaching competence. But I say to my junior colleagues, and this has been true in my experience, that if you don't get tenure here or if the tenure process is not working out for you, you can get a really good job somewhere else. It took me 13 years, and I became Chief Economist of the IMF a few years after that, and then I won a Nobel Prize!

I think finding what you really enjoy is key, but also considering the factors of lifestyle and pace. It is hard to be an academic, especially for junior academics: it's a tough lifestyle, and it's not for everyone, so you have to choose carefully.

TT: Outside of economics, what other hobbies and interests do you have?

One advice I have for everyone is find a sport or an activity that's a lifetime activity. I play a ridiculous amount of tennis and hang out in a climbing gym, which I go to for my daughter. I also used to run a lot of marathons when I was younger.

Another hobby of mine is reading science fiction. I have a six page memo of science fiction recommendations and rerank my top 20 science fiction books yearly. Outside of science fiction, I mostly read history.

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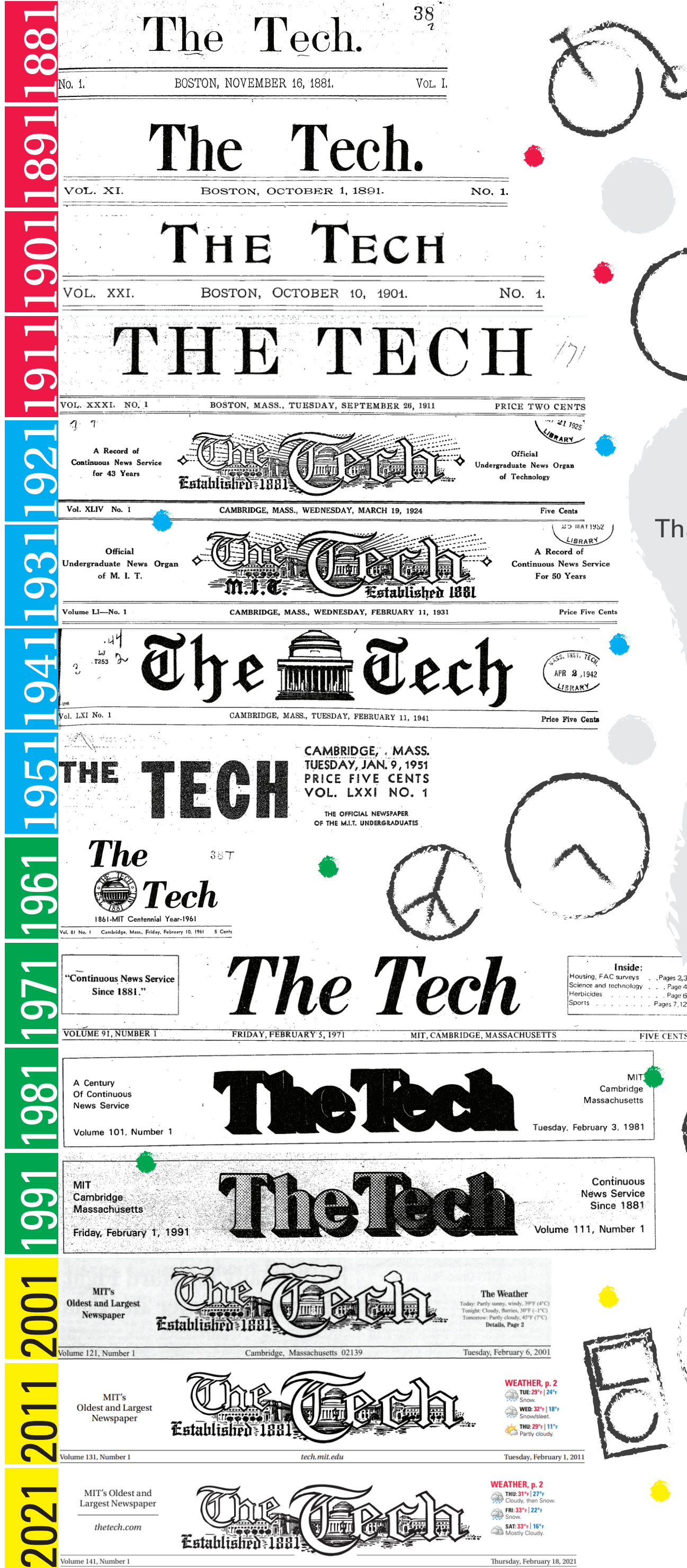
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## SPORTS BLITZ

Friday, October 25th:

- Women's Swimming and Diving lost to Harvard University 103-196
- Women's Swimming and Diving defeated Northeastern University 173-124
- Men's Swimming and Diving lost to Harvard University 68-224
- Women's Volleyball defeated Middlebury College 3-0

Saturday, October 26th:

- Sailing placed 10th at Yale, 7th at Brown, 3rd at Boston University, and 7th at Tufts
- Men's Heavyweight Crew placed 2nd, 8th, and 17th at the Wormwood Chase Regatta
- Rifle defeated Norwich University 4447-4327
- Women's Volleyball defeated Williams College 3-0
- Football lost to Maritime College 14-20
- Women's Openweight Crew placed 3rd, 1st, and 5th at Head of the Fish
- Field Hockey lost to Babson College 1-2
- Women's Volleyball defeated Tufts University 3-1
- Men's Soccer lost to Babson College 1-2
- Women's Soccer defeated WPI 2-0

Tuesday, October 29th:

- Women's Volleyball defeated Clark University 3-0

Wednesday, October 30th:

- Women's Soccer defeated Wellesley College 4-1
- Men's Soccer defeated WPI 3-1

Thursday, October 31st:

- Women's Volleyball defeated Wesleyan University 3-0

Friday, November 1st:

- Squash defeated Boston University 9-0

Saturday, November 2nd:

- Men's Fencing participated in the Big One Invitational
- Women's Fencing participated in the Big One Invitational
- Men's Water Polo lost to Harvard University 14-19
- Women's Cross Country placed 1st in the NEWMAC Championships
- Men's Cross Country placed 1st in the NEWMAC Championships
- Men's Swimming and Diving defeated Springfield College 200-98
- Field Hockey defeated Salve Regina University 1-2
- Women's Swimming and Diving defeated Springfield College 242-57
- Women's Soccer defeated Emerson College 3-0
- Men's Soccer tied Wheaton College 0-0

Sunday, November 3rd:

- Men's Water Polo lost to Brown University 17-20

Tuesday, November 5th:

- Women's Soccer defeated United States Coast Guard Academy 2-1
- Women's Volleyball defeated Babson College 3-0
- Squash defeated Northeastern University 9-0
- Men's Soccer tied Springfield College 2-2

## Upcoming (and ongoing) NEWMAC Championship Tournaments

By Matthew Barnett  
& Alex Tang

With the regular season in the books, many of MIT's fall athletic teams are slated to compete in their respective NEWMAC Championship Tournaments. At the time of publication, many are still ongoing. Here is a recap of how MIT's teams stand.

### Field Hockey

MIT Field Hockey finished their season 13-4 (8-1 NEWMAC) ranked 16th in the nation (amongst D-III schools). They earned the second seed in the 2024 NEWMAC Field Hockey Championship bracket, as well as a first-round bye. In their upcoming semifinal game on 11/7, they will host 3rd-seed WPI (12-6, 7-2 conference).

### Men's Soccer

MIT Men's Soccer closed their season 8-8-2 (3-3-2 conference). They were the fourth seed in the 2024 NEWMAC Men's Soccer Championship bracket. On Tuesday, they fell to Springfield College in PKs. With goals by Shikar Motupally '28 and Jack Minor '24, MIT went into overtime tied at 2-2. After two scoreless extra pe-

riods, the game went to penalty kicks, and MIT ended up losing in heartbreaking fashion: 8-9 was the final score.

### Women's Soccer

MIT Women's Soccer ended their season 18-1-1 (11-0 conference), ranked 3rd in the nation (among D-III schools) by the United Soccer Coaches Poll. They are the first seed in the 2024 NEWMAC Women's Soccer Championship bracket. On Tuesday, they defeated No. 8 seed Coast Guard 2-1, with goals scored by Meagan Rowlett ('24) and Ashley English ('24). They move on to the NEWMAC Semifinals, where they host 4th-seeded Babson (8-6-5, 5-3-3 conference) on Thursday, 11/7. Of note, Rowlett surpassed the all-time program record with 53 career goals in a 4-1 victory over Wellesley on 10/30.

### Men's Cross Country

MIT Men's Cross Country secured their 26th-straight NEWMAC Title this past Saturday, November 2nd, at Wellesley College's Nehoiden Golf Club. With nine finishers in the top 12 of the 8 km race, they recorded a winning score of 25. Sam Coutts '24 led the team and secured the race's indi-

vidual title with a finishing time 24:32.4. The team's next race will be at NCAA DIII East Regional Championships on 11/16 in Hopkinton, New Hampshire.

### Women's Cross Country

MIT Women's Cross Country secured their 17th-straight NEWMAC Title this past Saturday (11/2), also at the Nehoiden Golf Club at Wellesley College. All 5 of the team's scoring runners finished in the top 6 of the 6 km race, helping the team to record a dominating score of 16. Kate Sanderson '26 won the individual title and led the team with a finishing time of 21:40.2. The team's next race will be at NCAA DIII East Regional Championships on 11/16 in Hopkinton, New Hampshire.

### Volleyball

MIT's undefeated volleyball team, ranked 4th in the nation, has yet to complete their regular season. They are currently 27-0 (10-0 conference), and will play against Smith College and Union College on 11/9. Though their seed is not yet determined, they can anticipate hosting a quarterfinals match on November 12th, the first day of the NEWMAC tournament for volleyball.

## Upcoming Sports Events

### FRIDAY 8

Women's Basketball  
vs NYU  
5 p.m.

Men's Squash  
vs Navy  
6 p.m.

### SATURDAY 9

Women's Soccer  
NEWMAC Championship

Field Hockey  
NEWMAC Championship

Men's Water Polo  
vs Princeton University  
11:30 a.m.

Football  
vs Norwich University  
12 p.m.

Women's Volleyball  
at Smith College  
12 p.m.

Women's Basketball  
vs Swarthmore College  
1 p.m.

Men's Basketball  
vs UMass Dartmouth  
2 p.m.

Men's Squash  
vs Franklin and Marshall  
College  
2 p.m.

Women's Volleyball  
vs Union College  
2 p.m.

Men's Water Polo  
vs LIU  
7:30 p.m.

### SUNDAY 10

Men's Water Polo  
vs Iona University  
10 a.m.

Men's Squash  
vs Fordham University  
12 p.m.

### TUESDAY 12

Women's Volleyball  
NEWMAC Championship

### WEDNESDAY 13

Field Hockey  
NCAA Championship

### Women's Fencing

vs Boston College, Brandeis  
University, Harvard University

### Men's Fencing

vs Boston College, Brandeis  
University, Harvard University

Men's Basketball  
vs Endicott College  
7 p.m.

### FRIDAY 15

Women's Basketball  
at Bridgewater State University  
7:30 p.m.

### SATURDAY 16

Rifle  
vs United States Coast Guard  
Academy  
9 a.m.

Rifle  
vs Plattsburgh State  
9 a.m.

Women's Cross Country  
at NCAA DIII East Regional  
Championships

Men's Cross Country  
at NCAA DIII East Regional  
Championships

Football  
at WPI  
12 p.m.

Men's Squash  
vs University of Rochester  
1 p.m.

Men's Basketball  
at Rhode Island College  
7:30 p.m.

### SUNDAY 17

Rifle  
vs John Jay College  
9:30 a.m.

Men's Squash  
vs Western College  
9:30 a.m.

### TUESDAY 19

Men's Basketball  
at Salem State University  
7 p.m.

Women's Basketball  
at Emmanuel College  
7 p.m.

## Women's Club Soccer 0-3 at Regionals

MIT's Women Club Soccer traveled to Stony Brook University this past weekend to compete in the NIRSA Region 1 Club Soccer Tournament. They entered the tournament as the No. 21 seed, and were slated to face fourth-seeded RIT, ninth-seeded Temple, and sixteenth-seeded Brown in pool play.

The weekend did not play out as they had hoped. In their first game on Saturday against Brown, the team was shut-out 0-4 in a loss. Their second game against Temple held

more promise, but the team gave up a 2-0 halftime lead to lose 2-3 (goals by Maria Alder ('25) and Olivia Rivera ('26)). In their lone game on Sunday against RIT, the team fought valiantly in the face of injuries, but ultimately lost 1-2, with the lone goal coming from Caroline Ibanez ('26).

Despite the losses, the team enjoyed their trip to New York, and is optimistic about their chances to make it further next season.

— Matthew Barnett

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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.

## How counties are shifting in the 2024 presidential election

Former president Donald Trump won the presidency after widespread gains across the country delivered him victory over Vice President Kamala Harris early Wednesday. Most of the nation's 3,000-plus counties swung rightward compared with 2020. The Republican shift appeared across rural border communities in Texas, the wealthy suburbs of Washington, D.C., and even reliably Democratic counties in New York City.

Trump widened his margins in rural areas, while Harris underperformed compared with Biden in safely blue cities. This combination, and a rightward lurch in major suburbs and midsize metros, amounted to a Trump victory in every battleground state where a winner had been projected so far.

— Kevin Schaul & Kati Perry, FROM THE WASHINGTON POST  
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 6, 2024

## DOJ moving to wind down Trump criminal cases before he takes office

Justice Department officials have been evaluating how to wind down the two federal criminal cases against President-elect Donald Trump before he takes office to comply with long-standing department policy that a sitting president can't be prosecuted, two people familiar with the matter tell NBC News. The latest discussions stand in contrast with the pre-election legal posture of special counsel Jack Smith, who in recent weeks took significant steps in the election interference case against Trump.

But the sources say DOJ officials have come to grips with the fact that no trial is possible anytime soon in either the Jan. 6 case or the classified documents matter — both of which are mired in legal issues that would likely prompt an appeal all the way to the Supreme Court.

— Ken Dilanian & Laura Jarrett, FROM NBC NEWS  
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 6, 2024

## “Trump trade” takes off: Tesla, Bitcoin and Truth Social boom in election aftermath

The value of assets tied to Donald Trump — and those likely to benefit under his administration — surged in the wake of his decisive electoral victory on Tuesday. Leading the way was Trump Media and Technology Group, the company that owns the Truth Social media platform. Its stock closed up 6% in Wednesday trading.

Shares of Tesla, the electric automaker owned by Elon Musk, also saw a sizable gain — up 15%. Musk was heavily involved in promoting Trump's campaign, and the president-elect has indicated he would appoint Musk to a Cabinet-level position tasked with tackling perceived government waste.

— Rob Wile, FROM NBC NEWS  
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 6, 2024

## Boeing strike ends as machinists accept contract offer with 38% pay increase

Boeing's machinists voted to accept the company's latest contract offer, ending a strike that began on Sept. 13. The latest contract promises a 38% pay increase over four years, a \$12,000 ratification bonus and an increased 401(k) match. The striking workers rejected two previous contract offers. The machinists' union endorsed this latest version of the contract and encouraged its members to approve.

"In every negotiation and strike, there is a point where we have extracted everything that we can in bargaining and by withholding our labor. We are at that point now and risk a regressive or lesser offer in the future," a statement from the union said.

— Zach Wichter, FROM USA TODAY  
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 5, 2024

## Hundreds flee and homes burn as powerful winds feed wildfires in Southern California

California was lashed by powerful winds Wednesday that fed a fast-moving wildfire that destroyed dozens of homes and forced hundreds of residents to flee as forecasters warned of the potential for "extreme and life-threatening" blazes.

Northwest of Los Angeles, the Mountain Fire exploded in size and prompted evacuation orders for suburban communities, ranches and agricultural areas near Santa Paula in southern Ventura County. A thick plume of smoke rose hundreds of feet into the sky, blanketing whole neighborhoods and limiting visibility for firefighters and evacuees.

— Christopher Weber, Marcio J. Sanchez, & Stefanie Dazio, FROM ASSOCIATED PRESS  
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 6, 2024

# Trump returns to power, ushering in era of uncertainty

Shane Goldmacher & Lisa Lerer

FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES  
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 6, 2024

Donald J. Trump rode a promise to smash the American status quo to win the presidency for a second time, surviving a criminal conviction, indictments, an assassin's bullet, accusations of authoritarianism and an unprecedented switch of his opponent to complete a remarkable return to power.

Mr. Trump's victory caps the astonishing political comeback of a man who was charged with plotting to overturn the last election but who tapped into frustrations and fears about the economy and illegal immigration to defeat Vice President Kamala Harris.

His defiant plans to upend the country's political system held appeal to tens of millions of voters who feared that the American dream was drifting further

from reach and who turned to Mr. Trump as a battering ram against the ruling establishment and the expert class of elites.

In a deeply divided nation, voters embraced Mr. Trump's pledge to seal the southern border by almost any means, to revive the economy with 19th-century-style tariffs that would restore American manufacturing and to lead a retreat from international entanglements and global conflict.

Now, Mr. Trump will serve as the 47th president four years after reluctantly leaving office as the 45th, the first politician since Grover Cleveland in the late 1800s to lose re-election to the White House and later mount a successful run. At the age of 78, Mr. Trump has become the oldest man ever elected president, breaking a record held by President Biden, whose mental competence Mr. Trump has savaged.

His win ushers in an era of uncertainty for the nation.

To roughly half the country, Mr. Trump's rise portends a dark turn for American democracy, whose future will now depend on a man who has openly talked about undermining the rule of law. Mr. Trump helped inspire an assault on the Capitol in 2021, has threatened to imprison political adversaries and was denounced as a fascist by former aides. But for his supporters, Mr. Trump's provocations became selling points rather than pitfalls.

On Wednesday, the results showed Mr. Trump improving on his 2020 showing in a red wave of counties all across America with only limited exceptions. Mr. Trump had flipped Georgia and held North Carolina in the Sun Belt, while sweeping the so-called Blue Wall states of Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania. The victories vaulted him far past the 270 Electoral College votes he needed to win the White House.

# “Trump’s America”: Victory signals a new kind of country

Peter Baker

FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES  
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 6, 2024

In the end, Donald J. Trump is not the historical aberration some thought he was, but instead a transformational force reshaping the modern United States in his own image.

In her closing rally on the Ellipse last week, Kamala Harris scorned Donald J. Trump as an outlier who did not represent America. "That is not who we are," she declared.

In fact, it turns out, that may be exactly who we are. At least most of us.

The assumption that Mr. Trump represented an anomaly who would at last be consigned to the ash heap of history was washed away on Tuesday night by a red current that swept through battleground states — and swept away the understanding of America long nurtured by its ruling elite of both parties.

No longer can the political establishment write off Mr. Trump as a temporary break from the long march of progress, a fluke who somehow sneaked into the White House in a quirky, one-off Electoral College win eight years ago. With his comeback victory to reclaim the presidency, Mr. Trump has now established himself as a transformational force reshaping the United States in his own image.

Populist disenchantment with the nation's direction and resentment against elites proved to be deeper and more profound than many in both parties had recognized. Mr. Trump's testosterone-driven campaign capitalized on resistance to electing the first woman president.

And while tens of millions of voters still cast ballots against Mr. Trump, he once again tapped into a sense among many others that the country they knew was slipping away, under siege economically, culturally and

demographically.

To counter that, those voters ratified the return of a brash 78-year-old champion willing to upend convention and take radical action even if it offends sensibilities or violates old standards. Any misgivings about their chosen leader were shoved to the side.

As a result, for the first time in history, Americans have elected a convicted criminal as president. They handed power back to a leader who tried to overturn a previous election, called for the "termination" of the Constitution to reclaim his office, aspired to be a dictator on Day 1 and vowed to exact "retribution" against his adversaries.

"The real America becomes Trump's America," said Timothy Naftali, a presidential historian at Columbia University. "Frankly, the world will say if this man wasn't disqualified by Jan. 6, which was incredibly influential around the world, then this is not the America that we knew."

# Trump’s win raises questions on the credibility of the media

Brian Stelter

FROM CNN  
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 6, 2024

Donald Trump's return to power is a hinge point for the American media — in ways big, small, and to be determined. His defeat of Kamala Harris is raising questions about the media's credibility, influence, and audience. Some of the questions might not be answerable for years.

But journalists are asking each other: What does this "red wave" election say about the information environment in the United States?

In the hours after Trump won reelection Tuesday, some of his loyalists asserted that his victory is a complete repudiation of the news media. For a time on Wednesday morning, The Federalist's lead headline was not about Trump, it was about the "corporate media industrial complex" being "2024's biggest loser."

Legacy media "is officially dead," The Daily Wire podcaster

Matt Walsh wrote on X overnight. "Their ability to set the narrative has been destroyed. Trump declared war on the media in 2016. Tonight he vanquished them completely. They will never be relevant again."

That's wishful thinking on Walsh's part — Tuesday's marathon election coverage was a testament to the media's relevance — but the point is that many Trump voters share his wish. They believe the national news media is a big part of what ails America. Not only do they distrust what they read, they often don't read it in the first place. Can anything be done to change that?

A quote in a recent New York magazine column channeled that question. The quote, from an anonymous TV executive, was recirculated on social media Wednesday morning. "If half the country has decided that Trump is qualified to be president, that means they're not reading any of this media, and we've lost this audience completely," the execu-

tive said. "A Trump victory means mainstream media is dead in its current form. And the question is what does it look like after."

"Dead" is gross hyperbole, of course, but the comment reflected real concerns that many members of the media have. A severe trust deficit exists between the Trump base and big institutional media outlets. In a text message, a Trump campaign aide suggested that the press should show more humility.

That raises another question: Do major networks and publications have enough columnists and commentators who reflect the Trump majority's views? "Maybe we have a point," the aide remarked. "Maybe 'misinformation' is a lazy word that was never applied to press coverage of Biden's health or the border. Maybe 'offensive' things aren't 'offensive to most.'"

The mainstream media "has held less clout every four years," Semafor's Dave Weigel wrote Wednesday morning.

# Global reactions to Donald Trump’s election victory

Alexander Smith

FROM NBC NEWS  
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 6, 2024

Most world leaders were always going to congratulate Donald Trump on his presidential win, as they did early Wednesday before he was even officially declared the victor.

Some — like right-wingers and populists in Israel, India, the Gulf and Europe — were gleeful. Many of America's traditional allies, meanwhile, hinted at their unease but also a pragmatic determination to make the best of their new reality: four more years of a man who has undermined Washington's friends and boosted its autocratic foes, attempted to overturn the 2020 election and denied basic climate science.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said it was "history's greatest comeback." While his ultranationalist National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir posted "Yesssss" followed by the Ameri-

can and Israeli flags and a strong-arm emoji.

In the world's largest democracy, India, populist Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave his "heartiest congratulations my friend." And Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who is accused by human rights groups of attacking democratic dissent and the rule of law, led the celebrations among Europe's rising ultranationalists, saying he would be popping champagne corks.

"Italy and the United States are 'sister' nations, linked by an unshakeable alliance, common values, and a historic friendship," Italy's hard-right prime minister, Giorgia Meloni, wrote on X. "It is a strategic bond, which I am sure we will now strengthen even further." Orbán and Meloni are relative outliers in Europe, where most leaders will have hoped for a Harris win, according to officials and experts looking at their shared policies and style.

Few were ever going to say that,

given the 50% chance of having to deal with Trump in January. And in the event they too quickly sent their congratulations, reflecting the need to have good relations with Washington.

French President Emmanuel Macron — who many saw as something of a "Trump whisperer" during his first term — said he was "ready to work together as we did for four years," in a post on X. "With your convictions and mine. With respect and ambition. For more peace and prosperity."

In a parallel message written in French, however, Macron said he had spoken with his German counterpart, Chancellor Olaf Scholz, a conversation that reflected the stark reality now faced by Europe.

He and Scholz discussed the "new context" given to Europe by this election, according to the French leader's post, one that necessitated "cooperating with the United States of America" and also "defending our interests and our values."

# Trump victory to reverberate through global economy

Balazs Koranyi

FROM REUTERS  
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 6, 2024

appointments.

"Trump's fiscal pledges are seriously troublesome — for the U.S. economy and for global financial markets — as they promise to vastly expand an already excessive deficit at the same time as he threatens to undermine key institutions," Erik Nielsen, UniCredit's Group Chief Economics Advisor, said.

"One must conclude that Trump poses a serious — and so far vastly under-appreciated — threat to the U.S. Treasury market and thereby to global financial stability," Nielsen said.

Import duties, including a 10% universal tariff on imports from all foreign countries and a 60% tariff on imports from China, are a key plank of Trump's policies and likely to have the biggest global impact.

Tariffs inhibit global trade, lower growth for exporters, and weigh on public finances for all parties involved. They are likely to raise inflation in the United States, forcing the U.S. Federal Reserve to act with tighter monetary policy.

The International Monetary Fund has already characterised global growth as weak, with most nations producing "feeble" expansion. A further hit to global trade is likely to present a downside risk to its 3.2% GDP growth projection for next year.

Firms mostly pass import costs onto the customer, so tariffs are likely to be inflationary for U.S. buyers, forcing the Fed to keep interest rates high for longer or to even reverse course and hike borrowing costs once again.

This will be even more likely if Trump keeps his spending and tax pledges, which could increase the U.S. debt by \$7.75 trillion through 2035, according to the non-partisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget.

"Most damage would be done under a universal import tariff," ABN Amro's Rogier Quaedvlieg said. "If the ultimate implementation is non-universal, the hit to the global economy would be significantly weaker."

# What Trump’s win means for the world’s biggest problems

Annabelle Timsit, Adela Suliman & Kelsey Ables

FROM THE WASHINGTON POST  
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 6, 2024

Donald Trump is returning to the White House, and people across the world are trying to grapple with how a second term will once again shake up global affairs.

Trump's supporters say his unpredictability is a feature, not a bug, of his foreign policy, to deter bad actors and make headway on the world's most intractable problems. "Predictability is a terrible thing," Richard Grenell, Trump's former director of national intelligence reported to be seeking a position as secretary of state in a second term, recently told the Financial Times. "Of course the other side [America's enemies] wants predictability. Trump is not predictable."

America's allies are also struggling to predict what's next, as Trump promises to reverse what he sees as a lack of respect for the United States on the global stage

with his "America First" approach. Trump's history of overturning long-standing U.S. foreign policy, dismissing human rights abuses and cozying up to dictators is putting some leaders on edge. Here's what a Trump presidency could mean for some of the issues most important to people across the globe.

Trump has broadly called for an end to the Israel-Gaza war but has not been explicit about what he sees as the path to a cease-fire. Privately, he has offered his support to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the country's offensives against Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon — telling him in a recent call to "do what you have to do."

In his first term, Trump took a more adversarial approach with the transatlantic military alliance NATO, hammering members for what he said was their financial overreliance on the United States. He suggested on the campaign trail that he would encourage Russia to attack NATO countries

## Biden admin is planning for a possible migrant surge before Trump takes office

The Biden administration is making contingency plans for a possible surge in border crossings ahead of a Trump presidency, as more would-be immigrants say they are concerned President-elect Donald Trump will shut down the border.

On Monday afternoon, nearly 36 hours before Trump declared victory, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas held a virtual meeting with his top advisers and the heads of Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement in which the participants raised concerns about what a possible Trump victory would do to border security.

— Julia Ainsley & Didi Martinez, FROM NBC NEWS  
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 6, 2024

## German coalition on brink of collapse after Scholz fires key minister

Germany's governing coalition is in crisis after Chancellor Olaf Scholz fired a key minister and said he would call a vote of confidence in his government early next year. Scholz said he had no trust in Finance Minister Christian Lindner, who leads a rival party that has been part of the coalition along with Scholz's Social Democrats and the Greens.

The move means Scholz's government no longer has a majority in parliament. The confidence vote could lead to early elections by March. The so-called "traffic light" coalition led by the chancellor has governed Germany since 2021. But internal tensions had been bubbling for weeks before exploding into the open on Wednesday night.

— Ido Vock & Damien McGuinness, FROM BBC NEWS  
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 6, 2024

## Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu fires Defense Minister Gallant

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu fired his defense minister, Yoav Gallant, at a time when the country continues to fight wars in Gaza and Lebanon, and is increasingly in direct confrontation with Iran. The move on Tuesday came after months of public disagreement between the two over the course of the wars. Netanyahu said he was firing Gallant due to a breakdown in trust and gaps in positions between them.

Gallant has publicly challenged Netanyahu's failure to decide on a plan for the Gaza Strip's long-term governance and for not prioritizing a deal to release Israeli and other hostages held in the Palestinian enclave.

"During the past several months this trust between myself and the Defense Minister has begun to crack," Netanyahu said in a statement.

— Carrie Keller-Lynn, FROM THE WALL STREET JOURNAL  
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 5, 2024

## UK identifies 4 cases of new mpox variant, the 1st cluster outside Africa

British health officials say they have identified four cases of the new, more infectious version of mpox that first emerged in Congo, marking the first time the variant has caused a cluster of illness outside of Africa. Scientists said the risk to the public remains low.

Authorities announced the first case of the new form of mpox in the U.K. last week, saying the case was being treated at a London hospital after recently traveling to countries in Africa with ongoing outbreaks.

This week, the U.K. Health Security Agency said it had now identified three further cases who lived in the same household as the first patient. They too are now being treated at a hospital in London.

— FROM ASSOCIATED PRESS  
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 6, 2024

## Spain flooding death toll climbs to 217 as cleanup efforts in mud-soaked streets continue

The death toll from catastrophic flooding in Valencia, Spain, has reached 217, officials announced Sunday, as the search for survivors (and bodies) continued in devastated cities and towns left caked in mud and strewn with debris.

"The situation we are living in is tragic," Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said in Spanish during a televised national address on Saturday, describing the discovery of bodies in garages, homes, riverbanks and roads. "We are almost certainly talking about the most serious flooding our continent has seen so far this century. And I am aware that the response that is being given is not enough."

— Jack Moore, Morgan Winsor, & Camilla Alcini, FROM ABC NEWS  
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 6, 2024

## Hurricane Rafael makes landfall in Cuba as a Category 3 storm

Hurricane Rafael slammed into Cuba as a Category 3 hurricane Wednesday afternoon before losing some strength as it passed over the island on its way to the Gulf of Mexico. The powerful hurricane is the fifth major hurricane of the year in the Atlantic and the strongest this late in the year since 2020.

The storm's winds strengthened from 60 mph to 115 mph from Tuesday afternoon to Wednesday afternoon, an increase well over the 35 mph needed for rapid intensification. As Rafael moved over Cuba, it weakened slightly to a Category 2 hurricane, with 110 mph maximum sustained winds. Rapid intensification is happening more frequently as the atmosphere and oceans warm due to fossil fuel pollution; Rafael is the ninth storm to rapidly intensify in the Atlantic basin this year.

— Mary Gilbert, FROM CNN  
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 6, 2024



# Dr. Francis Collins presents The Road to Wisdom at the 2024 Boston Book Festival

“It’s not a book that I really felt a strong urge to try to put together until it seemed it was pretty much impossible for me to resist.”

By Vivian Hir  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

On Saturday, Oct. 26, former Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Dr. Francis Collins presented The Road to Wisdom, his latest book, at the 2024 Boston Book Festival’s Science and Society Keynote. Collins was joined in conversation by Boston Public Library President David Leonard. Collins began the speech by first discussing key ideas in The Road to Wisdom, and then ended with solutions to address America’s hyper-partisan society. A renowned physician-scientist, Collins is known for leading the Human Genome Project and discovering critical genes for diseases such as cystic fibrosis.

In The Road to Wisdom, Collins outlines four crucial points for logical thinking and sound judgment: truth, science, faith, and trust. Citing his multifaceted experiences from science to religion, Collins argues that these values can coexist without contradicting one another.

What motivated Collins to write this book was seeing the rise of misinformation and distrust in society, which was evident in the COVID-19 pandemic. “It’s not a book that I really felt a strong urge to try to put together until it seemed it was pretty much impossible for me to resist,” Collins said.

Collins then transitioned to discussing wisdom and its distinction from truth; wisdom is based upon knowledge of other key elements like experience, judgment, and morality. Good judgment comes from experience, although experience involves bad judgment at times. Major failures in his own scientific career shaped Collins’s approach towards science. “It actually built in me a desire to really be thoughtful about how you design experiments,” he said. “You have to recognize that science is not about getting the answer you want.”

Originally, Collins was an atheist who did not see religion entering his life. What inspired Collins to become a person of faith was an enlightening question a religious patient asked him when he was a student in medical school. “She asked me very directly, ‘What do you believe? Think about that,’” Collins said.

He came to the conclusion that it was difficult to defend atheism. “It’s the assertion of a universal negative, which scientists aren’t really supposed to do, because you never have enough data,” Collins remarked.

Viewing atheism as a belief with limitations, Collins converted to Christianity at age 27. Collins admitted many people expressed concerns that his faith would conflict with his science, but he considers faith as “another way of discerning a different kind of truth,” especially truths related to “good and evil.”

Returning to the principles in The Road to Wisdom, including how one distinguishes opinion from fact and belief from truth, Collins explained these differences by describing a series of concentric circles. The innermost circle consists of indisputable facts (e.g. 2+2=4), while the

next circle consists of established facts, such as the Earth rotating around the sun. Following this layer is an outer circle of uncertainty, with the final layer being opinion.

What makes this visual useful is that it forces people to consider what type of claim they are using. Collins affirmed that people can have different opinions. Established facts, however, should not have room for differences; or else this disrupts “the constitution of knowledge,” a common knowledge base agreed upon by everyone.

The disruption of knowledge and facts in society was clear during the pandemic, considering the widespread misinformation regarding COVID-19 and vaccines. As NIH Director, Collins was heavily responsible for directing the country’s response to the pandemic—developing and testing a new vaccine was a major project. Despite the vaccine’s high efficacy, 15% of the U.S. adult population did not get the vaccine by December 2021, according to a CDC report. The consequence of vaccine hesitancy was startling for Collins. “234,000 Americans died unnecessarily,” he lamented. “Our culture wars are killing people. What happened to us?”

What caused people to doubt the government’s information about the vaccine? “The public was not necessarily in a good space to think critically about this [COVID-19],” Collins said, recognizing that misinformation on social media played a role. However, he acknowledged that the government’s lack of effective communication was a contributing factor, noting that the reasons for distrust came from communication that seemed “self-contradictory” and “erratic” at times. Looking back, he wished he did a better job explaining that changes in recommendations were based on the pandemic’s evolving and uncertain nature.

Although the rise of misinformation during the pandemic suggests a bleak future, Collins believes there is room for conversation across the political divide. In order to understand why some people disagreed with the pandemic’s public health policies, Collins joined the non-profit organization Braver Angels, which fosters cross-partisan conversations.

Collins admitted initial conversations are uncomfortable, but he strongly encouraged the audience to have these difficult conversations. For example, Collins eventually understood why his conversation partner from rural Minnesota opposed the lockdown—the pandemic significantly affected his trucking business, and his children could not attend school. “No wonder this guy came forward saying, ‘This was a botched effort,’” Collins said. He emphasized the importance of listening and understanding the other person instead of “planning your snappy response.”

“The politicians are not going to solve this, and I don’t think the media is either,” Collins said. “We are the ones that are going to have the chance here to turn this around.”

# Designing a Realistic Tissue-Mimicking Bladder: Improving Imaging Devices and Opening up New Recipes for Creating Model Organs

A new study on building an acoustically and mechanically accurate synthetic bladder model may become a more reliable tool for testing imaging devices.

By Eugenie Cha

Each year, over 1.9 billion people suffer from lower bladder issues. Diagnostic imaging plays a crucial role in helping these people, whether it be diagnosing bladder cancer or monitoring the progression of bladder inflammation.

“We rely on imaging a lot,” says Dr. Venkat Ramakrishnan, a urologist at Boston Children’s Hospital. He emphasizes the importance of reliable imaging in diagnosis and especially surgery. Without an image, surgeons could accidentally cut into organs or other body features. “It’d be like playing a guessing game with someone’s life,” Dr. Ramakrishnan explains.

Many researchers are looking to improve imaging devices for both better images and patient convenience. To do so, they need to test their devices on actual or model human bladders. Dr. Ramakrishnan emphasizes how difficult it is for researchers to get actual human bladders from organ donations to test with (as there’s a shortage of donor bladders), highlighting the importance of model bladders. However, creating accurate bladder models is challenging because they’re very dynamic structures. “Overcoming the difficulty of creating a good bladder model and employing it is going to be game changing for patients,” Dr. Ramakrishnan states.

In the past, researchers have created bladder models, also known as phantoms, but they lack the ability to thoroughly mimic certain bladder characteristics. For example, some models are acoustically accurate—they simulate how sound waves penetrate the bladder correctly—but aren’t dynamic. In other words, these model bladders don’t fill and dispense liquid like a real bladder would. “The intersectionality of these crucial properties was missing,” said Sara V. Fernandez, a

graduate student in the Conformable Decoders research group at the MIT Media Lab.

In a study published in April 2024, Fernandez created a bladder phantom that would have the acoustic properties of the bladder while also mimicking their urine dispensing and collecting mechanism.

Tackling this project came with many challenges. With the human torso system having five layers of different tissues, the team experimented with various recipes of materials to simulate each tissue. Another problem the team ran into was creating the hollow shape of the bladder. The team solved this issue by creating a silicone mold with a sacrificial core in the middle that would swim in water and dissolve, leaving behind a hollow shape to hold fluids such as urine in it.

Beyond creating an effective bladder phantom, the project introduced new ways to model other organs. “You can now use some of the recipes and methods we used in the paper to create other phantoms of muscles and organs, like skin and skeletal muscle,” said Fernandez. While a bladder and a stomach may be very different organs, for example, they share similar characteristics like being hollow and having the ability to contract—two important properties from the team’s bladder phantom that can be translated to creating a stomach phantom.

The researchers integrated the phantom into a torso model of a woman and simulated urinary function. Creating this torso-tank system brought their bladder phantom to life by making the device more aesthetically closer to an actual patient.

“Being able to simulate these pathologic features in a patient model [with an accurate bladder] would be great for surgeons to practice on,” Dr. Ramakrishnan remarks. “It takes the guesswork out of the equation and may help save lives.”

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# MIT Assistant Professor Ariel Furst Stars in Chemistry Shorts Documentary

By Veronika Moroz

## Professor Ariel Furst Stars in Chemistry Shorts Documentary

The work of Chemical Engineering Assistant Professor Ariel Furst was highlighted in “Mighty Microbes,” the most recent episode of the short film series Chemistry Shorts.

The Furst Lab focuses on utilizing microbes, also called microorganisms, such as bacteria and algae, to improve human and environmental health equity. “I say this every time I talk to people, but I think microbes are so cool,” Furst shared. “A lot of our sustainability issues can be solved just by using what has already evolved naturally. I tell my grad students, if you use microbes in your research, you have a 4 billion year head start.”

Chemistry Shorts is a video series available on YouTube. It is organized by the Camille and Henry Dreyfus Foundation and filmed by Day’s Edge Productions, hoping to spread a love of chemistry. “We want people to realize that chemistry is a positive force in their daily lives, from the food that they’re eating to the clothing that they’re wearing,” Dr. Alex Dainis told The Tech. Dainis is a professional science communicator and coordinator for the Camille and Henry Dreyfus Foundation. “Showcasing who these people are and just their pure, genuine excitement for science” is an important part of the series, Dainis added, and “one of the things that I personally love about my job.”

Dr. Furst is just one scientist featured in Chemistry Shorts, along with researchers from other universities such as Stanford, California Institute of Technology, and University of Texas Austin. For her, the coolest part about science is lab research: she fell in love with science in high school after doing a research project on bio batteries and is still in touch with her mentor to this day. Now that she has her own lab, Furst works

to share her passion by exposing students to research earlier on, so that “hopefully people who might not like the class aspect of [chemistry] will realize that there’s more to science than just that.”

## Communicating Cutting-Edge Research to an Introductory Audience

Not only do the videos need to teach new chemistry concepts, but they also need to explain cutting-edge scientific research at an introductory level.

“In the production process, [we] have a number of calls with the scientists, both to help figure out the exact explanations of their science, but also to figure out one specific story that we want to tell,” Dainis explained. “All of these scientists are working on so many incredible projects, but we only have about 10 minutes to tell a story.”

For Furst, choosing which project to focus on was extremely difficult. “We care a lot about microbes that do all sorts of things. We think about microbes that are good for your gut, and good for the soil, and good for the environment by doing CO2 capture.”

Ultimately, the team decided to focus on using microbes to create cheaper and more efficient nitrogen fertilizer for agriculture. Nitrogen is a key component of proteins and is essential for plant growth and often comes in the form of ammonia in fertilizer. Currently, the primary method for manufacturing ammonia is called the Haber-Bosch process, which is responsible for about 2% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, the resulting ammonia often needs to be shipped overseas to get to the farming location. “The way we’ve done agriculture has allowed us to grow enough food to feed the planet,” Furst discussed, “but it hasn’t done that in a sustainable way. And the people who are most negatively impacted by food shortages, by climate change, by all of these

things that are caused by our industrialization of agriculture, are already disadvantaged groups.”

For Furst, the solutions to this energy, environment, and health equity problem are microbes, which can be dried and shipped without refrigeration. The Furst lab is working to develop treatments and protective coatings for the microbes in order to both enhance nitrogen production and improve efficiency. “They would allow people to have less manual labor involved in agriculture, while also making your soil healthier for the long term,” Furst said. “That’s our goal.”

## Conceptualizing Chemistry Through Storytelling (and Twinkies)

Chemistry Shorts is geared towards late high school and early college audiences. The video curricula and handouts meet Next-Generation Science Standards (NGSS), which influence the science instruction received by up to 70% of American students from kindergarten through high school. For “Mighty Microbes,” the lesson material covers redox reactions, such as the reaction to synthesize ammonia out of nitrogen and hydrogen gas. The short film relied on the use of metaphors, including Twinkies with googly eyes to represent microbes and superhero animations to represent protective coatings on the microbes.

The idea for using Twinkies came from people in Day’s Edge Productions, the filmmakers behind Chemistry Shorts, who were hoping to use “a baked good that we can make look like a microbe” to illustrate how microbes could die in poor conditions. The production company initially planned to animate the microbe destruction, but then Furst’s students proposed a better idea. “One of my students suggested sticking the Twinkie microbe in liquid nitrogen, and then smash-

ing it with a hammer. And then somebody else was like, ‘Let’s put it on the lyophilizer,’ which is this machine that basically freeze-dries things. And then somebody else took one of our bioreactors and was like, ‘Let’s just throw a microbe in some water and stir it up,’” Furst described. “It was just really fun to see how creative the students were about thinking about how to effectively show different types of damage.”

But Furst’s favorite memory from the filming process comes later in the short film, where Furst’s students sat around a table eating the Twinkie microbes. “I felt so bad for the students, because they were just so disgustingly sweet, but it was funny and a bonding moment. That’s what everyone is laughing about in that scene, just having to eat Twinkies covered in frosting.”

## Post Production: Looking Forward

“Mighty Microbes” was released on October 10th on YouTube. “It’s been really cool to see our work translated, and to see the impact of people actually using the tech,” Furst said.

Meanwhile, research continues at the Furst lab, whose startup, Seia Bio, has been commercializing microbe protection processes for companies. Furst said they are working “independently to help farmers develop optimal mixtures of native microbes for their land.” For the last six months, some microbes have been undergoing “growth trials going in South America to see if [they] can make a difference.”

The future of engineering microbes feels bright for the Furst lab. “I think as people get more comfortable with engineered microbes, they’ll be able to do a lot,” Furst stated. “I think that’s one of the areas that MIT has been pretty active in, engineering microbes, especially for agriculture. So that’s where I see it going.”

### Sol. to Hands Down

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INSIDE THE INSTITUTE

# MIT Runs on Dunkin’

Donuts, dollars, and dismissals: The Student Center Dunkin’ encounters friction between management, ownership, and MIT.



ELLIE MONTEMAYOR • THE TECH

By Ellie Montemayor  
PUBLISHER

**Author's Note:** *The information presented in this article is a synthesis of several interviews held, over a period of months from June to October, with the former management team of the Student Center Dunkin’ and other individuals familiar with the situation. These accounts were corroborated by documentation—such as forms and contracts, financial reports, and private emails and text messages—obtained by The Tech. Supplementary details also presented here are based on an analysis of news articles, public disclosures, and other online archival records.*

I sit by the Student Center Dunkin’ sometimes when I’m struggling through homework or staking out a story for *The Tech*. I see other students, tourists, miscellaneous workers and contractors sitting at the plastic lime-green benches adjoining the outside of the five-story-tall Brutalist behemoth, with white paper bags from Dunkin’ in front of them. Half-eaten cream donuts and half-finished green tea refreshers line the tables. Someone might trip and spill an iced latte every couple of days, cursing themselves at having run out on their luck right at the start of the morning, and I would watch the brew seep into the gravel in front of the Student Center or run unimpeded along the uneven floor inside of it.

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My first conversation with Chuck Thompson was in June, four days after he was fired by MIT Dining heads Mark Hayes and Heather Ryall.

It was 3 p.m. on a lazy Saturday in June (the 15th to be exact) and I had just gotten settled into The Tech’s fourth-floor corner office of the Student Center when a colleague sent me a snapshot of a photo be-

ginning to circulate around the Institute. I looked at it briefly: it seemed like just an everyday operational notice taped on the glass door of the Student Center’s first-floor Dunkin’ Donuts shop. It read, *Dunkin’ is temporarily closed to transition to a new, local franchise owner. We apologize for any inconvenience during this period.*

The message didn’t initially set off any warning bells. *Stay tuned for reopening news, including longer daily hours and seven days per week operations.* MIT is often described as a “food desert,” with very little on-campus food options and no retail venues that run past 10 p.m. (i.e. peak student hours), and I knew some students were complaining about the Dunkin’ not running on Sundays and about it closing too early to keep up with their late-night study habits. The Dunkin’, at the time, closed for the night at 4 p.m. on weekdays and at 2 p.m. on Saturdays. Perhaps it was a good thing that its hours were being extended.

But there was a curious sharpened-on message at the bottom of the paper in the photo, one that was cut off from the note by the time I ran down from my office to check later that day: *We all got fired. Thanks, Mark and Heather.*

The full note had been posted since the Wednesday before; the sharpened-on message showed up at around 6 a.m. that Saturday and was removed by lunchtime.

Barely an hour had passed from the initial tip to the time that I got the store manager’s phone number from one of my editors at the paper, who had it to coordinate donut deliveries for another student group he was a part of.

“My full name is Charles Thompson,” Chuck said over the phone at 5:30 p.m., as I hastily wrote out an initial list of questions for him to probe into a situation I knew little about. “But everyone calls me Chuck. I’ve been the store manager there [at the Student Center Dunkin’] for 11 years.”

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The Student Center Dunkin’ opened during the 2006–2007 academic year, replacing an Alpine Bagel Cafe that itself replaced a pub kitchen called Courses in the summer of 2002. The conversion was officially announced to students by Sisi Zhu ’08, then-chair of the Undergraduate Association’s dining committee and chair of the now-defunct “Campus Dining Advisory Board.” *Contrary to popular belief, Dunkin’ Donuts does not only serve unhealthy fast food,* Zhu’s May 19, 2006, email read. *They also have bagels, breakfast sandwiches, and blended fruit smoothies.*

(Over the years, the Institute has seen the rise and fall of various working groups meant to inject student representation into dining affairs. A rabbit-hole of archival research, including of articles and student-submitted opinions submitted to *The Tech*, indicates that campus dining has been a hot-button issue between students and administrators for a number of decades.)

Chuck, 56, was brought in as the establishment’s store manager 11 years ago, after taking a year off from work to take care of his children while his ex-wife was in school full-time for her bachelor’s. He’s an authentic working-class Bostonian, his accent replete with broad As, dropped Rs, and a gritty drawl: he sports a worn baseball cap and a sweat-stained pewter tee.

The store manager is the head of day-to-day operations for a retail dining establishment and is the point person for coordinating between an establishment’s working staff, the franchise owner who holds the contracting rights with a given brand or controls the business that owns the establishment, and, in the case of MIT, the administrative dining team.

“When she [my ex-wife] was done with school, I had my application in one of those online sites, and some lady had seen it, and she said it was perfect

because I had pizza experience and fast-food Dunkin’ experience,” Chuck told me during one of our conversations. “She saw it as a perfect fit.” He has, by his account, been in the food industry for all of his life: his first job was at Papa Gino’s, a pizza place in Bedford (“at 19 years old, I became the youngest general manager that they had” he said) and he would, over the years, continue working at various food chains all over Massachusetts.

*Campus dining options at MIT—both dining halls at dormitories and contracted retail vendors—are overseen by the administrative MIT Dining team, headed in the present day by Director of Campus Dining Mark Hayes and Assistant Director of Dining Operations Heather Ryall. Mark and Heather joined the dining team in January of 2018 and 2020, respectively. They have overseen a wider restructuring effort across campus dining options since the beginning of their tenure: the closures of LaVerde’s Market, retail vendors and cafes; the creation of the CommonWealth Kitchen Launchpad; continued pushback on student and worker dissatisfaction; and several rounds of meal plan price hikes.*

*Most recently, a multi-year plan was implemented to gradually mark up required meal plan commitments, which was first proposed in February 2020. (In the 2021–2022 academic year, sophomore-and-up minimum plan requirements sat flatly under Block 125, then \$1,969. Starting this year, sophomore minimums sit under Block 190, now \$3,114.50, and juniors-and-up under Block 160, now \$2,780.80.)*

Chuck was also store manager of a now-defunct Cambridge Grill on the other side of the Student Center. Both the original Alpine Bagel at MIT and the Dunkin’, alongside the shuttered Cambridge Grill, were owned (or in the case of the Dunkin’, franchised) by Nashville businessman Jeff Bunting.

\*\*\*

Jeff Bunting can be described as a busy man. I phoned him for the first time at the end of June, roughly two weeks after the affair in the Student Center. It was a meeting that finally came into fruition after a week and a half of rescheduling. (He was in and out of flights all over the East Coast in the preceding days.) He’s an unusually honest and open character for a businessman, but with it came a penchant for delayed or sporadic communications and at-times rambling dialogue. (It usually takes me a couple of tries and a couple of days to reach him for conversation, and our talks often meandered.)

One of Jeff’s primary business ventures, and the one through which he first began working with MIT, is his company Alpine Bagels & Brews, which he co-founded in 1996 as Alpine Bagel with his brother Marc and former Towson University roommate Christopher Sullivan. The company continues to operate bagel cafes on university campuses all over the East Coast.

“20 or some years ago, we started a bagel concept that was geared towards college campuses,” he said. “As our bagel concept grew around the country, we would add other concepts... whatever it may be: a smoothie shop, a pizza place [like Cambridge Grill]...”

Jeff began operating at MIT when an associate from Duke University, where he had also opened one of his bagel cafes, transferred positions to the Institute. “The second-hand position [for campus dining] over at Duke took a position at MIT. He’d seen what we had done at Duke and wanted us to come up.”

Healthy fast foods were the gist of his broader bagel cafe concept, Jeff said, but its MIT installation was eventually replaced with the Dunkin’ reportedly at the campus dining team’s request. “MIT, at the time, wanted to get a Dunkin’ on campus. They asked us to operate it.”

But from its launch, the Student Center Dunkin’ was marred with controversy: a local businessman with franchise rights in Cambridge—in our discussions, Chuck said that multi-unit franchise owners had de-facto “territories” in their areas of operation that other aspiring owners were, legally or otherwise, not supposed to encroach upon—took offense to Jeff opening up a shop in his territory. It became a quiet legal battle that was eventually settled by MIT’s lawyers in Jeff’s favor (he had more campus operating experience than said businessman) but which also prohibited Jeff from opening any other Dunkin’ in the area. (It is unclear to me whether that ban remains in effect to this day.)

When the Dunkin’ was finally allowed to open, the numerous parties involved signed off contract after contract to finalize the agreement. Jeff held a franchise agreement with the overarching Dunkin’ Brands Group that cemented his use of the brand, and he held a lease agreement with MIT that allowed him to operate the leased franchise installation on campus, to be overseen by the campus dining team for a period of five years. (Jeff would have to renew these agreements with both groups periodically.) His employee team running the operation was contracted under Jeff and his business directly, not under MIT. 18 years later, in 2024, the Dunkin’ would have 14 employees: Khady, Gilberto, Marilu, Ezekiel, Abigail, Keyla, Juan, Danny, Diogenes, Doris, Milledred, and Neris, who were all paid by the hour, and Chuck and his assistant store manager Seomara Melara.

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Seomara was in the middle of a break at the nail salon she was working at when I met with her. (It was another job that she had held at the same time as her work with the Student Center Dunkin’.) There was a certain sharpness to her Spanish-accented voice and a curtness to her responses, but also a kind of intimate hospitality to it. She was assistant manager to the Dunkin’ under Chuck and “loved working at Dunkin’.” None of the staffers

knew about the firing until Tuesday on June 11, she said, when Jeff flew in to meet with Chuck.

He had flown in early that Tuesday, a rare occurrence. (He only steps foot on campus a few times a year, perhaps once or twice, to check in on the business—usually to meet with the dining team or to review financials and operations.) He laid out the situation directly: “They weren’t going to renew our lease,” Jeff said to Chuck privately as the team continued their routine work in serving donuts and other Dunkin’ foods to students, staff, and miscellaneous passersby.

And Chuck, later that day, somewhat frazzled from the news and uninformed of the exact circumstances that led to it, recounted the situation—the bits of it that he could, at least—to his staff soon after. The employees who were clocked in that day continued to work but closed up shop early, as Chuck rebuffed an apparent request from MIT Dining to keep operating over the rest of the week. The shop was closed on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday; on Saturday, at around 5 a.m., Chuck stopped by the place to take back the last of his personal items when he saw the note posted up on the shop’s front door.

“I saw the note in the window and they’re like, ‘oh yeah, open more hours,’ just bragging about what they were going to do—[fourteen] people just lost their job,” Chuck recounted to me, flustered.

At the time it was all still moving parts, and the details surrounding the lease dismissal wasn’t clear to anyone from Jeff’s team—though Jeff had known about the notice over a month before he brought it up to Chuck. An email sent to him from Mark Hayes on May 1 read, *We were just notified by Inspire Brands that they are not extending your operating agreement beyond June 30, 2024.* (Inspire Brands LLC is the franchise conglomerate that owns the Dunkin’ brand.) But then the question arose: was the agreement with Jeff terminated on Dunkin’s side or on MIT’s side? Mark was telling him that Dunkin’ was apparently dropping him as a business partner—all while he was in the middle of the contract renewal process with the brand.

The answer seemed to be in the emails: as Jeff continued his back-and-forth with Mark Hayes and Heather Ryall over the course of May, he was still coordinating with Dunkin’ Brands to renew his franchise agreement. Signed: *Jeff Bunting*, the presumptive signed disclosure with Dunkin’ read. *Date: May 15, 2024.* And so the franchise agreement was being secured, but Jeff also had to have Mark and Heather sign off on his lease agreement to continue operating in the space.

That second contract from Mark and Heather never came, Jeff said, and his lease ultimately expired. And since his lease with MIT expired without a renewal, Jeff said, he was no longer permitted to operate his Dunkin’ franchise there. It snowballed: no establishment, no employees.

On the week of June 9, the first week of the month, the store’s weekly revenue totalled to \$12,023.91, and the staff payroll racked up \$4,194.43 in employee wages. Sales reports for the rest of the month remained unfilled as the store closed under Jeff and Chuck’s management for the last time that week.

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Over the following months, Jeff, Chuck, and Seomara described to me more stories of their complex relationships with MIT Dining, which they said may have contributed to their falling-out with the campus dining administrators and eventual firing.

“Mark and Heather told me that Jeff wasn’t responding to their emails,” Chuck said, recounting conversations he’d had with the pair just weeks before the firing. (Jeff can be a hard man to reach, from my experience, so I could relate to the sentiment.) “But if they had questions about the store, why didn’t they come to me? I was the one actually running it!” This was a sore point for Chuck, each time I asked about it; he had felt betrayed by the loss of agency he had over what he saw was first and foremost as his store.

But according to Jeff: “Mark and Heather would call me, and they would say the store wasn’t doing as well as they had hoped. Their problem was with Chuck and the way he operated the store.” (Perhaps that was the case; I’d read a few scathing reviews here and there, from over the years, posted online of apparent poor

customer service at the location. Many of the reviews were positive, though.) And he expressed disbelief when I told him about the complaints specifically directed at him.

Seomara told me about the dining team’s issues with their working hours. “We were super busy, and it’s already hard to cover shifts when someone calls out. We’ve tried hiring new people so that we could run later in the day and on Sundays. If anything, MIT should have helped us find more people. I feel like they didn’t even help us.” Chuck echoed the sentiment.

Jeff had heard the same: “Listen, Jeff, this should come as no surprise to you ... Chuck needs to be open seven days a week,” Jeff said Mark and Heather had told him before his lease was dropped.

He continued: “Mark told me on the phone before I ever received [notice of the lease being dropped], he said, ‘listen, Jeff, we’ve been unhappy with Chuck operating this for a long time. We’ve talked to you about it for over a year. We’re not getting the hours we need.’”

*I think they were looking for an excuse to kick us out*, all three said to me during our conversations. *I think they wanted to kick us out for a long time*, they said. One main point that the dining team apparently shared with all three was with what the dining team saw as the shop’s apparent underperformance. Mark and Heather were dissatisfied with how much the shop was making—that “Dunkin’ Donuts isn’t doing as good as it used to,” Seomara recounted to me. Jeff, Chuck, and Seomara all disputed that claim.

“We were doing better than we ever did before COVID,” Chuck said.

Over May and June of 2022, the shop cashed in total revenue around \$19k and \$10k weekly, respectively; in 2024, the weekly numbers averaged \$24k for April and May, and \$12k for the one week that the shop was fully operating that month, according to financial documents I reviewed. (Fall-off between May and June over the years seemed to be a consistent consequence of dampened student presence after the end of the semester.) That being said, operating costs also grew. Expenses across April and May 2022 stood at a weekly average of \$5054.37 (for purchases) and \$3213.17 (for hourly payroll); in 2024, it was \$6188.01 and \$4556.50.

Not long after the announcement was made to him, Jeff began preparing to fight back with a team of lawyers and assembled a team to review documents and contracts, but ultimately decided against it. It just wasn’t worth the cost. (Jeff commented once during our conversations that an attorney working on behalf of the dining team apparently said to him, “You’re out. We’re not renewing the lease,” but I was unable to verify that statement.) And the team’s relationship with MIT Dining—like many other vendors’ according to Chuck, who remains in close contact with the many workers and staffers running MIT whom he had befriended over the years—was quite chilly. It was not likely to warm up after an extended legal affair that the Institute, with its army of lawyers and an Institute-wide endowment of over \$20 billion, would likely win anyways.

So, Jeff sold the equipment he owned in the venue to MIT, about \$9k of it, Chuck said, and left behind around \$7k worth of inventory like food, paper, and chemicals. He’ll keep paying for Chuck’s health insurance until the end of the year. And, finally, he turned over the store to its new owner, an Iranian immigrant named Afshin Omid.

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Afshin, who goes by “Benny,” first met the staff on Tuesday the 11th, the last day of the shop’s operation under the old management. He was there to address staff concerns. They were all allowed to reapply for their positions, he said, and if accepted they would be able to stay on the team. And he asked them to avoid contact with the old owner.

“I don’t know what happened between him and MIT,” Seomara recalled Benny saying. “They don’t want you guys working for us.” It isn’t clear to me where that sentiment may have come from.

“At that moment, I couldn’t believe anybody,” Seomara told me, frustration creeping into her voice.

Benny owns a couple of Dunkin’s in northwest Boston, one at 219 Cambridge St and another at 209 N Harvard St, both

in Allston. I tried to reach him a couple of times over email and by phone, none of which were answered. My only communication with him, ultimately, was in an August 26 email where he told me three things: one, that he was “not available” to meet with me; two, that the franchise transfer was “handled by Dunkin’ corporate” and not MIT Dining; and three, that he had “never met” the “previous franchisee’s management team.” When I received his message, I looked back in confusion at some emails that Jeff had forwarded to me just two weeks before: in one of them, from a June 11 email titled “MIT Dunkin’ Donuts,” Benny reached out to Jeff—it looks like for the first time—to ask to meet.

*Good morning Jeff, I hope this message finds you well*, the email read. *My name is Benny Omid and I am the Dunkin’ Franchisee in Boston that’s taking over your Dunkin’ in the MIT campus* [sic].

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Before talking to Chuck, Jeff, and Seomara for the first time, I had never once stepped foot in the shop; I had never bought a single thing handmade by Chuck’s staff; I had never greeted Chuck or Seomara at the register while at the front of a busy line. These days, since the store’s July 9 reopening, it’s a different cast of characters: I spot the current store manager Adriana, a short heavy-set Latina woman with wide-rimmed glasses and dark brown hair all crunched up in a tight bun sweeping the floors at times, on occasion accompanied by multi-unit manager Maria with her dirty blond hair and her clipboard. The only times I’ve gone in since was to stake out the place or make my futile attempts at reaching out to Benny through Adriana and Maria.

(A multi-unit manager supervises and coordinates operations across several regional stores operated by a central owner. Jeff’s Dunkin’ had a multi-unit manager named Steve Ellar, who left the team during COVID; since then and up until June of this year, Chuck reported directly to Jeff.)

Benny, Adriana, and Maria all declined to speak with me for this article. Mark and Heather did not respond to numerous emails and requests for comment. A spokesperson for MIT Dining, when asked about MIT’s role in the change in ownership, declared that they had limited control over a process that was apparently initiated by Dunkin’ Brands and denied requests to speak directly with Mark and Heather. Several current and former administrative staffers, all named and described to me by the various individuals I spoke with, also did not respond to requests for comment. Dunkin’s public relations department did not respond to numerous emails asking for comment on the matter.

I still sit by the Student Center Dunkin’, sometimes, when I’m struggling through homework or staking out a story for *The Tech*. I see students chewing on bagels and muffins and breakfast sandwiches now made by different people. And I know that they don’t know about the people who lost their jobs over these bagels and muffins and breakfast sandwiches—that they don’t know about Chuck Thompson, or Jeff Bunting, or Seomara Melara, or Khady, Gilberto, Marilu, Ezekiel, Abigail, Keyla, Juan, Danny, Diogenes, Doris, Milledred, and Neris.

(Some of the hourly employees were eventually re-hired by the new management team after undergoing a traditional application process and now continue to work at the Student Center Dunkin’; a spokesperson for MIT cites a figure of seven re-hires but also gave other info that contradicted payroll data I reviewed. Seomara and her high school-aged daughter, who also worked at the Dunkin’, did not take the offer. Chuck says he was never offered a position at all.)

Seomara now works full-time as a nail tech. Jeff has cut all of his ties with MIT and continues to operate all of his other business ventures with all of his other university partners. Chuck remains unemployed. He continues to send out applications for foodservice management jobs in the area.

And I look back down to my laptop, closing the screenshot that my colleague had sent to me back in June, and blending back into the masses of students frantically keysmashing at assignments well past due—and I stop thinking about the people whose journeys I had intimately followed for over four months.



THEATRE REVIEW

# Boston Ballet Stuns in the 2024 Fall Experience Premiere

## Boston Ballet

Contemporary Dance Showcase

Fall Experience

Oct. 24, 2024

By Angelica Zhu

For their 2024 Fall Experience performance, Boston Ballet combined phenomenal dancing, music, and creativity within four contemporary dance pieces. The show opened with the world premiere of After choreographed by Principal Dancer Lia Cirio, followed by Ein Von Viel by Sabrina Matthews, Plan to B by Jorma Elo, and the breath-taking The Seasons' Canon by Crystal Pite.

The curtain opened on a modest stage: five couples in pale white and blue mesh costumes and a large spiral seashell-shaped prop on stage left, which the dancers often used to temporarily hide in during the dance instead of going offstage. The music accompaniment consisted solely of Sienna Tabron on piano and Christine Vitale on violin, and the unembellished tune added to the minimalist mood of the piece, with notes connected directly to each movement of the dancers.

Elements of traditional port de bras and partnering from classical ballet were very present compared to the other pieces in the show, and though the choreography felt free and unbounded, each motion was picturesque and appeared carefully placed. The couples were often placed symmetrically, with three performing similar movements while the other two moved around the stage.

Ein von Viel continued and extended the theme of an unadorned stage, with the entire piece consisting solely of two male dancers. The two alternated between dancing separate motions and joining or following the other like a shadow performing the same movement. With the single piano, it felt like the audience was peering into a ballet class, where the dancers were practicing and teaching each other combinations. With movements such as perfect 90-degree arabesques, straight arms, and aligned fingers, the dance focused on precision and sharpness. It was also untraditional, featuring two male or fe-

male dancers, but never one of each like a typical duet.

Plan to B featured additional non-classical dance movements and music. With a warm yellow glowing screen placed diagonally on stage right, the six dancers jumped between solos, duets, and trios in a whirl of energetic passion. Featuring more impressive leaps, turns, and partnering, the selection of the organ and harpsichord further contributed to the eccentricity of the piece.

After an intermission, the highlight of the night began. The backdrop erupted into spiderwebs of light that shifted in color to symbolize the seasons: white for spring, orange for summer, green for fall, and finally gold for winter. Although starkly different in size and style, the sections fit together beautifully. The piece began with a highly coordinated ensemble that moved in unison like the seeds of spring. Summer erupted with strong duet dances stretched from passion and angst, and fall was oddly depressive yet satisfying. The dance climaxed during winter, as the entire ensemble of 54 dancers entered the stage in a sometimes frantic, sometimes organized, desperate final dance. Fake snow drifted down as the dancers synchronized their movements like snowflakes. In addition, the recomposed version of Vivaldi's The Four Seasons by Max Richter perfectly extended the emotional crescendo of the collection.

The lighting was coordinated simply and elegantly throughout the experience to convey mood and emotion. The stage brightened in color and intensity for more energetic sections and deepened into dark blues and purples or sharpened into a sole spotlight at times.

Compared to a full-length traditional ballet such as The Nutcracker or Romeo and Juliet, the contemporary dance tended to place a higher focus on the choreography and formations compared to the costumes and music. The entire Fall Experience became more contemporary-leaning with each piece, beginning with the women wearing pointe shoes and ballet skirts in After, while the ensemble wore flat shoes and flesh-colored leotards or their bare chest in The Seasons' Canon. The music and lighting accompanied and helped build the vibrant power conveyed through the choreography, but the focus of night remained on the dancers and the capacity of strength, pliability, and beauty they held within their bodies.

THEATRE REVIEW

# Beyond the keys in Schubert: a dynamic between instrument and concert hall

## All-Schubert Program

The Celebrity Series of Boston

October 25

By Lani Lee

A pianist's instrument is both the piano and the hall. On October 25th, Paul Lewis challenged the interplay between them with the music of an all-Schubert Celebrity Series recital and the acoustics of NEC Jordan Hall. Often referred to as Schubert's Last Sonatas and performed together, the three piano sonatas in C Minor, A Major, and B-Flat Major provide a set of innovative and emotional landscapes to Schubert's classic lyrical lines. While having a recital with pieces from only one composer can present difficulties in creating varied moods and colors, it also provides a deeper understanding of smaller details and the composer's voice. Known to be an expert in Schubert's music, Paul Lewis made it clear that there were voices he wanted the audience to pick up in the performance.

Paul Lewis played the C Minor sonata intensely and with heightened excitement, which led to a dramatic effect but also the unfortunate inability to enjoy his usually well-balanced chord voicings. The faster tempo and the reverberation of the well-known recital hall seemed to make his pedal usage feel more extraneous than usual, and the sound overly emphasized the lower range, making the bass notes feel muddled, with some lines missing his characteristic clarity. In addition, the focus of the pieces was scattered due to sounds outside the pianist's control, including an incessant chirping noise in the middle of the C Minor Sonata and a frequent coughing on top of the music. These issues, combined with the difficulties of the hall, persisted much through the first half of the program, though the beautiful singing lines seemed to help him settle more into the performance.

Particular phrasing choices were effective. The left-hand figures in the fourth movement of the C Minor sounded appropriately galloping, keeping the audience at the edge of their seats with the creeping chromaticism in the right hand floating above it. He was able to create many characters in different sections of the same movement, taking time and si-

lence to delineate them. The arpeggios in the first movement of the A Major Sonata were distinctly harp-like, while the rolled chords in the third movement were varied in speed to match the rubato he took within the passages. The lightness of touch was a particular highlight in the Trio, with the tapped repeated notes creating a special matte finish that sounded almost senza vibrato amongst the more lush melodies.

In both the A Major and B-Flat Major Sonatas, Paul Lewis did not observe the repeats of the long expositions in the first movements, a hotly debated topic within the piano community as there are separate endings. Skipping these repeats omitted some measures of music and opportunities to present new ideas that could be savored by the audience. This was an interesting choice because one of his strengths lies in how different he can make the repeated passages. The incredible ability to fine-tune color with the instrument in this hall left the audience wondering how different he could have made the passage if it were repeated as well.

His trademark sensitivity was the most audible in the post-intermission B-Flat Major Sonata. In addition to the stable Molto moderato first movement, the middle section of his second movement created long pastoral lines evoking a sense of the countryside. The Scherzo of his third movement highlighted the smooth connection between melodies switching from low to high registers as if multiple voices were singing back to each other. He had unique interpretations of some repeated figures, such as the playful repeated notes in the third movement, or the more nonchalant fortepiano octaves in the fourth movement. His delivery of the fourth movement highlighted all the interpretations of Schubert he was known for, all ending in a thrilling Presto flourish that captured his virtuosity.

Paul Lewis gave a recital with the same program with the Boston Celebrity Series more than a decade ago, around the same time his album with Harmonia Mundi was released. Compared to his interpretations in these recordings, this live performance in Jordan Hall took more flexibility in musical phrasing while trying to maintain the same sense of clarity, sensitivity, and attention to detail. Artistry is ever-expanding and changing, and one of the joys of live listeners is getting to revel in the moment and experience the transforming interpretations of the future. It is a distinct privilege that the Boston music scene can make this happen for so many.

CONCERT REVIEW

# Magic, tap dancing, & the electric wind instrument: MIT's annual Family Weekend concert

MIT Wind Ensemble, MIT Jazz Ensemble, and MIT Vocal Jazz Ensemble perform in Kresge Auditorium to parents and students.

## MIT Annual Family Weekend Concert

MIT Wind Ensemble, Festival Jazz Ensemble, and Vocal Jazz Ensemble

Conducted by Dr. Frederick Harris, Jr., Kenneth Amis, and Laura Grill Jaye

Kresge Auditorium

Oct. 25

By Anahita Srinivasan  
ARTS EDITOR

As part of MIT's annual Family Weekend festivities, the MIT Wind Ensemble (MITWE), MIT Jazz Ensemble, and MIT Vocal Jazz Ensemble performed "Where the World Ends," a concert "celebrating music's power to unite," on October 25th in front of a full-to-the-brim Kresge Auditorium. Conducted by Dr. Frederick Harris, Jr., Kenneth Amis and Laura Grill Jaye, the three ensembles performed a wide array of pieces that kept the audience captivated.

Dr. Harris, director of MITWE, made a point to thank the families in the audience, stating that "these things don't happen in a

vacuum" and gave a "shoutout to all the music teachers" and "parents who have brought their students to the lessons and the festivals." Charlotte Wickert '24, president of MITWE, movingly spoke about her time in the ensemble, stating that one of the best parts was the "connections you make with other people."

What followed these speeches was "Adoration" by Florence Price. "I hope that you all can feel the joy from us in this next piece," Wickert said. Indeed, "Adoration" featured a beautifully melancholic opening thanks to the clarinets and flutes. The rest of the piece was floaty and pensive and certainly showed off the ensemble's emotionality and control.

The other standout piece from MITWE's section of the concert was "We The Seven" by Derek M. Jenkins, introduced by Amelia Gagnon, a PhD candidate in MIT's AeroAstro department. The piece is inspired by the experiences of the seven astronauts recruited for Project Mercury in the effort to send American men to space for the first time. Gagnon spoke for several minutes on Project Mercury, the ongoing research into how outer space affects humans, and the positive impact music had on the Project Mercury astronauts. John Glenn revealed that the astronauts would relax by listening to Puccini, especially "Madame Butterfly."

With this information in mind, "We The Seven," conducted by Kenneth Amis, had a haunting quality to it that sounded like the vast emptiness of outer space. Midway through, all the lights dimmed, leaving the audience in bewildered darkness with only the eerie pricking of the flutes to guide them through. It was an excellent piece that per-

fectly captured both the mystery of outer space and the bravery of the astronauts who dared to explore it for the first time.

After the intermission came the performances of the Festival Jazz Ensemble and Vocal Jazz Ensemble. The Festival Jazz Ensemble performed several pieces, including Duke Ellington's "The Star-Crossed Lovers" and Tommy Wolf's "Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most." Trombonist Alex Jin '27 put on a spectacular performance with several solos, and the back-to-back arrangement of pieces also featured special appearances from the electric wind instrument (EWI) and the South Indian flute. These instruments added texture to the performance and introduced an unexpected soundscape.

The Festival Jazz Ensemble's set also included the performance of Sabrina Drammis (G), a tap dancer who has made appearances at other MITWE and MIT Festival Jazz Ensemble concerts. Her performance in the Wayne Shorter piece "The Big Push" had the audience clapping along, her shoes providing the perfect percussive beat for the rest of the ensemble.

The Vocal Jazz Ensemble, conducted by Laura Grill Jaye, performed two pieces as well, both of which were world premiere arrangements. "Smile," a Charlie Chaplin piece, was shorter, while "Marmaduke," by Charlie Parker, featured solos from many members of the ensemble, each of whom had a different vocal timbre (deep or high, smooth or rough) that contributed a particular harmony to the piece.

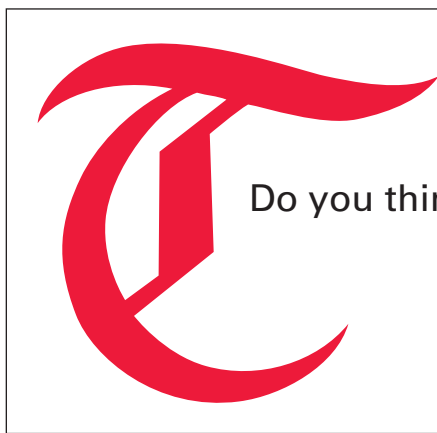
The last two pieces were the showstoppers of the concert, with the Festival Jazz Ensemble and Vocal Jazz Ensemble working

together. First was "Qué Te Pedí" by Gabriel Luna de la Fuente, which featured some truly spectacular vocals from Vocal Jazz Ensemble member Andrea Marciano-Delgado (G). Marciano-Delgado's vocals were rich and powerful and perfectly backed by the Festival Jazz Ensemble.

Inspired by the persuasion of Axel O Vera Sanchez (G), a percussionist in the Festival Jazz Ensemble, the concert ended with the piece "Ran Kan Kan" by musician Tito Puente. Both the Festival Jazz and Vocal Jazz Ensembles participated in the finale, but the true hero of this piece was Sanchez himself. Taking front stage, he performed a one-man magic act, with tricks including but not limited to pulling a six-foot-long stick out of a paper bag and changing his white dress shirt to a Tito Puente t-shirt. The performance was utterly unexpected yet brilliant, galvanizing the audience for the music that lay ahead.

The music was also spectacular. "Ran Kan Kan" is an electric piece with an infectious beat, one which both ensembles captured. Dr. Harris encouraged the audience to get up on their feet and dance, explaining that he wouldn't even need to cue us in: the piece itself would be enough to get us moving. And he was right: by the end of the performance, almost the entire audience was standing, clapping along to the beat and even grooving around a little.

All in all, the concert was a rousing success that kept the audience riveted from start to finish. I never quite knew what was coming next, and neither did the students and families in the audience—a perfect way to capture the spirit of MIT.



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MOVIE REVIEW

# 40 years of naysayers were right about Megalopolis, Coppola's visually ugly and thematically inept magnum opus

By Cameron Davis  
STAFF WRITER

☆☆☆☆☆

## Megalopolis

Directed by Francis Ford Coppola

Screenplay by Francis Ford Coppola

Starring Adam Driver, Giancarlo Esposito, Nathalie Emmanuel, Aubrey Plaza, and Shia LaBeouf

R. In theaters.

In 2023, I titled my review of Killers of the Flower Moon, "Someone needs to learn to tell Martin Scorsese 'no'," in reference to the poorly edited and overly-indulgent 3-and-a-half-hour runtime of the director's Osage Nation epic. Now, almost exactly a year later, we have a similarly acclaimed director's late-in-life epic in theaters. Francis Ford Coppola and Martin Scorsese share much in common: both are Americans of Italian heritage in their 80s, both boast wins for the Palme d'Or at Cannes and Best Director at the Oscars, and both are celebrated for their enormous contributions to cinema.

But, one small difference: where apparently his stature and bankability led to no one reining in Scorsese's worst impulses in his last picture, the path to Coppola's Megalopolis getting made is nothing but people saying "no." Since Coppola first envisioned the project more than four decades ago, actors have come and gone, production studios have offered and then pulled away funding, distribution companies have invested

and uninvested, and Coppola himself has taken two steps backward for every one step forward with the script. There has been no end to the "no"s. And at the center of them all has been a rejection of Coppola himself: actors have complained of misconduct on set, the entire visual effects team was fired over "creative differences," and the first trailer for the movie made up diss quotes against Coppola's past movies. At each setback, everyone was saying Coppola couldn't pull it off—including Coppola himself. Damningly, a friend of the director diagnosed him as having "no excuse this time if the film was no good," and being frozen by "having the power to do exactly what he wanted so that his soul was on the line."

And, lo-and-behold he couldn't pull it off. The haters were right; the naysayers very much knew what they were talking about. For a supposed labor of love, Megalopolis is visually hideous, narratively inept, and thematically tepid.

The story is held together by an ex-

tremely loose hodgepodge of weak political statements, sci-fi hand-waving, and sleepy historical allusions. It opens clunkily with low-budget CGI title cards in the style of Ancient Roman stone inscriptions telling us that the film is a "fable" before launching into a laughably literal retelling of Roman history updated to an alternate reality of the United States. We are introduced first to Cesar Catilina, an architect with the ability to stop time who wins the Nobel Prize for inventing an innovative new material, "megalon." He crashes a press conference and interrupts the corrupt mayor to argue for a utopian vision of "Megalopolis" as a megalon-empowered and rebuilt version of their city of New Rome. The mayor, Cicero, doesn't like this idea, preferring to build instead a casino district for tax revenue. Cicero and Cesar's feud grows as Cesar falls for Cicero's daughter, Julia.

Cesar leaves his mistress, TV presenter Wow Platinum (...yeah), and begins sleeping with Julia. Wow, looking

to fill the gap left by Cesar's celebrity and wealth, corners billionaire Hamilton Crassus III and marries him in a huge Coliseum-style wedding event. The characters' fates swirl around each other as money, crime, partisanship, and plotting all imperil the city's leadership and future.

At each turn, Coppola's script incessantly muddies the waters between the "real" United States and the fictional New Rome palace intrigue. Halfway through the film, a Soviet satellite crashes into earth, conveniently opening up some of the downtown cityscape for Cesar's Megalopolis. Not only is the crash otherwise immediately irrelevant, its implications are left painfully unresolved; what is the place of New Rome (read: the US) in a version of the 21st Century where the USSR still exists? Coppola either seems to forget this development or simply not care about its implications; either reason is shoddy. Similarly, he insists on gauche political connections between the film and real life.

A populist leader emerges at one point whose supporters don red hats and wave MAGA flags. In one scene, the leader hops down from a speech from a tree stump, which is revealed to be literally shaped like a swastika. These are half-hearted libel service to contemporary rote Hollywood liberalism without engaging in the story's actual connections to the leadership of Julius Caesar or Emperor Cicero.

It's no surprise, then, to learn that the script for Megalopolis first started forming in 1977; its view of politics feels stuck

in the past, with just the meekest of anti-Trump references to make it feel fresh to coastal audiences.

But the movie isn't just politically milquetoast, it's downright nonsensical. With whiz-bang graphics and bizarre needle drops, Coppola's supposedly ultra-personal ode to artistry feels like a bad Baz Luhrmann outing—and unlike the Australian's luridly appealing Romeo + Juliet or more polarizing Elvis, both of which are grounded in something (Shakespeare, or a factual biography), Megalopolis quickly loses its bearings.

How fast is the eponymous city being built, for instance, and what does the electorate think about it? Why do voters rally against Cesar, and then turn on other characters so quickly? How does megalon heal Cesar's eye so quickly, and how do technology and humanity come together in his bionic half-state? For how many scenes there are with journalists' bulbs flashing and reporters' pencils scribbling, what is the role of media in New Rome?

These questions are critical not just for a viewer to follow the plot, but also to understand Coppola's apparently "vulnerable" interpretation of artistry and creation in a hostile world. The director clearly wants us to think of him alongside the greats: Cesar flippantly launches into a Hamlet soliloquy, Cicero describes his own name as "Frank—like Sinatra," and a newspaper headline describes a crime as "like Hitchcock!" But it's hard to take those comparisons seriously when the film hardly makes sense.

For a movie this personal, its failure

singularly lies in the hands of its director. However, it doesn't help that the leading actors are all in over their heads (and apparently phoned some of their commitment in; thanks to COVID-19, only about a third of the cast even rehearsed together). Adam Driver as Cesar neither leans into the campiness of his time-stopping role, nor is he strong enough to carry the enormous burden of Coppola's architect metaphor. Giancarlo Esposito doesn't have half of the corruption or panache of real-life New York Mayor Eric Adams, and can't even hold a candle to Gotham's politicians from any Batman installment. When it's revealed he did some legal tomfoolery early in his career, for instance, we struggle to believe he ever showed that level of skill or menace. Nathalie Emmanuel is immediately forgettable as the central love interest; Laurence Fishburne plays a bizarre secretary-plus-film-narrator dual role; Jason Schwartzman is criminally underutilized (in his own uncle's film!); and Dustin Hoffman is given a rushed off-screen death after a decent couple scenes.

Only one storyline, and the actors embroiled in it, salvages the movie from self-serious techno-optimism: Jon Voight's role as the hapless head of the national bank is buffoonish in the best way, and plays hilariously into the ridiculous meddling of Aubrey's Plaza's Wow Platinum and Shia LaBeouf's Clodio Pulchur. It's obviously absurd, but the incestuous pettiness over an old man's estate must no doubt be on the 85-year-old Coppola's mind as he surveys his Hollywood-

steeped family. Quick cuts away from Driver's long-winded scenes to the cat-tiness of Voight, Plaza, and LaBeouf are welcome breaks, and the only time they theater laughed with instead of at the film.

It goes without saying for anyone who's seen clips of the movie, but Megalopolis is comically ugly, and remains half-pregnant with how much it wants to be New York and how much it wants to be New Rome. (In fact, it's neither! Megalopolis was shot in Atlanta and in Fayetteville studios. No wonder everything looks so plastic.)

Shots seem literally unfinished sometimes, such as when a scene of the fictional parallel to the New York Stock Exchange has banners out front that literally read "NYSE." Even the Coliseum, which is a cool spin on Madison Square Garden, features large swaths of space just taken up by CGI crowds mulling about. The same goes for the score, in which contrived drums and coffeehouse jazz dull any semblance of drama.

After a grueling 138 minutes, Megalopolis ends. And, as it begins, it once again pulls out the tacky Roman iMovie-slide title card, but this time with a revised Pledge of Allegiance: "I pledge allegiance to our human family, and to all the species that we protect. One Earth, indivisible, with long life, education and justice for all." It's perfect: the exact level of surface-level commentary and hokey utopianism as the rest of the movie, with phoned-in audio and cheap visuals. I'm left with no doubt that all the people who told Coppola "no" were, unfortunately, right.



GUEST COLUMN

The Pen and the Sword

By Kate Pearce

**Note from the Editor-in-chief:** *Ellie Montemayor '26, a publisher of The Tech, is one of the editors of Written Revolution. She was not involved in any public statements made about the status of the student group nor in the publication of this article.*

I am writing to contextualize the recent sanctions imposed on the student publication Written Revolution and its editors; these sanctions carry troubling implications for the state of free thought and expression on MIT's campus.

Written Revolution is an ASA-recognized student organization that, during the past year, has released five publications containing essays, poems, and artwork created by MIT students; these publications include essays on solidarity in the Global South, poems commemorating loved ones massacred in Gaza, and reflections on MIT's own campus protests.

According to its constitution, Written Revolution is "an anti-imperialist club dedicated to fostering a deeper understanding and critical analysis of imperialism's impact on societies, cultures, and economies worldwide," which aims to "engage and educate a broad audience through the power of conversations, written work, and advocacy".

"At the heart of Written Revolution is the belief that knowledge and awareness are foundational to fostering empathy, promoting social justice, and driving meaningful change. We aim to create a safe, inclusive space where individuals from diverse backgrounds can come together to learn, share, and discuss the complex histories and ongoing effects of imperialism in an expressive manner," the constitution reads.

Division of Student Life administrators have taken issue with an essay entitled "On Pacifism" that was published in the fifth edition of Written Revolution. "On Pacifism" grounds itself in the principle that occupied peoples have the right to resist their occupation; this "right to resist" is enshrined in international law, as United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2625 (1970) explicitly endorses the right to resist "subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation".

The essay delineates the diversity of tactics used by the pro-Palestine movements and analyzes the efficacy of these tactics as they were used in the American Civil Rights movement, the Buddhist resistance against the South Vietnamese government, and other historical contexts. The piece calls for MIT students to build stronger connections with the greater Boston community; after all, we cannot advocate for liberation whilst ignoring MIT's gentrification of Cambridge that has displaced thousands of the city's low-income residents. Fighting for food security on our own campus while ignoring the food deserts in Roxbury turns our activism into an elitist charade.

"On Pacifism" concludes with the following call to action: "One year into the accelerated phase of genocide, many years into MIT's activism failing to connect deeply with the community, we need to rethink our model for action. We need to start viewing pacifism as a tactical choice made in a contextual sphere. We need to connect with the community and build root-mycelial networks of mutual aid. And we must act now."

The Division of Student Life cites the publication of "On Pacifism" when justifying the ban of the fifth edition of Written Revolution at MIT. Administrators accuse its author of "highlighting self-immolation" for including a photo and discussion of the self-immolation of Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thích Quang Đức -- Quang Duc undertook this act as a protest against the South Vietnamese government's persecution of Buddhists, and the aforementioned photo received the World Press Photo of the Year award in 1963.

On November 1st, Written Revolution editors received an email from Dean of Student Life David Randall informing them that their publication had been banned and censored:

"At this time, you are directed to no longer distribute this issue of Written Revolution on MIT's campus. You are also prohibited from distributing it elsewhere using the MIT name or that of any MIT-recognized organization."

The Committee on Discipline banned On Pacifism's author — a currently-enrolled MIT student and graduate worker — from stepping foot on MIT's campus. Both of these sanctions were enforced immediately without due process.

This act of censorship echoes a troubling precedent for the future of free expression on our campus. It is largely indicative of the "Palestine Exception" to free speech; although the First Amendment theoretically protects those who advocate for Palestinian liberation, university administrators and government officials crush those who do in practice.

This exception has been illustrated at the University of Maryland, where the Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) applied to hold a vigil on October 7th; the university conducted a "threat assessment" where "no immediate or active threat" was found before unlawfully banning all expressive, non-university-sponsored events regardless. It is likewise illustrated at Columbia University, where administrators stipulated that student groups "should not issue statements unrelated to their missions"; and at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, where any speech activity short of "individuals speaking directly to one another" within twenty-five feet of a building is prohibited.

Articles published in The Tech have compared members of the Coalition Against Apartheid to neo-Nazis and claimed that the deliberate targeting of civilian infrastructure "can be attributed to human error and the fog of war". These are examples of abhorrent, erroneous speech; they are also examples of protected speech. MIT's sanctioning of Written Revolution exposes political prejudice against its authors — On Pacifism's discussion of tactics is largely similar to the discussions seen in 21H.001 (MIT history class "How to Stage a Revolution") as well as other pieces published in The Tech. These topics constitute a legitimate debate, regardless of your views on them, that we all have the right to contribute to.

The genocide in Gaza has only grown more harrowing as the Western world becomes increasingly apathetic. Israel launched an assault on Jabalia, a refugee camp in North Gaza, in October; the four hundred thousand civilians trapped there have been pounded with ceaseless air strikes. Israel firebombed the last flour store in North Gaza; no food has entered the camp in over a month. Those lucky enough to evade the bombings will starve.

Quelling dissent against Israel's war crimes only enables these atrocities to continue.

I call on MIT's students of principle to rebuke this act of censorship. Email David Randall (drandall@mit.edu) to express your discontent with this unilateral decision. Print copies of Written Revolution or read it online.

If you carry the privilege of being an MIT student, you are in a unique position to seek the truth distorted underneath layers of propaganda and class interests; after all, in the words of Chomsky, it is the responsibility of intellectuals to speak the truth and expose lies. We must connect with our communities to "build a better world", and we must challenge censorship to challenge imperialism. And we must act now.

*Kate Pearce '27 is a member of the MIT Coalition for Palestine. The views expressed in this piece do not necessarily reflect those of any MIT-affiliated organization.*

GUEST COLUMN

Eight more days on Kresge

By MIT Jews for Collective Liberation

Five months after the 4 AM police raid on the sleeping students of Students Against Genocide Encampment (MIT SAGE), we made our way back to Kresge with another tent. On October 16th, the MIT Jews for Collective Liberation (JCL) erected a sukkah to mark Sukkot during the 12th month of Israel's horrific genocide in Palestine. In this letter, we want to explain what Sukkot is, why we chose to build our sukkah on Kresge, and why doing so is consistent with our Jewish traditions. We close by asking the MIT administration and faculty to end collaboration with Israel's Ministry of Defense and war profiteers.

What is Sukkot?

Sukkot is a Jewish holiday that celebrates the Israelites' forty years of wandering the desert after being forced out of Egypt. We see Sukkot as an enduring metaphor for displaced peoples across the world—it is a metaphor that makes the displacement of two million people in Gaza, one million people in Lebanon, and the bombing of tent-sheltering refugees in Khan Younis and Jabalia (including 19 year old Sha'ban who was still strapped to an IV in his medical tent, along with his mother sleeping beside him) difficult to ignore. During Sukkot, we erect a temporary shelter with a slat-covered ceiling called a sukkah. We hand-built our sukkah on Kresge using found materials in order to bypass the \$1,000 it would cost for the engineering review that MIT tried to impose, and covered it with pro-Palestine and liberatory messaging (see photos).

Though some people view Sukkot as a Zionist holiday, we argue that this perspective is a perversion of the holiday's original meaning: Zionism is a modern ideology (around 125 years old in Jewish circles and over 400 years as a Christian one) while Sukkot is thousands of years old—it predates the modern idea of the nation-state. Though Sukkot's relationship to the land of Israel has been warped and narrowed to mean the Zionist conception of a Jewish supremacist nation-state, for most of its history the holiday was a love letter to the land itself, distinct from the segregationist, war-mongering politics of the present day. In Hebrew, the term is Eretz (land of) Yisrael, not Medinat (state of) Yisrael.

Why was our sukkah on Kresge?

Since November of last year, we have been speaking out in every available medium (protest, flyering, media, and many emails), imploring MIT administration and faculty to divest from the ongoing genocide—divest from the Israeli Ministry of Defense funding its research projects and sunset the Elbit and Maersk partnerships in the MIT Industrial Liaison Program (ILP). But to our collective sorrow, we are one year into the genocide and MIT has refused to reckon with the relationships that tie it to the horrifying realities of industrialized killing. No crisis of conscience, no willingness to give a second thought to

what funds our research programs or to what that research supports. 200,000 people are dead with the aid of drone warfare and the help of weapons shipper Maersk and weapons builder Elbit. Yet MIT carries on unchanged, allowing its drone research for the Israeli Ministry of Defense and partnerships with these complicit firms to continue.

We built our sukkah as a silent protest of MIT's continued participation in Israel's blood-thirsty regime. Though our sukkah served as a place of contemplation and community for its occupants and visitors over eight days, its canvas walls were painted with messages denouncing MIT's collaboration with a government that has engaged in apartheid, and genocide, and that is now pursuing the complete extermination of the Palestinian people. With this sukkah, our message remains the same: as Jewish students, faculty, and staff, we will not stop fighting until MIT ends its complicity in the war crimes which Israel claims are carried out on our behalf. We will not stop shouting 'not in our name,' and 'never again for anyone.' We will not stop standing with our friends and allies who call for Palestinian liberation, from the river to the sea.

Is this for the "betterment of humankind"?

MIT is invested in Israel's war machine, propping up its weapons manufacturing through research projects funded by the Israeli Ministry of Defense and ILP collaborations with war profiteers like Elbit and Maersk. We believe that supporting the Israeli government and its arms dealers is morally bankrupt. These entities are together responsible for the massacre of hundreds of thousands of people (in a region with a population that is over 50% children); they have starved and displaced more than two million people; they subject the people of Gaza to the daily tyrannies of manufactured disease, dehumanization, and intentional deprivation, with more reprehensible cruelty revealed each day. The MIT administration and faculty's refusal to reconsider existing arrangements during a year-long crisis makes us sick. We should be able to expect more from our institutions, from MIT. We should be better than this, as human beings.

On Sukkot, we commemorated our ties to the land, building a temporary shelter to remember how fragile and sacred those ties are. We built our sukkah to insist that it is our obligation to fight for an end to the Israeli state's war—its genocide, its ongoing apartheid, and its brutal attempts to sever the Palestinian people from their land.

With hope,

MIT Jews for Collective Liberation

*MIT Jews for Collective Liberation (originally called the MIT Jews for Ceasefire) are Jewish, anti-Zionist, diasporist MIT students, staff, faculty, and alumni who stand in solidarity with Palestine and oppressed people everywhere. We actively seek universal recognition for human self-determination and dignity.*

GUEST COLUMN

Daniela Rus, We Demand: No More Research for Genocide

MIT CSAIL Must End Its Research for Complicity in Autonomized Genocide, Starting With Its Director.

Publisher's Note (December 9, 1:10 PM):

*After careful deliberation amongst the Executive Committee and our faculty advisors, we have decided to pull this article from our publication. This article is being retracted in full. Our decision was made in light of increasing hostile rhetoric and action against Professor Daniela Rus and her laboratory.*

— Ellie Montemayor, Publisher

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est. In hac habitasse platea dictumst. Mauris a mattis nisi, sit amet ultricies justo.

Suspendisse tempor quam eget malesuada ornare. Mauris viverra blandit metus, nec viverra ligula



GUEST COLUMN

# A New, Greener Leaf for MIT Committees on Climate?

*An Open Letter to Prof. Richard Lester and the Ad Hoc Committee on Climate-Related Industry Engagements.*

By MIT Divest

On Friday, September 13th, 2024, Professor Richard Lester announced the formation of the Ad Hoc Committee on Climate-Related Industry Engagements, charged with examining the question of whether or not President Kornbluth's new Climate Project – an initiative to address the challenges of climate change—should accept funding from the fossil fuel (FF) industry. The Committee will deliver recommendations on this question by next summer.

This is not the first time MIT has appointed a committee to review FF divestment. Nearly 10 years ago, the 2015 Committee on the MIT Climate Change Conversation, consisting of faculty, students, and staff, delivered recommendations on divestment. In its report, the committee shared that it “rejected the idea of a blanket divestment from all FF companies.” It did, however, express “support by a (three-quarter) majority of the committee for targeted divestment from companies whose operations are heavily focused on the exploration for and/or extraction of the fossil fuels that are least compatible with mitigating climate change.” Further, the committee agreed that “MIT should exercise more ethical oversight of its investments and do so in a transparent and community-backed manner,” citing divestment of particular businesses as a potential outcome of this practice.

In 2020, MIT convened the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Guidelines for Outside Engagement. In their Tools for “Focus and Counsel”, the committee identified organizations whose policies result in “gross violations of political, civil, or human rights” as posing a red light for engagement. Additionally, organizations whose partnership could “damage

MIT's reputation for excellence in research and teaching” pose a yellow light for engagement under these guidelines.

Disappointingly, MIT has failed to address the concerns raised by these past committees. The Institute remains deeply tied to the FF industry, with noteworthy channels including investment of the endowment and engagement through departments, labs, and offices on campus. The MIT Investment Company's ESG framework remains a lukewarm statement on their inability to control which securities they are invested in, indicating no evidence of “transparent and community-backed” oversight of investments. Funding ties between Institute research centers and the FF industry exemplify a disregard for the devastating destruction of homelands and political strife coupled to human rights violations—to give only a couple of examples—spanned by the industry's practices, a clear red light for engagement.

There is also ample evidence demonstrating that FF funding compromises research integrity on energy and climate, with ramifications on MIT and the world at large that cannot be overlooked. A 2022 Nature study conducted a semantic analysis of reports from energy research centers and found that fossil-funded universities were significantly more favorable towards natural gas than those without fossil funding. The MIT Energy Initiative (MITEI) had the most favorable views towards natural gas of all the groups studied, including the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), Columbia's Center on Global Energy Policy, and even the American Gas Foundation, a natural gas special interest group. More broadly, a 2024 literature review highlights the danger of FF funding of university research due to its legacy of producing biased research and conflicts of interest as well

as a widespread lack of transparency on the extent of funding ties.

A notable example of this influence at work involves MITEI's “The Future of Natural Gas” report from 2011. The report made unbacked, pro-industry claims that supported natural gas extraction, characterizing environmental impacts as “challenging but manageable” without evidence. There were also numerous undisclosed conflicts of interest among co-authors of the report, including Ernest Moniz's seats on boards of oil and gas consulting and investment firms and Anthony Meggs' former role as a BP executive. This report was the central focus of a congressional hearing presented by Moniz in 2011, which went on to influence the Obama administration's energy policy on long-term natural gas infrastructure in 2012. Given the far-reaching policy impacts of energy research—especially at MIT—it is imperative that this research is held to a high standard of integrity.

In his announcement of the ad hoc committee, Prof. Lester portrays the question of FF funding in the Climate Project as uncertain. However, the campus community has repeatedly made it clear that they overwhelmingly support no fossil fuel funding in the Climate Project. An open letter written by MIT Divest urging against FF industry influence in the Climate Project has received over 520 signatures from students, faculty, and community members as well as an endorsement by the Cambridge City Council. A similar resolution urging the rejection of FF influence in the Climate Project was adopted by the MIT Graduate Student Union on September 24th, 2024, with 78.7% of voters responding in favor.

In light of this history, we make two key asks of Prof. Lester regarding the ad hoc committee. First, the committee's recommendations must be binding on the industry en-

gagements pursued via the Climate Project. Since MIT has failed to heed the recommendations of similar committees in the past, it is essential that the ad hoc committee and campus community at large hold MIT accountable for this decision. Otherwise, the committee serves as a device to feign ethical decision-making while the initiatives pursued through the Project remain vulnerable to bad-faith actors willing to pay top dollar to realize their agendas. As we know all too well, MIT can ignore committees that only deliver recommendations. If the Climate Project intends to finally provide due scrutiny to fossil fuel industry engagements in research, then the committee must hold power commensurate with this question.

Second, the committee meetings must openly invite the MIT community into dialogue by publicizing meeting proceedings. This should be paired with regular forums for the MIT community to provide comment on the committee's findings. The only way to foster productive, honest, and transparent discussion on the question of FF industry relations is by engaging our community at large. A question of this magnitude requires the attention and consideration of our community, so we must invite diverse input to best inform these key decisions.

*MIT Divest urges Prof. Lester and the MIT administration to avoid repeating past mistakes and ensure that the Climate Project can effectively respond to the increasingly urgent climate crisis.*

*MIT Divest is an environmental justice group on campus that advocates for cutting institutional ties to the fossil fuel industry. Members of Divest are brought together by a desire to have a tangible impact on mitigating the global climate crisis.*

# What Now?

By The Tech Editorial Board

Above all else, we must remember: this was the will of the American people.

At the time of writing, Donald J. Trump has once again ascended to the nation's highest office, winning over 72,623,882 votes (representing approximately 50.9% of the popular vote) against opponent Kamala Harris's 67,927,989 votes (representing approximately 47.6% of the popular vote). Trump's victory over the incumbent vice president secures him his second and final presidential term, an end to an election cycle equal parts tumultuous and divisive.

We write, as an editorial board, not as partisan representatives of any one group or ideology; we write not to repeat statements that have already been made by many before us, nor to incite further division in an already fractured community, nor to stoke fear of what may lie ahead—but to allow us, the people of MIT, the opportunity to reflect on this election and our role in helping shape the future of this nation and this world.

Still, we must acknowledge a dark and undeniable reality, one that sits at the core of this very statement: former president and current president-elect Donald J. Trump—a twice-impeached convicted felon widely characterized by attitudes ranging from racism and xenophobia to totalitarianism and mythomania—is a dangerous man.

## Nations Built, Nations Broken

Trump ended his first presidential term, his first actual term in politics, less than a year into the COVID-19 pandemic; his upcoming tenure will take over from an embattled administration that spent its four years in power suturing the nation's pandemic-era wounds and unwinding the policies put in place by its predecessor. Even before March 2020, illegal immigration, federal debt, and the trade deficit all rose across Trump's four years in power, issues that he had pledged to check in sweeping promises made during his first campaign.

Yet in his four years out of office, he has remained an elephant in the room, a shadowy figure in national and global politics.

From within, a transformed Republican party has spent the last eight years courting the whims of the president-elect, a sweeping metamorphosis from a party that has long prided itself on individualism and liberalism. They appear poised to maintain their devotion to, and almost worship of, Trump and the movement he has catalyzed. Leaders globally are following suit in what appears to be acknowledgements of fealty to a man who will once again control the world's greatest power. Trump's victory is the latest forte in a crescendo of far-right populist movements that have risen on the global stage.

But the danger Trump represents is not, in itself, the power that has been bestowed upon him; it is in his instability and unpredictability, his increasing penchant for violent and sinister rhetoric, and his impulses in translating his diction into action. At its most fundamental, the danger he represents comes to life through the large swathes of the American public that resonate with him.

Nations are built and broken by powerful men, men who ignite an inferno that cannot be extinguished, men not unlike Trump.

## Politics at Play

Taking all of that into account, we must remember: this was the will of the American people.

Whether this is a win or a loss to you, remember that this is, at heart, American

politics at play: Trump has won the popular vote and the Electoral College. He has been undeniably chosen by the people and for the people. The election was always going to be close and contentious; yet as many representatives of the news media have succinctly stated, Trump's appeals to fear and distrust ultimately won over the people against Harris's calls for calm and trust. This election cycle in particular has amplified falsehoods and false promises, as the political landscape of the past eight years dominated by Trump has led to receding faith in the American experiment.

But Trump and Harris were not the only players on the battlefield. Third-party candidates Jill Stein, a long-time representative of the Green Party, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., who dropped out of the race in August and has since attached himself and his voter base to Trump, and the nearly two dozen other candidates and dropouts have all altered the dynamics within this election cycle.

Republicans centered their campaigns on economy and security, a direct appeal to the growing concerns of an electorate that perceived Democratic control of the executive branch as a disaster. Voters bought in—including young men and Latino voters across the board. Scores of Republican politicians and officials, who had previously spoken out against Trump, fell into line once more. The campaign was antithetical to unity and hope: it feasted on sowing disharmony and promoting pessimism.

Democrats, meanwhile, ran a shaky and narrow campaign on protecting democracy and keeping Trump out of the White House—but at the end of the day offered little in the way of an actionable policy agenda past the sentiment of preserving the status quo. Left-leaning voters were not incentivized: compared to the 2020 election, millions stayed home. These included moderates, independents, and protestors in factions such as the Uncommitted National Movement. The Democrats' lack of a resounding message cost them.

Ultimately, neither camp succeeded in their basic responsibility as leaders of the free world: to unite and represent the American people.

The outcome of this race was not known to anyone—perhaps anyone but Trump, who, again, has long spoken of his intention to wrest control of the presidency no matter what—until its final minutes. Polls across the board oscillated in favor of Harris and Trump constantly, and up until Election Day, Harris seemed to hold a slim lead.

This race was a rare case where everything was up for grabs: safety and security, immigration and globalization, equality and diversity, inflation and economy, abortion and privacy, and foreign policy. More topics at stake included: higher education, healthcare, marijuana and drug culture, climate change and policy, police reform or revitalization, LGBTQ+ rights, and countless others. This race, as many saw it, was the watershed moment in the fate of this nation. And this race, as it seems, has opened up old scars and revealed new wounds: our nation is bleeding.

But regardless of who won the presidency, and regardless of what may come in the next four years, it is clear to us that the people want, and the nation needs, change.

And here, we must recognize: this can be the will of the American people.

## The Will of the American People

When we bring up the “will” of the American people, we do not only mean the privilege to vote. Of course, voting for our representation is a tenet of American democracy—but there remains so much

more to be done to truly unify this nation.

First, we call attention to the element perhaps most central to us, The Tech, as a representative of the news media. In the age of information (and disinformation), skepticism, rationality, and curiosity have become traits of the utmost importance. The internet is rife with falsehoods, and social media's penchant for generating online echo chambers of compatible consumers only fuels partisanship. When masses of people flock to singular sources of information and discredit all others, whether it's right-leaning Fox News or Qatar-based Al Jazeera or the numerous accounts that dot social media networks, they miss out on critical aspects of the world that offer fresh perspectives on such multi-dimensional topics. Homogeneity of thought is the ultimate poison to a heterogeneous society.

Ignorance may be bliss to the individual, but it is bleak for democracy. When masses of people choose not to interact with information and the wider world at all, regardless of the reason, they inevitably contribute to complacency in a democracy in darkness. We have said this before: trust the news media. Trust the free press. Trust the people who continue to uphold the very principles of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

We must learn to take in perspectives, especially those we do not agree with; we must learn to engage in discourse with others, especially with those we do not agree with. We must learn to acknowledge, accept, and perhaps even absorb those perspectives—and allow for our views to grow and develop. That is the path to reconstructing a real democracy.

The responsibility does not end there: we may, as voters, decide our stances on specific topics, whether it is on helping enshrine abortion rights or pushing for a robust economy. We may even vote for representatives that commit to such causes. But it is our responsibility, too, in making those changes happen.

Be an advocate, and be an activist. Volunteer. Help with causes on the local level. Engage with political candidates and ensure that they know who they are representing. Inform the uninformed, assist the unassisted, and remember the forgotten. Be an agent of change.

One's responsibility to their community does not end with casting a ballot every couple of years. And now more than ever, with the nation in the state it is in, it is our responsibility to enact the change we want to happen.

And our last request, and one that we feel is most important to make clear: break party lines.

When you pick up your ballot, resist the urge to simply bubble in Democrat, Democrat, Democrat or Republican, Republican, Republican. Across all levels of politics, select the representative that best represents your ideals, regardless of party affiliation. (And if none do: write-ins exist.) When we look past the red versus the blue, we are reminded that, in the end, representatives are to secure the continued health, prosperity, and stability of their community; the only differences between our choices for these representatives are their respective visions for how to achieve that goal.

It is tempting, we recognize, to keep within party lines. It is a safe bet to cling to one's ideology and identity to a party. But this is what has driven our nation apart: when we see the world only through lenses that are red or blue, we inevitably isolate ourselves from half of the world around us. We lose sight of our commonalities and see only our differences. The chasm between “us” and “them” only widens.

Coalition and compromise are a rare occurrence, a fact that is widely acknowl-

edged by leading political figures everywhere. Rather than working together to secure a strong and bright future, the political world has become a territorial dispute in which all camps refuse to budge.

Even the very idea of “the opposition,” when laid out critically, presents itself to be an illogical concept: all of us ultimately want the best for our communities and our nation's future, in whatever image we envision for it. Inevitably, our visions for America's future will conflict in some way. But we must take pride in the fact that we are all committed to securing a future at all. When we hide behind a party line and say to ourselves, “they are destroying democracy,” we create an opposition that says the same of us.

Democracy in its true form cannot exist when opposing voices are forcefully silenced: that is a starkly different kind of political system known to us as authoritarianism.

We recognize that a second Trump presidency has the potential to reshape the chair in the Oval Office into the throne of a king—what the founding fathers fought precisely against a quarter of a millennia ago. Trump has promised to quench challenges to his asserted power and retaliate against his perceived political enemies. He has flirted with the idea of deploying the military on citizens and has openly discussed plans to purge what he sees as “the enemy from within.” His erratic concept of the limits of presidential authority (or lack thereof), paired with historic Supreme Court rulings that are set to further benefit his administration, may have unfathomable consequences.

Nonetheless, we must recognize that the result of this election was the will of the American people.

But when we break party lines, commit to compromise, and act critically and with intention, we can step towards a future where the will of the American people is the will of all, and not just that of a narrow majority.

## Our Community Once More

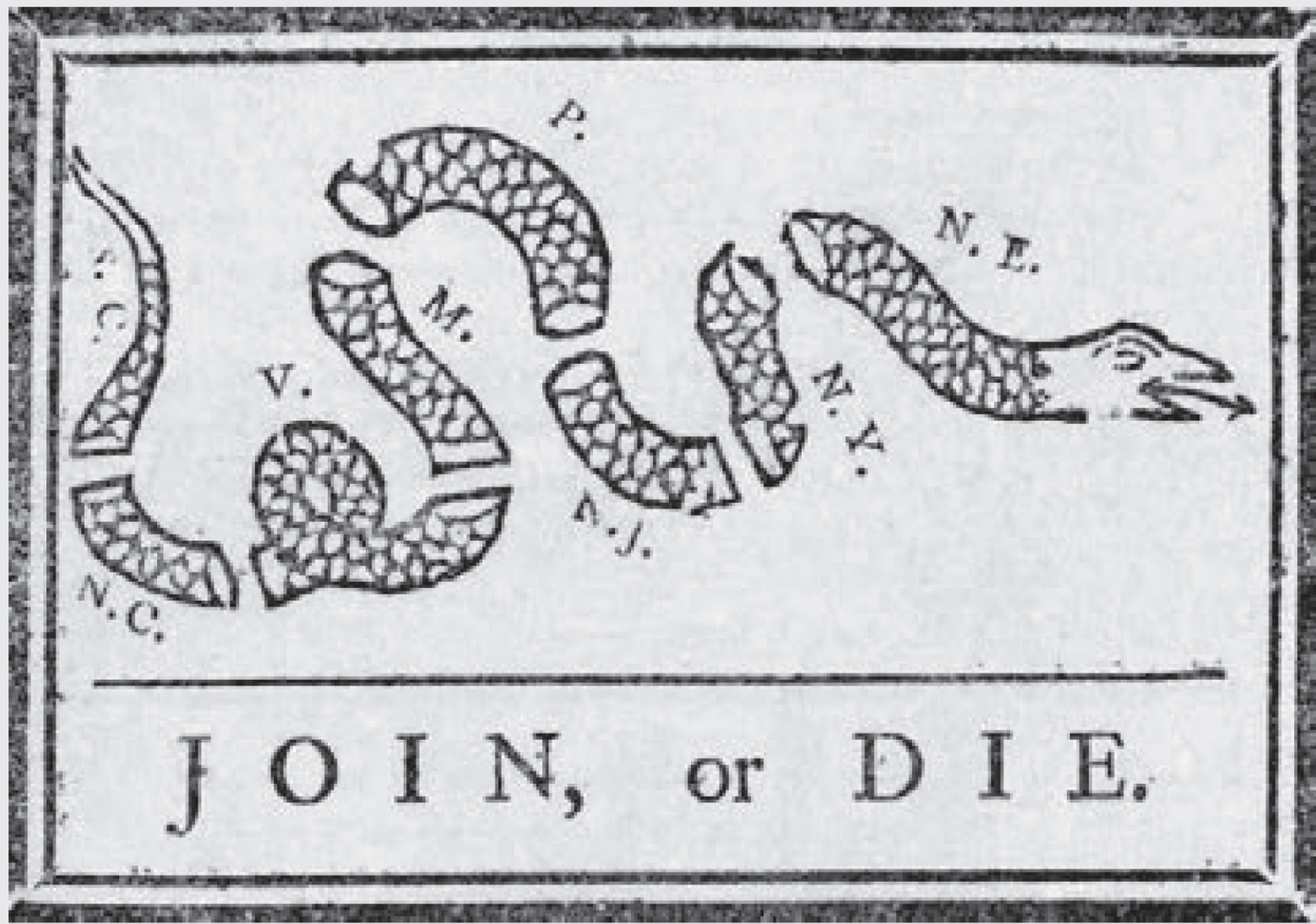
The results of this election are a wake-up sign for all of us of the path that lies ahead. We must commit to our community in ways that we have not done before.

We have seen deepening divides in our community, and we must be ready to confront these divisions. We must even mend the bridges that have been burned from within; our community—our 11,886 undergraduate and graduate students, our 17,180 employees and faculty, our global network of alumni, and the countless other groups that call this Institute our home—is under tremendous pressure from all fronts, including from ourselves. Over the past year, we have seen unprecedented divisions across our campus, reflecting a broader national sentiment of discord and distrust, specifically concerning an expanding war in the Middle East and the future of a post-affirmative action MIT.

To our fellow students, we ask you all to remember that tomorrow is in your hands. Take a step back and think about the world around you. You came here to be around the best and brightest—you came here to be the best and brightest, a shaper of the future of this nation and the world. You came here seeking excellence. You came here seeking belonging. You came here, and now, you can be a part of something much larger than yourself. Lead us into the future.

When it is all said and done, when America emerges from one of the most critical and darkest junctures in modernity, when we finally are tasked with this nation's future, we must remember: it has been, and will always be, the will of the American people.

# The Tech is looking for editorial cartoonists.





# The 2024 Election: The Institute Reacts

*Student voices echo the sentiments of the nation, administration largely silent.*

**By Alex Tang, Karie Shen,  
Vivian Hir, & Alor Sahoo**  
*EDITORS*

The Associated Press declared former President Donald J. Trump of the Republican Party the winner of the 2024 U.S. Presidential election over current Vice President Kamala Harris of the Democratic Party.

**A campus in anticipation**

The election was under intense anticipation from members within the Institute community.

103 students identified as Democrat (59.9%), 55 students identified as Independent (32%), while 8 students identified as Republican (4.7%). The vast majority of the students cast ballots remotely: 81% voted using a mail-in ballot, while 19% voted in person.

From the poll, The Tech has compiled a series of quotes reflecting a gamut of student perspectives on campus. These quotes were lightly edited for clarity.

Affiliated as a Democrat, voted for Harris: “Real change comes from ground up organizing, so I voted for

to dramatize either candidate, and tried to temper my own expectations and enthusiasm before the election; it remains ridiculous that they are sensationalized like sports games. But it will continue to depress and impress me that a country built upon the backs of immigrants and women has now voted directly against them twice. I do not regret coming to MIT, but this is not the country that I thought I was choosing.”

Affiliated as a Republican, voted for Trump: “I voted for Donald Trump because [of]... his track

Biden administration has a very disappointing foreign policy. Harris hasn’t committed to a strong policy platform that she is willing to defend in interviews or at speeches. [Democrats] have created a national environment focused on demonizing the opposition, which may or may not have correlated with the multiple assassination attempts against the former president.”

Kyra Shutt ’25, an Independent, voted for Harris: “Mostly a ‘lesser of two evils’ kind of thing, but Kamala is actually a likable person and I think she’s more than qualified. And I really appreciate Walz’s political history and personality too. I don’t fully endorse Kamala, but I’ll do my part to keep Trump from getting back into office.”

Enoch Ellis shared an invitation to a Town Hall meeting to provide students an environment to share their thoughts and concerns about the election results. At the time of writing, the location has not yet been shared, but Ellis directs undergraduates to the @mitundergrad Instagram, where the location will be revealed.

Dr. Diep Luu, director of the Undergraduate Advising Center (UAC), also sent an email outlining resources for support, including the UAC’s daily drop-in hours, Student Support Services

**Voted for Harris**

**I do not want to dramatize either candidate, and tried to temper my own expectations and enthusiasm before the election; it remains ridiculous that they are sensationalized like sports games. But it will continue to depress and impress me that a country built upon the backs of immigrants and women has now voted directly against them twice. I do not regret coming to MIT, but this is not the country that I thought I was choosing.**

**Kyra Shutt ’25, Independent, voted for Harris**

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**Affiliated as a Republican, voted for Trump**

**I voted for Donald Trump because [of]... his track record of policy successes, like keeping Russian and Chinese imperial ambitions mostly in check, promising movements towards peace in the Middle East, renegotiating NAFTA, and low inflation, unemployment, consumer prices, and illegal immigration rates in his previous administration... Kamala Harris [has] not proven herself to be an effective leader, in my opinion, in the tasks she was given while Vice President.**

The Institute Community & Equity Office’s (ICEO) November edition of ICEO News on Nov. 4 opened with a letter from Vice President for Equity and Inclusion Karl W. Reid ’84, SM ’85. Titled “Our shared election stress,” Reid detailed his heightened anxiety leading up to the election, acknowledging that the results would “have implications for us at MIT, in our communities, and in our personal lives.” Stress and incivility, however, would negatively impact job satisfaction and performance. To counter this, Reid outlined suggestions and resources to help community members uphold MIT’s core values of Openness and Respect, practice civil dialogue, and prioritize personal wellbeing by recognizing and processing election stress. Reid ended by referencing David Kaiser, Professor of Physics and Germeshausen Professor of the History of Science, in his book *Becoming MIT: Moments of Decision*, stating “MIT continues to thrive, not by avoiding complex challenges, [but] by embracing them—a lesson I am also learning.”

MIT’s Office of the President was silent leading up to the election. MIT President Sally Kornbluth did not send any communications via email or video to the MIT community.

**As the ballots were cast**

On Election Day, Nov. 5, The Tech shared an 2024 election poll with the MIT community. 172 individuals responded to the poll, and results were collected prior to the winner of the election being announced.

The results were as follows: 147 students voted for Democrat Kamala Harris (85.5%), while 9 students voted for the Republican Donald Trump (5.2%). The remaining 16 students voted for a third party candidate, such as Jill Stein and Claudia De la Cruz.

The students who voted for Harris had some common ground for their support. According to comments provided in the survey, one common reason that students voted for Harris was their strong opposition to Trump based on his past presidency, and his controversies, which notably included a felony conviction of falsifying business records in May. The main concerns that students raised about a second Trump presidency included the possibility of Project 2025’s policies becoming reality and Trump’s stances on pivotal issues like immigration and climate change.

With regards to party affiliation,

the candidate whose administration would be most likely to give into popular pressure on important issues. Also, Trump is a racist and fascist, and Stein is an incompetent right-wing grifter.”

Affiliated as a Democrat, voted for Harris: “I voted for Harris for the following reasons, among others: support for reproductive rights, support for the Affordable Care Act, support for LGBT rights, I am horrified by Trump’s campaign promise to deport millions, better tax plan than Trump’s tariff plan, Trump mishandled relief of hurricane Maria and then allowed Puerto Rico to be publicly ridiculed during one of his rallies”

Affiliated as a Republican, voted for Harris: “Trump has a radicalizing destabilizing effect on our federal legislative government.”

record of policy successes, like keeping Russian and Chinese imperial ambitions mostly in check, promising movements towards peace in the Middle East, renegotiating NAFTA, and low inflation, unemployment, consumer prices, and illegal immigration rates in his previous administration... Kamala Harris [has] not proven herself to be an effective leader, in my opinion, in the tasks she was given while Vice President, [and] Donald Trump representing a broader shift in the Overton window, a rejection of the neoliberal/neoconservative hegemony which had dominated American politics from Reagan to 2015.”

Affiliation as a Democrat, voted for Jill Stein: “My state votes overwhelmingly in one direction, and ultimately, my one vote won’t affect the result. I don’t think either main

think she’s more than qualified. And I really appreciate Walz’s political history and personality too. I don’t fully endorse Kamala, but I’ll do my part to keep Trump from getting back into office.”

Spencer Sindhusen ’27, a Republican, supported Trump but was not eligible to vote: “I want to pre-empt all doom-and-gloom predictions on both sides. This will not be the last election in America... Trump’s been president before, and he hasn’t obliterated America’s democracy as he’s often been accused of...As for Kamala, I personally believe, as a conservative, that her policies on immigration, the economy, foreign policy, and government censorship will be a net negative overall, but I also believe that her victory will not completely upend the American

(S3) drop-in hours, the Office of Religious, Spiritual, and Ethical Life’s (ORSEL) Music in the Chapel program, Support, Wellbeing, and Belonging spaces such as the Wellbeing Lab and the Rainbow Lounge, the International Students Office walk-in hours, and a Community Dialogue event, “Aftermath of the Election: How do we bring our community together and recommit to the MIT Values?” on November 19.

The Tech again solicited commentary from students as the election results were finalized.

Samantha Belleman ’27 said, “I am very upset today. I am scared for my rights as a woman and a queer person. I feel very defeated and unsure of the future.”

Chase Vanias ’27 said, “When history textbooks look back on this era in time, the steadfast horrors of today will become increasingly and wildly evident. Until then, we just have to act like voting [for] a 34-time convicted felon, convicted sexual abuser, insurrectionist leader, and four-times bankrupted business owner, held some resemblance of rationality.”

Evan Thompson ’26 said, “I was definitely shocked at the result, especially the sheer magnitude of victory. I think many, including me, simply underestimated how fatigued Americans are with some of the institutionalized issues in our country. For those affected the most, Trump is a hope who appears to represent everything the current status quo isn’t.”

**A silent administration**

Reactions from outside the Institute have called for respect and support in the aftermath. In an institutional-wide internal email, Todd Golub, Director of the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, acknowledged that “there are many opinions on the outcome,” but called for the community to “maintain a culture of respect for each other as we digest the news today and in the weeks to come.”

At the time of writing, MIT President Sally Kornbluth has yet to release a statement to the Institute community regarding the outcome of the election. Eight years ago, when Trump was first elected President over Hillary Clinton, former President Rafael Reif sent an email to the MIT community the subsequent evening following the election.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GRACE ZHENG

**Simmons Hall hosts a live election watch party in Multipurpose Room, one of many in the dorm.**

Identified as liberal, voted for Harris: “I am worried about funding and research opportunities for MIT people [if] Trump wins... He wants to roll back Title IX protections for both students and staff at higher education institutions, and he wants to abolish critical race theory and gender ideology in K-12 schools across the country... As a neurodivergent, AFAB [assigned female at birth] nonbinary, queer, and disabled person, I cannot excuse any of his behavior. He actively wants to take away my rights... He even calls for the death of reporters and other people using their free speech to criticize him and his party...He’ll attack and wage war on anyone who doesn’t let him do what he wants without consequences.”

Voted for Harris: “I do not want

candidate is entitled to my vote and I think voting third party for a candidate like Stein or de la Cruz whose views align more closely with mine will mean more than a vote for Harris.”

Affiliation as an Independent, voted for Nikki Haley as a write-in: “Protest vote to signal the existence of Never-Trump Republicans.”

The Tech has also received commentary from individuals who have given explicit permission for their perspectives to be used in this piece.

Baba Shonaiya ’26, an Independent, voted for Trump: “[The] country was better under Trump than under Biden. Harris never won a single primary while Trump ran a grassroots campaign. The

experiment. Our democracy can only continue if we see those we disagree with as our fellow countrymen and not some enemies.”

**The outcome**

Over the course of the night, former President Trump built up leads in pivotal swing states that Harris could simply not claw back. Florida was a harbinger: he won the state by over 13%, an astonishing jump from the margin of victory in 2020 of 3.3%. Then North Carolina. Then Georgia. Then Pennsylvania. Then Wisconsin. Then it was over. Trump won the electoral college.

**The aftermath**

In an email to the undergraduate community on Nov. 6, Undergraduate Association President