

Facilities workers deliver petition to Kornbluth

Priorities include health insurance, higher wages, and job protections

By Scarlet Gitelson, Jada Ogueh

MIT facilities workers marched to President Sally Kornbluth's office on Sept. 29 to deliver a petition signed by nearly 1,000 faculty, alumni, staff, and graduate students.

This was the second petition delivered (the first on July 21) and the latest act in over four months of negotiations to obtain contract provisions for health insurance, higher wages, job protections for immigrant workers, and access to union funds. If the latest petition remains unsuccessful, the union will conduct a strike authorization vote on Oct. 27.

Branch 32BJ, District 615, of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) encompasses MIT's custodians, mechanics, electricians, and other facilities workers. Members have been working without a contract since the prior expired on June 30. In

July, 32BJ rejected the administration's offer of 50-cent hourly raises and a three-year pay freeze for staff earning more than \$85,000.

Despite the current tension, administrators maintain their commitment to these negotiations. "MIT is committed to retaining and attracting talent in all positions serving the Institute community, and that commitment extends to offering competitive compensation and benefits to our employees," Kimberly Allen, Executive Director of Media Relations and Crisis Communications, said on behalf of the Department of Labor Relations.

As stagnant bargaining has continued through the summer, members of the MIT community have joined 32BJ's efforts to show support for the union. Jared Lavarra '28, an undergraduate who has supported 32BJ throughout the summer and into the

academic year, voiced his reasons for standing behind the union.

"It feels good to stand in solidarity with people you care about because these are people that are showing up every day," Lavarra said.

Many workers feel frustrated with the lack of progress so far, especially given that the union and administration haven't met since the 32BJ's counter to the rejected July offer. Electrician Jim Bradford said, "It's been discouraging as far as what they brought to the table, trying to take issues and benefits away from us, and then really offering us no living wage increase that is acceptable in my opinion."

Specifically, workers remain frustrated with the lack of benefits such as health insurance. Maria Petrosillo, a custodial services foreman, said, "At the end of the week, with all the de-



LEVY LE—THE TECH

MIT facilities workers part of branch 32BJ of the SEIU demonstrate outside of Lobby 7 on Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2026.

MIT Facilities, Page 16

U.S. News ranks MIT as #1 national university

MIT dethrones Princeton, which held the top spot for 15 consecutive years

By Hana Sousa

On Sept. 22, the U.S. News & World Report announced that MIT would claim the top spot of its new 2027 National Universities Ranking, dethroning Princeton, which held the top spot for 15 consecutive years. Last year, the Institute was ranked second.

This year's ranking shift was partly due to a methodology change from last year. Specifically, the updated rankings use data from the U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard to evaluate the graduate earnings four years post graduation on a new metric called "earnings by major." MIT had the highest score for this metric, which accounts for 5% of each school's total score.

While LaMont Jones, managing editor for education at U.S. News,

acknowledged that schools that have larger portions of graduates in high-earning majors might benefit from the methodology change in an interview with *The Daily Princetonian*, he added that the metric accounts for this and that it ultimately is intended to "be a more fair and accurate factor."

"One could argue that depending on how good your earnings are, that could help mitigate the effects of whatever debt you have. On the contrary, if your earnings aren't great, even if your debt isn't great, it's difficult to manage with low earnings," Jones told the Princeton student-run newspaper.

The U.S. News rankings employ 17 factors, each chosen from literature review and in consultation with specialists in higher education. The scores in each sector are screened from publicly available sources and

surveys conducted by the U.S. News within the eligible institutions. The

information is then statistically analyzed and standardized. In each cate-



DAKA EJILEMELE—THE TECH

The Lobby 10 Dome and Killian Court on Thursday, Oct. 1, 2026. U.S. News & World Report placed MIT as the #1 national university in its 2027 ranking.

gory, the top performer scores 100, while the others receive grades from 0 to 99. The factors are weighted and summed up. Overall, MIT received a perfect score this year, while Princeton scored 99 and Harvard, 96.

Beyond the top overall position in the National University category, MIT was also ranked first for undergraduate research and creative projects, second on the list of most innovative schools, and third on the list of best value schools.

"America's economic strength, scientific leadership, and national security depend on world-class education and research institutions, and MIT is proud to be one of them," MIT spokesperson Kimberly Allen said about the new rankings.

Despite appreciating U.S. News's "well wishes," Chris Peterson, Di-

MIT #1, Page 2

10/08 IN SHORT

The last day to add full-term subjects is Friday, Oct. 9.

The deadline for continuing undergraduates to change a Spring 2026 subject to Flex P/NR grading is Friday, Oct. 9.

The last day to drop half-term subjects offered in the first half of term is Friday, Oct. 9.

Enjoy the three-day weekend with the Indigenous Peoples' Day holiday on Monday, Oct. 12.

Monday's schedule of classes are to be held on Tuesday, Oct. 13.

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MIT Police Association returns to negotiations

MIT leadership proposed a 0% raise in the first year with no future guarantees

By Anand George, Jada Ogueh

Since April 6, the MIT Police Association has been in discussions over a new contract with MIT and have been working without a contract since July in accordance with the previous agreement.

MIT proposed a contract with a 0% raise in the first year of the contract with no guarantees of raises in the second and third year of the contract. In comparison, the Boston-Cambridge-Newton area experienced 3.7% inflation over the past year (as of July 2026), according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In a press release regarding the offer, the MIT Police Association said that they were disappointed with MIT's offer, especially as top executives at MIT receive salary increases (16.7% on average) substan-



LEVY LE—THE TECH

A MIT police car is parked along Massachusetts Avenue outside Lobby 7. The MIT Police Association has been in contract negotiations with the Institute since Monday, April 6, 2026.

tially above the increase in cost of living.

"Offering officers a 0% raise while executives receive double-digit increases sends a clear message about whose work MIT values — and whose it does not. The MIT community deserves better," the association said.

However, Institute administrators have expressed that they have to adopt a careful stance on budgeting and hiring given the uncertain outlook for federal funding and policy. They cited the July 2025 8% tax passed by Congress on investment returns from university endowments as well as limited restoration of federal funding, which have led to budget cuts across the university. Last October, the MIT Investment

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ELEVATORS DOWN

Statistics on MIT elevators' service requests. **NEWS, p. 6**

US AND THEM

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ENGINEERS IN SOCCER

MIT women's soccer plays close game with WashU. **SPORTS, p. 8**



THE CYCLE ENDS

Menstruation Science Day displays research on women's health. **SCIENCE, p. 10**

STAY SAFE IN THE BIKE LANE

How to make the roads safer for cyclists. **OPINION, p. 15**

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McDermott Court reopens with new landscaping

After years of construction, the renovated court is now open to the public

By Graham Schmidt

At 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 15, McDermott Court — the open space in front of the Green Building (Building 54) — reopened to the public after more than five years of continuous construction. The superintendent of the renewal project packed up the last orange cones and yellow cordon surrounding the new plaza. Students then began to filter through the stone walkways around the “Green Dot,” the circular lawn at the center of the court.

McDermott Court closed in 2020 to serve as a staging ground for the construction of Building 55. It remained fenced off for several years as other projects began, including the installation of a new radome on the roof of Building 54 and the renovation of the East Campus dorms. Construction work on the new open space took place over the summer, finishing in August, just in time for the fall semester.

The Court was dedicated in 1966, following the construction of the neighboring modernist Buildings 18 and 54. It featured a circular lawn — the Dot — surrounded by pavement and, further toward the river, Alexander Calder’s steel sculpture *La Grande Voile*.

Now, waves of waist-high knolls enclose the Dot and the sculpture. Other additions include benches, a power bollard for events, and new lighting fixtures for evening activities.

A week after opening, McDermott Court began to look more Seussian than brutalist, unlike the surrounding buildings. Workers spray-painted colorful shapes onto the hilly terrain to mark off sections of soil. Sacrificial annual grasses put down roots to firm up the landscape. Pots of native plants sat on hilltops, waiting their turn for transplanting. “Please keep off” signs appeared on the lawn.

In an email statement to *The Tech*, Laura Tenny, a senior campus planner in the Office of Campus Planning, wrote that the grass would remain off-limits until next spring.

“Walking on it while it’s getting established can lead to ongoing compaction, muddy spots, and patchy or dying lawn,” Tenny wrote.

It will take time for the gardening to finish, too. The new terrain around the Dot provides extra soil for a native wildflower meadow to take root. According to Tenny, the native plants will need a few years of weeding, observation, and maintenance before they reach maturity.

The extra habitat around the green dot is part of a broader effort on campus to expand green spaces and

improve sustainability. The Institute has planted more trees and recently renovated the Julie Fassett Garden, near Baker House.

Tenny says that, like these other projects, the additions to McDermott Court “improve drainage and will reduce the urban heat island effect.”

MIT also sought to tailor the new space to the needs of the community. In 2024, the project team canvassed more than 800 people about what they wanted from the updated court. The respondents’ highest priority for using the new space was to “be in nature.” They also wanted an event friendly space, more outdoor seating, and climate-conscious greenery. All of these requests made it into the final plans.

The Department of Earth, Atmospheric, and Planetary Sciences (EAPS), which is mostly housed in Building 54, will be especially impacted by the reopening of McDermott Court. Those with offices on the south side of Building 54 have been looking down at construction since 2020. When Building 55 was being built, EAPS students, faculty, and staff sometimes had to squeeze through narrow walkways between fencing and concrete to get to work.

Professor David McGee moved into the second floor of Building 55 when he became department head of



DAKA EJILEMELE—THE TECH

McDermott Court outside of Building 54 (the Green Building) after reopening on Wednesday, Sept. 15, 2026.

EAPS last year. His new office directly overlooks McDermott Court. In an interview with *The Tech*, McGee expressed enthusiasm, both for the new building and the new green space.

“Building 54 is skinny and stratified,” McGee said, referring to the limited number of spacious areas for people to meet. “Having Building 55 here has been really great for the departmental community, and for our ability to bring together conversations around climate and space research.”

Now that McDermott Court has reopened, McGee says, there’s even more space for community events, like departmental barbecues and lunches. But the view is also important. As we spoke, sunlight reflecting off the Dot lit the office with a faint green glow.

“It’s easy to understand intellectually that it is very different to look out on gravel versus looking out on green and variety,” McGee added. “But it’s quite different to actually experience it.”

MIT pauses authorization of work-study credit programs for international students

Federal government weighs raising fee for alternative to \$100,000

By Caden Betz

On Aug. 24, MIT and universities across the country received a broadcast message from the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP), which operates under the Department of Homeland Security. The message warned colleges of an increase in work-study authorization for international students in violation of SEVP’s standards.

SEVP’s guidance signals a stricter interpretation and enforcement of existing rules. In response, MIT has paused new work-study authorizations for international students and is reviewing the validity of current students’ authorizations.

Newly interpreted regulations

The type of authorization in question is called Curricular Practical Training (CPT), a temporary work authorization allowing international students with F-1 visas to participate in work-study programs for credit.

Students applying for CPT authorization must request approval from their university. If the student is approved, they complete structured work-study programs with organizations that cooperate with their university. In order for a CPT request to be authorized, a program must be “integral” to the field of study.

The federal administration’s change comes from the word “integral.” Previously, the term was interpreted in a way that allowed universities to authorize most CPT requests for programs deemed important to a degree. Now, in order for a program to be deemed integral, the credit must be absolutely

necessary to graduate, and the program must be required of all students in a major program.

Missed opportunities

While SEVP only recently announced its new guidance, scrutiny from the federal government for international student work has already limited opportunities for MIT students.

Recent graduate Kyle Pratt ’26, an international student from Jamaica, has felt the effects of heightened regulation. “I was turned down from an internship because of the situation in the White House,” Pratt said.

Pratt said a friend had completed the same internship a year before who found the opportunity enriching. He applied to the internship to gain the same experience, but was turned down, with the company stating “they weren’t very confident in accepting an international student for the internship.”

Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (Course 6) international student Rafaa Qanash ’27 believes that “not having this trial period for students, especially international students, to do the internship will affect their full time opportunities.”

Qanash notes that many international students use internships as a “trial period” for work within the U.S. If international students never have a chance to experience what work within the U.S. is like, they are less likely to stay after graduation.

MIT’s response

When contacted about how they are helping students navigate shifting regulations, the MIT International Student Office (ISO) explained that they have been in contact with potentially impacted students

as well as department heads and advisors.

“All those supporting students in this moment recognize that these kinds of changes are challenging and frustrating for our international students,” the office wrote.

Shortly after the announcement from SEVP was sent, ISO updated its page regarding CPT information, alerting students that it would temporarily pause all pending CPT authorization requests and contact students who currently have authorization.

Individual departments have also been communicating with students to inform them of the changes in regulations. Qanash said MIT EECS emailed her to tell her that the department could no longer sponsor CPT requests.

Pratt commended MIT’s consistent work to keep international students up-to-date on the latest news. “I never feel like I’m behind on what I need to know. They’re always giving updates, and they’re always having seminars and office hours,” Pratt said.

Finding opportunities elsewhere

For international students looking to gather real-world experience in their field, options are limited.

One possible alternative is Optional Practical Training (OPT). OPT programs are designed to allow students to complete an internship of their choosing that is not restricted by their school’s curriculum. On a MIT EECS page titled “Resources for International Students,” the department advised international students that OPT authorization is the next best path for international students looking for practical training.



CADEN BETZ—THE TECH

MIT’s International Student Office, located in Building E18. Following a warning sent from the SEVP to colleges about work-study authorizations on Monday, Aug. 24, 2026, MIT temporarily paused all pending CPT authorization requests.

However, while students request CPT authorization in a relatively straightforward process, OPT authorization comes from the federal government, which often takes months longer and is considered more complicated.

Furthermore, the Trump administration has been pushing to raise the fee for OPT authorization from \$500 to \$100,000. PIE news reports that on Sept. 11, the policy passed White House review, pushing it towards a final administrative review.

With both CPT and OPT programs in limbo, not only are international students facing difficulties being able to study within the U.S., but they are also faced with the possibility of not being able to stay in the country.

MIT administrators have said that as an institution whose mission involves attracting the brightest minds in the world, the Institute is acutely aware of barriers to international students. At a press conference in May regarding changes in federal policy, President Sally Kornbluth stated that the university has felt how recent policy changes have affected the school’s ability to recruit talented students from around the world.

“I’ve said many times that MIT is in the talent business. Which means we’re very alert to changes in our talent pipeline. We’ve already seen clear signs that policy changes affecting international students and scholars are discouraging extremely talented individuals,” Kornbluth said.

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MIT Mathematics Department announces new Master of Science in Mathematics of Data

The fifth-year SM is open to current MIT Course 18 and 18C majors

By Veronika Moroz
SCIENCE EDITOR

After years of solely offering PhD graduate programs, the MIT Mathematics Department has opened applications for a new master's program, the Master of Science in Mathematics of Data (MMAD). It will function as a fifth-year master's program only open to current undergraduates majoring in mathematics (Course 18) or Mathematics with Computer Science (18C). Next fall, around a dozen students will begin a year of graduate coursework and thesis research on the math behind data science and machine learning.

In a written statement to *The Tech*, Cecil and Ida Green Distinguished Professor of Mathematics and MMAD faculty chair Philippe Rigollet explained that the math department founded the program in response to increasing student interest in the theory behind artificial intelligence.

However, extensive major requirements can limit undergraduates from taking many AI-related courses. "It is difficult to combine that breadth [of required foundational knowledge] with substantial specialization in probability, statistics, optimization, machine learning, and related areas within a four-year undergraduate degree," Rigollet wrote.

Through the master's program, Rigollet hopes math undergraduates will be well prepared for either PhD programs or "careers in mathematically sophisticated, data-intensive fields." However, according to MIT's Career Advising and Professional Development Graduating Student Exit Survey, 82% of master's students work in industry after graduating, and it's too early to say if MMAD alumni's post-graduate plans will be any different.

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PROGRAM: Philippe Rigollet, Founding Director | rigollet@mit.edu
APPLICATIONS: Charlotte Rubel, Math Academic Services (2-110) | crubel@mit.edu

SCAN FOR DETAILS

VERONIKA MOROZ—THE TECH

A poster in the Undergraduate Math Lounge advertises the new Master of Science in Mathematics of Data. Applications for the program opened on Tuesday, Sept. 1, 2026.

Bring on the master's

MMAD isn't the only new master's-only program at MIT. Last July, MIT Sloan School of Management announced the formation of its Evening Master of Business Administration (MBA) program, and is planning to welcome its first cohort in August 2027. Evening MBA students will spend 22 months working full-time while attending online classes and going to Sloan for in-person sessions two evenings a week.

"Right now in higher education, it is an especially important time to continue to innovate," said John C. Head III, Dean of MIT Sloan. Richard M. Locke, Sloan announced the Evening MBA after market research revealed that working professionals are increasingly interested in getting a business degree, but don't want to leave their jobs, Locke explained.

Though Rigollet and Locke stressed that their new programs were not developed in response to funding cuts, some departments are considering offering master's programs as a way to increase revenue. After MIT's federal funding decreased by over 20% last spring, Provost Anantha P. Chandrakasan and Chancellor Melissa Nobles announced the formation of an Institute-wide Committee on Exploring Master's-Only Programs, which would decide whether "expanding [MIT's] educational offerings will serve to advance our mission and generate additional revenue."

According to Rigollet, for the math department, the funding cuts mean that the PhD program will gradually shrink, eventually hosting up to 25 fewer PhD students. Though he emphasized that the decrease in PhD students and the development of the master's program are "largely separate," the new MMAD students should not increase competition for resources. MMAD students will not get their own offices, since they will primarily be doing coursework and not research. They will also be responsible for arranging their own funding, which will come from Research Assistantships with faculty or Teaching Assistantships in courses like linear algebra, probability, and statistics. By contrast, math PhD students are typically guaranteed financial support, but are often assigned Research Assistantships or Teaching Assistantships after their first year.

If budget constraints continue, it is possible that other departments will follow suit, broadening their own master's offerings. The Committee on Exploring Master's-Only Programs, which has not yet responded to requests for comment, is expected to submit a report on its findings by Oct. 30.

Akirah Bradley-Armstrong appointed vice chancellor for student life, effective Oct. 19

Bradley-Armstrong was UCSC's Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

By Qiyun Chen

Effective Oct. 19, Akirah Bradley-Armstrong will join the MIT community as the vice chancellor for student life. After earning her Doctor of Education degree from the University of California, Davis, she went on to hold a variety of student life leadership roles at several institutions.

She succeeds Suzy M. Nelson, who will retire late October after serving a decade in the post. In her new role, Armstrong will lead campus life initiatives by overseeing student well-being and support, organizations and events, and living communities.

In an email to *The Tech*, Jill Bassett, Chief of Staff to the Chancellor, emphasized that student and Institute engagement was a central part of the national search process for the new vice chancellor. For instance, the committee, which included two undergraduate and two graduate students and the consulting firm Isaacson, Miller, reviewed survey submissions from and held over twenty listening sessions with the MIT community.

Regarding the qualities of an ideal candidate, the MIT Division of Student Life (DSL) used MIT community feedback to focus on finding someone who can respond to the evolving needs of students, strengthen fiscal resilience and stewardship in a time of financial cutbacks, and work collaboratively across the university to support student success.

According to an email from Chancellor Nobles to the community, Bradley-Armstrong stood out with her "proven record of leading large, complex student affairs organizations and fostering vibrant campus communities."

As the former Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Success at the University of California, Santa Cruz, she piloted influential program changes such as the launch of the University of California system's first campus mobile crisis response team and the establishment of a two-year housing guarantee.

Bassett added that, during Nelson's term, the DSL has worked hard to be student-centered and stated that this trend will continue with Bradley-Armstrong.

"Leadership changes also bring opportunities for fresh ideas and new ways of thinking about the future. This is a moment when higher education is facing considerable change, and Akirah is well positioned to guide the division through any challenges," Bassett wrote.

PHOTO COURTESY OF AKIRAH BRADLEY-ARMSTRONG

Akirah Bradley-Armstrong is the new Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs after the previous vice chancellor, Suzy M. Nelson, retired last October. Her time in the role will be official starting Monday, Oct. 19, 2026.

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Over a thousand students attend HackMIT 2026

The grand prize winner, Peel, is a low-cost physical scanner for counterfeit pill medicine

By Christine Baek

Over the weekend of Sept. 19–20, over a thousand students from more than 200 colleges across the country gathered at MIT to turn ideas into projects at HackMIT. Within just 24 hours of building, these students created nearly 300 projects, ranging from the ultimate AI caregiver to a real-life Clash Royale battle in augmented reality.

But the finished projects were only one part of the weekend. From workshops with SpaceXAI to talks with Y Combinator during Hack-Week, the events leading up to the hackathon made HackMIT about more than just the competition. For participants, the experience was also about the people and community who made the event possible.

While most students from across the country applied to secure their spots in the hackathon, first-year

MIT students and MIT students hosting other competitors were guaranteed admission. In addition, the top 50 scorers of the annual capture-the-flag-style puzzle hidden in the HackMIT website were also guaranteed admission to the event. For those who were accepted, the real challenge began on Saturday.

Grant Sanderson, creator and host of the YouTube channel 3Blue1Brown, gave a keynote address at the kickoff of the event. “Build a little bit less, but prioritize the learning,” said Sanderson, emphasizing the real purpose of HackMIT behind the building craze and time vcrunch: to learn.

After his opening remarks, the 24-hour countdown officially began, which would conclude Sunday morning. The final projects were presented at the Johnson Ice Rink, where judges evaluated them for

originality, technical complexity, and collaboration. After the first round of presentations, around 15 teams were selected to advance to the next round.

With hundreds of teams building simultaneously, each project was unique in its own goals and approaches. Some focused on design and practicality, while others were about the different applications of AI, hardware, and other technologies.

Teams could submit their project to one of four tracks: Entertainment, Education, Sustainability, or Healthcare. For instance, Burrow, a project submitted to the education track, is an AI study companion with an animated bunny named Bunny living in the browser alongside students. Rather than a chatbot, the Bunny assists learning by teaching “socratically,” nudging or hinting rather than spoiling the answer. The project won HackMIT’s track prize in Education.



PHOTO FROM THE HACKMIT PLUME PROJECT GALLERY

Peel, an optical dissolution tester that uses AI to verify medicines, won the Elastic sponsor challenge and the Grand Prize at HackMIT 2026 the weekend of Saturday, Sept. 19, 2026.

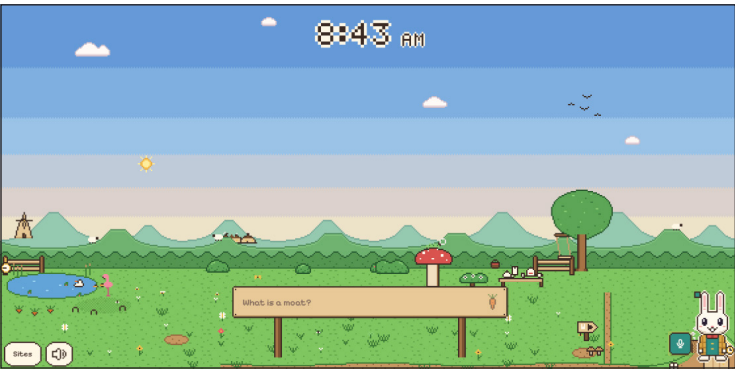


PHOTO FROM THE HACKMIT PLUME PROJECT GALLERY

Burrow, a project integrating an AI study companion into browsers, won the Education track prize at HackMIT 2026 the weekend of Saturday, Sept. 19, 2026.

In the entertainment track, Klick won the Espressif Systems sponsor “Best Use of Espressif Hardware & Solutions” challenge and Meta’s “Bringing People Closer Together With AI” challenge. Klick is a program that gives participants an AI “twin” that makes networking easier. Made from a short description about a person, a twin connects with other twins and measures

compatibility between people as users walk around. If a pair of twins connect, their badges turn the same color to assist users in finding one another.

The creators described their project as “our attempt to stop leaving the most important people in your life to luck.”

HackMIT 2027 will take place in September next year.

Faculty address AI use through teaching policies

Departments across MIT rethink course policies as AI recommendations roll out

By Lauren Adler

Following the Ad Hoc Committee on AI Use in Teaching, Learning, and Research Training at MIT’s report, *The Tech* surveyed professors to understand their stances on AI in their courses and how they incorporated the report’s recommendations into their AI policies.

Many students worry about how professors use AI tools and whether they receive adequate guidance on using the tools in an educational context. This ambiguity is a friction point for many students, a sentiment prevalent in the report; it found that AI overuse in the classrooms makes students feel like “teaching is not a priority for their instructors.” To this end, the report urged instructors to ensure every MIT subject has a clear policy on generative AI use in the syllabus and on the course website.

The report’s appendix included sample AI policies for course syllabi, drawing on survey feedback, existing AI policies submitted by faculty and instructors, and similar

AI use policies on other campuses, Co-Director of the Ad Hoc Committee Eric Klopfer said.

Faculty members across departments are implementing these recommendations in various ways. Professor of Applied Mathematics Laurent Demanet emphasizes the instructor’s role as a “human shepherd,” guiding students to use AI as a tool for learning, not as a crutch.

Regulating AI use outside the classroom is a challenge. Still, it requires special consideration, since most graded homework in technical classes at MIT has traditionally been take-home written problem sets. Demanet teaches 18.03 Differential Equations with a fairly liberal AI policy.

According to the syllabus, course staff will not police AI use beyond requiring disclosure. In fact, Demanet recommends using AI in cases like reviewing class notes, but she also warns that over-reliance can damage exam scores.

Real World Computation with Julia is taught by Professor of Applied Mathematics Alan Edelman;

the class’s grading and structure have been completely restructured compared to past semesters, said Mary Feliz ’28, a computer science (Course 6-3) and mathematics (Course 18) double major currently enrolled in the course. From a copy of the syllabus that Professor Edelman shared with *The Tech*, the AI policy opens with 2 statements: “1. Humans like to learn, at least when it is not too stressful. 2. LLMs [Large Language Models] can help us leapfrog our learning.” The guidelines go on to explain that LLMs can help students learn concepts required for a deep understanding of course material that they may not have learned in prerequisite courses. For everything else, the syllabus advises students to remain “engaged and asking questions.”

Some faculty say the Ad Hoc statement’s specific recommendations did not necessarily change their AI policy. Still, these professors believe there has been improvement in the communication of these expectations between faculty and students.

8.01 Classical Mechanics co-leaders Krishna Rajagopal and Michelle Tomasik wrote via email, “The 8.01 policies this year are not different in their intention than they were last year, but we hope and think that they now provide our students with greater clarity about our expectations.” They cited the Ad Hoc statement as helping them improve how they communicate their expectations around AI use to students. As 8.01 is a class designed with a collaborative approach to learning, the professors recognize that AI is now a tool that many students use to learn and study — as a result, they require any AI use cited as a collaborator alongside a brief description of the specific use on each problem set.

Some professors, such as Associate Professor of Science, Technology, and Society Oliver Rollins have opted not to outline an overarching AI policy in the course syllabus, but rather approach use on a task-by-task basis.

“Everyone’s using it in everything else, right?” Rollins said. “We

draft emails with it, we do a bunch of other things with it, so if you’re trying to limit [AI usage] within the classroom, I just think it’s an impossible task.”

Rollins acknowledges that as AI continues to evolve and expand, more regulation and discussion will be required, but cautions that it must be done with care and consideration. AI can help bridge gaps in understanding when access to human instruction is limited, or for students who may have had less prior instruction in reading and writing, or as a translation tool for students who may not have English as their first language, he said.

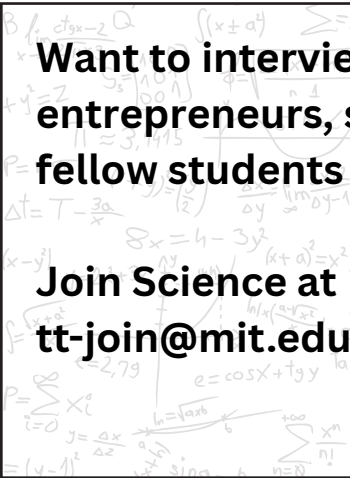
“If we police AI, the people that we’re going to attack are folks who are already in these really precarious, marginalized positions,” Rollins added.

It is difficult for both faculty and students to understand and adapt to rapid AI advances in real time, let alone create and agree on policies for its use. Demanet captured the uncertainty well: “We’re not sure how to meet the moment in our classes.”



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Service requested: A look inside MIT's elevators

749 elevator service requests were logged between Jan. 2 and Sept. 20, 2026

By Grace Zhang
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

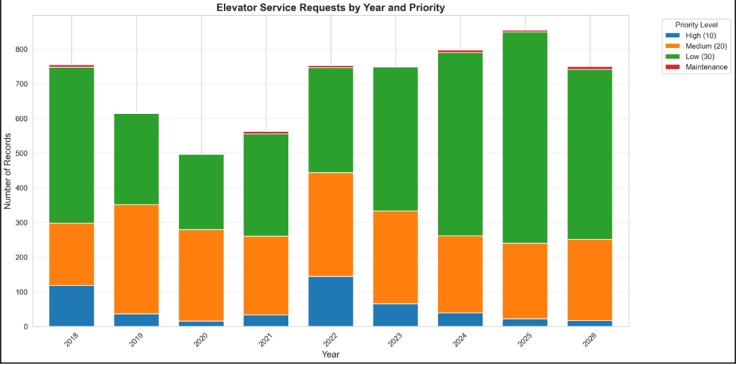
In May, Graham Schmidt G was on his way to collect culture media in Building 18 when he got stuck in an elevator.

The doors closed, but the elevator didn't move. Schmidt pressed a few buttons; nothing happened. Finally, he called for assistance and was told that help would be coming.

"Minutes passed — five, maybe ten. Eventually I got sick of waiting and pulled at the doors enough to squeeze through," Schmidt said. "I didn't wait to see if the technician made it or not."

Schmidt's experience is not unique. According to records obtained by *The Tech*, 46 service requests related to entrapment were logged between Jan. 2 and Sept. 20, 2026. During the same time period, *The Tech* identified 749 broader elevator service requests, including delays, outages, and other problems.

From 2018 to 2026, MIT community members submitted 6,329 elevator service requests, averaging around 700 requests per year. Aside from a dip from 2019 to 2021, the number of requests remained consistent.



Elevator service requests by year and priority from Jan. 1, 2018, to Sept. 20, 2026.

But not every request is equal. According to Mike Smalley, director of Maintenance and Operations in Facilities, when a request is submitted, MIT Facilities prioritizes it based on factors such as access to alternate elevators and impact on users. In most years, maintenance and low-priority requests constituted the majority, while medium-priority requests were the largest share in 2019 and 2020. High-priority issues, meanwhile, represented around 3% to 19% of requests in a year.

Elevator service requests by year and priority, Jan. 1, 2018 to Sept. 20, 2026.

Historically, service requests for elevators remained open — from submission to closure — for a median of 1.78 days and a mean of 13.58 days. According to Smalley, MIT's investment in elevator maintenance has "significantly improved performance and reliability" over the past decade. Despite this, Schmidt has noticed that response times vary.

"The Building 18 elevators are never down for long, but other elevators take a long time to fix," Schmidt said. "There was one stretch when [an elevator in Building 6] wasn't working for at least a month."

In the records, Building 32 (the Stata Center) had the most elevator service requests. Other notable locations included Building 46 (home to the Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences), Building E62 (Sloan), Building E37 (Graduate Tower at Site 4), and Building W20 (the Stratton Student Center).

Top 15 MIT buildings by elevator service requests, Jan. 1, 2018 to Sept. 20, 2026.

In addition to service requests and annual state-mandated inspections, a dedicated Facilities team works with technicians from elevator firm Schindler to perform regular maintenance, covering doors, brakes, cables, and safety features.

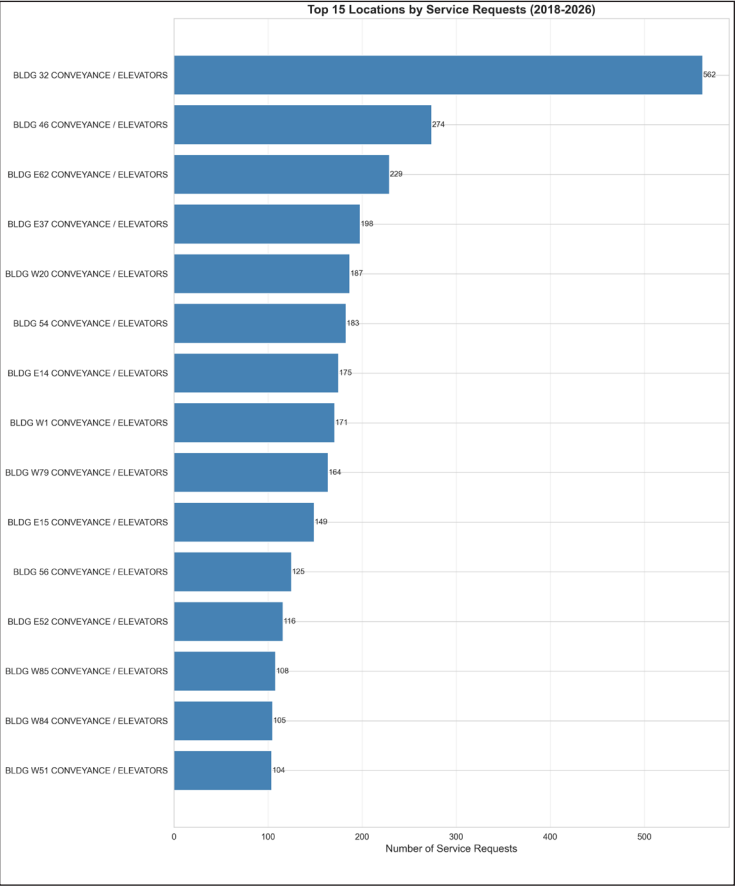
Such routine maintenance could take an elevator out of service. When this happens, Facilities notifies building managers and updates a running list of elevator outages on campus.

Notably, the two elevators in the Student Center were alternately out of service at the beginning of this month for "planned replacement of the steel cables that support and move them," Smalley wrote. Both are now operational again.

For some students, elevator outages can significantly impair accessibility.

"If you need the elevator because you are on crutches, wheelchair, or need to move things, then this definitely impacts [your] experience negatively," Vivian Hir '25 MEng '26 pointed out.

Associate Dean and Director of Disability and Access Services Mary Ellen Vigeant wrote that her office is committed to supporting students with disabilities regarding accessibility issues.



The top 15 MIT buildings ranked by number of elevator service requests from Jan. 1, 2018, to Sept. 20, 2026.

"If the path of a student with a disability is hindered by a closure of an elevator, we encourage them to reach out to our office to discuss ways we may be able to help," Vigeant stated. She cited Facilities's aforementioned outage list as a resource to inform alternate routes.

Smalley encouraged community members to report problems when they encounter them, which can alert Facilities to problems earlier.

"The best way to report a problem is to alert your building

manager or the MIT Customer Service Center (617-253-4948, dof-csc@mit.edu)," he wrote. "Include the building number, the elevator car number, and what you noticed."

Disclosure: Graham Schmidt G, a prospective news staff member, and Vivian Hir '25 MEng '26, a former news editor, were interviewed about their personal experiences with MIT elevators. Neither was involved in the writing or editing of this article.

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BOOK REVIEW

Possessing individuality and community: The Dispossessed by Ursula K. Le Guin

Le Guin explores the relationship between community, homeland, and shared humanity

★★★★★

The Dispossessed

Ursula K. Le Guin

Harper & Row

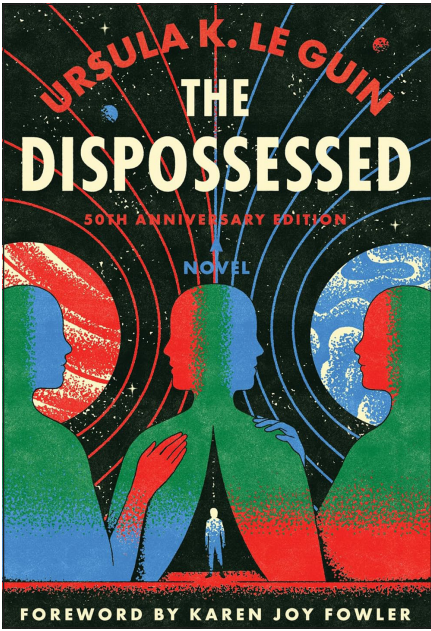
Oct. 4, 2026

By Daria Ashikhmina

We, as readers, treat science fiction as a form of escapism from reality, but how often does a novel reveal a reflection so much like us that it hurts to follow the plot? Ursula K. Le Guin is best known for her science fiction series *The Hainish Cycle*, which targets a mostly adult audience, and her high fantasy series *The Earthsea Cycle*, which targets a mostly young adult audience. Her writings include themes of political systems, globalism, moral development, relationships between hard sciences and philosophy, and gender and sexuality. *The Dispossessed*, alongside novels *The Left Hand of Darkness* and *The Word for World is Forest* of the *Hainish Cycle* series, was written during the 1960s–70s period that marked a major shift in American political and social environment spanning the Cold War, second-wave feminism, student protests, the Space Race, Vietnam War, Black power, Stonewall, rise of accessibility to hallucinogenic drugs, and discovery of the Chinese Cultural Revolution in the West.

Consequently, *The Dispossessed* is filled with references to the social context of the 1970s, posing thought experiments ranging from the international technological race to the ethics of collective consciousness. Should society raise every person as equal? Can exceptionality be accepted and flourish in such a society? Are exceptional discoveries owned by those who discover them? Do we owe loyalty to our nation? Le Guin builds and maneuvers among these questions, but, similar to many moral dilemmas, she avoids giving a clear “yes” or “no,” instead testing readers’ moral intuition and encouraging them to argue with her characters. One of the unique details of *The Dispossessed* is an abundance of the main character’s inner monologue that often lacks a definite conclusion, but rather pokes into the reader’s beliefs and encourages them to think deeper and respond to the monologue. Readers’ intermediary into the universe of *The Dispossessed* is Shevek, an exceptional physicist and activist from the planet Anarres who works on General Temporal Theory (a unified theory of time that will allow for faster-than-light-speed communication) and is praised by scientists on the planet Urras. Yet, he can’t find the same appreciation on Anarres and struggles to connect with the ideals of his home planet. He becomes the first person in 150 years to travel from Anarres to Urras in an attempt to unify the two worlds that were once one, torn between his connection to two societies. The novel is split between two settings — one set on Anarres during Shevek’s past and one set on Urras during Shevek’s present. Often dreamy and philosophical, chapters in Anarres recount Shevek’s

past and upbringing as an anarchist and political and scientific figure in a society that discourages exceptional figures. They often flash forward by years and highlight the most defining moments of Shevek’s life. On the other hand, chapters in Urras remain more in the present and are central to the plot of the *Hainish Cycle* series. Here, Shevek’s anarchist ideals are challenged by capitalist and individualistic ideals. The juxtaposition of Anarres and Urras shows a reflection of the Cold War period that is central to the social conflict in *The Dispossessed*. However, Le Guin doesn’t just stop there. She extends the commentary to argue about the conflict between independence and loyalty, as well as between individuality and community. During rising civil engagement and intercontinental communication, the themes of an endless fight for utopia find their reproduction in Anarres — anarchist, gender-blind, and separated from the long history of national conflicts by the revolutionaries who left Urras. On the other hand, Urras represents an Earth-like society with its own post-industrial first world, authoritarian second world, and developing third world that is being torn apart by the influences from the first and second. Le Guin explores the relationship between loyalty to community, themes of homeland, and an individual’s desire to share humanity among these worlds rather than being bound by loyalty to one. The period of economical and cultural globalization in the 1980s and 1990s was the bright and promising result of the dilemmas discussed in *The Dispossessed*. And it remains relevant in the 21st century today, as Le Guin’s critiques in the world-building of the *Hainish* universe reflect the current



The cover of the 50th Anniversary Edition of Ursula K. Le Guin’s novel *The Dispossessed*.

political atmosphere of modern civilization, where the separation between “us” and “them” is still present and thriving. “My race is very old... We have been civilized for a thousand millennia. We have histories of hundreds of those millennia. We have tried everything. Anarchism, with the rest. But I have not tried it. They say there is nothing new under any sun. But if each life is not new, each single life, then why are we born?” (*The Dispossessed*, p. 373).

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MIT women's soccer is 9-2-1 to start their season after Wednesday's loss to #1 Washington University in St. Louis (WashU), an earlier loss to Tufts University, and a draw with New York University in early September. De-

A new Legacy begins

Boston Legacy FC concludes inaugural 2026 NWSL season

By Lauren Adler

“Dear Boston...,” wrote Jennifer Epstein, alongside Stephanie Connaughton, Ami Kuan Danoff SM ’19, Anna Palmer, and the Boston Unity Soccer Partners in a 2023 announcement that professional women’s soccer was back in Boston, with the Boston Legacy slated to make their National Women’s Soccer League (NWSL) debut in the 2026 season. The Legacy joined the NWSL as the league’s 15th team.

In 2013, the Boston Breakers were a founding member of the NWSL, playing through the 2017

season before folding in 2018. At the time, in 2018, this left the “City of Champions” with just two professional women’s sports teams: the Boston Renegades (flag football) and the Boston Pride (ice hockey), which was dissolved in 2023 when their league was bought out to make way for the new National Women’s Hockey League.

The movement to bring women’s professional soccer back to Boston was more than adding another team to the field. “It’s time we write the story of a new sports legacy about the greatest female

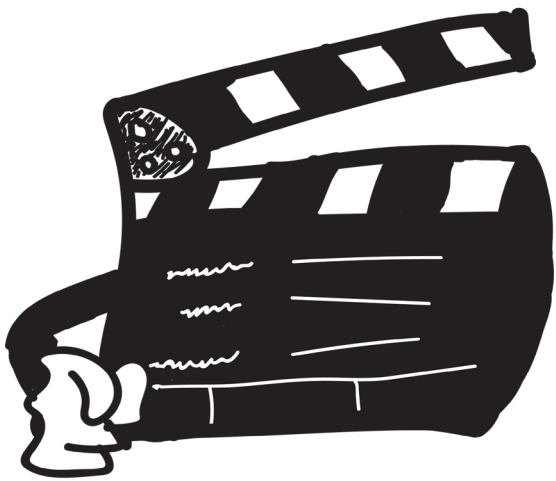
athletes and the greatest sports fans. We play here, in Boston, we play to win, and we play to make us all proud,” the co-founders wrote in the announcement of the team’s founding.

The Legacy played to a 7–5–14 first season, with forward Amanda Gutierrez leading the team with 10 goals. Aïssata Traoré is also a strong scorer for the Legacy; the forward put in seven goals during the 2026 season. Casey Murphy is the Legacy’s primary goalkeeper, appearing in 21 games in 2026 and recording 66 saves. It’s only the Legacy’s first

season, and as was said in the 2023 team announcement, “while winning championships will be the goal, it’s more than just the wins that excite us, it’s how sports brings communities together and presents unique opportunities for both the athletes and the fans to forge meaningful connections across neighborhoods, race, gender and economics.”

After a 2–0 loss to the Seattle Reign on Saturday, Sept. 26, the Legacy are no longer in contention for the NWSL playoffs, but they still have much to look forward to. The Legacy are currently

in on a \$252 million renovation of the historic White Stadium in Boston and expect to begin play there beginning in the 2028 NWSL season. While they wait, the team plays matches at Centreville Bank Stadium in Pawtucket, R.I., and occasionally Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Mass. when available. Once renovations are complete, the Legacy will become one of the few NWSL teams with its own dedicated venue, joining the Kansas City Current with CPKC Stadium and the Denver Summit, which also plans to complete its venue in 2028.



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Lived experience meets MIT research

MIT’s Menstruation Science Day, a screening of “End of the Cycle,” highlights the push to bridge patient stories with endometriosis research

By Lauren Adler

Samantha “Sammy” Jaye Lang was 17 years old when she was diagnosed with endometriosis. The disease is characterized by the growth of uterine tissue outside of the uterus, systemically impacting the whole body and often manifesting as pelvic pain and heavy menstrual periods. Now 23, despite having undergone two surgeries in an attempt to provide some relief for her condition, the pain resulting from endometriosis has continued to be so severe that she has been on medical leave from college.

Sadly, Lang’s story is not uncommon. Endometriosis affects at least 10% of women (~190 million worldwide) without a cure currently available. Alongside her family, she founded The Endometriosis

searchers, and MIT community members, CGR’s mission centers on scientific discovery and translational research grounded in patients’ lived experiences.

CGR’s efforts were on full display at Menstruation Science Day on Sept. 30, one of several events the center has organized after announcing the \$10 million Fairbairn Menstruation Science Fund in July 2025 to support continued progress in women’s health research at MIT.

The event’s centerpiece was the 2026 feature-length documentary “End of the Cycle,” co-directed by Lang while she was away from school. The film combines patient narratives with historical context and advances in research and clinical medicine to raise awareness of the condition and support research, treatment, and advocacy. It highlights a variety of

Unfortunately, progress is often slow because the research is severely underfunded. In 2020, only 1% of all global research and development funding in biopharmacy was allocated to cover all non-cancerous women’s health conditions, including contraception, fertility, maternal health, menopause, and gynecology. That’s a single dollar out of every \$100.

This movement to spread awareness of endometriosis is having a noticeable effect. The Vice Chair of Gynecology at Newton-Wellesley Hospital, Dr. Stephanie N. Morris ’96, reports increased awareness and more young patients in their teen or young adult years presenting to her clinic for care.

“[Younger women] finding answers to what’s causing their symptoms is very empowering,” Morris said on the panel following the film screening. “You don’t have to go through decades of being gaslit and feeling like it’s all in [your] head, and that has a huge impact on people’s ability to function.”

As awareness of the condition increases and more patients seek medical care, Morris pointed out how it can create a challenging dynamic: “It’s great that we’re seeing people earlier, but it’s really whard to provide evidence-based answers of what to do,” she explained. This echoed the evening’s focus on the urgent need to advance research into endometriosis and other women’s health conditions.

Limited treatment options

Drug discovery also plays a substantial role in how the medical field approaches endometriosis. Dr. Stephen Palmer, a reproductive biologist and Celmatix’s current Chief Scientific Officer, is focused on drug discovery for reproductive disorders. He first became interested in pharmacological therapeutics for endometriosis when his wife was diagnosed with the disease.

There are many misconceptions about endometriosis. While some people think it only affects the reproductive system and is hormonal in nature, in reality, it’s a systemic inflammatory disease that can impact the whole body and is linked to higher risks of developing other conditions such as cancer, rheumatoid arthritis, and cardiovascular disease. Drugs for endometriosis have historically been endocrine-based, despite the growing understanding that endometriosis is a challenge of reproductive immunology.

Palmer recalled that when he first began working on drug discovery for endometriosis, experts warned that the disease

was the “graveyard of drug discovery” within the study of inflammatory diseases. This metaphor describes the phenomenon in which pharmaceuticals for endometriosis were composed of the “leftover” drugs that were previously tested and failed for other inflammatory conditions, such as multiple sclerosis or rheumatoid arthritis.

Palmer does believe the industry is moving in the right direction. “Every other week there’s another drug coming forward,” he said. He imagines a future with multiple pharmaceutical treatment options, allowing patient stratification by disease stage and individual biology so treatments can provide the most personalized care possible.

Through collaboration with researchers across MIT, CGR can facilitate cross-departmental collaboration, allowing researchers to apply their expertise to endometriosis research in innovative, interdisciplinary ways. The center is led by Professor Linda Griffith and focuses on three primary areas in women’s gynecological health: how endometriosis and adenomyosis — endometriosis occurring within the uterus’s muscle layer (myometrium) — affect patients, differences in patients’ responses to treatment options, and the clinical challenge that many patients do not respond to currently available therapies for these conditions.

However, it cannot address every aspect of this complex issue on its own. Other contributors include Associate Professor of Biology Eliezer Calo Ph.D. ’11, whose research focuses on fundamental cellular biology. Calo’s lab collaborates with CGR to understand the nucleolus — a structure within the nucleus that makes and assembles ribosomes — in endometrial cells.

“This is where MIT is so special,” Griffith said. “You can have somebody from [electrical engineering and computer science], biological engineering, and then pulling in one of the world-leading cell biologists all around this clinical mystery that affects 10%, at least, of the people in our community.”

The issue is deeply personal for many within the research community, driving their work, advocacy, and programming for events such as Menstruation Science Day. Griffith herself has been diagnosed with endometriosis. Her own experiences, along with the many personal stories she hears from MIT community members and women emailing from across the world, remind her of the magnitude and importance of the work she is helping move forward.



Prof. Linda Griffith moderates a panel for Menstruation Science Day on Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2026, which features panelists Sammy Jaye Lang, Stephanie N. Morris, Prof. Eliezer Calo, Dr. Steve Palmer, and Aleshia Carlsen-Bryan.

sis Collective, a non-profit organization whose mission is “to help find better treatments and ultimately a cure — so that millions of women can live healthy, full, and productive lives.”

Historically, much of basic science and translational biomedical research has prioritized areas with the most scientific capital, shaping the social power dynamics that dictate which questions are deemed “worthy” of investigation. Neglected research on gynecological conditions has long left generations of women struggling with painful conditions without diagnosis or treatments available to them. However, the MIT Center for Gynepathology Research (CGR) is flipping the script. In collaboration with patients, physicians, re-

personal stories from individuals living with endometriosis, including comedian Amy Schumer, Olympic medalist Brittany Brown, dancer Julianne Hough, actresses Janel Parrish and Fọlákẹ Olówófọyẹkù, and Lang herself.

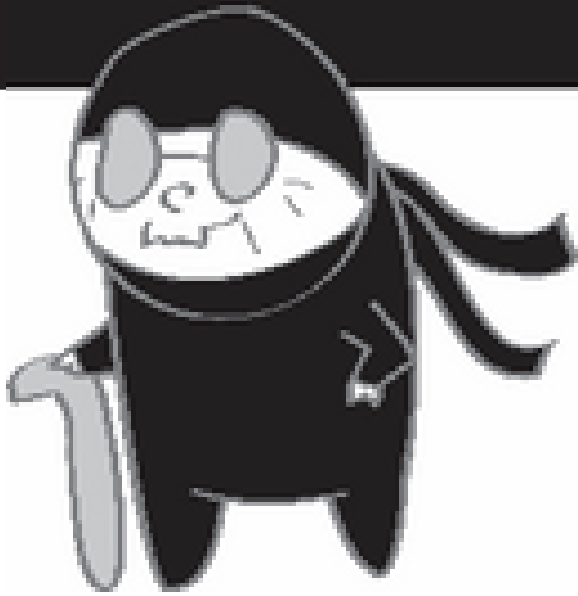
A long journey to care

The patient experiences described in the film all highlight one of the painful realities of living with endometriosis: the long path to receiving an official diagnosis. A 2024 review found it takes an average of 5 to 12 years to get an endometriosis diagnosis, a waiting period in which the severity of the condition often worsens as the disease progresses. Many patients with endometriosis face medical dismissal and often feel limited by their options for care.

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‘Artificial Intimacy’: Sherry Turkle says AI should “stay in its lane”

Turkle’s book on the dangerous seductiveness of chatbots is “Sherry unplugged”

By Dora Woodruff

On Tuesday, Sept. 29, an audience of around 300 gathered in Harvard’s Science Center. Before the talk began, the audience was already murmuring about AI.

“They’re using AI to do their homework...”

“People are always scared of new technology...”

“I would never let my eight-year-old...”

The event marked the launch of MIT professor Sherry Turkle’s new book, *Artificial Intimacy: Who We Become When We Talk to Machines*. In her book, Turkle warns that chatbots are reshaping the human experience, from our capacity for empathy to our ability to have difficult conversations and experience grief. Priya Parker MBA ’11, author of *The Art of Fighting: The Transformative Power of Conflict*, called Turkle “the exact right person at the exact right time to write us this exact book.”

Turkle is a professor in the Program in Science, Technology, and Society, as well as the founding director of the MIT Initiative on Technology and Self. She has spent decades examining the relationships between humans and machines, amassing a total of eleven books, hundreds of published articles, and a “Woman of the Year” title from *Ms. Magazine*.

During the talk, Turkle sat down with MIT Physics and History of Science Professor David Kaiser. Kaiser shared that Turkle had recently emailed him, writing, “This book, *this book*, is Sherry unplugged.”

Turkle calls for AI to “stay in its lane”

From the beginning of her talk, Turkle refused to mince words.

“I don’t like [artificial intimacy]. I’ll tell you why I don’t like it. I think it’s toxic for children. I say, keep it in its lane,” she said. Throughout the evening, Turkle repeated that phrase: “Keep it in its lane.”

So, what does Turkle think “its lane” is? She was clear that her stance is not anti-generative AI. “I like the generative AI that’s going to help us with Alzheimer’s,” she offered as an example. “Let it do that stuff, and let it not offer to be my husband and my lover

and my best friend and my therapist. That’s not its lane.”

One audience member mentioned practicing for interviews with a chatbot. Turkle responded (“with pride,” in her words) that she had been a supervisor for one of the first AI job interview coaches. “That’s its lane. Practice job interviews,” she said. “This isn’t a book that says every use of generative AI is apocalyptic. I’m really narrow on the focus.”

However, within this specific scope of artificial intimacy, Turkle calls for a “state of emergency.” By artificial intimacy, she means a social, emotional connection that a human forms with an AI. Asking a chatbot to draft a workplace email is not artificial intimacy; venting to a chatbot about an irritating coworker is. Artificial intimacy is increasingly common. A 2025 OpenAI paper claimed that around 72% of adult conversations with ChatGPT relate to personal topics. Beyond general-purpose chatbots, many AI products are designed specifically for artificial intimacy, from “griefbots,” AI-powered avatars trained on the data of deceased people, to Ropet, “[a] robot pet that loves nothing more than you stroking its fuzzy fur.”

This proliferation of artificial intimacy alarms Turkle. “When you turn away from it, [AI] doesn’t care if you cook pasta or kill yourself,” she emphasized. It was the illusion of empathy, she explained, that scared her the most: a chatbot cannot take accountability for harming its user.

Turkle isn’t alone in this fear: Stanford psychiatrist Nina Vasan says that “AI companions pose unacceptable risks to kids and teens” by encouraging poor life choices, increasing mental health risks, and sharing harmful information.

“I feel like we failed a generation, if not two or three, by the delay in taking social media safety seriously,” Vasan said. “If we let that same thing happen with AI, we are failing society.”

The dangers of artificial intimacy

Turkle’s book is not about the AI safety concerns that might come to mind first, such as AI hacking into the Department of Defense. Nonetheless, in response to an au-

dience member’s question about the consequences of artificial intimacy, she spoke of a looming “catastrophic event.” She warned of a future in which OpenAI collaborates with companies like Disney and Mattel to create popular chatbot children’s toys, speculating that “children will not be able to develop inner lives.” Her concern is not entirely hypothetical: in 2025, Mattel and OpenAI announced a new collaboration, declaring a goal to “bring the magic of AI to age-appropriate play experiences.”

Turkle brought up several extreme case studies during the talk; however, the more quotidian examples of artificial intimacy troubled her just as much. She spoke about one of her interviewees for her book, an architect who wanted to pass his love of astronomy onto his son. When the architect went away for a business trip, he encouraged his son to keep learning about astronomy with ChatGPT. Upon returning, he found his son glued to the chatbot interface and less willing to engage with his father over astronomy.

“What’s being lost is the relationship between this man and his son over something that the father loved,” Turkle lamented. “What’s missing now is all the other conversations they would have had while they were looking at the stars.”

On a more personal note, Turkle brought up her own grandmother. Her grandmother, who lived alone in Brooklyn, regularly played gin rummy with a group of other women, sang in a community choir, and participated in local political groups. Turkle imagined a world where, instead of these activities, her grandmother spent ten hours per day talking to a chatbot. She wondered what the consequences would have been for her grandmother’s mental health and sense of identity.

“I think of children and the elderly as the most vulnerable population,” she said, “so that’s where the industry goes first.”

Has the train “already left the station?”

Near the end of the talk, Kaiser asked Turkle about techno-determinism: the theory that a society’s culture, history, and future

is determined in large part by the technology it develops. He asked her whether the chatbot train has “already left the station.” In other words: is artificial intimacy already too ingrained into our culture to limit its consequences?

Turkle’s rebuttal of techno-determinism was fierce.

“It’s suicidal to say, ‘No, we can’t do anything about this,’” she claimed, arguing that the inevitability of chatbots penetrating our social and personal lives is only what the tech industry wants the public to believe. Countries, schools, and individuals all have the ability to make their own decisions.

“These are social and political choices that we’re making,” she said. “It’s not as if God ordained it.”

She also cited literature on the psychology of overwhelm, comparing the artificial intimacy crisis to climate change and the anti-vaccine movement. Overwhelming stress and effort can be paralyzing, preventing people from taking action when action is most needed.

“[My grandmother] trained me as a child that if ever there was a whiff of fascism in the United States, I should be like Wonder Woman—” she paused, pretending to arm her wrists with cuffs to laughter and applause from the audience, “—and you know, go ahead and fight it... People don’t really know what to do now. Trying to mobilize ourselves, and not retreating behind the screen, goes very much to the heart of the matter.”

Throughout the evening, Turkle laid out clear, specific concerns, including mental health risks, children’s developmental psychology, and loneliness among the elderly. However, her greatest fears are not localized specifics but the bigger concern of the slow erosion of the skills and values that make us human. Her closing message to the audience was an urgent call to action: “Reality has never needed us more. The ravaging of the earth, the ravaging of the water, the ravaging of politics and democracy... reality needs you. You have to reclaim the real.”

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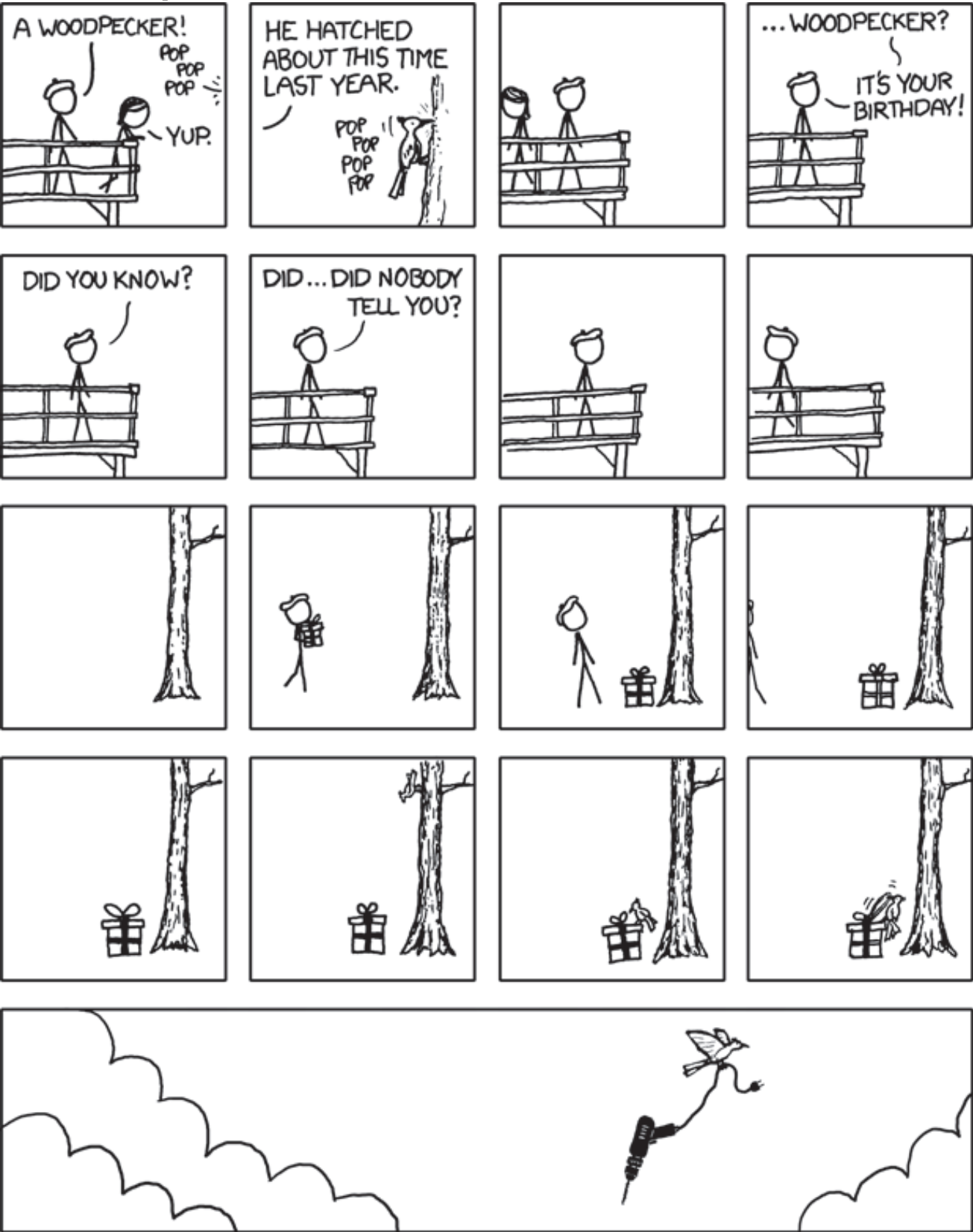
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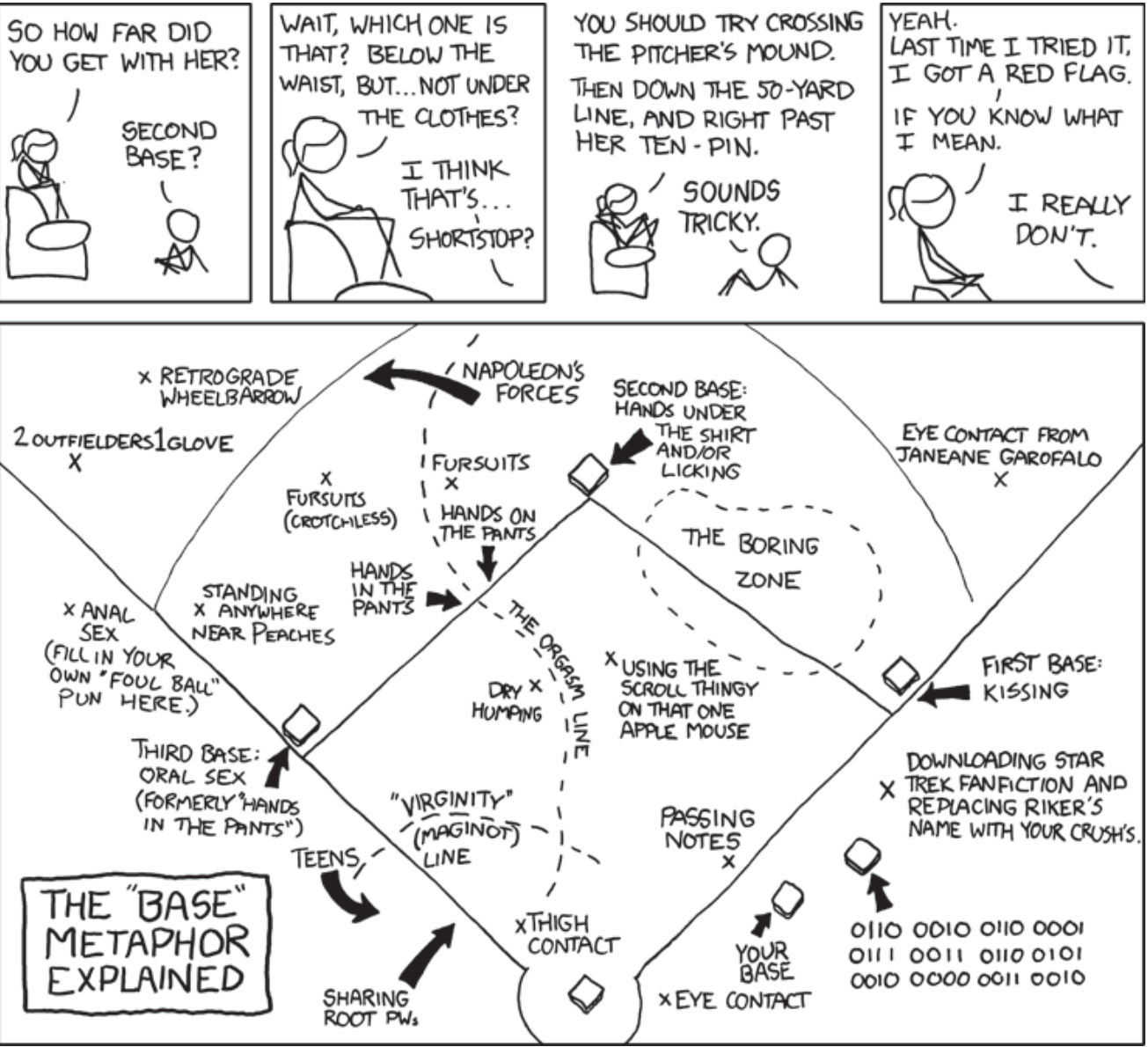
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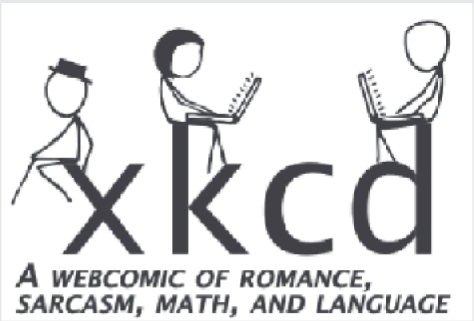


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[540] Base System



once got to second base with a basketball player. She was so confused.



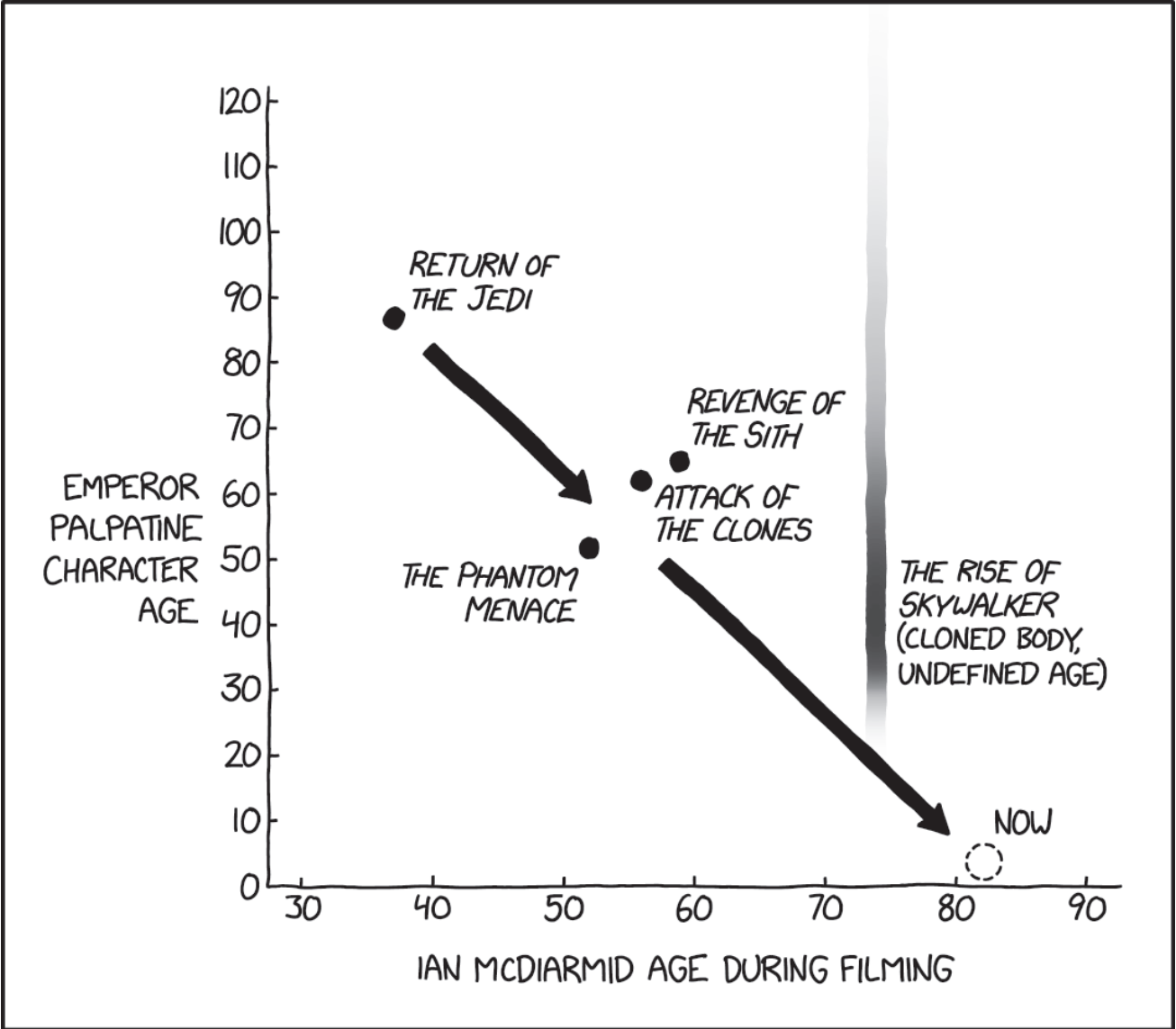
by Randall Munroe

[1065] Shoes



I *do* hear that they're the most comfortable thing to wear on your feet since sliced bread.

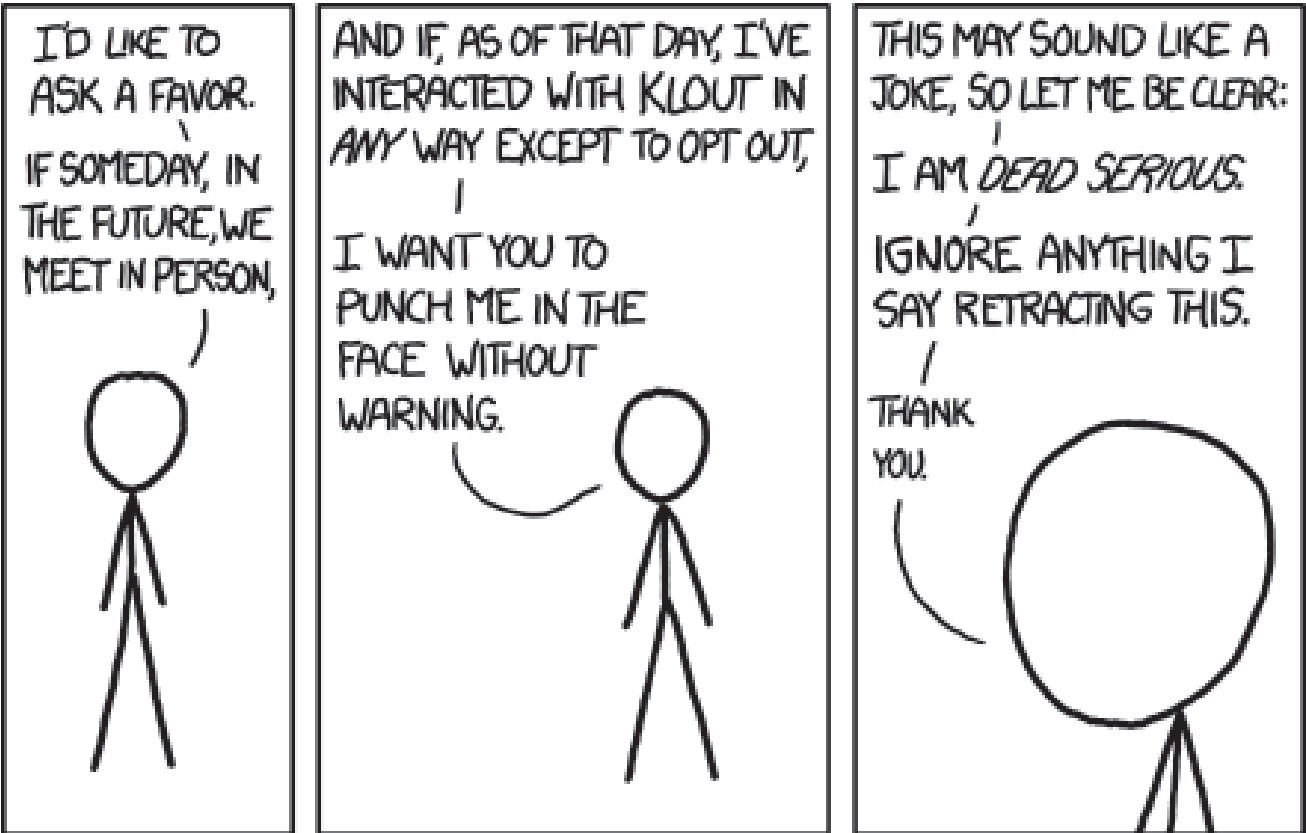
[3157] Emperor Palpatine



TO CONTINUE THE TREND, THEY SHOULD MAKE A STAR WARS MOVIE WHERE 81-YEAR-OLD IAN MCDIARMID PLAYS THE EMPEROR AS A TODDLER.

Many things about Star Wars were not well planned out, but having a 37-year-old in old-age makeup play the Emperor in Return of the Jedi was such an incredible call.

[1057] Klout

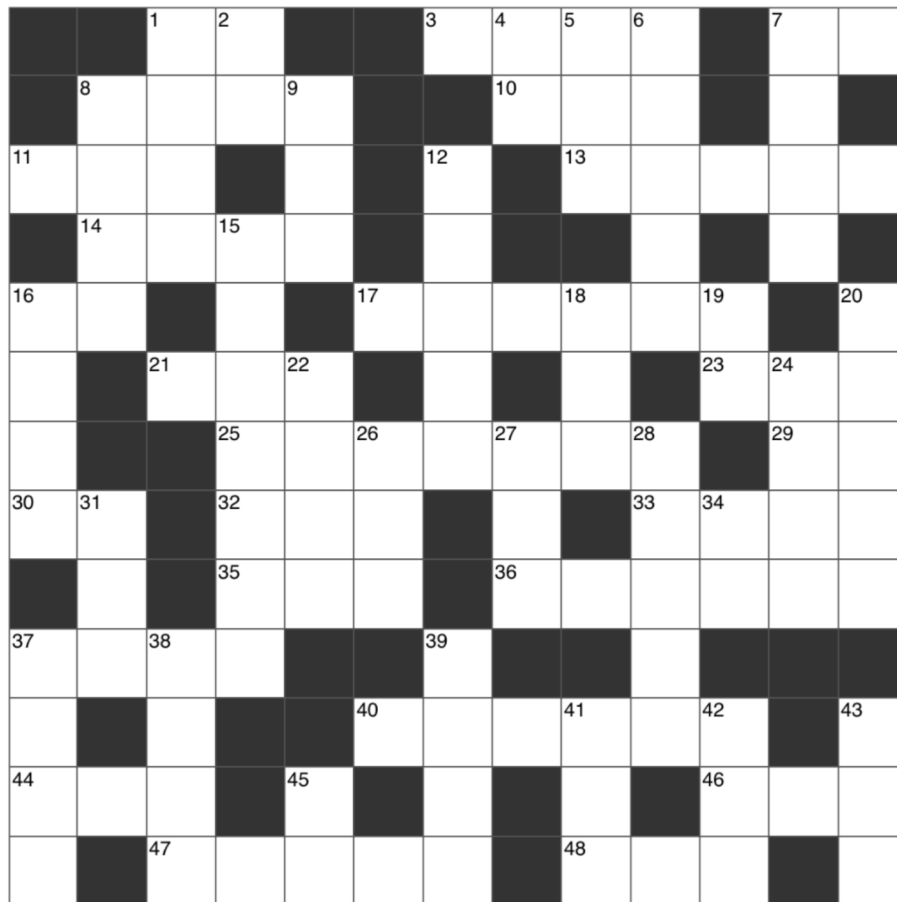


Though please do confirm that it's actually *me* on Klout first, and not one of my friends trying to get me punched. The great thing about this douchebag deadman switch is that I will never dare trigger it.

Solution, page 2

1. Degree similar to MD
3. Ave running through MIT campus
7. Tiffany & __
8. Student Housing Term
10. Phonetically: Bird that hoots
11. Mother
13. Game central to the film "21"
14. MASS ____ (MIT)
16. MIT Course 20 init.
17. MIT's only Division I sport
21. Slang term for someone who is old
23. Versatile Greek exclamation
25. River separating the campus from Boston
29. "That's alright"
30. Sam I ____, Dr. Seuss book
32. Rowing instrument
33. Verb. To get possession of
35. Basketball net feature
36. MIT mascot
37. W20 abbr.
40. Street home to Simmons Hall
44. An indefinitely long period of time
46. A of HASS-A
47. Bridge measurement unit named for a student
48. Ink, informally

1. The iconic roof of Building 10
2. Homophone for 32-Across
4. Internet country code for Angola
5. Informally, "How's it going?"
6. MIT's school for business management
7. Alternate name for rowing
8. Verb. To show excessive, unquestioning fondness
9. 11-Across with a Boston accent
12. Cafe near Random Hall
15. Market located in the Stud
16. Greek alphabet letter after alpha



18. Rage	Technology
19. In Monopoly, collect \$200 after passing ____.	34. Init. for audio-visual media
20. MIT dorm designed by Alvar Aalto	37. Science acronym that can also be part of a plant
22. Tea synonym (Hindi)	38. Vessels, most commonly used to hold the cremated remains
24. Hawaiian dish often featuring raw fish	39. Quality ____ (convenience store)
26. Upper body appendage	41. Exam often taking before applying to college
27. To throw in a high, curving arc	42. Brass ____ (ring)
28. Gehry-designed center with unusual angles	43. Dined
31. Abbr. Massachusetts Institute of	45. Therefore

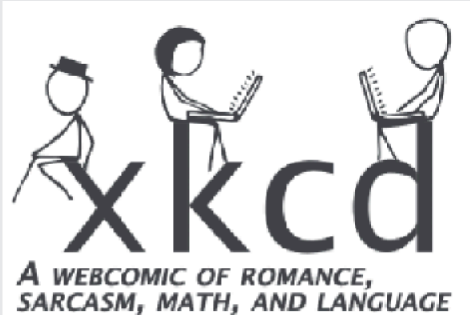
JUICE MISSION CONTROL

JUPITER ICY MOONS EXPLORER CHECKIN IS COMPLETE. ALL SYSTEMS NOMINAL.

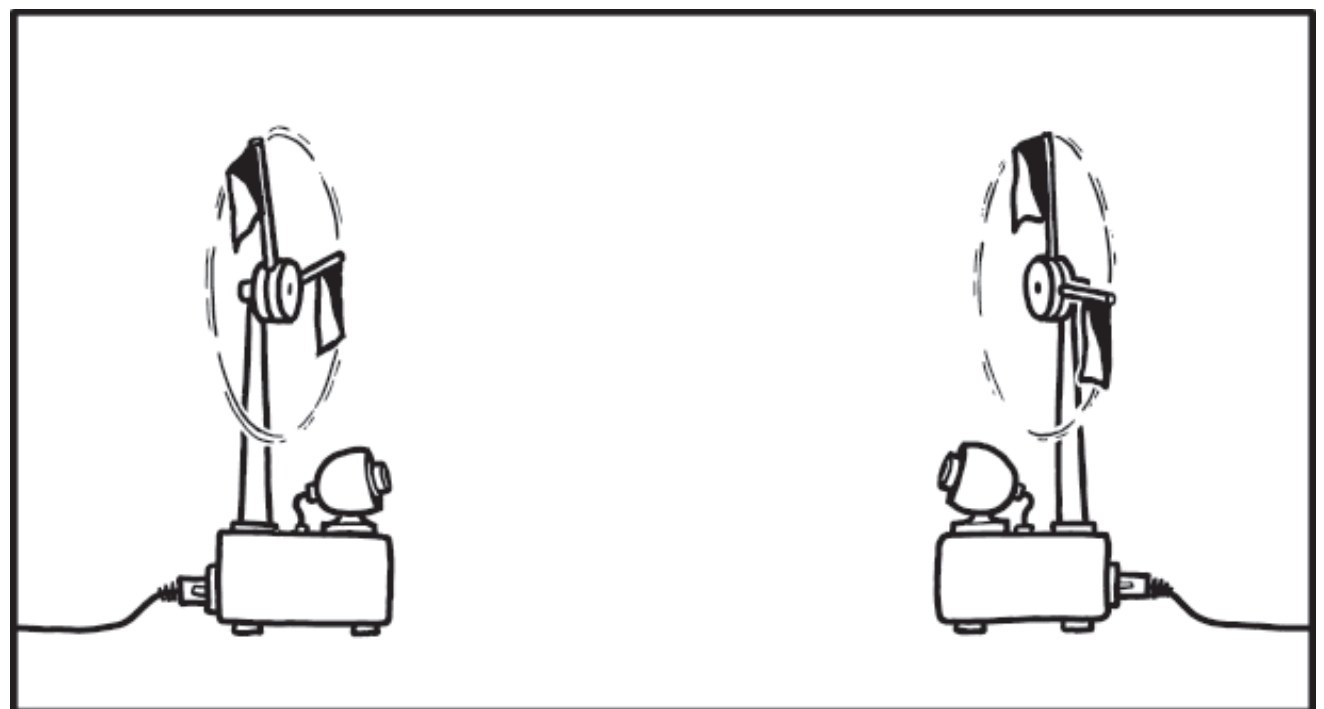
WHAT?
JUPITER ICY MOONS EXPLORER.

OH NO.

[3295] Semaphore



by Randall Munroe



NETWORKING TIP: SEPARATE SENSITIVE COMPONENTS WITH A SEMAPHORE GAP.

The speed of light in air is 50% faster than in fiber, but it's a challenge to get the arms to move fast enough to realize the latency advantage.

You too can prevent a bicycle crash

To be safe on a bicycle in Boston-area traffic, think outside the box and the bike lane

By John S. Allen

I read with alarm and dismay of the death of Professor Thomas Rose resulting from a truck-bicycle crash.

A series of such crashes has taken the lives of MIT affiliates in recent years: Phyo Kyaw '10 in 2011; visiting scientist Kanako Miura in 2013; graduate student of theoretical physics Minh-Thi Nguyen in 2024; and now, Professor Rose.

The bicycling advocacy community repeatedly and almost exclusively calls for “safer streets” — infrastructure improvements — in response to crashes, but I see another lesson: many people who come to MIT find themselves dependent on bicycling for transportation, but they are unprepared for the distinct realities of Boston streets.

I can put myself and others forward as proof that safe cycling is possible in Boston-area traffic — my MIT mentors, Professor David Gordon Wilson and Professor James Melcher, both cycled to work for decades before there was special bicycle infrastructure. But safe cycling here, on any kind of

street or path, requires special bicycling-specific expectations, situational awareness, and skills.

Infrastructure changes can sometimes help to improve safety, but offer no guarantee: every fatal crash that I mentioned occurred in connection with a bike lane. For instance, Massachusetts Avenue has bike lanes as it crosses Memorial Drive, where Dr. Rose’s fatal accident occurred. Details of the crash have not yet been released, but the intersection has serious flaws despite repeated modifications — for instance, a bicycling advocate took a count in 2023 and found that 55 of 102 motorists ignored a red right-turn arrow there. Kanako Miura’s and Minh-Thi Nguyen’s crashes both involved “right hooks,” with trucks turning right across a bike lane. Barrier-separated, “protected” bike lanes also do not prevent right hook crashes, as evidenced by another fatal right hook in Cambridge in the same month as Nguyen’s: the bicyclist entered an intersection from a barrier-separated bike lane.

Bicycling skills which suffice in another country or city may create a false sense of security here. Most new residents must im-

prove their skills to bike safely here. This requires a shift in perspective.

It is not safe in Boston traffic to expect other road users to strictly obey the law, or to look for a bicyclist where they don’t expect or can’t see — in the right rear blindspot, in a bike lane in the “door zone,” to the right of turning traffic, in the gap ahead of a stopped vehicle. Safety, then, often requires more than following the law and pavement markings, to apply MIT independence of thought — in this case, to shed the expectation that infrastructure (signs, signals, paint, and barriers) alone will protect bicyclists, or will protect them at all.

To ride safely and efficiently, bicyclists need to be proficient with mounting/dismounting and braking, learn to anticipate and avoid risks, get comfortable with controlling the travel lane — riding in its middle, yes, that is legal — as needed to be visible, avoid the door zone and prevent unsafe overtaking, prepare lane changes in advance, and use lane position and hand signals to communicate. A rear-view mirror helps with that. Online and in-person courses teach the needed skills. They build

empowerment and confidence. But bicyclists should still wear a helmet. This is serious risk reduction, even if it is not a free pass to safety.

MIT offers indoor spin classes. That is good for building physical fitness. However, more safe cycling training would easily pay for itself in lives and careers spared, along with future alumni donations. Higher fuel prices, promotion of bicycling, and e-bikes and other electrified personal vehicles, with their broader user base, have led to political friction and increased attention toward bicycling safety. I do see that the idea of training is beginning to get some traction. Locally, Brandeis University has subscribed to an online cycling skills course. MIT might do even better and include on-bike instruction. It’s what I hope and should be able to expect from MIT. As a concerned alumnus, I am ready to offer my assistance.

John S. Allen ’75 has made a career as a writer, instructor and consultant on bicycling issues. He has served on the boards of local, state and national bicycling organizations. He is a certified instructor at CyclingSavvy and author of Bicycling Street Smarts (2019). He lives in Waltham, Mass.

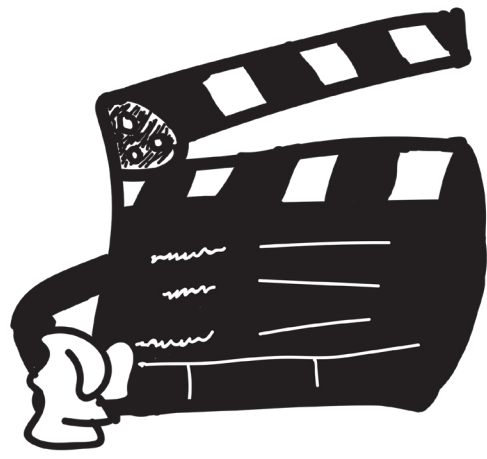
Ud tem iure tie tate exerostrud esto exerote
Quat praeseq uiscill andrerostie magna consequissi.Um eui te feu facil u

By Opinion Writer

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Do you have a question for President Kornbluth?

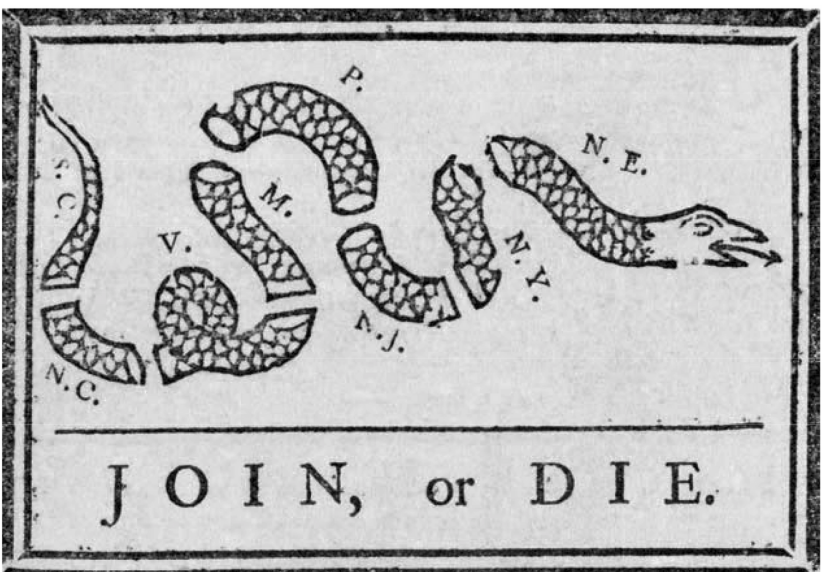
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OPINION POLICY

Management

The Opinion department is collectively managed by the Editorial Board of *The Tech*, which consists of the Publisher, Editor-in-Chief, Managing Editor, Executive Editor, and Opinion Editor.

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Editorials are the official opinion of *The Tech*. They are written by the Editorial Board.

Guest Submissions

A Guest Submission, which may be designated as either a Guest Column or a Letter to the Editor, may be written and submitted by any member of the MIT community.

Guest Columns express a particular opinion on campus-relevant matters; and a Letter to the Editor is an open letter addressed directly to the “Editor,” in reference to a Guest Columns express a particular opinion on campus-relevant matters; and a Letter to the Editor is an open letter addressed directly to the “Editor,” in reference to a particular piece or set of pieces published.

Electronic submissions are encouraged and should be sent to tt-opinions@mit.edu. Hard copy submissions should be addressed to *The Tech*, P.O. Box 391529, Cambridge, Mass. 02139-7029, or sent by interdepartmental mail to Room W20-483. Electronic submissions will be prioritized over hard copy submissions. All submissions are due on Thursday two weeks before the date of publication (i.e. by the publication prior to the target publication).

Maria Petrosillo: “People aren't making ends meet”

MIT Facilities, from Page 1

ductions, people really [aren't] making ends meet with everything that's going high. I mean, people are forced to work two jobs.”

As MIT and its workers navigate the wake of a hiring freeze in early 2025, current open positions don't make up for the past year's personnel loss. Petrosillo estimated over a third of positions on their team still stand unfilled.

“The Institute has had to adopt a careful stance on budgeting and hiring given the uncertain outlook for federal funding and policy,” Allen

said. This statement comes at a time MIT is facing increased endowment taxes and fewer federal grants.

“Even in such an environment, our bargaining team strives to reach agreement on contracts that are fair and recognize everyone's contributions while reflecting the reality of the Institute's financial situation,” she added.

For the moment, the bargaining process continues. “There was some movement in talks we held immediately after our rally in July, but it was still far from enough movement, so we expect the coming weeks to be full of activity,” Franklin Soultz, 32BJ

SEIU Regional Communications Manager, said.

32BJ aims to negotiate the best contract possible to support their essential work. “We make ourselves available for emergencies. We're covering shifts left and right, and just trying to keep the place going,” Bradford said. “We're doing it for the students. Everything's done for the students.”

Petrosillo echoed this sentiment. “We're the ones that make MIT work,” she said. “We're working through the night and making sure the Institute's ready for the next morning.”



LEVY LE—THE TECH

Members of 32BJ marched to President Sally Kornbluth's office along the Infinite Corridor to deliver a signed petition on Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2026.



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