

# MIT Faculty Newsletter

<http://web.mit.edu/fnl>

**in this issue** we offer continued commentary on MIT and Jeffrey Epstein as well as on the Goodwin Procter report (below) and Faculty Chair Rick Danheiser on “Epstein and MIT: The Unanswered Questions” (page 6); the call for a new center at MIT (page 18); and announcement of the launching of the MIT 2020 Quality of Life Survey (page 20).



1913 Sketch of New MIT “Educational Buildings”

## Straighten Up & Fly Right EC (Executive Committee, MIT Corporation) and GP (Goodwin Procter LLP)

Kenneth R. Manning

*To the Memory of Patrick Henry Winston  
February 5, 1943 – July 19, 2019*

**NAT KING COLE'S CLASSIC SONG,** “Straighten Up and Fly Right,” offers an apropos breather for those of us troubled by the commutative entanglement of EC and GP:

*A buzzard took the monkey for a ride  
in the air  
The monkey thought that ev'rything  
was on the square  
The buzzard tried to throw the monkey  
off his back  
But the monkey grabbed his neck and  
said, now, listen, Jack*

*Ain't no use in divin', what's the use of  
jivin'*

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## MIT: Where Now?

Leigh Royden and Rosalind Williams

**THE AUGUST 2019 REVELATIONS** that the MIT Media Lab had accepted donations from convicted pedophile Jeffrey Epstein sparked an upheaval among MIT faculty. A closed Media Lab meeting on September 4, intended to be calming, culminated in sobbing and yelling. On September 6, an exposé of the Media Lab in *The New Yorker* accused MIT leaders of engaging in years of evasion and deceit to conceal the affiliation with Epstein. On September 18, at an overflowing and emotionally-charged Institute faculty meeting, MIT faculty lined up to express their collective shame, outrage, and revulsion.

Like many in the MIT community, we attended this meeting and participated in the dizzying whirl of communications involving multiple participants, venues, and formats. The Epstein affair uncov-

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## Editorial

- I. The Goodwin Procter Report and Faculty Views on the Jeffrey Epstein Case**
- II. No War on Iran**
- III. Professor Aron Bernstein**
- IV. FNL Officers Elected**

**THIS ISSUE CONTAINS IMPORTANT** articles on the Jeffrey Epstein funding scandal and related issues from Professors Leigh Royden and Rosalind Williams, Professor Kenneth Manning, and Faculty Chair Rick Danheiser. These are deserving of careful reading. MIT Students Against War also released a valuable statement (see their Facebook page).

*Continuing Conflict of Interest and the Need for Reformed Governance*

Though the Goodwin Procter report was valuable, it did not represent an “independent” assessment. Indeed, it was commissioned and paid for by the Executive Committee of the MIT Corporation, under the President’s direction, and the firm has represented MIT in the past in important lawsuits. There is no guarantee that the firm will not receive future busi-

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**Goodwin Procter and Jeffrey Epstein**  
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ness from MIT. Given these facts, it is perhaps not surprising that the report specifically exonerated the President. Indeed, the Corporation relied on a second law firm (Paul, Weiss) to verify and certify the findings, to lend more credibility to the report. Moreover, given that all the official bodies engaged in evaluating the events have been authorized and empowered by the President, working with the Executive Committee, we have to look to voices that are not tainted by that obvious conflict of interest.

The released report revealed considerable evidence that the problematic nature of accepting Epstein's donations was well understood and condoned at the highest level of the Administration and the Corporation. The widespread discussion that led to the cover-up of the donations and the decision to keep them anonymous represents a deep failure to protect the integrity and image of the Institute. The responsible parties made the wrong decision, resulting in the Institute once again putting access to private income streams above the reputation, mission, and integrity of academic life at MIT. There are innumerable issues on which the faculty, students, and staff have no explicit guidelines, but the expectation is that each will act with some sense of moral and social responsibility, with actions that can be owned up to and defended in the full light of public scrutiny. The notion that the absence of written guidelines exonerates Institute leadership, as the report claims, is bizarre.

The best solution to this failure of leadership is to bring MIT's governance structure into the twenty-first century on both the representational and operational levels, overcoming current impediments to genuine faculty governance. This will be achieved by having electronic elections with voting by the whole faculty, an elected Nominations Committee, more candidates than open slots in order to accommodate candidates running on different platforms, and Institute faculty

meetings chaired by the Chair of the Faculty that can make Institute decisions. Given the mobilization of modern technology by MIT for handling course administration, grants, and personnel, electing key committee members by visual count of raised hands of those attending a single meeting of the faculty can only represent resistance to faculty governance by the Administration. Across the nation citizens are battling to reduce the barriers to

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voting for their elected representatives and opening up access on the ballot to elected offices. It's time MIT joined that effort in our internal governance.

*Reforming the Corporation and its Executive Committee*

The reform of governance needed within the Institute has to extend to the Corporation and its Executive Committee, which require far higher participation from faculty, educators, and leaders of other research universities than its current membership allows. It also necessitates revision of the rules and bylaws, including the rules that govern the Corporation, to ensure that the reforms have real-world meaning.

The Goodwin Procter report was reviewed by the Executive Committee of the Corporation before release and some sections were redacted. However, even the released version makes clear that the Executive Committee was aware of the problems with the Epstein donations. They were passive in not intervening, and therefore complicit. Certainly, Chairman Robert Millard and members of the Executive Committee bear some responsibility.

MIT alumni include leading academics, scientists, engineers, architects, social scientists, and humanists at the major universities, in the U.S. and abroad. Yet very few are represented on the Corporation. We note that the Corporation has been silent on many of the controversial issues that have disturbed students, staff, and faculty in recent years. These include the building of commercial office buildings rather than

graduate housing on campus, the continuing relationships with Saudi Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and the influence of the Schwarzman donations on computer science and other areas of research at MIT. The corporate tilt of the Corporation membership perhaps accounts for their silence with respect to the Ruiz/Reif/Marsh misuse of the invaluable and irreplaceable East Campus land for commercial office buildings, rather than graduate housing, laboratories, and academic facilities.

*The Value of the Royden/Williams Report*

The report on page 1 offers viewpoints quite different from the official Administration communications. The general policy of this *Faculty Newsletter* is to require articles and letters be signed. We believe this is sound for this publication, but a downside is the frequent loss of articles by faculty who fear that candid expression of their concerns will result in some form of recrimination from the Administration or other colleagues. However, in many areas of social science research, keeping the identities of individ-

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**Goodwin Procter and Jeffrey Epstein**  
continued from preceding page

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uals responding to questionnaires anonymous, is standard. Professors Royden and Williams signed their article but appropriately kept the identities of the interviewed faculty confidential. As a result, we have access to faculty views that might otherwise have remained hidden.

**No War on Iran**

President Trump's justification for the assassination of Iranian and Iraqi commanders and threatened escalation to destroy Iranian cultural sites in response to any retaliation, is his unfounded claim that U.S. forces or citizens were in "imminent" danger of attack by Iran. This continues to provide a rationale for Congress authorizing \$738 billion for the Pentagon – more than half the total Congressional Discretionary Budget. The difficulties our faculty, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows face in obtaining federal funding for key research projects is in part due to this draining of the federal budget into unneeded and unproductive financing of the war and weapons industries. Seventy years after President Eisenhower's warning of this danger, and 50 years after Martin Luther King Jr.'s warning, we remain mired in the same misguided policies of militarism abroad leading to impoverishment at home.

MIT faculty and Massachusetts political leaders were instrumental in the signing of the July 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) agreement with Iran. (Our valued Editorial Board member Professor Aron Bernstein, memorialized on page 10, was

also a strong supporter, working through the Council for a Livable World.)

The unilateral withdrawal from the treaty with Iran by President Trump was a grievous step backwards in international affairs. However, the killing of Iranian and Iraqi commanders, together with seven others, is a criminal activity in clear viola-

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tion of the United Nations Charter and other rules of international law, as well as a violation of the Constitution. If any nation in the Middle East needs chastening, it is not Iran, but Saudi Arabia with its continuing attacks on Yemeni civilians. The imposition of further sanctions on Iran is a terrible act which compares with the brutal sanctions against Iraq during the Saddam era. The demonization of Iran has had a major negative influence on the lives of Iranians living in the U.S., and on the ability of educational institutions like MIT to be able to recruit the best minds from Iran.

Happily, progressive Democrats rapidly introduced resolutions and bills into the Congress, to pull the nation back from the brink of a full-scale armed conflict. Massachusetts Senator Ed Markey held a joint press conference with Mass Peace Action where he announced his letter with Representative Khanna and 22

other members of Congress, opposing President Trump's actions and his threatened further actions against Iran. The danger of intensified war in the Middle East, with its concomitant risk of nuclear weapons use, requires all of us to speak out for diplomatic solutions to these conflicts.

**Professor Aron Bernstein 1931 – 2020**

Our valued Editorial Board member and Professor of Physics Aron Bernstein passed away suddenly from pancreatic cancer last month. His significant contributions to MIT and society are described in Robert Redwine's memorial on page 10. Aron remained involved in particle physics research to his last days, but never lost sight of the major dangers facing our society, and maintained his unstinting advocacy for peace and nuclear disarmament. We will miss him greatly.

**FNL Officers Elected**

*Faculty Newsletter* officers were elected at the recent winter FNL Editorial Board meeting. Professor Jonathan King was re-elected Chair; Professor Robert Berwick was elected Vice-Chair; and Professor Ceasar McDowell was elected Secretary. ■

**Editorial Subcommittee**

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**Straighten Up & Fly Right**

Manning, from page 1

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*The buzzard told the monkey, you're  
choking me*

*Release your hold and I'll set you free*

*The monkey looked the buzzard right  
dead in the eye and said*

*Your story's touching, but it sounds like  
a lie.*

MIT Corporation's EC recently (January 10, 2020) released what purports to be a meticulous review of MIT's involvement with convicted sexual predator Jeffrey Epstein. The investigation was supposed to have been carried out with integrity, balance, objectivity, and fairness, with the intent to unearth and lay out central facts in the case. EC hired GP, a firm retained by MIT over the years. At the Institute faculty meeting on September 17, 2019, faculty members raised concerns about the potential conflict posed by this if objectivity, which mandates a certain distance, were to be achieved. But EC stuck with its choice. Allegedly, GP would fact-find in a probative way and carry out an independent review so that the Institute could begin to restore its reputation and fashion policies to address problems arising from the Epstein affair. Unfortunately, what began as a dreadful state of affairs has been made worse by GP's flawed investigation undertaken at EC's request.

The report is defective. Rather than concentrating on facts, it is replete with opinions. For example, the multiple assertions of "good faith" and "errors" in judgment to characterize motivations and actions of individuals raise doubts about the report's neutrality and objectivity.

The methodology used was imprecise or obscure. For example, one of the data retrieval techniques – keyword searches in electronic material, emails, etc. – is nowhere clarified with specifics as to what search terms were used. Without this information it is impossible to evaluate how relevant or comprehensive the data retrieved and analyzed were. Similarly, no list of interviewees was appended, so it is

impossible to evaluate if the interview process was thorough, germane, or complete. In a footnote, the report states: "only emails containing search terms suggestive of relevance to this investigation were actually reviewed. Email also was collected from certain former MIT faculty and staff, utilizing the same search terms." What were the criteria for relevance, and what terms were used in text searching? Why were these elements not disclosed? The report buries key findings and fails to pursue important questions, claiming that "no evidence" exists when in fact what is meant is that GP unearthed none or, possibly, either overlooked or failed to find it.

The report is defective. Rather than concentrating on facts, it is replete with opinions. For example, the multiple assertions of "good faith" and "errors" in judgment to characterize motivations and actions of individuals raise doubts about the report's neutrality and objectivity.

By naming certain individuals and not others, the report selectively targets some for closer scrutiny than others. This practice is perplexing given that when a person's professional position is referenced, minimal effort would reveal his or her identity. Identities are thus not protected, if such was the intent. In any case, it would have been fairer to name all or to name none.

The report shows an imbalance in the treatment of individuals. Some individuals' records were scoured and laid out in glaring detail, while records of others with comparable relevance were handled more gingerly and less intrusively. All should have garnered the same treatment.

The report was shared in preliminary form with EC months before its release, thereby undermining claims of impartiality. During the fall of 2019 GP shared with EC multiple iterations before the final report appeared. For what purpose? Who said what to whom? What changes were made? How reliable is GP's claim that changes were restricted to names, titles, positions, and overall organization?

Without independent access to early versions, this cannot be determined.

Our faculty deserves criticism as well. A committee of faculty members, hand-picked by the Faculty Officers, reviewed GP's report and spoke with the lawyers who prepared it. A letter to the faculty from the Faculty Chair, dated January 21, 2020, outlines what the committee found. Unwisely and wrongly, the committee agreed to receive information from GP that GP insisted had to be privileged and protected, barring committee members from sharing it with the MIT faculty at large. While the committee expressed "regret" about this confidentiality agreement, regret is not enough. Why would a

representative body agree to terms keeping information secret from the constituency it represents? This decision weakens the committee's credibility and inserts a wedge between committee members and their colleagues. Also, if committee members did not ask for access to earlier versions of the report, they should have.

Finally, how many billable hours and at what cost per hour was the investigation carried out? What did EC pay GP for the investigation and report?

The firm's report is inadequate, to say the least. EC promised us an objective, thorough, transparent investigation, a basis to reassess and move forward, but we got something less.

*Straighten up and fly right  
Straighten up and stay right  
Straighten up and fly right  
Cool down papa, don't you blow your  
top.* ■

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## From The Faculty Chair

# Epstein and MIT: The Unanswered Questions

Rick L. Danheiser

**ON JANUARY 10 THE** Executive Committee of the MIT Corporation released the long-awaited report by the law firm of Goodwin Procter titled “Concerning Jeffrey Epstein’s Interactions with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.” The charge to Goodwin Procter (GP) for their fact-finding investigation was defined by the Executive Committee and involved four questions: (a) what donations Epstein made to MIT and when; (b) who among MIT’s senior leadership was aware of the donations and approved their acceptance; (c) what visits Epstein made to campus and their circumstances; and (d) whether senior leadership was aware of and approved these visits. The Faculty Officers and Faculty Governance were not consulted at any time with regard to the investigation or the report prior to its completion.

In the early fall I obtained agreement from the Chair of the Executive Committee, Bob Millard, for a group of faculty that I would convene to meet with representatives of GP with any questions we might have following our review of the report. The meeting with the GP lawyers took place on January 13 and lasted four hours; a summary of our findings was sent to the faculty on January 21. The group of faculty meeting with GP consisted of 12 current and former officers of the faculty.

My reading of the Goodwin Procter report left me with a number of concerns and a number of questions. Many of these were relieved by what I learned at the meeting with the GP lawyers on January 13. As mentioned in our report on January 21, our group of 12 current and

former faculty officers found the GP attorneys to be forthcoming and frank, and we were impressed that their investigation was thorough, albeit within the scope that had been defined by the Executive Committee of the Corporation.

Who among MIT’s senior leadership was aware of the donations and approved their acceptance? This is the central question for most readers of the Goodwin Procter report. The GP report identified Executive Vice President Israel Ruiz and former Vice President and General Counsel Greg Morgan as the members of the senior leadership team most culpable in allowing the donations from Jeffrey Epstein.

Nonetheless, after the meeting some members of our faculty review group felt that a number of questions concerning the interactions of Jeffrey Epstein with MIT remain unanswered. In this column I discuss what I regard as the most significant “unanswered questions,” and offer my own comments and reflections on Epstein’s involvement with the Institute and what contributed to making it possible. With regard to the unanswered questions, in general I do not offer answers or render my own judgments. Rather, I urge all readers to carefully consider these questions and to review the GP report and other material so as to arrive at your own conclusions.

### Questions Concerning Knowledge of the Donations

Who among MIT’s senior leadership was aware of the donations and approved their acceptance? This is the central question for most readers of the Goodwin

Procter report. The GP report identified Executive Vice President Israel Ruiz and former Vice President and General Counsel Greg Morgan as the members of the senior leadership team most culpable in allowing the donations from Jeffrey

Epstein. Not only were both senior administrators aware of Epstein’s prior conviction as a sex offender, but in 2013 they developed a framework for allowing donations from Epstein so long as they were recorded as anonymous and were under 10M dollars.

In addition to indicting Ruiz and Morgan, the GP report also names Jeffrey Newton, Vice President for Resource Development until January 2014, as responsible for approving the Epstein donations in 2012-2013. The report does note that initially Newton opposed accepting funds from Epstein. Kirk Kolenbrander served as Interim VP for Resource Development following Newton and the report simply indicates that he does not recall any discussions of Epstein before 2019. Newton’s eventual successor, current VP for Resource Development Julie Lucas, likewise is not identified as having played a significant role in these decisions. Lucas is described as being

aware of the donations, but not involved in the decision-making, and the GP report states “There is no evidence that she knew the details of Epstein’s crimes at the time.” Most readers of the report have accepted this conclusion, but questions remain for some members of the community. Lucas was aware that the donations from Epstein were being handled in an unusual fashion, i.e., with MIT insisting that they be recorded as anonymous, and with a limit with regard to their size. Some readers of the report find it surprising that she did not seek an explanation for this extraordinary handling.

For some readers a more important unanswered question is whether President Rafael Reif had knowledge of the Epstein donations prior to 2019. The Goodwin Procter report concludes that President Reif “was not involved in the decisions to accept Epstein’s donations” and had “no contemporaneous knowledge” of them. Many members of the community believe that the report absolves President Reif of any blame or responsibility, and in general this is the sense of the vast majority of the reports in the media. However, there are members of the community who still believe that significant unanswered questions remain. Goodwin Procter found emails that document Israel Ruiz’s intention to talk about Epstein’s gifts at a January 13, 2015 retreat of the Senior Leadership Team, as well as a statement by Ruiz to Media Lab Director Joi Ito on the evening of that meeting that he would like to share with him the perspectives of President Reif and others. Also troubling to some readers is the reference to a cryptic note “Epstein – Joi Ito” that President Reif wrote on his copy of the agenda for an April 2015 Senior Team Meeting. On the other hand, other members of the senior administration, with the exception of Julie Lucas, have no recollection of discussions of Epstein and his conviction as a sex offender at these meetings and they argue that had there been such discussions they would have remembered them.

In their concluding summary, the GP investigators state that there “is no evi-

dence that anyone brought the significance of Epstein or his crimes to President Reif’s attention at any time prior to 2019.” Critics of this conclusion note, however, that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. Finally, some faculty have noted that President Reif has regular private one-on-one conversations with the members of his Senior Team such as Vice Presidents Ruiz, Morgan, Newton, and Lucas; they express surprise and skepticism that the subject of Epstein’s donations and the unusual arrangement for accepting his gifts were never discussed at any of these meetings over the years.

For some readers a more important unanswered question is whether President Rafael Reif had knowledge of the Epstein donations prior to 2019. . . . In their concluding summary, the GP investigators state that there “is no evidence that anyone brought the significance of Epstein or his crimes to President Reif’s attention at any time prior to 2019.” Critics of this conclusion note, however, that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.

As the Goodwin Procter report notes in several places, memories are imperfect and unreliable, and in the absence of any contemporaneous records, notes, and evidence it is a matter for each reader to come to their own conclusions as to who knew what and when with regard to these questions.

Bob Millard is the Chair of the MIT Corporation and the Chair of its Executive Committee. As a reminder to readers, the Bylaws of MIT define the role of the Corporation in Section 1.1: “*The members of the Corporation constitute the government of MIT. As such, they hold a fiduciary duty to govern MIT, to oversee the stewardship of MIT’s assets for MIT’s present and perpetual well-being and stability, and to ensure that MIT adheres to the purposes for which it was established.*”

The Goodwin Procter investigation discovered that on several occasions in late 2016 Joi Ito attempted to enlist the aid of Chairman Millard in obtaining donations from Jeffrey Epstein. Millard

declined to assist Ito; however, he did follow up on this request by making inquiries of MIT Resource Development concerning Epstein, and the GP report indicates that Millard was aware that there were “issues” associated with Epstein and that Ito was proposing that these funds be required to be received anonymously, a highly unusual arrangement.

Many readers of the GP report are satisfied with the fact-finder’s conclusion that “We uncovered no evidence that Chairman Millard discussed Epstein with members of the MIT Senior Team.” Some readers are troubled, however, that

Millard did not consider it his responsibility as Chair of the governing body of the Institute to follow up further and broach this subject with President Reif.

From 2013 to 2017 Jeffrey Epstein made nine visits to the MIT campus during which time he met with a number of members of the MIT faculty. I would be remiss if I did not note that a number of faculty interacted with Epstein during these visits and it is regrettable that none felt it their responsibility to express concerns and that none felt comfortable or able to bring these concerns to the attention of members of the MIT administration.

#### Questions Concerning Professor Seth Lloyd

The Goodwin Procter report reserves its harshest condemnation for former Media Lab Director Joi Ito and Professor Seth Lloyd, emphasizing that Epstein’s post-conviction donations to MIT were driven either by Ito or Lloyd, and not by MIT’s

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**Epstein and MIT**

Danheiser, from preceding page

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central administration. While Ito's role is beyond question, for some in the community questions remain with regard to Lloyd's motives.

Professor Lloyd's interactions with Epstein are described in some detail in the Goodwin Procter report. These include accepting what is described as a "personal gift" of \$60,000 in 2006 (prior to Epstein's conviction) that was not reported to MIT, and subsequent gifts to support his research in 2012 (2 x \$50,000) and 2017 (\$125,000). Lloyd was well aware of Epstein's criminal record at the time of these latter gifts and has apologized for what he has described as his "lapse of judgment."

The Goodwin Procter report makes the serious accusation that on June 7, 2012 Professor Lloyd "purposefully failed to inform MIT that Epstein, a convicted sex offender, was the source of the donations" that he was about to receive. In reporting the imminent donation, Lloyd provided MIT staff with the name of an Epstein assistant, and Epstein's connection to the donation only emerged when MIT staff followed up by contacting the assistant. The GP report asserts that the "only reasonable inference is that Professor Lloyd did this to obscure the fact that Epstein was the donor and to hinder any possible due diligence or vetting by MIT." The report further remarks that "In his interview, Professor Lloyd acknowledged that he had been 'professionally remiss' in not alerting MIT to Epstein's criminal record."

Professor Lloyd has denied concealing Epstein's identity in a post on *Medium* on January 16, referring to the accusation in the GP report as "completely false." Lloyd notes that MIT was aware that Epstein was the source of the donations at the time that they eventually approved the gifts, which is not inconsistent with the findings reported by the Goodwin Procter investigators. Where Lloyd and GP diverge is in the "inference" by GP that Lloyd's motive in not identifying Epstein explicitly at the

outset was to conceal Epstein's identity as the source of the funding.

Professor Lloyd is currently on paid administrative leave from MIT and a faculty panel is being convened to review the facts surrounding Professor Lloyd's interactions with Jeffrey Epstein. There is one other relevant point worth mention-

others have questioned whether the absence of a formal, written policy really is a mitigating circumstance with regard to these decisions. Does the absence of explicit policies and rules grant *carte blanche* to decision-makers to act without consideration of the morality of their actions?

The executive summary of the Goodwin Procter report emphasizes that "the decision to accept Epstein's post-conviction donations cannot be judged to be a policy violation." Goodwin Procter bases this on the fact that "MIT has no formal, written policy addressing when to accept donations from controversial donors or what processes to use in considering them." . . . . On the other hand, others have questioned whether the absence of a formal, written policy really is a mitigating circumstance with regard to these decisions. Does the absence of explicit policies and rules grant *carte blanche* to decision-makers to act without consideration of the morality of their actions?

ing that is not noted in the GP report. During the period 2010 to 2013 Lloyd submitted at least six papers on his research in which he explicitly acknowledged receiving financial support from Jeffrey Epstein. Should these acknowledgments of support affect the assessment of Lloyd's motives? The faculty review panel will be evaluating all evidence and interviewing relevant individuals in the course of their fact-finding.

**Questions of Responsibility and Policy**

The executive summary of the Goodwin Procter report emphasizes that "the decision to accept Epstein's post-conviction donations cannot be judged to be a policy violation." Goodwin Procter bases this on the fact that "MIT has no formal, written policy addressing when to accept donations from controversial donors or what processes to use in considering them." This has been interpreted by some as an extenuating circumstance that played a role in the decisions to allow the donations and interactions of Jeffrey Epstein with MIT. On the other hand,

The absence of a formal policy for evaluating problematic donors came to my attention in August and in the early fall I appointed an Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Guidelines for Outside Engagements to define a set of values and principles to guide the assessment of gifts, grants, and other associations of MIT in the future. Professor Tavneet Suri is chairing this important committee. An Ad Hoc Committee to Review MIT Gift Processes chaired by Professor Peter Fisher has been appointed by Provost Marty Schmidt to work in coordination with the Outside Engagements Committee. The work of these groups should rectify the absence of formal policies at MIT and we hope that the result of their efforts will in fact serve as inspiration and as a model for the development of similar guidelines and policies at other academic institutions.

On the subject of gift policy, an unanswered question for some readers is why the Gift Policy Committee (GPC) was not consulted by any of the senior administrators during the deliberations on accepting the Epstein donations. Summaries of the activities of the GPC can be found in the



annual *Reports to the President* for the period 2007 to 2015. According to these reports, during this period the Gift Policy Committee met five to 12 times each year. In 2010-2011, the GPC “reviewed in detail issues surrounding a number of new major gifts to MIT.” In 2014-2015 the GPC reports that “Gift acceptance principles were presented and approved by the committee.” Considering the membership of the committee, why were the unique arrangements for accepting gifts from Epstein not brought to the attention of the GPC during this period?

With regard to gift policy, it might be asked how it was that the senior administrators could believe that accepting the donations from Epstein would be unobjectionable provided that they were kept anonymous. It is clear that the decision-makers were focused on the idea that this measure would prevent Epstein from using his association with the Institute to “whitewash” his reputation. However, was it not naïve and misguided to think that anonymity addressed all of the concerns with regard to accepting donations from a convicted pedophile? The Outside Engagements Committee will no doubt address the question of when it is acceptable to consider anonymous gifts, but I offer here my own thoughts as to why anonymity does not address all of the concerns associated with accepting donations from problematic donors. Aside from allowing the donor to “whitewash” their reputation, there are several other considerations.

• **Absolution.** There is the possibility that in the donor’s mind their generosity somehow compensates for their misconduct. It is possible that relieving their guilty feelings might make further criminal behavior more likely.

• **Deceit.** Coworkers have the right to know where the funding supporting their work and their stipend comes from. It is unacceptable for a principal investigator to keep secret the sources of funding for their lab as may be required in the case of anonymous gifts and grants.

• **Sympathy.** Regardless of the size of the gift, it can engender a conscious or unconscious bias in the mind of the recipient who may harbor hopes for future and possibly larger donations. How can one avoid the risk that such hopes impact the behavior of the recipient toward the donor?

• **Contamination.** “*Und wenn du lange in einen Abgrund blickst, blickt der Abgrund auch in dich hinein.*”\*

With regard to gift policy, it might be asked how it was that the senior administrators could believe that accepting the donations from Epstein would be unobjectionable provided that they were kept anonymous. . . . Missing apparently was any concern with regard to the morality of associating MIT in any way with a Level 3 sex offender who had been convicted of procuring for prostitution an underage girl.

### Questions of Responsibility and Leadership

I close by noting that at several points in the report, Goodwin Procter depart from their fact-finding assignment and suggest that the Senior Team members who approved donations from Epstein with knowledge of his past were “acting in good faith” and were attempting to balance the value of the donations to MIT research programs with the risk to MIT’s reputation. Missing apparently was any concern with regard to the morality of associating MIT in any way with a Level 3 sex offender who had been convicted of procuring for prostitution an underage girl.

President Reif, as leader of the Institute, is looked upon to define and promote the values under which we operate as faculty, administration, staff, and students. Since the revelations of last August, President Reif has impressed many members of the community with his efforts to focus attention on improv-

ing the “culture” of MIT by addressing issues of inclusion and diversity, and seeing to it that everyone at MIT share values that respect the interests and rights of all members of the community. His leadership in promoting discussion of these issues and elevating their visibility is much appreciated. A final unanswered question then, an unanswerable question, is whether things might have gone differently if President Reif had been clear and vocal in articulating these values and expectations from the beginning of his

presidency. When the senior administrators making decisions concerning Epstein weighed the pros and cons of accepting the donations, would their calculations have been different if their concerns had included not only the reputational risk to the Institute, but also whether their decisions were consistent with the values expressed and promoted by the President?

In conclusion, in this column I have tried to summarize what I believe are the most significant unanswered questions in the minds of some members of our community. I encourage readers to consider these questions as we work together to ensure that in the future everyone at MIT upholds the values to which we aspire.

*\*And when you gaze long into an abyss, the abyss gazes also into you.* – **Friedrich Nietzsche**

**Rick L. Danheiser** is the Arthur C. Cope Professor of Chemistry and Chair of the Faculty ([danheiser@mit.edu](mailto:danheiser@mit.edu)).

## In Memoriam Aron Bernstein

Robert P. Redwine



Aron Bernstein

**IT IS WITH GREAT SORROW** that we acknowledge the passing of Professor Emeritus of Physics Aron Bernstein. A former member of the *Faculty Newsletter* Editorial Board, Aron was an MIT faculty member for 40 years, retiring in 2001. He passed away on January 14 at age 88 after a short battle with cancer.

Aron grew up in Brooklyn and Queens during the Depression and World War II. He had a special talent for mathematics and science and attended Queens College and Union College, receiving a bachelor's degree in physics from Union in 1953. He received his PhD in physics from the University of Pennsylvania in 1958 and then went to Princeton as a postdoctoral associate. He joined the MIT faculty in 1961.

Aron was well known as an accomplished and broad nuclear scientist. He performed experiments at a number of particle accelerators around the world, investigating nuclear structure and reac-

tions with a variety of probes. While primarily an experimentalist, he also had deep knowledge of nuclear physics theory, which helped him to perform cutting-edge and important research. Aron mentored many young scientists who worked with him as students and postdocs. A number of them are now leaders in the field of nuclear science.

An early and lasting interest of Aron's was the issue of nuclear weapons. He was particularly inspired by Victor Weisskopf, a member of the MIT faculty when Aron joined. Weisskopf, like other MIT physics faculty members, had been in Los Alamos during the war as part of the Manhattan Project. He and others worried about the

aware of the threat that nuclear weapons pose to humankind. For people who grew up during the Cold War, the threat of nuclear weapons was in general all too real. For those who are younger this is no longer the case; indications are that many people have no idea how real and continuing the threat is. The NWEP is developing a large amount of relevant information and documents that are available broadly (to teachers and students especially) and that describe the realities of nuclear weapons and related threats. Aron's leadership of the NWEP will certainly be missed, but the project will continue to pursue the goals he cared so much about.

Recently, Aron led the establishment of the Nuclear Weapons Education Project (NWEP) at MIT. The goal of the NWEP is to make sure that younger generations are aware of the threat that nuclear weapons pose to humankind.

threat to humankind from the proliferation of nuclear weapons and worked to try to contain the threat. Aron joined and continued this effort for much of his career. In 1969 he helped found the Union of Concerned Scientists, an organization that remains one of the key voices in nuclear arms control. Aron also was a longtime supporter and board member of the Council for a Livable World. The Council aims at electing candidates who are strongly committed to addressing the issues posed by the existence of nuclear weapons.

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Aron was clearly a remarkably accomplished and successful person. For those who knew him well, this is a very incomplete description. He was a special person who genuinely cared about humanity but who also cared deeply about his family, friends, and colleagues. One looked forward to seeing Aron in the beginning of the day and exchanging perspectives and feelings. He was so polite, thoughtful, and caring. He had a remarkable life and left a very positive legacy. He will be missed but he will also long be respected and admired. ■

**Robert P. Redwine** is a Professor in the Department of Physics ([redwine@mit.edu](mailto:redwine@mit.edu)).

## Catalyzing a Conversation

Edmund Bertschinger  
Yang Shao-Horn

**AT THE SEPTEMBER INSTITUTE** faculty meeting, one of us lamented the difficulty of knowing what to do regarding MIT's receipt of gifts from Jeffrey Epstein. That difficulty challenged, and continues to confront, both the senior leadership team, who had to decide whether and how to accept gifts from a convicted sex offender, and the MIT faculty, who must decide whether and how to reject poor judgment and weak leadership. The intervening months have brought greater clarity even as the list of concerns has grown and fueled a deepening crisis of leadership. This letter discusses aspects of MIT leadership and governance in the spirit of inconvenient truths, calls for both accountability and a strategic plan for governance and priorities, and seeks to catalyze a broad conversation for the future of MIT.

President Reif wrote in October 2019, "I have also heard very clearly that cultural change needs to be championed and supported by those in leadership, but that it cannot be dictated; to succeed, it requires that units across MIT define their own specific priorities and solutions." Yet many women faculty have expressed concerns with the senior leadership. It is not up to department heads alone to handle problems of gender harassment. Some faculty leaders have indeed effectively advanced the professional success of women at MIT. The importance of this to all of MIT calls for stronger leadership from the President.

President Reif has told some of us in meetings with faculty in our departments last fall that the discontent of MIT staff he heard in October was news to him. In fact,

the Institute Community and Equity Officer repeatedly raised concerns of staff to him and other members of the senior leadership, beginning in November 2013, when an entire Academic Council meeting was dedicated to this topic. In at least one departmental meeting this fall attended by a co-author of this letter, President Reif stated that the problem was treatment of staff in "academic units," that is, by faculty, ignoring the serious morale and turnover

This Administration has a mixed record on women in leadership. While five department heads in the School of Engineering and three senior leaders are women faculty, the Women's Power Gap in Higher Education study ranked MIT 86 of 87 among Massachusetts colleges and universities for women in leadership in November 2019.

problems in the MIT Libraries and other non-academic units. MIT's leadership should continually assess and address staff concerns more effectively.

The Administration has not addressed openly the harm to MIT caused by the declining satisfaction of our students. Over the past four years, the fraction of the graduating class contributing to the senior class gift reported at Commencement has declined from 88% to 64% to 51% to not being reported at all in 2019. The disaffection of our students, due to student perceptions of repeated violations of their trust, has consequences for their giving 30 years from now. Failing to acknowledge and redress their grievances lessens the likelihood that new alumni will become donors.

This Administration has a mixed record on women in leadership. While five department heads in the School of Engineering and three senior leaders are women faculty, the Women's Power Gap in Higher Education study ranked MIT 86 of 87 among Massachusetts colleges and universities for women in leadership in November 2019. Not all of the factors are directly under the control of President Reif; for example, he does not select

members of the MIT Corporation. Nonetheless, the senior leadership provides input. Another factor in the Power Gap report is the salary of the highest paid employees. Only one of the top 10 highest paid employees at MIT is a woman. MIT's President and the Executive Committee of the MIT Corporation should heed these issues leading to MIT's poor ranking.

President Reif's administration has undertaken many valuable new initiatives, such as the Schwarzman College of Computing, MIT.nano, the Met Warehouse project, the Kendall Square Initiative, edX, the MITx MicroMasters programs, The Engine, a major renewal of the MIT campus, an Innovation Initiative,

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**Catalyzing a Conversation**

Bertschinger and Shao-Horn from preceding page

a Quest for Intelligence, all while undertaking a major capital campaign and starting numerous new degree programs. Individually, these all make sense and the individuals who initiated and spearheaded them should be applauded. Taken together, however, the effect is to leave many faculty and staff feeling excluded from decision-making and burdened with additional responsibilities or unable to get the attention of a senior administration overwhelmed with managing so many new projects. The senior administration asks each department to prepare a strate-

gic plan but there is no overall strategic plan nor overall planning process for MIT. As individuals, we cannot add responsibilities without subtracting something. We do not believe MIT can grow endlessly, and therefore needs a clearer setting of priorities. Remediating this may require changes to our governance structure.

President Reif has not taken responsibility for the actions taken by his administration, including the acceptance and hiding of donations from Epstein by three vice presidents. Instead, according to the Goodwin Procter report, he “does not recall discussing Epstein prior to 2019.” This raises questions about accountability and leadership that impact MIT’s future.

President Reif has strengthened MIT and increased its visibility in the world in important ways. Governing an organization as complex as the leading research university in the world is a difficult undertaking in the best of times. In this challenging time, the faculty bear a responsibility in helping to shape the culture and leadership for a better MIT.

We suggest that the time has come to discuss changes in leadership and governance structures to bring about a better future for MIT. ■

**Edmund Bertschinger** is a Professor in the Department of Physics (*edbert@mit.edu*);

**Yang Shao-Horn** is a Professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering (*shaohorn@mit.edu*).

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## Statement from the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Guidelines for Outside Engagements

Tavneet Suri

**THE MEMBERS OF THE** Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Guidelines for Outside Engagements were selected by Faculty Chairs Susan Silbey and Rick Danheiser because of their experience with the relevant issues and their attentiveness to the MIT mission. The committee members have received requests to participate in and support grass-roots efforts, many of which coincide with our current deliberations.

Because we wish to continue our deliberations with open minds and to avoid any appearance of bias, we will abstain from signing any public letters or making any public declarations of support for such efforts. The absence of individual committee member support should not be construed as agreement or disagreement with the views expressed in those letters. That said, the faculty on the committee play important roles at MIT and

will freely articulate their own independent views on important issues beyond the purview of the committee charge in their respective communities and the greater MIT community. ■

**Tavneet Suri** is an Associate Professor in the Sloan School of Management and Chair of the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Guidelines for Outside Engagements (*tavneet@mit.edu*).

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ered so many problems that it was difficult to tease them apart or understand the contributing factors. To better understand what was happening, we decided to conduct some informal research consisting of interviews with 11 MIT senior faculty whose judgment we value either through personal acquaintance or reputation. Seven of the 11 have served on Academic Council, and all have held leadership positions at the Institute. They represent four of MIT's five Schools.

We carried out these interviews over a six-week period beginning in early October. At the outset of each conversation, we told our colleagues that we wanted to discuss current events at MIT. We were purposely vague. We were most interested in learning what was on their minds, not in imposing what was on ours. We heard a near-consensus that MIT has "lost its way"; that the faculty have had little voice in setting institutional priorities and direction; and that pursuit of "the almighty dollar" has warped MIT's values and threatens to jeopardize its fundamental mission.

What has gone wrong?

In the first part of this article, we focus on the words and ideas that we heard repeatedly during our interviews. (All 11 interviewees have reviewed this report. Nine felt that this article accurately represented their views, but two felt that their perspective was not represented.)

In the last two sections, we present our own analysis and recommendations; these are ours alone.

**A Breakdown of Trust**

The faculty we spoke with lamented a breakdown in trust between faculty and the senior administration. In fact, this topic was raised near the beginning of every conversation and many emphasized that the loss of trust began before and extends beyond the Epstein affair. We were told "trust has broken down"; "our sense of trust is badly shaken"; "it feels like things are falling apart"; and "our problems are much deeper than Epstein."

When we asked more about loss of trust, our colleagues commonly began by citing the decision, starting in the Media Lab and eventually communicated upwards to a "senior team," to negotiate with Epstein over donations and other forms of support. No one felt that this was an acceptable choice. The decision was interpreted not just as a failure of policies and procedures, but more fundamentally as a lack of judgment and integrity.

The faculty we spoke with lamented a breakdown in trust between faculty and the senior administration. In fact, this topic was raised near the beginning of every conversation and many emphasized that the loss of trust began before and extends beyond the Epstein affair.

Particularly troubling was a perceived lack of honesty among MIT leadership to take full responsibility for these events. Our interviewees were dismayed by what they saw as long-running efforts to avoid accountability through evasion or obfuscation. Some repeated a litany of names now connected with MIT – most notably David Koch, Mohammed bin Salman, Henry Kissinger, and Stephen Schwarzman – who cause faculty moral embarrassment because their public reputations are so antithetical to MIT's professed ideals. Our faculty colleagues felt that MIT needs to be more open and thoughtful in acknowledging the complexities and ambiguities of engaging with ethically-compromised individuals. They believe MIT leadership should promote community-wide discussion of these issues, especially when MIT's educational initiatives repeatedly stress the need to include "ethics."

Trust is a two-way street, and our colleagues also expressed the sense that top MIT leadership lacks trust in the faculty. They described the President and some others in the senior administration as "lacking respect for faculty in general" or "very cynical about faculty," whom they often seem to regard as "selfish." Some interviewees described MIT's leaders as

thinking that faculty do not appreciate the difficulties of management, do not grasp the big picture, nor the need to make tough decisions.

We heard a widespread complaint among faculty of "initiative fatigue," caused by a struggle to deal with a steady stream of demands associated with an endless flow of new initiatives. "The rhythm is broken. What gives way is time to think, to sit down with students." The

result is mutual resentment. Faculty worry that their core activities of research and teaching are being shortchanged, while upper administration worry about faculty selfishness and short-sightedness. In this situation, loss of trust becomes a vicious circle.

Most of our interviewees expressed a strong opinion that, after the Epstein events, President Reif is not a leader who can restore trust at MIT. One person said, "He doesn't own it." Another said, "A lot comes back to him." Although they had mixed assessments of Rafael Reif as a person, they believed that MIT would be better off with a new administration that could make a fresh start.

**The Almighty Dollar**

When Rafael Reif became President of MIT in 2012, it was with the understanding that he would oversee a major capital campaign. Announced in 2016, the "Campaign for a Better World" is the fifth major capital campaign in MIT's history, with a target of \$6 billion. So far it has raised \$5.5 billion.

Unlike the previous fundraising campaign that began in 1997, in which two-

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thirds of the funds came from MIT alumni and friends, the current campaign has succeeded by casting its net much more widely. MIT hired many fundraisers who do not know MIT well, and encouraged them to raise money wherever they could find it, including from donors who do not value or understand MIT's core mission.

Our interviewees acknowledged that the senior leadership invited faculty participation at the outset of the campaign, when its priorities and goals were first established, but said proper oversight faded away as the campaign evolved. "Donors are setting the agenda," one said. It is not clear to most faculty where the new money has been directed or how much of that direction has been determined by the donors. Others said "faculty have no idea how the campaign is being run," and "the campaign has gone off the rails."

A major source of frustration was the perceived disconnect between a highly successful campaign and a continuing shortage of resources for core educational and departmental needs. We kept hearing the question "Where's the \$6 billion?" If the money being raised is not noticeable in departments, where is it going?

Our interviewees felt that there is a tacit agenda of transforming Kendall Square into a geographically condensed version of Silicon Valley, with venture capital flowing into it from around the world. The massive building campaign that MIT has undertaken seems a physical manifestation of this ambition. The rise of multiple skyscrapers, much of which will be rental property owned by MIT and leased to industry, sends a message of scale and ambition at once overwhelming and alienating.

There are many players in the development of Kendall Square, and it is reasonable that the MIT Investment Management Company be involved in that activity. However, there was concern that the MIT senior administration has become too heavily invested in MIT's business and real estate activities in Kendall Square and that

this mission dominates the senior administration's thinking and decision-making. Faculty worry that the Institute's core mission of academic excellence and education is being left behind. Several of our interviewees were worried about how highly leveraged MIT may have become as a result of its recent expansion.

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legally a non-profit, is being conceptualized as a business. Many gave examples from the language of the leadership, described as "corporate-speak" or "boardroom culture." Many pointed to the corporate-style measures of success cited by senior leadership: growth of endowment, growth of international commitments, and constant competition of MIT with peer institutions (above all Stanford) using metrics like endowment dollars per faculty member and admissions yield. Our faculty colleagues repeatedly wondered if these metrics and goals are appropriate or realistic for MIT.

The faculty members we interviewed repeatedly told us that money-making is becoming MIT's main institutional goal. "It's the money." "Money drives everything." While the stated campaign goal may be "a better world," in practice its goal is to raise \$6 billion – or more, because the campaign creates a vicious circle with the need to raise ever more money. Stephen Schwarzman's gift is a prime example. His donation of \$350 million is starter money for the College of Computing, which,

faculty are told, needs \$1.1 billion to be up and running. His generous gift now commits MIT to raising another \$750 million.

**A New College: The Expansion of Computing**

The establishment of the Schwarzman College of Computing has been celebrated as a great success for the campaign.

It is welcomed by many at MIT as a large part of the solution to pressing problems of faculty supply and student demand in computer science and related areas.

Yet during our interviews we were taken aback by the strength of resistance to the College – not necessarily to the College itself but to the process by which it was established. The Schwarzman College is seen by most of the faculty we interviewed as a "top down" initiative, decided by pro forma consultation rather than true discussion: "Decisions were already made, so 'consultation' is in quotes." "The whole thing was a game." One interviewee described the establishment of the College and the selection of its dean as "legitimation exercises for a course of action already preferred."

The creation of the College is seen by many of our interviewees as triggering disputes and power struggles within MIT. They see it as damaging to trust among faculty and between faculty and senior leadership. One interviewee said "it could have been handled in a much more collegial way." Because the undergraduate cur-



## BYLAWS OF THE CORPORATION MIT

Amended as of October 3, 2008 December 7, 2012

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riculum is already an arena of strong faculty disagreements and resentments, this is not a promising context for inevitable curricular discussions about the dominance of computing in undergraduate education. There will be more jostling for position as existing faculty figure out where they, their students, and their research fit into the new academic structure. At the same time, confronted with this new reality, they are strategizing how to get a share of those resources.

### Shared Governance: Is it Working?

As the interviews progressed, it became clear to us that the problems at MIT are much bigger than the Epstein situation. We felt that we better understood some of the deep concerns and discontent among faculty. After some analysis, we have come to the conclusion that many of the issues described above have developed through recent change in the balance of power among faculty, senior administration, and

At the December 2012 quarterly meeting of the Corporation, a quiet revolution in MIT governance took place. Unnoticed by nearly all faculty, this changed the dynamic balance that had previously existed between the Executive Committee and MIT's senior leadership. In a series of votes by the Corporation, what had formerly been "Bylaws of The Corporation" were renamed "Bylaws of MIT." Hundreds of changes were made to the Bylaws, with the new Bylaws stating that "The members of the Corporation constitute the government of MIT."

the MIT Corporation – primarily the Corporation's powerful Executive Committee.

MIT operates with a system of shared governance that functions through trust and collaboration. Most faculty are much more familiar with the structure and leadership of faculty and administrative governance than they are with the

structure and leadership of the Corporation. Therefore, we will give an overview of this lesser known aspect of MIT governance.

The Corporation is large and unwieldy. It currently has 71 active members plus four officers and 35 emeriti members. Until 1930, the president of MIT presided over the Corporation. After 1930, the chair of the Corporation has been either a past MIT president or another member of the Corporation. Since Paul Gray stepped down as Corporation chair in 1997, no MIT president has served in this role; the Corporation has been chaired by individuals who do not have academic leadership experience.

Within the Corporation, power is largely vested in the Executive Committee. The role of the Executive Committee in shaping MIT's direction cannot be overstated. The chair of the Executive Committee is especially powerful, setting the agenda and presiding over the meetings. The Executive Committee is composed of seven to 10 Corporation members, who serve five-year terms, as well as four ex officio members (including

the president of MIT, the chair of the Corporation, and the board chief of MIT Investment Management Company) and three regular guests (including the provost and general counsel). Until 2012, the MIT president served as chair of the Executive Committee.

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At the December 2012 quarterly meeting of the Corporation, a quiet revolution in MIT governance took place. Unnoticed by nearly all faculty, this changed the dynamic balance that had previously existed between the Executive Committee and MIT's senior leadership. In a series of votes by the Corporation, what had formerly been "Bylaws of The Corporation" were renamed "Bylaws of MIT." Hundreds of changes were made to the Bylaws, with the new Bylaws stating that "The members of the Corporation constitute the government of MIT." These changes confirmed and extended the purview of the Executive Committee: "The Executive Committee shall have responsibility for overseeing the general administration and superintendence of all matters relating to the Institute."<sup>1</sup>

Most significantly, the Executive Committee would no longer be chaired by the president of MIT, but by the chair of the Corporation. This means de facto that the Executive Committee is no longer likely to be headed by someone with experience as an academic leader. The lack of academic experience now extends to the entire Executive Committee where, at present, only one of the seven term members has significant academic leadership experience.

All these changes add up to a new relationship between the university and the Corporation. In the words of a *Tech* article at the time, "The Corporation appears not to be styling itself as a separate entity with oversight responsibility for MIT, but rather implying that its oversight is part of MIT itself."<sup>2</sup> One faculty member we talked with commented that "It used to feel like MIT faculty and senior leadership worked together to control the Corporation. Now it feels like the Corporation and senior leadership are joining forces to control the faculty."

It is not only the Executive Committee whose role has changed in recent years. Another critical player in shared gover-

nance, Academic Council, has changed significantly in form and function, with the net effect of reducing the influence and input of the faculty into MIT affairs.

Academic Council was introduced at MIT in 1949 by the then-new President James Killian to "be responsible for the

MIT's mission and goals. Academic Council now has the reputation of being ineffectual: a passive audience for President Reif, rather than a place where the voices of the faculty are heard and alternative viewpoints are welcomed.

Most significantly, the Executive Committee would no longer be chaired by the president of MIT, but by the chair of the Corporation. This means de facto that the Executive Committee is no longer likely to be headed by someone with experience as an academic leader. The lack of academic experience now extends to the entire Executive Committee where, at present, only one of the seven term members has significant academic leadership experience.

executive coordination of the Institute's educational activities and for the administration of education policy as determined by the Faculty." The Council had 10 members: four school deans, the deans of undergraduate and graduate students, the faculty chair, and the president, provost, and executive vice-president.<sup>3</sup>

By the President Vest years (1990-2004), Academic Council had added new members, but still functioned to make decisions related to educational programs and policies. Overall it worked effectively to funnel concerns of the general faculty through the department heads to the school deans and thence to the president and provost. The composition and tone of the Council encouraged discussion and competing perspectives on the greater issues facing MIT.

Academic Council is now bloated to 30 members. Size has brought diffusion of focus and influence. From many accounts, the Council's current role is primarily one of receiving reports rather than acting as a deliberative body. Some of the faculty that we interviewed told us that the outnumbered academic deans are "not mattering anymore" and "not happy." They feel they have little opportunity for meaningful input into framing

**Where From Here?**

On January 10, as we were making final revisions to this article, the MIT Corporation released the Goodwin Procter report detailing its findings surrounding Jeffrey Epstein's visits and donations to MIT. That report raises many difficult issues with which MIT will need to contend.

However, the findings of that report resonate with many of the themes we have noted: an institutional culture focused on fundraising; an uneasy, unclear relationship between the university administration and the MIT Corporation; and a widespread belief among MIT citizens that its leaders do not share their ethical concerns.

The recommendations in this section are ours alone, and at least two of our interviewees would disagree sharply with some of our points.

First, a number of immediate steps could, and probably should, be taken to do some fact-finding and air-clearing. For example, MIT should develop a clear mechanism for assessing ethical issues surrounding large donations, reinvigorate its oversight of outside professional activities, and conduct thorough financial audits of all units deeply involved with outside

private funding. Some have suggested that the faculty resume active oversight of the Kendall Square and Volpe building projects, so that MIT priorities are not entirely lost in the construction boom.

Second, we would urge a greater level of transparency on the part of the senior administration. One example is an annual compilation, intended for faculty, describing where MIT's donations come from; for larger donations, the source and whether they are earmarked by the donor for a particular purpose; the use to which these funds are ultimately put; and a simple accounting of MIT's real estate investment and debt profile.

However, this is not enough. Our conversations with colleagues last semester suggest that none of these initiatives can be effective without reestablishing trust and a rebalanced system of governance. While some have suggested that MIT would benefit from creation of a faculty senate, we believe that no system of governance will be successful without trust between the faculty at large and the senior leadership.

Over the past semester, we have come to believe that many of the visible ills affecting MIT arise, at least partly, from an imbalance of power, most notably reflected in the composition and roles of the Executive Committee and Academic Council. Because this reflects the deepest level of organization at MIT, we believe that the way forward for MIT must involve change at a similarly deep level.

We propose that:

1) The Corporation should reverse its 2012 decision, and reinstall the president of MIT as chair of the Executive Committee. We also recommend that, in

addition to including at least one outside member with experience in academic leadership, the Executive Committee should include an ex officio representative of the MIT faculty. This individual would be elected by the faculty at large through a nomination and selection process, with details of the process to be defined by the chair of the faculty.

2) The role of Academic Council should be strengthened by reducing its membership so that it is better configured to fulfill its core mission. We propose that it revert to a structure and purpose similar to those of the earlier Academic Councils, perhaps consisting of the MIT president, provost, chancellor, vice-chancellor, deans of the five Schools, the faculty chair, an equity officer or equivalent, and a few others.<sup>4</sup>

3) We believe that MIT needs new leadership to take on the restoration of trust and the rebalancing of power. In his seven-year tenure, President Reif has successfully fulfilled his promise to oversee the "Campaign for a Better World." The issues of today require another vision and focus. President Reif should act with dignity to make way for new leadership.

MIT is at a turning point in its history comparable to the pivotal post-World War II years and the Sixties. Both were tumultuous for the Institute – and transformational. The fundamental questions MIT faced in the past about the role of universities in the larger world are on the table again, more than ever. MIT defines itself as a special kind of university; in President Killian's memorable phrase, one that is "polarized around science, technology, and the arts."

What does this mean now? What is our identity and mission? Who should we be serving in education and research? What can we afford? How will we be affected by income inequality, environmental collapse, and doubts about reality? What is "a better world" and what would be a better MIT?

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<sup>1</sup> John A. Hawkinson, "MIT revises bylaws; Corp. chair to lead Executive Committee," *The Tech* (December 11, 2012). <https://thetech.com/2012/12/11/corporation-v132-n60>. The responsibilities of the Executive Committee are enumerated in <https://thetech.com/2012/12/11/corporation-execduties-v132-n60>. The *Tech* published a redline copy of the new bylaws tracking all the changes from the previous (2008) version: <http://tech.mit.edu/V132/N60/corporation/bylaws-redline.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Hawkinson, "MIT revises Bylaws."

<sup>3</sup> James R. Killian, Report of the President, MIT (1948), p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> A current sub-group of Academic Council, Dean's group, has a composition similar to that which we propose, but the President of MIT is not a member of Dean's group and its agenda does not mirror that of Academic Council. ■

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## A New Center for MIT

Sherry Turkle  
Caroline A. Jones  
in consultation with  
faculty from SHASS  
and SA+P

**MIT IS IN A UNIQUE POSITION** to establish an Institute-wide center with the capacity to address recurring problems provoked by rapid technological change. Our world-renowned faculty have existing expertise in the challenges we face in such areas as race, gender, and the social, psychological, and ecological impacts of technology. And MIT holds a special place in the national and international conversation on such matters. Just as we have been the source for tremendous innovation, we are also positioned to engage constructively and critically with the difficult issues that always accompany profound change.

This new unit could be an MIT Center for Critical Thought or Critical Studies, an MIT Center for Technology and Society Studies, MIT Center for the Humanities, or simply, MIT Center for Change. Reporting to the President and Provost, the center would be Institute-wide and independent of any single School, headed by members of our faculty who have been professionally engaged with critical research about technology for decades. Our students should also be brought into the planning for the center, since they will occupy the future we create. As envisioned, the center would constitute a bold, symbolic, and substantive move for this institution, which has often looked for engineering-led solutions to human problems. Here in contrast, we envisage a center that looks at technology, in history and at present, as a human endeavor. Because technology is human, social forces and inequalities are expressed in and through it, and new social relations are created by it. These human-technology

relations need to be elevated as important subjects of study and proposed action at MIT.

This center will support distinguished and emerging scholars from here and elsewhere whose research interrogates the social and cultural effects of scientific and technological innovation as well as technology transfer. It will study the present, but also encourage historical scholarship. From Gutenberg to the deployment of cybernetics, technologies of innovation have brought waves of social change with important lessons for the present. In order to create a better, more equitable future, the new center will take up these lessons. It will build on MIT's expertise across fields such as history, science and technology studies, anthropology, literature, media studies, architecture, urban planning, and the arts, domains in which scholars have grappled with how technologies have shaped and been shaped by social and economic forces in different parts of the world. The center will be a space for rigorous research, education, and critical reflection on the historical and future role of technology as part of our planetary condition. This means that it will also encourage the arts that MIT has always welcomed as forms of expression and intelligence that produce their own kinds of knowledge and reckoning with technological change.

The proposed center will be a place of scholarly reflection, of course, but it will also set agendas for change both within the Institute and in the world at large, as overarching themes are established, and scholars are mobilized to work together on the knotty and often unanticipated

problems that human technologies bring in their wake.

The center would focus on computing only as one aspect of the interface of technology and humanity; it would address the advances as well as grave social and ecological challenges technology creates, such as climate change and environmental pollution. The work of the center's fellows will inform policy discussions and national conversations. Our own scholars would help choose others to join them: thinkers who work on the historical, psychological, anthropological, sociological, economic, cultural, artistic, philosophical, and political components of how we change in relation to our tools, and with specific attention to the ethical dimensions of these changes.

Below we offer some bullet points to facilitate further discussion. Some are thoughts about possible organization. Some are examples of possible first projects.

- Several of MIT's peer institutions already have interdisciplinary centers that have served them to great effect. Harvard has several (the Radcliffe, Mahindra Humanities Center, Berkman Center, Society of Fellows, to name a few); the Stanford Humanities Center is now decades old, as is the Stanford-based Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences. Perhaps a useful model is provided by the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, in which individual fellows working on their own projects are paralleled by three- to five-year working groups focused collaboratively on specific themes or research problems. These working groups are led by a convening



faculty member (in this case, across various German universities) joined by visiting fellows to enrich the approach to problem areas year by year. The mission for MIT in designing our center is to find the formula that builds on our strengths and most enriches us – to find the kind of center where we can be most enhanced and where we can make the greatest impact.

- The center should have a director and a steering committee comprised of faculty members from various Schools. Their charge would be to oversee the research initiatives of the center, and select and engage with fellows and postdocs following a competitive review process. Members could serve for two- to three-year terms and help to identify or lead and support research initiatives. A Board

appointed by the President and Provost in consultation with the director would help support the center’s activities and advocate for its work in the world.

- The center would also play a role in retention and maintaining diversity in our faculty, since a group of fellowships could be set aside for MIT’s own tenure-track scholars. Junior faculty could compete for these designated fellowships, so as to have support for a leave prior to tenure, without having to relocate or leave the MIT support systems for their family and research. (This model is followed by the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study.)

- The center’s research initiatives should bring scholars together across fields, emphasizing the arts, social sciences, and humanities but including scientists who want to engage urgent

interdisciplinary research from social or humanist perspectives. Working groups could focus on, for example, the politics and materiality of climate change; psychological impacts of automation and AI; technologies of contemporary authoritarianism; race/ethnicity and technological innovation; cultural responses to extinction; the developmental effects of screen life; guns and school violence in the U.S.; rare earth politics and e-waste; democracies and social media. Research initiatives could change every one to two years or have overlapping and reinforcing agendas, as guided by the steering committee. ■

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**Caroline A. Jones** is a Professor in the Department of Architecture ([cajones@mit.edu](mailto:cajones@mit.edu)).

Existing Center	Theme/Disciplines	Requirements of Fellows	Demographic *impression of composition from being there
Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton not managed by university; own endowment	4 distinct schools admit 1-year fellows in Humanities, Social Science, Science, and Math.	Single fellowship talk internal to IAS.	Some junior, mostly senior. ~10% long-term fellows*.
Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin Funded by federal ministries; endowment	Multi-disciplinary, some multi-year groups.	Multiple talks for different publics.	Some junior, mostly senior. ~5% long-term fellows*.
Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study Affiliated with Harvard, incorporates endowment from Radcliffe College	Multi-disciplinary; unusual in including creative artists, writers, filmmakers.	Single fellowship talk, can be internal or broadly advertised. Meet with individual donors.	A few post-docs from HU, many junior faculty. No permanent fellows but rotating HU faculty advisors.
National Humanities Center private non-profit affiliations, some funding, and library privileges w/ Duke/UNC/NC State	Traditional humanities with some environmental history.	Public lecture. Meet with board members.	Strong emphasis on URM diversity and junior faculty. ~Est. 80% senior faculty*.
Max Planck Institute(s) of Germany Federally funded	Discipline-specific, “departments” set research agenda, themes.	Internal talk.	International graduate students, post-docs, junior faculty, senior faculty.
Stanford Humanities Center Stanford University funded, endowment	Humanities	Full year fellows teach one subject for Stanford undergraduates (quarter system).	Internal grad students, a few internal faculty fellows, the rest external fellows (mix of junior/senior).
Center for Advanced Study of the Behavioral Sciences Once independent, now under control of Stanford University	Social science	Internal talk.	Many working groups, primarily senior faculty.
(Harvard) Mahindra Humanities Center Endowment, grants	Humanities	Harvard faculty-run seminars and initiatives.	A few post-doc fellows.
Harvard Society of Fellows Endowment	Multidisciplinary	Senior fellows (HU faculty) choose post-docs, mentor them through 3-year fellowships.	A few complete PhDs as Junior fellows, but most are post-docs.

## MIT 2020 Quality of Life Survey Launches

Amy Glasmeier  
Ken Goldsmith



### MIT 2020 Quality of Life Survey



**ON JANUARY 28, 2020**, the MIT Council on Family and Work invited our entire MIT community of approximately 26,000 members to complete the 2020 Quality of Life Survey. The survey is being administered to faculty, other instructional staff, researchers, postdoctoral scholars, administrative staff, support staff, and service staff on MIT's main campus and at Lincoln Laboratory, as well as graduate and undergraduate students. To

express our thanks for the community's participation, we will offer \$25 prizes to 800 randomly drawn participants.

#### **Confidentiality Is Paramount**

Sponsored by the Council on Family and Work and administered every four years by Institutional Research in the Office of the Provost, the survey is one of the Institute's most important tools for understanding issues and concerns related

to work-life balance across our entire community. The results inform all levels of the Institute and help to shape MIT's benefits policies and other work-related programs. The confidential information provides a snapshot of the community's opinions, allows for comparisons over time, and is vital to the Council's ability to support the interests of MIT community members.

#### **What is the Council on Family and Work?**

The Council is an independent Standing Institute Committee appointed by the President, sponsored by the Executive Vice President and Treasurer, and co-chaired by a faculty member as part of the Institute's faculty governance. Professor Amy Glasmeier (Urban Studies and Planning) and Assistant Dean Ken Goldsmith (Architecture + Planning) currently serve as co-chairs, and Council members volunteer their time to represent all facets of the MIT community.

When the Council on Family and Work was established 25 years ago, its focus was on providing Institutional support for the non-work concerns of the community, including child and elder care, parental leave, and affordable housing. Over the past decade, the Council has focused on the important issues of Institute work-related climate and culture.

The Council monitors the state of family and work life at MIT and works to ensure that the Institute is a place where faculty, staff, and students can have fulfilling and productive professional and per-

sonal lives. In its independent advisory and deliberative capacity, the Council focuses on advising senior officers on what they need to hear based upon what the community tells us through the survey.

The Council's charge is to:

1. identify family and work-related issues,
2. establish a process to evaluate and respond to these issues, and
3. make periodic recommendations to MIT's senior officers about courses of action relevant to these specific issues.

The Council works in close collaboration with Institutional Research (IR) in the Office of the Provost, and IR provides the Council with technical support to continually update the survey design to reflect social changes. IR administers the Quality of Life Survey and provides results that form the basis of reports and recommendations that the Council makes to the President, Executive Vice President and Treasurer, Vice President of Human Resources, and Chancellor (see the Council's website for previous Council reports of the survey findings). The Provost and the Chair of the Faculty serve as co-sponsors of the faculty portion of the survey.

### What is the Quality of Life Survey?

The survey covers a number of topics, including satisfaction, workload, work-related stressors, departmental climate, mentoring, integration of work and personal/family life, access to resources both at work and in support of family life, and the tenure and promotion process. The core of the 2020 Quality of Life Survey questions is based on questions developed for a Faculty Survey that was first administered in 2004. Over time, the results of Quality of Life Surveys have shown that despite overall satisfaction, there are still

important issues that impact the community in ways that positively and negatively affect an individual's ability to thrive.

MIT has been using surveys to collect quality of life and climate data for 30 years, and the results are the most heavily used survey-related dataset at MIT. In addition to informing the Administration on overall campus issues, the results of the Quality of Life Survey have become an

MIT has been using surveys to collect quality of life and climate data for 30 years, and the results are the most heavily used survey-related dataset at MIT. In addition to informing the Administration on overall campus issues, the results of the Quality of Life Survey have become an important tool for department heads and directors to understand specific issues that affect the overall climate for faculty, staff, and students in departments, laboratories, and centers.

important tool for department heads and directors to understand specific issues that affect the overall climate for faculty, staff, and students in departments, laboratories, and centers. The survey is one of the Institute's few sources of important data on non-work-related demographics, such as the number of community members with spouses, children, etc. The results are an integral part of the MindHandHeart Department Support Project and are used extensively for Visiting Committee briefings and by the Institute Community and Equity Office.

After the 2016 survey, Professors Krishna Rajagopal, Leslie Kolodziejki, and Christopher Capozzola summarized the results in a September/October 2016 article in the *MIT Faculty Newsletter*, "MIT Asked, We Answered: The 2016 Faculty Quality of Life Survey," specifically regarding gender differences. Since that time, the Schools have re-established gender equity committees and are using the results of the Quality of Life Surveys and the Academic Climate Surveys to inform their work in additional multiple ways.

MIT has used results from previous surveys to introduce several important initiatives, such as:

- Employee T pass benefit
- Flexible work hours
- Expanded childcare on campus
- Initiatives to address student hunger
- Increased number of lactation rooms

### Reporting and Sharing Results

Survey results are aggregated for reporting, and results for small groups are suppressed. Results aggregated at the School, department, lab, center, or other subgroup level will be made available to associated deans, department heads, directors, etc. Results aggregated at the Institute-level will be made available to the general public on the Institutional Research website.

Overall results (in Tableau format) and highlights, as well as results for units with enough responses to ensure confidentiality, will be available by late spring 2020. Trend results combining responses from previous surveys will be available after that. It's important to hear all the voices in the community, so participation is key to having meaningful results.

For more information and to access your survey link, visit <http://ir.mit.edu/qol>.

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**Ken Goldsmith** is the Assistant Dean for Finance and Administration in the School of Architecture and Planning ([kegol@mit.edu](mailto:kegol@mit.edu)).

## Improving on the Probability of Alumni Connections

Joe McGonegal

**THERE ARE SOME 98 MIT** alumni chapters, 1,200 MIT faculty and leadership, and 365 days in the year.

Given that each MIT faculty member has, on average, five extra-curricular commitments per week that restrict them from travel, what are the odds that a given faculty member could come, at the request of an MIT club or group, to give a talk on a given night in a given city?

I posed that question to Allan Gottlieb '67, editor of the "Puzzle Corner" column in *MIT Technology Review* and NYU faculty member himself who has given his own share of alumni talks.

Gottlieb replied:

*"Well, each faculty has a 5/7 probability of NOT being available.*

*The probability that all faculty are not avail is  $(5/7)^{1200}$  ( $\wedge$  means power, i.e. exponent).*

*The prob at least one can make it is  $1 - (5/7)^{1200} = .999999999999... (174\ 9a)$ .*

*But I'll bet you don't get that many successes!"*

Indeed we don't. But my colleagues and I in the Alumni Office are perpetually grateful to the faculty who *do* collaborate with us in any given year to travel, reconnect with, and inspire MIT alumni around the world.

In calendar year 2019, that number was 69, and I've listed their names below. Did we forget you? Please let us know.

Can we partner up in 2020 to get you in front of an alumni audience, one consisting of your former students, your future collaborators or donors, amplifiers of your department's work and/or ambassadors of MIT to the world? Please give us a call or complete our faculty speakers' bureau survey, a useful guide for our hundreds of alumni volunteers who want to convene events for their classmates spotlighting great speakers addressing the world's greatest problems.

Beyond these events, we track and market MIT faculty appearances at conferences and other events on a public-

facing calendar for our colleagues in the advancement community and alumni volunteers to follow. In the fall 2019 term alone, we tracked and publicized an additional 155 upcoming talks MIT faculty were giving at conferences around the world. A handful of these leads engendered volunteer-led alumni gatherings in and of themselves.

Our 1,200 faculty lead busy lives and are likely on the road more than typical researchers – leading book tours, spawning startups, working with sponsored research entities, and (we hope) going on vacation. We wish you safe travels for all of the above. If there's time to spare on these sojourns though, the Alumni Office can frequently help subsidize such travel in order to enrich our global network of connected alumni making a better world. Let's be in touch!

Thanks again to the faculty listed below who volunteered with us in 2019. ■

**Joe McGonegal** is Director, Alumni Education ([jmcg@mit.edu](mailto:jmcg@mit.edu)).

Hal Abelson  
Nicholas Ashford  
Arthur Bahr  
Richard Binzel  
Tanja Bosak  
Cynthia Breazeal  
Markus Buehler  
Vladimir Bulović  
Gang Chen  
Joseph Coughlin  
Ed Crawley  
Munther Dahleh  
Bob DeSimone  
John Durant

Kerry Emanuel  
Nick Fang  
Eugene Fitzgerald  
Felice Frankel  
Ted Gibson  
Shafi Goldwasser  
Jonathan Gruber  
Leonard Guarente  
Alan Guth  
Paula Hammond  
John Harbison  
Susan Hockfield  
Jeffrey Hoffman  
Neville Hogan

Jason Jay  
Valerie Karplus  
John Kassakian  
Kyle Keane  
Jeehwan Kim  
Sangbae Kim  
Janelle Knox-Hayes  
John Leonard  
Richard Lester  
John Lienhard  
Thomas Malone  
Robert Merton  
David Mindell  
Neha Narula

Melissa Nobles  
Elizabeth Nolan  
Scot Osterweil  
Krishna Rajagopal  
Mitchel Resnick  
Israel Ruiz  
Donald Sadoway  
Sanjay Sarma  
Martin Schmidt  
Stuart Schmill  
David Schmittlein  
Noelle Selin  
Kieran Setiya  
Julie Shah

Phiala Shanahan  
Pawan Sinha  
Amy Smith  
William Thilly  
Skylar Tibbits  
Evelyn Wang  
Ben Weiss  
Dennis Whyte  
Omer Yilmaz  
Dick Yue  
Feng Zhang  
Xuanhe Zhao  
Maria Zuber



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## Save the Date for MacVicar Day 2020

**THE OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR** and the Registrar's Office are pleased to announce this year's MacVicar Day program. The event will take place on Friday, March 13 at 2:30 PM in Building 6, Room 120.

In addition to celebrating the 2020 MacVicar Faculty Fellows, Vice Chancellor Ian Waitz will host a series of lightning talks by MIT professors and students. Speakers will examine how MIT – through its many opportunities for experiential learning – supports students' aspirations and encourages them to become engaged citizens and thoughtful leaders.

All in the MIT community are welcome. More information will be available at <https://registrar.mit.edu/macvicar> as the event approaches.

### About the MacVicar Faculty Fellows Program

Named to honor the life and contributions of the late Margaret MacVicar, Professor of Physical Science and Dean for Undergraduate Education, the MacVicar Faculty Fellows Program recognizes faculty who have made exemplary and sustained contributions to the teaching

and education of undergraduates at MIT. Fellows are selected through a competitive annual nomination process. They hail from all corners of the Institute and represent a diverse range of academic disciplines. Together, the Fellows form a small academy of scholars committed to exceptional instruction and innovation in education, embodying through their work the continuing promise of an MIT education for the future. ■

## letters

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### The Coop and the MIT Press Bookstore

*To The Faculty Newsletter:*

**I GREATLY APPRECIATED** Ruth Perry's piece on changes at the MIT Coop and the sidelining of books ("A Bookstore Without Books," *MIT Faculty Newsletter*, Vol. XXXII No. 2). And it made me think Professor Perry and other faculty would be pleased to know the MIT Press Bookstore – temporarily on Mass. Ave since the construction in Kendall Square

began – is returning to its Kendall roots in mid-2020 and relocating to the lower level of 314 Main Street.

Although we don't function as the Institute's designated textbook fulfillment service, we are an expertly curated bookstore that sells textbooks in addition to academic and general audience books, from several leading publishers across a

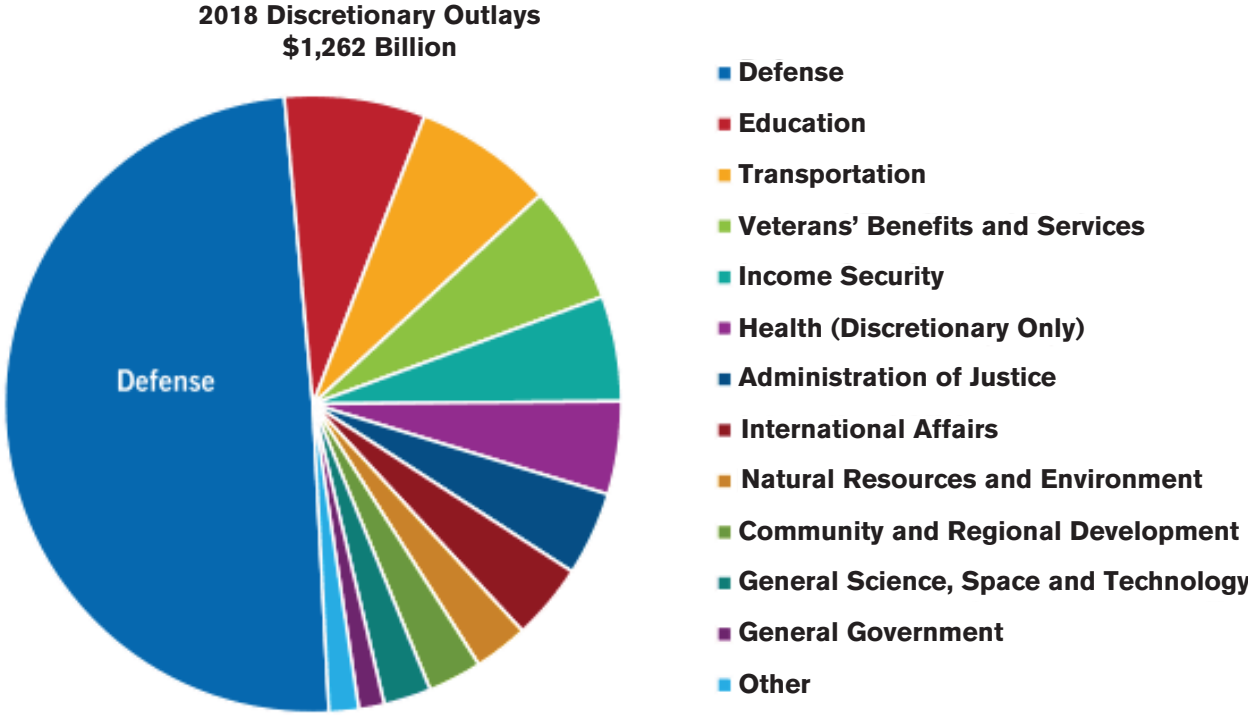
range of fields. Thankfully, the Coop is not MIT's only campus bookstore. I welcome any and all input on how the new MIT Press Bookstore can best serve the Institute community.

**Amy Brand**, PhD '89  
Director, The MIT Press



# Numbers

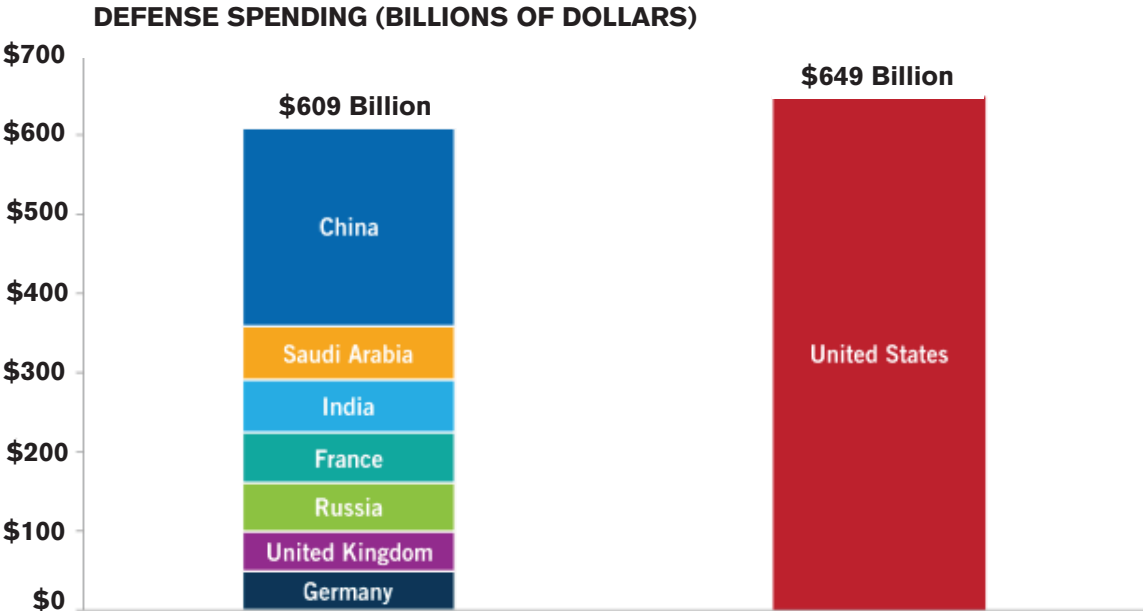
## Budget of the United States Government



SOURCE: Office of Management and Budget, *Historical Tables, Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2020*, March 2019.  
 NOTE: Health (discretionary only) includes National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, veterans' healthcare, and administrative costs for Medicaid.

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SOURCE: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Military Expenditure Database*, April 2019.  
 NOTES: Figures are in U.S. dollars, converted from local currencies using market exchange rates. Data for the United States are for fiscal year 2018, which ran from October 1, 2017 through September 20, 2018. Data for the other countries are for calendar year 2018.

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