

MIT Faculty Newsletter

<https://fnl.mit.edu>

in this issue we offer “Discussing Research Security with Research Groups,” ([page 8](#)); “Planning for Commencement 2024,” ([page 9](#)); “Phi Beta Kappa at MIT,” ([page 9](#)); and a variety of perspectives on continuing activities on campus, beginning on page 10.



Lobby 10

Presentation to the Institute Faculty Meeting

Jonathan A. King

20 March 2024

Madame President, Officers and Members of the Faculty, and Faculty Committees.

IT IS A PLEASURE to have the opportunity to address you on the origins and current working of the *MIT Faculty Newsletter*. Though the FNL has been published continuously for 36 years, this is the first time an FNL representative has been invited to address an Institute faculty meeting. Perhaps we are benefitting from the sound instincts of our chair and new president. Hopefully, this will set a new pattern, and we won't have to wait another 36 years.

There are many examples where our academic community has faced serious stresses, and all stakeholders – faculty, students, staff, and administration – worked together effectively to protect the

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From The Faculty Chair Spring Updates from the Faculty Committees

Mary C. Fuller

AS YOU MAY KNOW, faculty governance at MIT operates in two modes: through our traditionally open monthly meetings and through a system of standing committees. Last month, I wrote about faculty meetings; this month's column is an update from the standing committees of the faculty. These committees have a membership proposed by the Committee on Nominations at the March meeting and elected in May; their business ranges from student life, to graduate and undergraduate education, to libraries and buildings.

Generally, the chairs of the standing committees meet as a group with the chair of the faculty twice a year to provide an update on their work. (Their reports are synthesized in the annual report to the president from the chair of the faculty.) This year, I asked the chairs of

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Editorial Bringing It All Back Home

THE EVENTS IN GAZA, one-third of the way around the world, are impacting our students, our faculty and staff, local City Councils, State Legislatures, and even the US Presidential race. The events are polarizing in all communities, with all sides in pain.

In this issue we include articles that express some of the impacts of Gaza events on lives at MIT. These are in addition to other articles which address Research Security ([page 8](#)), Commencement ([page 9](#)), Phi Beta Kappa ([page 9](#)), reanalysis of faculty voting ([page 11](#)), and notes from the Faculty Chair ([page 1](#)).

The presentation regarding the history of the *Faculty Newsletter* by Professor Jonathan King to the March Institute faculty meeting ([page 1](#)) came about by invitation of Faculty Chair Mary Fuller to speak on the FNL Editorial Board elec-

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Photo Credit: Page 1: Gretchen Ertl, MIT Media Library; Page 4 (Vera Kistiakowsky): Rob Bogaerts, Wikimedia Commons;

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tion procedures. An expanded version of a letter previously published in *The New York Times* from Professors DeGraff and Padilla ([page 10](#)) addresses the general debate over the dimensions of academic free speech. The letter from MIT Jews for Ceasefire ([page 12](#)) expresses their concerns. The letter from an alumnus ([page 14](#)) expresses views of supporters of Israeli policy and criticizes the MIT administration's and the

FNL's response to charges of anti-semitism on campus. The FNL contacted identifiable faculty groups that had voiced related concerns, including members of Faculty for Israel, inviting contributions, but hasn't received submissions as we go to press. Our pages continue to be open to individual faculty and faculty groups.

Quoting NYU professors Paula Chakravartty and Vasuki Nesiah in their *New York Times* Op-Ed of April 5: "From the Vietnam War to Apartheid South Africa, universities have been

important places for open discussion and disagreement about government policies, the historical record, structural racism and settler colonialism. They have also long served as sites of protest. If the university cannot serve as an arena for such freedoms, the possibilities of democratic life inside and outside the university gates are not only impoverished but also under threat of extinction." ■

**Editorial Board of the
MIT Faculty Newsletter**

Nominate a Colleague to Run for Election to the Faculty Newsletter Editorial Board

THE ANNUAL ELECTION FOR membership to the *Faculty Newsletter* Editorial Board will be held later this spring. All MIT faculty and emeritus faculty are eligible to be nominated by the FNL Nominations Committee.

Members of the Editorial Board serve three-year terms and are eligible to run for re-election. Membership criteria include:

- commitment to defending an independent voice of the faculty

- a professional situation that doesn't require close support from any sector of the administration
- gender and disciplinary diversity

Duties include attending three Editorial Board meetings per academic year; participating in the writing of at least one editorial and offering input on the content of at least one issue of the *Newsletter* per academic year; and whenever possible participating in whatever

forums or other events sponsored by the FNL.

If you would like to advance a colleague or yourself for possible nomination, please email a brief (a paragraph or two) description of yourself and why you'd like to be a member of the Editorial Board to fnl@mit.edu.

All emails must be received by Monday, April 29. ■

**Presentation to the Institute
Faculty Meeting**

King, from page 1

intellectual and social productivity of our MIT environment.

Some examples include unexpectedly large cuts in Congressional appropria-



Physics Professor Vera Kistiakowsky

tions for NIH, NSF, and Department of Energy programs. These put many graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and junior faculty at risk and under stress.

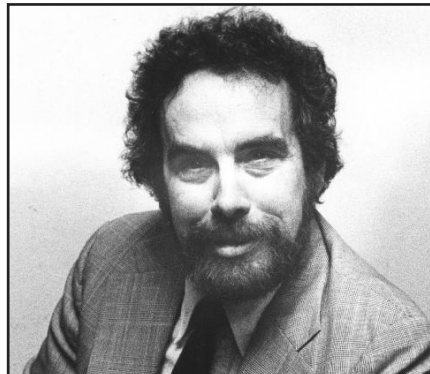
Another example is the recent disastrous pandemic. Faced by unprecedented difficulties, all sectors came together and were remarkably successful. New committees were formed as needed and all put their shoulders to the wheel.

However, there have been other times when the interests of, for example, the faculty and the administration of the period diverged, with differing goals.

One of these gave birth to the *Faculty Newsletter*.

In 1987, at the start of the Christmas vacation, then-Provost John Deutch and School of Science Dean Gene Brown announced the closing of the Department of Applied Biological Sciences (ABS). This implied the layoff of all faculty, students, and staff of the Department. Little attempt was made to conform to the spirit of *The Rules and Regulations of the Faculty*. A few of our senior faculty understood this, but we were denied access to the faculty mailing list and were unable to communicate with our faculty colleagues. Nor were we able to bring a counter motion before the faculty.

Professor of Physics Vera Kistiakowsky, Professor of Nuclear Engineering Larry Lidsky, and I went through the MIT Directory (no longer published) and hand typed office addresses for all the faculty. The mailed communication calling for opposing the action of the provost was the [zeroth issue](#) of the *Newsletter*.



Nuclear Engineering Professor Larry Lidsky

Here is Vera's statement from that issue:

"A group of faculty members which has been discussing the recent events concerning the Department of Applied Biological Sciences has concluded that difficulty in communication prevents faculty consideration of the problems except in crisis situations. There exists no channel for the exchange of information between faculty members for the discussion of problems at MIT, since neither Tech Talk nor the faculty meetings serve these purposes. Therefore, we decided to explore the desirability of a newsletter, and one purpose of this zeroth edition is to see whether there is support for such a publication."

Eventually we were able to mobilize a sufficient number of faculty to prevent the layoffs of any of the ABS students, staff, or faculty. Because of the difficulty of getting onto the faculty meeting agenda, this wouldn't have happened without the independent communication represented by those first FNL publications.

In the intervening 36 years the FNL has been maintained by a dedicated group of more than 70 volunteer faculty, who shared the belief that the faculty are an essential component of a university, par-

ticularly a research university such as MIT.

MIT Numbers (back page) lists the 62 members of the faculty who have served on the Editorial Board over the years. Chairs are in red. The group covers quite a range of disciplines: Fred Moavenzadeh was Chair of Civil and Environmental Engineering; Steve Lippard was Chair of Chemistry; Gordon Kaufman and Ernst Frankel were on the Sloan Faculty; John Belcher was from Aero and Astro; Patrick Winston was from Computer Science; Ruth Perry and Helen Lee from Humanities; Woodie Flowers was from Mechanical Engineering.

In addition, through these years we have had the benefit of a dedicated, though woefully underpaid, managing editor, David Lewis.

Since its inception the FNL has published all faculty submissions as long as they avoid libel or slander. This includes refutations or critiques of editorials or other articles.

Some 177 issues have been published, carrying more than 1000 articles. A short list doesn't capture the range of content, but perhaps two examples make their value clear.

It was the *Faculty Newsletter* that first published [the report of the Hopkins Committee](#) documenting differential pay scale for male and female faculty, a very hot potato at the time. To his credit, President Charles Vest stepped forward and united with the Hopkins analysis.

Our desire to provide the broadest audience for the Hopkins report led to the establishment of the FNL website.

The data collection and analysis of the acute affordable rental housing shortage by the Graduate School Council was invaluable not only for faculty and students, but for the surrounding Cambridge Community.

President Vest was not only a visionary with respect to women faculty, but also in 1997 confirmed the *Faculty Newsletter* as a special Standing Committee, within MIT's structure, but operating according to its own Policies and Procedures set by a Board of Editors composed only of MIT

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Presentation to the Institute Faculty Meeting

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faculty and emeritus faculty. The Board elects its officers. Our current officers are me, Sally Haslanger as Vice-Chair and Ceasar McDowell as Secretary.

President Vest established a small budget for a staff editor and for the costs of publication, which was later transferred to under the Office of the Provost, and has carried forward to the present. He specified a follow-up five-year review. This was carried out by an FNL Review Committee, chaired by Professor Stephen Graves. Their investigation affirmed the value of the FNL to the campus community.

Despite the support from Vest, the Graves Committee, and many faculty, a faction within the administration continued to try to undermine the FNL and curtail its publication. This took the form of refusals to make our managing editor full time; refusal to promote him to an appropriate level; denial of deserved salary raises. Faced by a petition from senior faculty to bring this before the faculty meeting, these efforts failed. They are described in detail in the FNL issue of March/April 2007: [The Saga of the Struggle for Survival of the Faculty Newsletter](#).

Before reviewing FNL election procedures it is important to review some unusual features of MIT Governance:

- a) *MIT has no Faculty Senate, or equivalent deliberative body independent of the administration.*
- b) For decades the faculty meeting has been chaired by the president or provost, rather than the elected chair of the faculty.
- c) There is serious under-representation of scholars, engineers, scientists, and educators on the MIT Corporation.
- d) Officers of the MIT Investment Management Corporation (MITIMCo) have exerted undue influence on MIT policies.

Nomination and Election to the Editorial Board

All MIT faculty and emeritus faculty are eligible to vote in the Editorial Board election. In 2008 we moved to an electronic confidential ballot election in which all faculty and emeritus faculty could vote for Editorial Board nominees.

Recruitment of nominees follows three paths: a) Self-nomination in the Committee preference questionnaire; b) Self or other nomination in response to the call published in the *Newsletter* itself; c) nominations from prior and current Editorial Board members.

Given the continuing absence of an elected Faculty Senate the primary criteria remain:

- a) Commitment to defending an independent voice of the faculty, and a
- b) Professional situation that doesn't require close support from any sector of the administration.
- c) Gender and disciplinary diversity.

Unlike other standing committees that have spheres of action or influence within MIT, the FNL has no influence whatsoever over any aspect of MIT governance or policy. The FNL Editorial Board is much closer to a shadow cabinet or a judiciary function. Thus, just as we don't have judges, department heads, deans, provosts, or presidents turn over every two years, the FNL Board needs the accumulated experience of its members, and we encourage re-election of incumbents.

In the last election, more than 300 faculty voted for Editorial Board nominees. That same year, fewer than 60 voted in the regular election for faculty committee chairs and members. Of course we always want broader participation, but at present the FNL numbers establish the legitimacy of its electorate.

The FNL also maintains a website. Over the past month, the website received nearly 30,000 hits from 95 countries. We also on occasion hold forums to facilitate direct exchange among concerned faculty, staff, and students. One FNL forum brought the Director of Human Rights

Watch to the campus to review the roles of Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Saudi Arabia in the famine and deaths in Yemen. This was the only forum for open discussion held at MIT.

In addition to occasional live forums, the FNL co-sponsors the annual "Reducing the Threat of Nuclear War" conferences, commemorating the nuclear disarmament advocacy of Professors Vera Kistiakowsky and Aron Bernstein. Over the past decade these have featured congressional leaders of such efforts, including US Representative Barbara Lee, US Representative Jim McGovern, US Representative Ro Khanna, US Representative Pramila Jayapal, and US Senator Ed Markey.

Continuing Need for an Independent Voice of the Faculty

A similar dynamic that led to the founding of the FNL, has in fact been repeated in subsequent conflicts where, absent a Faculty Senate, the level of scrutiny and candor needed could not be comfortably expressed in the faculty meeting itself.

- Conflict over the decision to build commercial office buildings rather than graduate housing in the East Campus;
- Conflict over the political and financial embrace of Saudi Prince Mohammed bin Salman;
- The mishandling of the donations from Jeffrey Epstein;
- The suspension of the student organizations supporting Palestinians in Gaza.

Some progress has been made, and a spotlight was eventually shown on the mishandling of the Jeffrey Epstein funds, which many here participated in. In fact, that process would have been much easier if we had a Faculty Senate independent of the sitting administration.

In the continuing absence of an elected Faculty Senate, the FNL fills a distinctive need.

Thank you for your attention. ■

Jonathan A. King is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Biology; Chair, Editorial Board of the MIT Faculty Newsletter (jaking@mit.edu).

Spring Updates from the Faculty Committees

Fuller, from page 1

standing faculty committees for a mid-year update on their work to inform the faculty as a whole. The updates we received are a sample of what has been in process this year in terms of regular business. If you'd like to engage or find out more about any of these topics, names of committee members, chairs and staff are listed on the [faculty governance website](#).

Campus Planning

(Seth Mnookin, Chair)

The CCP has been continuing the work we began last year that examines the decision-making process that informs campus planning and construction. We are preparing a report for Institute leadership containing recommendations about how faculty can be more meaningfully involved in that process. We are also in the midst of receiving a series of briefings about issues on campus, including a community engagement pilot program regarding the upcoming Eastman and McDermott Courts landscape revitalization; a flexible workspace task force that is developing plans for more efficient use of administrative space; and an update on campus resiliency projections and sustainability goals. Finally, we are preparing suggestions to improve the workings of the CCP moving forward, with recommendations about longer tenures and formal mechanisms for communicating with the faculty as a whole.

Faculty Policy

(Mary Fuller, Chair)

This year, the committee has met several times each semester with the president and provost to discuss and advise on emerging questions; we hope to continue this more frequent cadence of consultation. Among other topics, FPC provided feedback on the new postering policy; reviewed clarifications to the charge for the Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Freedom and Campus Expression; engaged with the co-chairs of the Task Force on the Undergraduate Academic

Program; reviewed proposed changes from the Committee on Graduate Programs (CGP); discussed implementation of the collective bargaining agreement with the Graduate Student Union (GSU), updates concerning Research Administration Services, and a [process](#) now underway to upgrade MIT's enterprise resource systems. We also met with two sub-committees of the UA on how to advance their interests in improving civic engagement and in clarifying term regulations around student holidays.

Graduate Programs

(Duane Boning, Chair)

The Committee on Graduate Programs has focused their work during this academic year on graduate policy and procedure changes related to the MIT-GSU collective bargaining agreement that now establishes terms of employment for graduate students who provide instructional or research services. A major undertaking was the creation of policies to distinguish between employment and academic effort. The committee also developed a proposal to allow the minus modifier on the J grade for all subjects that receive J/U grading. This proposal has been reviewed by the Faculty Policy Committee and will be proposed and voted on at the April and May Institute faculty meetings.

Library System

(Nick Montfort, Chair)

The Committee on the Library System (CLS) is continuing to devote itself to promoting open and equitable access. While the principles of OA have remained the same over the past several years, a great deal has changed in the OA landscape since the MIT Open Access Task Force released its final recommendations in October 2019. This includes the Biden administration's update to federal policies to require that taxpayer-funded research be made available to the public immediately at no cost; the announcement was made in 2022, with implementation to be complete by the end of 2025. There are many barriers to opening up MIT

research that is not federally funded, however, and they range widely depending upon whether the research in question is sponsored research in engineering or a scholarly monograph. CLS is focused on discerning how to best help MIT's many diverse researchers move to make their insights openly available as we also support equity in research.

Nominations

(Rodrigo Verdi, Chair)

During AY2023-24, the Committee on Nominations successfully recruited nominees for 19 openings on Standing Committees of the Faculty and eight openings on the Edgerton and Killian Award Selection Committees. Nominations also conducted an extensive search process to identify a nominee to serve as the next Chair-Elect of the Faculty (2024-25) and as the next Chair of the Faculty (2025-27): Professor Roger Levy (Brain and Cognitive Sciences). The chair of Nominations, Rodrigo Verdi, and staff to the committee, Tami Kaplan, [wrote an article](#) for the November issue of the *Faculty Newsletter* explaining the nominations process and describing some recent and upcoming changes made to improve it.

Student Life

(Raúl Radovitzky, Chair)

The Committee on Student Life has been working on a single topic this year: the past, present, and future of the MIT dining program, and more generally considerations of food accessibility, affordability, and quality for the larger MIT community, including students, researchers, staff, and faculty.

Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid

(Ila Fiete, Chair)

The primary topic on the 2023-2024 CUAFA agenda has been the Supreme Court's decision in SFFA, the potential consequences on the composition of the MIT undergraduate community, and what admissions and financial aid might

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Spring Updates from the Faculty Committees

Fuller, from preceding page

be able to do – within the bounds of the law – to ameliorate any decline in diversity.

For context, faculty may find it helpful to revisit a [June 2023 blog post](#) by Dean of Admissions + Student Financial Services Stu Schmill '86, which explains how MIT Admissions has used tools like race-conscious admissions and standardized testing to enroll classes that were both [robustly diverse and academically excellent](#). It also explains why – [based on data from state flagship universities](#) that were barred from considering race in admissions even before this most recent decision – the Admissions Office is anticipating a (potentially substantial) decline in the proportion of under-represented students in the MIT Class of 2028.

While the Admissions Office awaits these results – it won't know the actual composition of the class until the summer – CUAFA recommended several race-neutral measures to generally improve access to MIT that took immediate effect this year.

Two key initiatives include:

1. Increasing the financial aid budget, principally through a new policy that guarantees \$0 Parental Contribution for families that earn less than \$75K (with typical assets); this policy – informed by leading economics research into clear, effective financial aid communications that can actually change applicant behavior – also enabled admissions to quintuple the number of students matched through [QuestBridge](#), a nonprofit organization that connects academically outstanding and socioeconomically disadvantaged

students to well-matched universities with generous aid programs.

2. Increasing the admissions budget to cover all travel costs to and from Campus Preview Weekend, Ebony Affair, and/or Sin LiMITe for any student with an address in the United States who receives any financial aid, in an attempt to enable every adMIT in America to visit campus in April and feel at home in our community.

CUAFA continues to investigate a range of other initiatives and responses – both those “within” admissions/financial aid and also those that might be produced through partnerships across the Institute – as it awaits the results of the Class of 2028 in a “proactively reactive” posture.

Undergraduate Program

(William Minicozzi, Chair)

The Committee on the Undergraduate Program (CUP) and its Subcommittees on the Communication and HASS Requirements (SOCR and SHR) had a full first half of the academic year. As part of a process for institutional accreditation (New England Commission of Higher Education, NECHE), the CUP and its subcommittees were charged with developing learning outcomes for the GIRs, including the Communication and HASS Requirements. Early fall, the CUP, SOCR, and SHR refined and finalized these learning outcomes which were drafted during AY2023.

In early fall, the CUP and its subcommittees were also asked to be Foundational Working Groups for the Task Force on the Undergraduate Academic Program. These Foundational Working Groups were charged with providing reports on: CUP – developments,

trends or concerns observed by the committee, comment on the recent experiments, along with other emerging matters that CUP views as important for the Task Force to consider; SOCR and SHR – assessing the status of the Communication and HASS Requirements. The CUP and its subcommittees devoted most of the fall and early spring to this task and recently submitted their final reports.

The CUP and its subcommittees have returned to routine business, but also plan to continue discussion on topics that arose in the fall as part of the Foundational Working Group efforts. For SOCR this includes a discussion of communication in the context of Generative AI. This spring, the CUP will take a preliminary look at some of the history of and data reflecting the Institute Drop Date. The chair of CUP also serves *ex officio* on the recently charged Task Force on the Undergraduate Academic Program.

Other committees

Readers of these columns, I hope, are also aware of two additional groups we have stood up this year that are not standing committees, but are engaged in important work on our behalf: the Task Force on the Undergraduate Academic Program (co-chairs, Joel Voldman and Adam Martin) and the Committee on Academic Freedom and Campus Expression (co-chairs, Michael Sipser and Peko Hosoi). Both have recently visited the faculty meeting, and each will be communicating regularly with the MIT community: in the meantime, please see the CAFCE [website](#), the Task Force [website](#), and the MIT News [article](#) on the Task Force. ■

Mary C. Fuller is a Professor of Literature and Chair of the Faculty (mcfuller@mit.edu).

Discussing Research Security with Research Groups

Peter H. Fisher
Gregory Moffatt

THE NOVEMBER 2022 REPORT of the MIT China Strategy Group, co-chaired by Richard Lester and Lily Tsai, grappled with how the Institute can preserve its fundamental commitment to open scientific exchange and collaboration while taking fine-tuned steps to address known security risks and ethical risks. Titled *University Engagement with China: An MIT Approach*, the report also expressed principles applicable to MIT's engagement with other countries. Its recommendations identified actions to mitigate the risk of harm to MIT research and researchers. For one, the report urged each principal investigator (PI) "to ensure that all group members understand the norms and expectations of the group."

We have written this article to encourage all our PI colleagues at MIT to engage their research groups in a discussion of the group's norms and expectations. These discussions are essential to promoting scientific exchange and collaboration while preserving research security. We provide a written resource to support such conversations later in this article.

When you welcome new students, postdocs, and staff to your research group, what topics are part of their orientation? At group meetings, you might periodically discuss your expectations regarding lab notebooks, proper care of equipment, and other housekeeping matters. Do your advisees also know how to protect data when discussing their work at MIT with friends or when traveling overseas? Do you expect early results to be shared in preprints or tightly held to preserve their commercialization prospects? Have you made clear the requirements to appear as

a co-author on a paper from your group? Do members of your research group *fully* understand your expectations about initiating new collaborations or when it's appropriate to share information, samples, or equipment outside the group?

The research group constitutes the fundamental unit of research at a university, and the group meeting presents the best environment for discussing norms and expectations. We suggest raising these topics routinely and discussing them openly. When such conversations are held in the candor of the research group or between mentor and advisees, they can dispel fear and enable work to proceed with clarity and confidence.

An ounce of prevention

PIs are central to the research enterprise, set the group's tone, and establish the norms and expectations of the group. As the Strategy Group noted, PIs' broad influence – as scholars, leaders, innovators, teachers, mentors, and ambassadors – is the same characteristic that "places them most at risk of foreign interference or influence as well as U.S. government investigation" and most vulnerable to harm resulting from errors in the research group. In the current policy environment, the consequences for the PI could include setbacks to the research program, reputational damage, or loss of funding. The PI's "role in risk assessment and management," the report therefore said, "is central."

Where to begin? A new resource

We [have created a resource](#) to support PIs in broaching the subject of research secu-

rity with their research groups and advisees. Framed as a discussion guide, designed to be locally adaptable, and written with direct input by faculty at each of the Schools and the College, it suggests an approach to outlining fundamental principles and policies that apply to every individual and unit engaging in research at MIT. Some PIs may find the guide provides a structure for a dedicated information session with their research group or that single topics could be incorporated into regular lab meetings.

Proactive discussion is the key to communicating the PI's expectations.

The four-page guide does not attempt to capture much complexity – there is no lengthy detail on export control regulations, for example, nor sponsor-by-sponsor requirements on conflict of interest. However, it points to resources for further guidance. By fostering candid discussion within your group, you will bring important questions and unchallenged assumptions to light. For further support on these topics, we invite you to contact MIT Research Compliance in the Office of the Vice President for Research at research-compliance-help@mit.edu.

With other colleagues working to implement the recommendations of the MIT China Strategy Group, we are speaking at School council meetings this spring about the discussion guide and more. We welcome your feedback. ■

Peter H. Fisher is Thomas A. Frank (1977) Professor of Physics and Vice Provost and Associate Vice President for Research Computing and Data (fisherp@mit.edu).
Gregory Moffatt is MIT's Chief Research Compliance Officer (gtm@mit.edu).

Planning for Commencement 2024

James Poterba

THE MULTI-DAY MIT Commencement ceremony that was introduced in 2022 has been well received. Commencement 2024 will follow the same basic structure as last year's celebration, with multiple shorter events replacing the historical Commencement marathon.

Activities will begin on Wednesday afternoon, May 29, with the advanced degree ceremony for the School of Science and the combined ceremony for the School of Engineering and the College of Computing. On Thursday morning, May 30, there will be advanced degree ceremonies for the Schools of Architecture and Planning; Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences; and two programs within the Sloan School of Management. On

Thursday afternoon, the OneMIT Ceremony, featuring the address by Commencement speaker Noubar Afeyan (PhD '87), President Kornbluth's charge to the graduates, and the traditional turning of the class ring, will be held on Killian Court. Two Sloan advanced degree ceremonies take place on Thursday evening. The celebration will conclude on Friday, May 31, with the Undergraduate Degree Ceremony in the morning on Killian Court and two additional events for Sloan advanced degree programs.

Commencement is an important milestone for our graduates, and many of them look back on it decades later as a key element of their MIT experience. Faculty involvement is essential to making it a

meaningful and memorable event; our students delight in having their teachers and supervisors share in their joy and accomplishment.

You should have received an email invitation, sent on March 7, to participate in Commencement 2024. You can register and order regalia on your mobile device using the latest version of the Atlas app; like me, you may need to update the app before registering. The deadline for ordering regalia is Monday, April 22.

I welcome your feedback as we continue to refine the new format, and hope to see you at one or more of this year's ceremonies. ■

James Poterba is the Mitsui Professor of Economics and Chair, Commencement Committee (poterba@mit.edu).

Phi Beta Kappa at MIT: A Golden Opportunity to Recognize Undergraduate Excellence

Emily Richmond Pollock

DID YOU KNOW THAT MIT's chapter of the national honor society [Phi Beta Kappa](#) annually recognizes around 75-90 senior undergraduates for their broad excellence and achievements in liberal arts and sciences? Building on years of stalwart leadership over many years by Diana Henderson and Arthur Bahr from Literature, Anne McCants from History, and many other distinguished colleagues, and supported by Kim Benard and Ian Murray in CAPD, I am shepherding this year's PBK selection process and events.

Faculty and teaching staff across the Institute can help us in our work by notifying us of excellent students who should

be on our radar. While GPA and transcripts are our initial data set, we love to hear when there are students who are writing exciting theses, have conducted impressive original research, or have shown particularly broad and deep engagement across the liberal arts and sciences, such as a minor or double major, whatever their specific GPA.

In addition, if you were yourself inducted into Phi Beta Kappa as an undergraduate, we would really love to hear from you and add you to our roster. Faculty "membership" in MIT's chapter can be as minimal as showing up to cheer on and shake the hands of new inductees

at our Commencement-time event (this year: Wednesday, May 29 at 10 am in 32-123) and as involved as helping out with the selection process. We also annually choose a distinguished faculty speaker for the induction (recent speakers have included Arthur Bahr and Elizabeth Wood) and host an informational reception in April.

Please reach out to me (pollock@mit.edu) or Kim Benard (benard@mit.edu) to share information or ask questions. ■

Emily Richmond Pollock is an Associate Professor in the Department of Music and Theater Arts (pollock@mit.edu).

A Letter to the Media and to Congress from MIT Faculty: How Fear Has Been Weaponized to Suppress Free Speech

Michel DeGraff
Tanalís Padilla
on behalf of 32
MIT Faculty Members

ON MONDAY, MARCH 25TH, an excerpt of the below letter was published in *The New York Times* Letters to the Editor section. We had to significantly edit it in order to meet their length requirements, so we wanted to share our full text with you, our colleagues, in order to continue the conversation around campus climate. We cannot stay silent in the face of calculated tactics designed to weaponize fear and intimidation. As civil rights organizer Marshall Ganz stated, “the only way to fight fear is with courage.” Thus, we find our courage together, as a group of concerned faculty, to speak plainly and clearly about the external political agendas that are harming our community.

We represent a group of 32 MIT faculty from various disciplines. Today we write a public letter to set the record straight about what is happening on our campus. It is not the story that you have heard in national news and it is not the story that appears in the [request for information](#) that the US House Committee on Education and the Workforce made to our institution on March 8th.

First, let there be no doubt: hatred of all kinds is real and rising, including antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism, xenophobia, misogyny, transphobia, and more. All of these were pervasive in US academia well into the 1960s and they are surging again nationally. On our campus, we are committed to fighting the rise of hatred in all of its forms.

Second, our students, staff, and faculty who are raising their collective voices to call for a ceasefire in Gaza face unsubstan-

tiated accusations of antisemitism, even while [50% of US Jews currently support a ceasefire](#). Criticism of Israel’s government is repeatedly and erroneously conflated with antisemitism. MIT students, staff, and faculty who have spoken out publicly for Palestinian rights not only have been repeatedly doxxed, defamed, and threatened, but also have had to endure accusations of antisemitism weaponized against them to suppress their free speech. Our students have been attacked as “pro-Hamas” and chased through the hallways for wearing a kaffiyeh or a hijab. Students who have engaged in peaceful and permitted protests for Palestine – several with family in Gaza City, Khan Younis, and Rafah – have been physically intimidated and defamed online. A Women and Gender Studies book club reading a well-known Palestinian woman activist’s memoir was held up as evidence of antisemitism on campus, ignoring the fact that the book actively promotes nonviolent resistance. Members of the [MIT Jews for Ceasefire](#), a prominent campus group of Jewish students, staff, and faculty, have been harassed and isolated for advocating for a ceasefire. These actions and others suppress protected political speech in support of the rights, humanity, and dignity of the Palestinian people.

Third, the media portrayal of MIT has largely relied on a single narrative that ignores the rich diversity of the Jewish experience on the MIT campus. No one person or group can speak for the entirety – or even the majority – of MIT’s Jewish community. Such irresponsible and unbalanced coverage has further fueled the silencing and intimidation of our Palestinian, Arab, Muslim, and allied communities. It has led to the cultivation

of fear and isolation amongst Jewish members of the MIT community, whose families and friends have been misled to believe a skewed representation of MIT. Such narrow, one-sided understanding of the history and the lived experience of a whole community makes people feel unsafe on campus and creates a climate of fear and intimidation.

Our ask is simple. We cannot teach and learn and hold a fractured community together when Congress and the media are stoking partisan firestorms, so we ask these institutions to do their jobs so that we can do ours. Our job at MIT moving forward involves hard conversations, sitting with uncomfortable realities, and ensuring that we enable community exchange, reflection, and listening. We call on the media to return to journalistic norms of fairness and balance in reporting on college campuses; to stop the sensationalism; to avoid cherry-picking sources; to report in search of truth. We invite you to our campus to meet our students and join us in our university events and dialogues, to get your story right. We call on Congress to tamp down the election-year theater because it is harming our students and preventing our community from collectively navigating the grief and trauma of this present moment. We invite you to remember that you were elected to uphold our freedoms as guaranteed in the Constitution: freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, and, most notably, *freedom of speech* – no exceptions. ■

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Questioning the “Mea Culpa”: Mathematically and Administratively

Prahlad Balaji Iyengar

I AM A FIRST-YEAR PHD student in the EECS department studying quantum information. I was also, along with other students, ejected from the February 14 Institute faculty meeting without reasonable cause. We wanted to learn about the Committee on Academic Freedom and Campus Expression (CAFCE) committee’s plan, hear the faculty debate perspectives on free speech, and demonstrate by our silent but attentive presence the importance of incorporating the student voice. Ironically, both CAFCE committee co-chairs (joining President Sally Kornbluth) followed their presentation emphasizing open engagement with the campus community by voting to exclude us from the room. The motion was brought forth by a tenured faculty member who claimed that videos from a previous faculty meeting had been leaked to NPR. These videos, as far as I am aware, are nowhere to be found.

Prof. Peko Hosoi was invited to a post-debate meeting with students and faculty to discuss the reason for our frustration, and conceded that it was a mistake to (1) tally the votes for but not against, and (2) not recuse the CAFCE co-chairs from the vote. She communicated her desire to issue an apology about the way the meeting was handled.

A “Mea Culpa” was issued – not to the students, but to the faculty in the [January-March Faculty Newsletter](#). The students received a “special message” praising us for following the rules (and still getting kicked out). To attempt to justify the vote outcome independently of her actions, Prof. Hosoi proposed a mathematical defense, using the mean average of previous votes as an estimate for the expected number of voters in this faculty meeting. This analysis is faulty on three different levels.

First, I question the use of the mean as an estimator. As a toy example, suppose when you ask a cunning child to pick a number from 0 through 9, they alternate between picking either 1 or 3. In the limit, the mean is indeed 2; however, that would be a poor prediction for the very next value. The choice of the mean as

an appropriate estimator for this problem makes an assumption about the underlying distribution.

Second, I observe an abuse of the Gaussian. Upon inspection, the graph provided in the “Mea Culpa” suggests that the underlying distribution for the raw number of votes is itself Gaussian. Though Gaussians are commonly used to model *statistics* about the data via the central limit theorem, this does not imply that the underlying distribution of voters is Gaussian. This abuse of the Gaussian betrays at worst a deliberate manipulation of the reader, and at best a confusion of the role of Gaussian distributions in statistics.

Third, I question the data that was used. The data itself is not conducive to a rigorous analysis. If we wanted to get a distribution of voter participation, we ought to have used the percentage of voters, normalized to the attendance at each meeting at the time of the vote. The model cannot accurately predict the number of voters *given the total attendance* without taking into account the attendance at each session.

Viewed in isolation, these could be simple mistakes. But together, they indicate a structural issue with understanding the problem.

I extend that criticism to the MIT administration’s approach to CAA and pro-Palestinian organizing on campus. Consider the following three mistakes made by the administration:

1. **Revoking access to an Instagram page where student groups advertise themselves,** falsely implying that the CAA’s Instagram takeover was against the rules. This decision, made without precedent or due process, was later retracted and an apology was issued on the same Instagram account.

2. **Issuing threats of suspension to student protestors during the November 9, 2023 sit-in in Lobby 7.** President Kornbluth, who was in attendance, bypassed disciplinary procedure and review processes. The “justification” that the protest broke the rules was undermined by having changed the rules just 24 hours prior.

Kornbluth later retracted this threat due to the steadfastness and solidarity of the protestors.

3. **Issuing a no-contact order for CAA students on behalf of the IDHR staff.** In January, students engaged in symbolic protest by reading Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s *Letter from Birmingham Jail* in front of the IDHR office. The administration responded by requiring all CAA members, even in their individual capacities, to run all IDHR incident reports by Dean David Randall. This non-confidential step discouraged reporting of Islamophobia and, ironically, violated Title IX regulations. This unconstitutional gatekeeping of the IDHR process was retracted only after lawyers contacted the Office of General Counsel.

These three mistakes could be viewed in isolation. But to members of the CAA these past six months, this pattern of negligence betrays a structural problem in the way this administration approaches certain student groups.

These structural issues also manifest in the way other groups on campus are deprioritized. Jews for Ceasefire has consistently faced administrative **barriers** which devalue their anti-Zionist Jewish perspective. Asian American Initiative’s SOLE-designated community space was reassigned to other groups without warning. BSU’s (the Black Students’ Union) and BGSA’s (the Black Graduate Student Association) years-long campaign to reduce policing has been ignored by increasing armed police presence in our hallways and lobbies. These are not isolated oversights, they form a pattern of negligent behavior, revealing to the student body which students are considered less equal than others.

To Professor Hosoi and others interested, I present a fuller mathematical analysis [on the FNL website](#). To the administration, I can only recommend that you turn a critical lens toward your own actions these past two semesters. ■

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A Statement on Jewish Activism, Safety, and Recent Events at MIT

MIT Jews for Ceasefire

WE, THE MIT JEWS FOR CEASEFIRE, a group of Jewish students, staff, and faculty, are writing to ask you, members of the faculty, to challenge the widely reported claim that pro-Palestinian activism on campus constitutes an anti-semitism problem. We urge you to avoid falling prey to bad faith arguments by pro-Israel students and faculty who publicly align and collaborate with rightwing politicians and organizations whose stated goals are the [dismantling](#) of DEI programs, the [degradation](#) of education, and the [undermining](#) of the labor movement.

Two Jewish groups have formed on campus recently: MIT Jews for Ceasefire (J4C) and the MIT Israel Alliance (MIT IA). Members of the MIT Jews for Ceasefire took part in the November 9th protest with the MIT Coalition Against Apartheid and other anti-war groups because we believe in the right of Palestinians to live in freedom and with dignity and we urge MIT to divest from Israel's occupation, apartheid, and genocidal war in Gaza. Instead of the peaceful sit-in that we were expecting (protest organizers instructed attendees to bring our homework, and so we did), we were accosted by counterprotesters who projected violent imagery on a screen, yelled, pushed us, stepped on us, insulted us, and [much more](#). We were harassed by other Jewish and Israeli students, staff, and faculty that either could not fathom our Jewishness or were outright derisive of it (calling us self-hating Jews, not real Jews, G_d's mistake, etc). You can read what we have [written about that day](#). One counterprotester spread a since-debunked lie that

the anti-war protestors prevented MIT's Jewish students from attending classes ("[It's been falsely rumored](#)," page 2). This lie has grown so virulently – boosted by MIT IA's appearance on CNN and Fox News – that it has now captured national and congressional attention as an example of the "big problem of antisemitism in academia."

The consequences of the MIT Israel Alliance's behavior, enabled and abetted by MIT faculty supporters, are numerous. MIT faculty and students have doxxed students expressing support for Palestine. The administration [suspended](#) the Coalition Against Apartheid, a group that had formed in the 80s to push for divestment from South African apartheid and has lobbied for similar divestment from Israel. Anti-Palestinian, anti-Arab, and Islamophobic incidents on campus have [spiked](#). Led by the Chair of the House Republican Conference Representative Elise Stefanik, Congress has requested emails and targeted individuals for investigation. And MIT police have increased both their presence and their surveillance on campus significantly. Following the protest, we learned that a number of the violent and verbally abusive counterprotesters – whose lies that day and since have put students at risk, and put MIT under national political fire – are members of the MIT Israel Alliance.

Pro-Israel activists on campus have a [crybullyism](#) problem: faced with opposition to their nationalism and militarism, they respond violently then turn around and claim "oppression of Jewish voices."

A false binary

There are many accounts of attempted or outright targeting and silencing of pro-Palestinian protesters and/or Muslim-presenting people on campus. These incidents have been perpetrated by students, faculty, and the MIT administration (some of them are recorded [here](#)). But the MIT Israel Alliance has successfully leveraged a moral panic around campus antisemitism, with the mainstream media irresponsibly platforming MIT IA while erasing Palestinian pain and ignoring the global anti-war movement that has a growing presence on the MIT campus. At the same time, the MIT administration has, to date, largely ignored Islamophobic and anti-Jewish acts committed by pro-Israel individuals. Instead, it is focusing intently on claims of antisemitism made by pro-Israel students and faculty.

That public narrative perpetuates an imaginary binary: the Israeli nationalist Jewish students on one side versus Muslim/Arab/Palestinian students on another. As a pro-Palestinian and anti-Zionist Jewish community, J4C challenges this false dichotomy. While MIT IA members are rewarded with invitations to hold congressional press conferences with GOP operatives, J4C is focused on our community at MIT. With dozens of active organizers and an audience of hundreds on campus, J4C [has protested, written letters, hosted speakers, and held events](#). We are creating a pluralistic, progressive Jewish space on campus while challenging MIT's complicity in the acute crisis in Gaza.

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**A Statement on Jewish Activism, Safety,
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But in our quest to create a reprieve to the monopolistic hold that Israeli nationalist politics and institutions have on MIT Jewish life (this includes Hillel with its many resources, like the use of physical spaces and even data – did you know that Hillel automatically receives Jewish student information upon matriculation without their consent?), we have been met with bureaucratic delays and lack of any tangible support. You can read more about our experiences with administration in our recent [open letter](#). Our commitment to building a diaspora-centered, tolerant, and progressive Jewish community at MIT has only been strengthened in the face of oppositional efforts from student groups and a non-committal administration.

Whose safety?

The Israeli nationalist faction has hitched their wagon to racist and antisemitic politicians. As Jews, we are beyond alarmed that MIT Israel Alliance members don't seem to care about the harm that they are unleashing on the institution and the country by actively collaborating with far-right Congresspeople [Elise Stefanik](#) and [Mike Johnson](#). These politicians have both employed the highly antisemitic "Great Replacement Theory" in their arguments against immigrants and immigrant rights – a fact that, by itself, should have been immediately disqualifying. Moreover, both Representatives are two of the most ardent supporters of ex-President Trump, whose [antisemitic rhetoric](#) is louder than a bullhorn. Stefanik and Johnson [refused to condemn](#) Trump when he called the Charlottesville Unite the

Right Rally Nazis "very fine people." And they have both refused to certify President Biden's election, displaying their outright disdain for the democratic process.

MIT Israel Alliance and their faculty supporters are either unwitting enablers or co-conspirators in the conservative lawmakers' transparent plot to dismantle the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs. Under the guise of keeping Jewish students safe, these lawmakers are destroying the very programs and initiatives that are making campuses more safe for all people, including Jews. In the face of threatened legal action from these politicians, the MIT administration continues to suppress and punish brown and black students who have called out the Institute's [culpability in the ongoing genocide](#).

Likewise, in filing [federal charges](#) against our graduate workers' national union for its endorsement of Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS), MIT IA members have entered into a collaboration with the National Right to Work Committee, a highly litigious anti-labor organization known for "[directly \[contributing\] to the erosion of high-paying middle class jobs and to growing inequality](#)."

We urge those who engage with MIT IA to consider whether this group truly protects the community it claims to represent: how can MIT IA fight for all Jews while collaborating with [racist and antisemitic politicians](#)? Immigrant Jews while [siding with anti-immigration politicians](#)? Queer Jews while allying with [homophobic and transphobic](#) politicians? Poor, working-class, disabled Jews while leaning on [anti-labor, anti-Medicare, anti-healthcare](#) politicians?

MIT Israel Alliance commits real harm on campus and beyond through physical

violence, intimidation, doxxing, harassment, and collaboration with dangerous individuals and organizations seeking to dismantle the very institutions that keep all of us safe. Yet MIT IA and their faculty supporters continue to broadcast that they are scared and unsafe – all because MIT community members speak up against a genocide and our institution's [complicity in it](#). For us, Jewish safety cannot come at the expense of the safety of others. Over 32,000 Palestinians have been murdered in Gaza by Israeli forces and their US-supplied weapons. More than 13,000 of those who have been killed are children. There are no universities left in Gaza. With each passing day, as the threat of famine swells, our advocacy against the genocide becomes increasingly urgent.

Every McCarthyist movement seems dire in the moment, only to later be recognized to be an embarrassment and a disgrace. This moment should be seen for what it is: a weaponization of antisemitism to undermine pro-Palestine organizing, suppress free speech, delegitimize diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, and gut labor rights. We urge you to challenge the false narratives surrounding antisemitism and Jewish safety on campus, to finally attend to anti-Palestinian, anti-Arab, and Islamophobic incidents at MIT, and to join us in envisioning a better university for all. We welcome any students, staff, or faculty at MIT who may be questioning how to interpret or respond to events on campus, to reach out to us to [start a conversation](#). ■

MIT Jews for Ceasefire can be reached at: mitjews4ceasefire@gmail.com.

Editor's Note: This statement is being cross-published with *The Tech*.

Is Antisemitism One of MIT's Values?

David Etlin

PRESIDENT SALLY KORNBLUTH'S [testimony](#) at the widely viewed congressional [hearing](#) on campus antisemitism prompted an [outcry](#), including bipartisan [condemnation](#). Responding to this, MIT's Associate Chair of the Faculty was quoted in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* as saying: "We all understand that there are problems that have to be worked out, and I think everybody's ready to roll up their sleeves and work them out [. . .] I don't think we're the kind of community where we will just hand responsibility off to the administration." Unfortunately, the MIT faculty have [not](#) worked out the problem of antisemitism plaguing the MIT community, and too many of the faculty have rolled up their sleeves to [perpetuate anti-semitism](#).

Jewish and Israeli members of the MIT [community](#) have tried to help, but they and their efforts have largely been [ignored](#). The anti-Zionist authors who dominate the *MIT Faculty Newsletter* have disregarded the articles published in its pages by Professor [Yossi Sheffi](#) and by the [MIT Israel Alliance](#). They have averted their eyes from the resignation statement of Professor [Mauricio Karchmer](#). They have discounted the multiple open letters signed by [alumni](#). They have taken no notice of the material compiled by Professor [Lionel Kimerling](#). They have not listened to the [voice](#) of graduate student [Liyam Chitayat](#), or the [testimony](#) to Congress by graduate student [Talia Khan](#). They have brushed aside [the numerous social media posts by Professor Retsef Levi](#).

The [October 7](#) attack on Israel was perpetrated by Hamas pursuant to their

genocidal antisemitic [ideology](#). Shani Louk's mangled body was seen being hauled away in a pickup truck and paraded around to jubilant crowds in Gaza; her decapitated [skull](#) was later found. Captured terrorists, who confessed to necrophilia, said their Hamas commanders ordered [decapitations](#) and offered bounties for kidnapping. With this as context, the MIT Women's and Gender Studies Program announced a [reading group](#) on the writings of a Palestinian who has said, "we will slaughter you and you will say that what Hitler did to you was a joke, we will drink your blood and [eat your skulls](#)."

Professor [Daniel Jackson](#) has explained that "[a]ntisemitic attitudes have practical consequences." MIT faculty and staff have, together with students, [fostered](#) a climate of Jew-hatred on campus that has led to the eruption of antisemitic activity on campus following the October 7 massacre in Israel. Starting with a [statement](#) blaming Israel for the attack against it by Hamas, and with [photos](#) glorifying Hamas' attack used in social media posts against Israel, faculty have supported the rallies on [October 13 and November 9](#); respectively, the "day of action" called for by [Hamas](#), and the anniversary of the Nazi [Kristallnacht](#) (The Night of Broken Glass).

Vandalism of a [Holocaust memorial](#) and the [Hillel](#) center at MIT are not only acts of hatred against Zionists, they are acts of hatred against all Jews. Given MIT's [Values Statement](#), it should be unacceptable to bully or intimidate anybody for their views on Zionism, however [unfashionable](#) they may

presently be on campus; just as it should be unacceptable to discriminate against anybody for their religious beliefs, ethnicity, or ancestry. But it has been [observed](#) that MIT adopts a completely different standard for groups other than Jews, Israelis, and Zionists, when those other groups are treated in ways they deem hostile, or when their members are portrayed in a disparaging manner.

The *MIT Faculty Newsletter* Editorial Subcommittee [ignore](#) all the pro-Hamas and pro-Nazi messages and symbolism, and instead [blame the victims](#) for this antisemitic abuse. The same Editorial Subcommittee have [inquired](#) why MIT is not working toward peace. As Daniel Jackson and David Dolev have [replied](#), the MIT MISTI program aims to promote peace through cross-cultural understanding. However, the office of the MIT MISTI program was [targeted](#) by a contingent of anti-Israel protestors, who rattled doors and [accosted](#) the program director.

The antisemitic disruptions of the MIT campus do not occur in a [vacuum](#). At UC Berkeley, [rioters](#) broke through a glass door at an event with an Israeli speaker, physically assaulting students while shouting "Jew." (Coincidentally, this happened on the same day that the Berkeley law school [Dean](#) was at MIT speaking on campus free expression in the Dialogue Across Difference program.) As argued by [FIRE](#), a leading organization for campus free speech, rioters must be expelled in order for campuses to be environments where all may speak freely.

Although a group of [faculty and staff](#) are critical of the administration's [token](#) [continued on next page](#)

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efforts to address the campus disruptions, there is one point where they agree with MIT leadership and with the MIT Corporation: the antisemitic activity is protected free speech. Indeed, the recent Report of the MIT Ad Hoc Working Group on Free Expression (FEWG) paved the way for the current antisemitic climate, by highlighting Nazi marches in a Jewish community as an example of acceptable hate speech. But MIT is no Harvey Silverglate, as demonstrated by that same FEWG report giving priority to DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) over free speech, especially when it comes to requiring DEI loyalty oaths from administrators.

The Chairwoman of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce has exposed the hypocrisy of MIT's "free speech" excuse for antisemitism, as revealed by the cancelled speeches by Professor Dorian Abbot and former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Additionally, the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee has noted publicly the bias of the MIT leadership in its selection of invited speakers for

Standing Together Against Hate. This double standard reflects institutional antisemitism.

How can MIT claim free speech for interruptions of multiple MIT classes, while forbidding the display of the Israeli flag and attempting to block the screening of video footage of the horrific October 7 attack on Israel? Even libertarians recognize that MIT staff cannot espouse antisemitic or anti-Zionist bias while engaging in their professional work as an interfaith chaplain. A fortiori, such biases should be forbidden for staff responding to complaints of discrimination and harassment; MIT DEI or IDHR staff who refuse to acknowledge that antisemitism is covered under Title VI have failed in their responsibilities under the law.

In order for MIT to clarify the murky understanding of antisemitism in its community, the Institute can avail itself of the working definition of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). This definition is a simple one, whose interpretation is guided by a set of examples which "could, taking into account the overall context," be antisemitic. As the standard employed by both the Federal government and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the

IHRA definition of antisemitism could provide guidance to MIT for matters such as the Title VI Federal Civil Rights lawsuit the Institute now faces from some of its Jewish students.

The IHRA definition of antisemitism might even assist the Institute in incorporating Jews into MIT's Strategic Action Plan for Belonging, Achievement, and Composition. MIT's failure to grasp the problem of "Antisemitism and Jewish Inclusion on Campus" is exhibited in this blurb from a DEI event held during Independent Activities Period: "Jewish students, as a minority group, are encountering much of the same discomfort that other minorities face on campus and in the world, in that they don't feel heard or acknowledged."

No, the discomfort Jews are facing is unlike anything faced by anybody else on campus or in the world. Nobody but the Jews are facing regular calls for "intifada" and genocide "from the river to the sea", whether on the streets, on the campus, or within the pages of the MIT Faculty Newsletter. MIT needs to do better if it wants to build a better world. ■

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MIT Numbers

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