

GSC Year End Report 2016-2017

Arolyn Conwill, GSC President 2016-2017

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Introduction

This report covers the major initiatives of the GSC from 2016-2017. The highlights of the year can be broken down into four themes: professional development, advocacy, community building, and internal development. Detailed reports on the activities of each Committee/Board can be found in the Appendices.

The GSC's accomplishments this year have been a team effort, and have been carried out by volunteers, many of whom have taken on leadership roles in Council and on Committees. The GSC's ability to represent and serve the graduate student body depends on the contributions of each and every student who has dedicated their time, their enthusiasm, and their perspective to our work. The GSC also benefits greatly from the stellar administrative support of Lauren McLean and Betsy Granese.

Highlights of the Year

Professional Development

Improving professional development opportunities for graduate students was a major priority this year, in terms of both enhancing the GSC's own professional development programming as well as developing better practices at the Institute level.

The **Committee on Academics, Research, and Careers** (ARC) is responsible for the GSC's professional development programming. Through strong leadership, ARC was able to not only continue the Committee's core initiatives, but also revamp and launch new ones. For example, in collaboration with the Muddy Charles Pub, ARC has launched a **Profs on Tap** series, aimed at creating opportunities for graduate students to interact with professors and professionals in an informal setting. Further collaborations with Global Education and Career Development (GECD), Gordon Engineering Leadership (GEL), the Alumni Association, and the MIT Libraries brought an excellent set of **career panels and skills workshops** to the graduate student body. ARC also revamped its **De-Stress Your Dissertation** series (formerly Dissertation Bootcamp) to serve more graduate students.

In addition, recognizing the value and competitiveness of ARC's **Travel Grant** program, Council approved requests to significantly increase Travel Grant funding allocations (ultimately to over \$41k for FY17*, up from \$23k in FY16*), enabling more graduate students to attend and present their work at conferences throughout the year. ARC also launched a new grant program, **Professional Development Exploration (PDE) grants**, to support graduate students in attending workshops or conferences outside their strict research or academic focus.

The GSC also took a leadership role among the **Career Fair** Partner Organizations in executing Career Fair 2016 and in ramping up for Career Fair 2017. Specifically, the GSC initiated changes to expand the Career Fair Director team to be more representative of MIT's student body and to solicit feedback more directly from students at multiple points during the year. The GSC also encouraged the other Partner Organizations to make a larger financial investment in professional development and career exploration opportunities throughout the year using Career Fair revenue, in order to facilitate career exploration throughout the year.

Finally, organizational and leadership changes in MIT's Administration, particularly in the Office of the Chancellor, provided an opportunity to reimagine how centralized offices engage with the graduate student body to build on graduate education at the department level. The GSC Officers, in consultation with the Executive Committee and Council, provided input into the priorities for the new **Vice Chancellor**. Pursuing other partnerships across MIT also provided fruitful opportunities to work towards a broader strategy for improving professional development; these efforts include an ongoing and informal working group with staff from GECD and ODGE, as well as contributions to an Alumni Association working group dedicated to developing an updated vision for how to engage graduate alumni and graduate students.

Advocacy

This year the GSC had strong advocacy efforts, both on campus and off campus. At the beginning of the year, we welcomed Vice President and Dean for Student Life Suzy Nelson to campus. In working together with the Division of Student Life and the Office for the Dean for Graduate Education, the GSC has made progress on a number of projects. In particular, **graduate families** will have increased personal and financial support in the upcoming year, as a result of a joint project between GW@MIT, HCA, and the GSC Officers.

In addition, the **organizational changes within the Office of the Chancellor** provided an opportunity to share our vision for where there are opportunities to enhance the graduate experience. During this process, we emphasized the importance of: furthering professional development and supplementing a student's academic curriculum (leadership skills, conflict management, entrepreneurship, internships, ...), sharing best practices between schools and graduate programs (graduate advising, diversity/inclusion, admissions practices, role of internships, ...), and relieving financial pressure on graduate students, especially those who are parents (childcare grants and subsidies, expanded parental leave policy, general policies that are sensitive to students' financial situations, ...).

In terms of off-campus advocacy, the GSC has significantly expanded its capacity through the creation of the **External Affairs Board** just over a year ago. In its first year, the External Affairs Board has deepened relationships with advocacy partners (including the MIT Washington Office, the Undergraduate Association, the Postdoctoral Association, Science Policy Initiative, National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS), and others), developed a rigorous process for making position statements on behalf of the GSC, updated the GSC's

policy platform, engaged with policymakers at the federal, state, and local level on issues relevant to MIT graduate students, held events that promote awareness and discussion of current events, and ramped up public outreach efforts. The External Affairs Board is in a strong position to continue its work in its second year.

This section would not be complete without acknowledging our **advocacy partners**, including other governing bodies and student groups both on campus (Undergraduate Association, Postdoctoral Association, Graduate Women at MIT, Science Policy Initiative) and off campus (NAGPS) and including members of MIT's Administration (Interim Dean for Graduate Education Blanche Staton, Vice President and Dean for Student Life Suzy Nelson, Chancellor Cynthia Barnhart, International Students Office Director David Elwell, and many more), who have all brought enthusiasm, patience, and perspective to our joint efforts.

Community Building

The GSC's work in community building this year included the events organized by Orientation Committee (OC) and Activities Committee (AC), relationships with dorm governments and other constituencies facilitated by the Committee on Housing and Community Affairs (HCA), social space and programming provided by the Muddy Charles Pub, support for graduate student groups by Funding Board and the Funding Board Task Force, and strong partnerships with offices and organizations across MIT.

The GSC welcomed incoming students to MIT during **Orientation 2016**, which featured a wide variety of events. In order to ensure that planning for future orientations goes as seamlessly as possible, Orientation Committee has written a thorough orientation guide. While new students receive extensive information regarding resources and opportunities at MIT during Orientation, one challenge has been that students may benefit from hearing this information at a later point, once they are more settled in. Orientation Committee organized a Re-Orientation event series at the beginning of the spring semester, and feedback from this pilot can be used to explore ways to facilitate better connections between students and helpful resources throughout the graduate experience.

Activities Committee did a great job organizing small and large events throughout the year, from the Taste Of series (in collaboration with the Alumni Association and with cultural groups) Grad Gala (which took place at the Boston Aquarium and completely sold out). Activities Committee also benefited from strong collaborations with student groups.

The **Committee on Housing and Community Affairs** (HCA) liaised with dorm governments throughout the year and housed a number of strong subcommittees, including Transportation, Off-Campus, and Sustainability. It also now houses a new Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee, which aims to increase the GSC's capacity to create initiatives in these areas and to serve as a student-led effort to centralize diversity initiatives taking place throughout the Institute.

The **Muddy Charles Pub** continues to serve as a community space for graduate students. Long-term planning was a major focus of this year, and the Board has made significant steps towards ensuring the longevity of the Pub. The Muddy Charles Pub Board is currently at capacity, reflecting strong engagement of the larger community of students, alums, and staff (all of whom are eligible to join the Board) with the Pub.

In addition to organizing its own programming, the GSC commits the majority of its financial resources towards empowering graduate students and graduate student groups directly, primarily through Funding Board. The GSC made a major push to streamline allocations to student groups and individuals, as a result of the recommendations made by the **Funding Board Task Force**. Feedback so far has been very positive.

Finally, the GSC has built stronger connections with offices and organizations across MIT, which in turn helps us build a stronger community for graduate students across campus. In particular, this year we have built stronger relationships with the Division of Student Life (under the leadership of VPSL Suzy Nelson), Global Education and Career Development (GECD), the MIT Alumni Association (MITAA), the Undergraduate Association (UA), and the Postdoc Association (PDA). These new and renewed partnerships lay the groundwork for future collaborations.

GSC Internal Development

The GSC Vice President led an **engagement and recruitment** effort this year, resulting in an increased number of Council representatives and competitive applications for Institute Committees through Nominations Board. The GSC saw stronger participation on Committees, in part due to an improved onboarding process for Council representatives spearheaded by the Vice President.

Last but not least, Council approved a number of changes to the **GSC Bylaws** in an effort led by the GSC Secretary to streamline procedures and remove inconsistencies. The nine resolutions passed cover legislative processes, financial operations, and selection/removal of positions. In addition, as a result of one resolution, GSC Committees and Boards have developed internal operating procedures. These changes will promote the general health of the organization.

Outlook

As always, the GSC's work continues into another year. On the immediate horizon, the appointment of the new Vice Chancellor presents an opportunity to set broad priorities for graduate education, in particular building on the professional development visioning done during the transition. The GSC's renewed partnerships with GECD and the Alumni Association also have the potential to catalyze changes in how professional development fits into graduate

education. These opportunities will hopefully work synergistically with the ongoing evolution of Career Fair, which is one piece of the puzzle of the larger professional development strategy.

The next year may also be an opportunity to increase engagement with constituents and constituencies through more outward-focused projects. Stronger relationships with student groups and stronger recruitment of Council reps set the stage for more direct outreach to the graduate student body at large. In addition, these efforts could mesh well with the development of the new Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee, or other projects like External Affairs Board's concept of an advocacy network of graduate students at large that would amplify the student voice in external policy decisions.

Overall, the GSC is in a strong position going into the next year. There were many contested elections for 2017-2018 Executive Committee positions, and the incoming leadership team has more experience than any other team in recent memory. Additionally, the updates made to internal practices (Funding Board Task Force, Bylaws amendments, etc.) should increase the GSC's capacity to do the work that has the most significant impact on the graduate student body.

Appendix I: Executive Committee Membership

Executive Committee Membership 2016-2017

Officers	
President	Arolyn Conwill
Vice President	Angela Crews
Secretary	Orpheus Chatzivasileiou
Treasurer	Lisa Guay
Committee/Board Chairs	
Academics, Research, and Careers (ARC)	Andrew Fiore and Erik Tillman
Activities Committee (AC)	Saurabh Gandhi and Sami Khan
External Affairs Board	Daniel Curtis
Housing and Community Affairs (HCA)	Ryan Gillis and Sarah Shapiro
Orientation Committee (OC)	Sarah Goodman and Jimmy Kaczmarek
Muddy Charles Pub	Zsigmond Varga
Association of Student Activities President	Nichole Clark

Appendix II: Officer Reports

Vice President and Nominations Board

Angie Crews, GSC Vice President

Vice President

In 2016-2017, the Vice President (VP) initiated a few new processes with Council Representatives that resulted in larger representation from the student body and an increase in participation on GSC Committees. When the Officer team began serving in May 2016, 68 of the 97 Council Rep seats were filled. In order to ensure greater representation, the VP advertised the open seats at GCM's and requested help from the current Council Representatives to fill the empty seats. The VP also reached out to the graduate administrators of the departments that did not have any representation in order to advertise the positions. This ended up paying dividends, with 82 of the positions filled by the end of year.

The VP also initiated new on-boarding procedures with the Council Reps. Upon receiving the

application and processing the paperwork, the Council Reps were emailed a copy of the Council Rep Handbook and put in touch with Co-Chairs of the Committees that they stated they were interested in when they filled out their initial applications. The Co-Chairs then emailed the new Council Reps and informed them about their respective Committees and the next meeting times. The net result was that more new Council Reps started serving on the GSC Committees, which ultimately helped with recruitment of ExComm positions later in the year. Additionally, the VP began providing a quick orientation to new Council Reps at the end of the GCM's. This was used to make sure Council Reps understood attendance requirements, how to submit a proxy, Council Rep funding, and serving on Committees. The increase in average attendance throughout the year is a good indicator that the orientations were effective.

Nominations Board

The Nominations Board also had a successful 2016-2017. In the summer of 2016, the Nomination Board processed 34 applications for graduate students and filled 25 different Presidential and Faculty Institute Committees. As the year progressed, multiple other requests for graduate student representation were filled for ad-hoc committees, and ultimately the Nominations Board nominated 26 students to fill 20 different ad-hoc committees. By ensuring the best possible graduate students were provided to serve on committees, the Nominations Board ensured that graduate student voices were considered in an effective manner.

Secretary and Publications and Publicity Board

Orpheus Chatzivasileiou, GSC Secretary

Secretary

As one of the four Executive Officers of the GSC, the Secretary interacted with MIT administrators on a number of projects that would serve to improve graduate student life. Of note is his interaction and collaboration with the VPSL on the matter of MIT Shuttles, especially the improvement of late night service.

In internal matters, the Secretary spearheaded a large-scale project focused at amending the GSC Bylaws to remove inconsistencies, streamline procedures and eliminate ambiguities or loopholes. In this, he was assisted by Lisa Guay, the Treasurer, and Andrew Fiore, the co-Chair of the Committee on Academics, Research & Careers. As a consequence of this, nine Bylaws amendments were introduced to the GSC General Council, dealing with matters such as the election and impeachment of the Executive Officers, the streamlining of some committee functions and the establishment of committee procedures, the dismissal of Committee Chairs, the elections/appointments of GSC Representatives to Council, the GSC Financial Process (funds disbursement oversight, Stabilization Fund, and Initiatives Fund), and the GSC Legislative Process (voting procedures and voting thresholds).

Publications and Publicity Board

In the 2016-2017 academic year the Publications & Publicity Board (P&P) continued its role of supporting the GSC in its publicity efforts. Through the Secretary, who heads the Board, P&P sought to improve the ways in which the GSC interacts with the administration in terms of publicity, by making stronger connections with Institute Events, as well as the public communications officers in ODGE, ISO, Alumni Association, and other organizations. As part of that effort, P&P helped in the cross-promotion of Institute/Department events via the GSC weekly newsletter (The GSC ANNO) as well as the GSC social media accounts.

In order to increase engagement among the graduate students, P&P instituted an initiative for regular (three times per week) posting by the GSC Committees on the GSC Facebook page. Furthermore, in order to increase transparency and aid in the debate, P&P created a new webpage where anyone can view and comment on GSC legislation before such legislation is voted on. Furthermore, P&P overhauled the look of the GSC ANNO weekly newsletter and revamped the submissions form to make it more user-friendly. P&P is currently in the process of designing the new GSC website, which we hope will be ready sometime in the summer.

As a part of the regular activities of P&P, new webpages were designed to promote major GSC events (such as the GSC Orientation, Ski Trip, and Grad Gala), as well as more than 30 posters were designed and posted on campus.

Treasurer and Funding Board

In Fiscal Year 2017, the GSC allocated over \$321,000 to student groups and individuals (see table below), amounting to more than half of the GSC's unrestricted annual revenue. Notably, the GSC significantly increased the budget of the Travel Grant program (raised to ~\$41,000 from \$24,000 in FY16) and developed a new Professional Development Exploration Grant program to encourage students to gain skills outside their field of study. In addition, the GSC formalized its post-event report collection process and was able to recycle nearly \$35,000 in unused allocations from previous cycles as new Funding Board awards.

Funding Source	FY17 Total Awarded
Funding Board/Collaboration/Family Programming/Start-up/Diversity	\$230,062.00
Orientation Dorm Event Fund	\$12,900.00
Sustainability Grants	\$3,038.15
Athletic & Performance Activity Grants	\$15,998.87
GSC-PKG Public Service Grants	\$7,703.60
Initiatives	\$7,070.84
Travel Grants	\$41,094.10
Professional Development Exploration Grants	\$3,145.00

Total	\$321,012.56
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Funding Board Task Force

The GSC also launched a Funding Board Task Force in Summer 2016 to examine current GSC funding practices and provide recommendations for updating Funding Board processes, funding applications, and communication with students and student groups. The Task Force recommended, and the Treasurer and Funding Board implemented, changes to application timelines, a streamlined funding application, and more comprehensive post-event reports. Additional efforts to streamline the application process and increase transparency for grants awarded to individuals are continuing with the transition to the 2017-2018 GSC leadership. The Task Force also recommended an overhaul of the way the GSC communicates the funding process, broader MIT funding opportunities, and the Funding Board funding guidelines. These discussions are still ongoing and implementation is anticipated to coincide with the release of the new GSC website, which is currently under development.

Appendix III: Committee Reports

Academics, Research, and Careers (ARC)

Erik Tillman and Andrew Fiore, ARC Co-Chairs

2016-17 has been an excellent year for ARC! We collaborated with the ODGE, GECD, GSC officers in pursuit of our focused goal to improve stakeholder understanding of graduate student professional development initiatives around the institute, and to improve the quality and number of professional development opportunities for graduate students. Our ongoing goal is to identify space for improvement, and work together to serve unmet needs of the graduate student body. Currently, ARC organizes career panels for academic and non-academic jobs. This year alone, we added two new panels for students based on student interest: Exploring Entrepreneurship (in April), and Jobs in Government and Non-profits (in January), bringing our total number of panels offered to five this past year. Through our Travel Grant program, we funded 79 students' travel and conference costs, allowing them to present their work and grow their professional networks. We also created a new grant program, the Professional Development Exploration Grant, to allow graduate students to attend a workshop, conference, or other opportunity outside the scope of their academic or research focus. In this first year, we supported 16 students pursuing extramural professional development opportunities.

We also partnered with ODGE in continuing work from our Advising Subcommittee, discussing best practices in graduate advising and ensuring the distribution of these critical documents to all graduate students and faculty. We worked with ODGE and the Chancellor's Office to guide the discussion about the future of education towards a vision that considers the distinct needs of

undergraduate and graduate education. Through this partnership, we aim to ensure that graduate students across MIT's schools and departments have equally exceptional access to professional development, advising, and academic resources to help them succeed at MIT and beyond.

Activities Committee (AC)

Saurabh Gandhi and Sami Khan, AC Co-Chairs

The Activities Committee continued its strong traditional set of indoor and outdoor events promoting community building and networking among graduate students throughout the year, providing opportunities for destressing and promoting arts talent. While continuing to work with various multicultural student organizations, AC also initiated a collaborative effort with the Post Doc Association to promote interaction between the graduate and post-doc community. As a brief summary, AC spent close to \$45,000 on multiple socializing and entertainment events that served ~4000 students throughout the year, in addition to the two major events--Ski Trip and Grad Gala--which served ~450 students each. We also had two events geared towards providing opportunities to students to showcase their arts and music talent. The events are summarized below:

<i>Event Name</i>	<i>Date of Event</i>	<i>Budget</i> <i>(includes GSC funding and outside sources)</i>	<i>Approximate # Attendees</i>
Ski Trip	January 2017	\$130,000	350
Grad Gala	April 2017	\$60,000	550
Acoustic BBQ	May 2016	\$8500	900
Taste of series	Sept, Oct, Nov, Dec 2016, Feb, Mar 2017	\$2100 per event, \$12600 total	~250 per each, total 1500
Battle of the Bands	March 2017	\$3000	~150
Grad Arts Showcase	March 2017	\$7000	~300
Harbor Islands trip	July 2016	\$700	60
Six Flags trip	August 2016	\$800	54
Coffee hours	2 per month during fall, spring, IAP	\$6000	~50 each, total ~800
Take a night off breakout	May 2017	\$5200	Expected ~200

In addition to funds from the Graduate Student Council, AC events were supported by generous sponsorships from the Office of the Dean for Graduate Education (ODGE), the MIT Alumni Association, MISTI, MIT COOP and the GradRat. The event budgets listed above reflect total event expenditure, rather than GSC net expenditure.

The AC co-chairs would like to thank Ina Kundu (who served as a co-chair for the first three months), Astera Tang and Kaitlyn Dwelle (Ski Trip Subcommittee), Yijin Wei, Xueying Zhao and Katrine Tjolsen (Grad Gala Subcommittee), Lisa Guay (GSC Treasurer), the 2016-17 GSC Executive Committee and a number of students who volunteered at different events for their contribution towards the success of all of the above events.

Events Details

Additional details on Activities Committee events can be found in the appended document.

External Affairs Board

Daniel Curtis, External Affairs Board Chair

Executive Summary

The External Affairs Board (EAB, or “the Board”) coordinates the external affairs and activities of the GSC, including relationships with organizations outside MIT; political advocacy at all levels of government; community outreach, education, and service; and statements of the positions of the GSC or the graduate student body on issues of significance to the welfare of graduate students at MIT.

Five subcommittees carry out this work under the management and oversight of the Board:

- Federal Affairs
- State and Local Affairs
- External Affairs Events
- University Liaison
- Public Outreach

The 2016-2017 term was the first full year of operation of the External Affairs Board, which was created by passage of Resolution 62.gsc.7.2 in March 2016. The Board inherited the advocacy portfolio of the Legislative Action Subcommittee (LASC), which was primarily directed toward the U.S. federal government, and established several subcommittees early in the term to expand GSC external advocacy activities.

The Board successfully expanded GSC external advocacy in several ways this year, including:

- Recruitment of new contributors,

- Expansion of the portfolio of topics covered,
- Expansion of the GSC Position Statement collection,
- Two GSC Policy Platform updates, and
- Record levels of external advocacy activity by several measures.

The Board itself demonstrated a great deal of knowledgeability, thoughtfulness, and responsiveness this year in its role to coordinate the external affairs and activities of the GSC, develop advocacy messages and strategies, and oversee the operations of the subcommittees. All 5 subcommittees clearly demonstrated the capacity to independently develop plans of action and execute activities in their area of responsibility successfully, and highly qualified nominees have been selected for 7 out of 9 subcommittee chair positions for the 2017-2018 term.

In addition to its advocacy efforts, the Board has also taken an active role in developing and building stronger relationships with external organizations, including the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS) and Ivy+, via the University Liaison. The recently formed Public Outreach Subcommittee is spearheading the Board's efforts in communicating to the general public, particularly regarding the benefits of scientific research.

Primarily through the Events Subcommittee, the Board has brought information about policy developments back to the graduate student body and has created venues for discussion and debate as well as opportunities to develop analytical and communications skill.

Although the structure and operating procedures of the Board are relatively complex by GSC standards and these practices will be honed in the coming years, the Board has attracted a very high-performing team of contributors that are up to the challenge. The Board has demonstrated itself to be sustainable, useful, interesting, and effective, and has represented and served the graduate students of MIT well during its first year of operation.

Full Report

Due to its length and extensive detail, the External Affairs Board's full report from 2016-2017 is attached as a separate document.

Housing and Community Affairs (HCA)

Ryan Gillis and Sarah Shapiro, HCA Co-Chairs

The 2016-2017 Housing and Community Affairs Committee focused on continuing to advocate for graduate student stipend levels and policies to support graduate student families and began new initiatives related to transportation and a fire relief fund after the Cambridge fire. The students on our stipend committee worked with the faculty and staff to present a proposal for graduate student stipends, based on cost of living analysis and competitiveness to peer institutions, culminating in a 4.0% raise in stipend levels. In addition to advocating for increased stipend levels for all graduate students, we continued to advocate for specific policies to support

graduate student families including a parental leave proposal and a childcare grant proposal, the latter through a collaboration with Graduate Women at MIT. After the Cambridge fire in December 2016, we worked to set up an Amazon registry for affected students, allowing MIT community members to purchase needed items for those impacted by the fire.

HCA also has four active subcommittees:

- Transportation
 - Our new transportation subcommittee has focused on improving transportation for graduate students at MIT, in particular working with the administration to set up late-night shuttle alternatives
- Sustainability
 - The sustainability subcommittee is working to develop an optional training module, available through Atlas, to educate the MIT community about best practices for sustainability
- Diversity
 - Our new Diversity Subcommittee seeks to provide a single platform as well as an origin of advocacy for all minorities and cultural groups at MIT
- Off-Campus
 - The Off-Campus subcommittee plans multiple events every month to build community among graduate students who live off campus.

Orientation Committee (OC)

Sarah Goodman and Jimmy Kaczmarek

Executive Summary

This year's fall orientation was unique in several aspects, chief among them being the delay in electing 2016-2017 Orientation Committee chairs and the difficulty in accessing documentation from previous years. Nevertheless, the orientation was a success, thanks to incredible support from GSC (both members and administration) as well as individual event coordinators. The full program for Orientation 2016 included over 50 events in a timespan of about three weeks, about half of which were hosted by the GSC.

The main change implemented this year in terms of events was the use of food trucks for the welcome picnic. Overall, this went well, but some specific issues will need to be addressed for next year, such as which food trucks should be invited and how best to keep the line moving. We also ran into some issues in recruiting event coordinators, which, combined with historically low attendance, led to the rescheduling of the Volunteer Day event to a yet-to-be-determined time.

In addition, although all were successful in their own right, it was noted that there may simply be too many events (and some of them too long) for orientation to be as effective as possible. As such, our main recommendations for the future are to create a "Graduate Resources Midway" which will combine the informative aspects of Grad School 102/103, while leaving GS 102/103 open to be topic-based panels. Moreover, for ticketed events, we would recommend against doing multiple rounds of ticket sales, and would also recommend having a clear refund

policy stated from the beginning of ticket sales.

In terms of administration, the core orientation team consisted of the two Orientation Committee Chairs along with the GSC administrators, GSC Webmaster, GSC Creative Media Manager, and GSC Secretary. Towards the beginning of the planning phase, the team also included an orientation fellow, however she ceased her work in July. With more consistent documentation, such as this report, the Orientation Chair Guide currently being written, the use of Slack for communication, however, we feel that the orientation fellow position may not be necessary, and future orientations would be justified in choosing not to hire one, or only hiring one on a temporary basis as specific needs arise.

The success of this year's orientation notwithstanding, everyone involved believed that the planning process could benefit greatly from more careful documentation of orientation events. Thus, in the spirit of similar reports made in the past, we present our complete summary of the 2016 GSC Orientation.

Full Report

Due to its length and extensive detail, Orientation 2016's full report is attached as a separate document.

Muddy Charles Pub

Zsigmond Varga, Muddy Chair

Finance. The Pub is in a good financial standing and is more popular than in recent memory with growing number of regular patrons. At the end of last year, having completed the long-term model that predicts our financial standing based on income and capital expenses taking depreciation costs into account, the Financial Task Force recommended to take measures to prevent future inflation-caused loss as none of our accounts were interest bearing at the time. In response, over the past 10 months, the Finance Subcommittee worked together with MIT Division of Student Life (DSL) and the Recording Secretary's office to create the Muddy Charles Pub Quasi-Endowed Fund as of May 1st, 2017(still finalizing the paperwork). We have initially committed \$100,000 to the Endowment and will use the Fund income to support the operations and activities of the Muddy Charles Pub through a continuous and steady revenue stream.

Long-term Planning. The Pub faces considerable uncertainty as an occupant of Building 50. Beyond a temporary relocation of the Pub, this potential future renovation gives the board a unique opportunity to renew and expand the Pub as a venue for graduate students. In order to fulfill the Board's responsibility to future graduate students and Pub patrons, the Board must be prepared for a number of conceivable scenarios. To accomplish this, the Board has charged the new Long-term Planning Subcommittee to build a framework and creative vision for our future. The committee has already reached out to many entities on campus and will be releasing a series of patron surveys soon. We hope you will participate in these surveys when released.

Activities. The Activities Subcommittee has spent considerable efforts to revive programmatic pillars such as the Muddy Mondays and has initiated a new event series starting this spring: Professors-on-tap. Additionally, the website is in the process of being transferred to a better host and renewed for the 21st century.

Outlook. In the upcoming year, the Board plans to tackle multiple challenges. Work on strategic plans for the long-term future of the Pub are underway as well as expanding the portfolio of activities offered by the Pub. The Board will need to focus on medium and long-term spending plans and how to expand its services to the MIT community with the newly generated endowment revenue stream. Furthermore, with the new Board of Advisors in place, the Board will begin to nominate the first set of Advisors for open positions. Currently, The Governing Documents do not touch upon the relationship between the Board of Governors and MIT Dining. Thanks to great efforts of past Chairs, the Board's relationship with MIT Dining has greatly improved and opened a candid dialogue between both parties. Having already started the process, in the coming year, the Board will work with MIT Dining to eliminate the grey areas of our relationship and finalize a written agreement between both parties.

Appendix IV: Additional Appended Materials

The following documents are appended to this report:

- Activities Committee Event Details
- External Affairs Board Full Report
- Orientation Committee Full Report
- GSC Summary Document

Activities Committee Event Details

The details below in conjunction with the AC co-chair manual should be useful for planning similar events in the future.

I. Acoustic BBQ

Date: May 18, 2016 (4 - 7 pm)

Location: Morss Hall, Walker Memorial*

Purpose: De-stress at the end of the semester

Budget: \$8500

attendees: 900

volunteers: ~10

*The usual location for this event is the Stata Amphitheatre. However, the event had to be moved to the rain location due to inclement weather on the day of the event.

Although the event had to be moved indoors, it was extremely well-attended. Note that among the few spaces on campus that are large enough to host this during rain, Morss hall is the most convenient in terms of moving, since it is the closest to Stata.

This was the only event throughout the year when we required more volunteers than we could find. The ExComm graciously offered to help out with it.

There was some discussion about the effectiveness of advertising this on the infinite display. I think it is useful, but should be advertised just two days prior to the event date on the infinite display.

II. Harbor Islands trip

Date: July 9, 2016 (9 am - 5 pm)

Location: Meet at Long Wharf

Purpose: Outing for students (family friendly event)

Budget: \$800

attendees: 60

volunteers: 3-4

Since it is a day long thing on a weekend, ticket sales are typically low, around 50-70 based on the last few years. It is good to start sales early, allowing more time for people to make plans.

This is one of the few AC events where we get a few families and not just students.

We carry large amounts of food and water on the ferry, and it is highly recommended to find a couple of strong volunteers!! It is not hard to find volunteers if you offer free tickets.

It looked like it was going to rain on the day of the trip, and so both the islands that we visited had very few people. It didn't actually rain, so it turned out really well for us! Also, everyone who had bought a ticket showed up irrespective of the gloomy forecast.

III. Six Flags Trip

Date: August 20, 2016 (9 am - 6 pm)

Location: Pick-up and drop off at 77 Mass Ave

Purpose: Socialization

Budget: \$800

attendees: 54

volunteers: 1

Overall, the trip went smoothly and was well-received. We did not charge any additional ticket charge for the bus, and this may not be the best idea. One, because people tend to change their minds more often at the last moment if they have not paid extra/have to pay extra (we had some difficulty coordinating with a group of 4). Secondly, so that we can afford to keep the bus longer.

It takes almost 2 hours in travelling to and from the location. As a result, the actual time spent there was just 5 hours (11 am - 4 pm). While a small minority of students preferred going back at 4, most would have liked to stay for another couple of hours. If doing it again, extending the time should be considered, and also advertised.

IV. Battle of the Bands

Date: March 13, 2017 (5:30 - 8:30 pm)

Location: Morss Hall, Walker Memorial

Purpose: Opportunity for student bands to perform in public, entertainment and socialization

Budget: \$3000

attendees: 150 (6 bands participated; one pulled out at the end)

volunteers: 2

This event was taking place properly for the first time. It was initiated in 2015, but was not advertised well, and clashed with some other major event on campus. In 2016, the event had to be cancelled 2 days before the date because of another event going on, and the police did not have the capacity to attend to both.

We collaborated with the PDA (post doc association) for this event. One of the two chairs from the PDA was very enthusiastic and helpful with the planning, but he went off to Antarctica for research. The other chair was not responsive. Overall, I think it would still be worth working with PDA for this and other events (hoping that the chairs are responsive). GSC and PDA shared the budget equally (almost, see below). In terms of attendance, there were about equal number of students and post docs. As a mixer, this was a successful event.

The bands really really appreciated the opportunity to perform. A couple of them were performing on stage for the first time, and were quite excited about it!

We used LMC (a student group) to provide A/V services since they are cheaper than MIT A/V. However, at the last moment, we decided to also record the show (this cost was not shared with PDA since it was not discussed before, and they were already tight on budget). LMC does not have recording equipment, so we got MIT A/V to do it. 1: avoid two different providers, since there can be compatibility and other issues with the equipment. 2: In general, such recordings do not come out great (recording requires a very different setup, and a person at MIT A/V himself told me later that we should probably have not had a recording). LMC was professional and good.

We actually did not require any volunteers at all, except one for managing the pizza. It was difficult to find judges, and we ended up having just one - that was the contribution from the enthusiastic post doc who then went to Antarctica.

V. Taste of series

Date: Multiple (6 - 7 pm)

Location: Morss Hall, Walker Memorial

Purpose: Socialization, promote cultural groups

Budget: \$2100 per event

attendees: ~250 - 300

volunteers: 12-16 (collaborating groups handle this)

This year's Taste of had some of the highest turnouts, with Taste of France attracting over 350 students. This series is partially sponsored by MITAA, and each event is organized in collaboration with a student group from a different country. We tried to have as much diversity as possible with representatives from Asia, South Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Americas (we need Australia, and perhaps also Antarctica!).

We tried to have some cultural component to the events besides the food, and had activities such as - Chinese calligraphy, capoeira dancing, Egyptian belly dancing, live painting, a capella and a live Mariachi band.

Taste of France and Taste of Mexico were also partially funded by the respective MISTI offices. We think MISTI fits perfectly with the Taste of series, and are trying to secure their sponsorship for all events in the series. They are currently discussing this internally.

VI. Coffee hours

Date: 1st, 3rd Mondays (6 - 7 pm)

Location: Forbes cafe, Stata

Purpose: Destress

Budget: \$6000 total

attendees: ~50 each

volunteers: Astera did it all

VII. Arts events

Date: March 24, 2017 (5 - 8 pm)

Location: LIST atrium

Purpose: Opportunity for grad students to showcase arts

Budget: \$8000

attendees: ~300

volunteers: completely handled by the Arts subcommittee

VIII. Grad Gala

Key event details:

Date: April 15, 2017 (8:00 pm – 12:00 am)

Location: New England Aquarium, Boston

Total attendees: 557

Total income: \$60,700

Total costs: ~\$60,000

The 2017 Grad Gala was held at the New England Aquarium on April 15th, 2017. This venue was a departure from the typical hotel setting of the Grad Gala as in previous years. Post-event feedback surveys from many of the previous Galas indicated a high interest for the Aquarium; however budget considerations always ruled out the Aquarium as a possibility in comparison to hotels. This was the first time in many years that the Grad Gala was successfully held at the Aquarium owing to a strong negotiating effort from the Gala planning team and healthy funding support from the GSC, Alumni Association and the MIT Grad Rat.

Event planning started as early as October. A number of hotels were identified as potential venues along with the Aquarium and a couple of museums. The Gala team

decided not to proceed with hotels and decided to try something “different”. A prime consideration was the availability of the dance floor: this ended up ruling out many museums. The Aquarium, however, had a dance floor available in the outdoor tent so the team focused on the Aquarium. Members of the team toured the Aquarium in late October and negotiated the contract details with the Aquarium managers. Event management and food costs were lowered to bring the overall event costs within budget, and the contract was successfully signed in early December.

In the months leading to the Gala, the planning team put forth tremendous efforts in advertising (via Facebook, announcements, posters, etc), selling tickets (via adMIT one), arranging shuttle services to and from the venue, finalizing the DJ and photographers, and preparing gift packages for the gala attendees. Tickets sold out within 10 days, and the gala team voted to increase the tickets cap from 500 to 550 to meet the additional demand. Yet, there was a waitlist of over 100 people! This indicates the outstanding interest in the 2017 Grad Gala!

The event itself went extremely smoothly with minimal hiccups. Guests arrived in shuttles or via public transport and were treated to a delicious strolling dinner, two drink tickets and desserts.

Post-event feedback was overall positive. Below are the key survey results and numbers:

- Survey response rate: 79%
- 80% of attendees “greatly enjoyed” the Aquarium’s setting
- 83% of the attendees “overall enjoyed” the Grad Gala
- Average overall satisfaction rating: 4.2/5

Attendees rated the food and DJ as average – something for next year’s planning team to be aware of. Also attendees greatly preferred a museum as a venue for next year’s Gala!

IX. Ski Trip

See separate report

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GSC External Affairs Board 2017 Annual Report

Prepared by the members of the External Affairs Board
July 14th, 2017

Contact the authors at:
EAB 16-17 Members <eab-members-17@mit.edu>

Executive Summary

The External Affairs Board (EAB, or “the Board”) coordinates the external affairs and activities of the GSC, including relationships with organizations outside MIT; political advocacy at all levels of government; community outreach, education, and service; and statements of the positions of the GSC or the graduate student body on issues of significance to the welfare of graduate students at MIT.

Five subcommittees carry out this work under the management and oversight of the Board:

- **Federal Affairs**
- **State and Local Affairs**
- **External Affairs Events**
- **University Liaison**
- **Public Outreach**

The 2016-2017 term was the first full year of operation of the External Affairs Board, which was created by passage of Resolution 62.gsc.7.2 in March 2016. The Board inherited the advocacy portfolio of the Legislative Action Subcommittee (LASC), which was primarily directed toward the U.S. federal government, and established several subcommittees early in the term to expand GSC external advocacy activities.

The Board successfully expanded GSC external advocacy in several ways this year, including:

- Recruitment of new contributors.
- Expansion of the portfolio of topics covered.
- Expansion of the GSC Position Statement collection.
- Two GSC Policy Platform updates.
- Record levels of external advocacy activity by several measures.

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The Board itself demonstrated a great deal of knowledgeability, thoughtfulness, and responsiveness this year in its role to coordinate the external affairs and activities of the GSC, develop advocacy messages and strategies, and oversee the operations of the subcommittees. All 5 subcommittees clearly demonstrated the capacity to independently develop plans of action and execute activities in their area of responsibility successfully, and highly qualified nominees have been selected for 7 out of 9 subcommittee chair positions for the 2017-2018 term.

Although the structure and operating procedures of the Board are relatively complex by GSC standards and there is room for improvement in the coming years, the Board has attracted a very high-performing team of contributors that are up to the challenge. The Board has demonstrated itself to be sustainable, useful, interesting, and effective, and has represented the graduate students of MIT extremely well during its first year of operation.

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Major Accomplishments by GSC External Affairs in the 2016-2017 Term

Extremely successful recruitment

The creation of the External Affairs Board and its first four subcommittees established a total of 15 Board positions that needed to be filled early in the 2016-2017 term. 12 of those positions were filled by June, including 5 out of 7 subcommittee chairs and 2 of the 3 at-large positions. Most of these Board members were veterans of either the GSC Legislative Action Subcommittee (LASC), the GSC Executive Committee (ExComm), or the Science Policy Initiative (SPI). In the assessment of the Chair, it is actually beneficial to have an at-large position open most of the time, providing the option to bring in a new leader during the year if a new project idea arises or a new perspective needs to be represented on the Board. Overall, early efforts to fill the Board with a skillful and experienced set of advocates were highly successful.

The Board was represented at several events focused on advertising and recruitment in late summer and early fall of 2016, including Graduate Orientation events. Several active contributors in spring 2017 first became aware of the Board and its activities at these events.

Interest in discussing and solving policy problems had already been increasing at MIT for many years before 2016. This had ensured a slow but steady stream of new contributors for LASC and increasing trip applications for our friends at SPI in recent years. The result of the 2016 US Presidential Election caused a pronounced increase in interest in politics and policy issues across our campus. This has had several interesting results, including the creation of several new student activist groups, a further uptick in applications for SPI's spring 2017 Congressional Visit Days (CVD), several new contributors across all External Affairs activities, and the creation of the External Affairs Board Subcommittee on Public Outreach (which had sufficiently many contributors on day 1 to investigate several options for outreach activities and promptly begin work).

In total, the Chair estimates that GSC External Affairs had over 30 contributors across all of our activities during the 2016-2017 term.

Major expansion of the portfolio of topics covered

LASC had focused almost entirely on United States federal legislation before 2015 and had particularly focused on student visa policy, federal research funding, open access, and international student entrepreneurship. In its final year of operations in 2015-2016, LASC started new advocacy efforts directed toward the Massachusetts

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state government (Statehouse Visit Days, SVD), local government (Somerville zoning), and development of federal regulations (the STEM OPT Extension for F-1 visas).

In the 2016-2017 term, External Affairs continued work on issues spanning the full LASC portfolio and began work in several new areas, including:

- Policies regarding sexual violence on campus (state and federal legislation).
- Climate change and related research (federal legislation).
- The International Entrepreneur Rule (federal regulation).
- Federal funding for infrastructure (federal legislation).
- Bike safety (state legislation).
- Privacy rights (state legislation).
- Scientific integrity (federal legislation).

Major expansion of the GSC Position Statement collection

LASC developed detailed position statements relatively rarely before 2016. It has become standard practice for External Affairs to develop at least one detailed position statement on each issue or government action of interest to GSC. LASC developed 7 detailed position statements in the 2015-2016 term, all of which have been approved by the External Affairs Board and continue as the official positions of the GSC. The Massachusetts SVD of March 2016 played an important role in establishing the development of detailed position statements as a standard practice.

External Affairs developed 15 new position statements during the 2016-2017 term covering a wide range of topics (including each of the new topics indicated above). Most of these statements were developed in early 2017 to support two campaigns of meetings in DC in March and SVD in April.

Several records set by level of external advocacy activity in Spring 2017

External Affairs set records for GSC external advocacy activity in several areas in the spring semester of 2017 (defined here as Jan 1 through May 3). Each of these records represents a great deal of work by many contributors.

- Number of policymaker meetings: **61**.
 - 48 federal, 12 Massachusetts, 1 Cambridge.
- Number of meetings with legislators present: **7**.
 - 1 federal, 5 Massachusetts, 1 Cambridge.
- Number of new Position Statements and Letters developed: **14**.
- Number of travelers supported: **10**.

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Two GSC Policy Platform Updates

Responsibility for maintaining the GSC Legislative Platform was transferred to the External Affairs Board when LASC ended operations in May 2016. LASC had previously maintained the platform and had carried out no more than one major update per year between 2010 and 2016. LASC organized Policy Platform Open House events to consider updates in January of 2015 and 2016.

External Affairs continued the LASC practice to typically begin the platform update process with a widely advertised Open House event; this was done in January 2017 for the regular 2017 update. This update resulted in the addition of 6 new platform items and changes to 5 other items.

A special update was also carried out, starting in June 2016, to expand the coverage of local quality-of-life issues on our platform and consider the option to develop two separate platform documents. This special update cycle resulted in the addition of 7 new platform items, changes to 5 other items, a decision to maintain a single platform document, and renaming the document "Policy Platform of the Graduate Student Council".

External Affairs developed a valuable collaboration with the GEIR Best Practices Community

LASC began advocating in favor of continued funding for the Massachusetts Global Entrepreneur in Residence (GEIR) program in early 2016. The beginning of this effort featured several meetings with outside organizations, including the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MassTech) and Global EIR Coalition.

These LASC efforts seem to have been noticed by the right people, because External Affairs leaders were invited to join the GEIR Best Practices Community in Boston in July 2016. This community now has quarterly meetings to discuss changes in GEIR programs (including new programs), data on GEIR programs and results, legal concerns, and success stories from GEIR participants. Our participation has provided us with regular updates on GEIR data, legal insights into the operation of GEIR programs, and opportunities to share information about GEIR programs with MIT administrators.

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The International Students Office is highly responsive to GSC inquiries and concerns

GSC advocacy on international student issues is energetic, visible, and effective, and has been for many years. Advocacy in favor of domestic renewal of student visas was an important early issue for LASC, and policies to support international student entrepreneurship were the focus of multiple publications and events by LASC between 2013 and 2016. External Affairs has continued these efforts, in part through new statements during this term and ongoing collaboration with the leadership of the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS).

The results of the 2016 US Presidential Election caused substantial concerns that US policies governing international student visas, work, and entrepreneurship could become more restrictive, and important existing opportunities might be entirely removed from US visa policy. The MIT International Students Office (ISO) increased their frequency of communications and meetings with international students after the election to help address these concerns, and they made it a standard practice in early 2017 to include GSC leaders in most of these communications and meetings. This includes email broadcasts on important visa policy updates, international student social gatherings, and meetings of the International Council.

The ISO has been appropriately responsive during this term when they have been contacted by GSC leaders about specific issues. Due to our experience advocating to improve visa policy, External Affairs Board members have regularly been included in GSC meetings and communications with the ISO and have contributed to the generally effective handling of international student issues this year. To help maintain a positive working relationship between the GSC and the ISO, External Affairs has made it a standard practice this year to share summary reports on our advocacy efforts with the ISO.

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Timeline of Major Activities and Developments, March 2016 through May 2017

March 2016

- The regular 2016 Legislative Platform update was adopted in the March General Council Meeting (GCM) through passage of Resolution 62.gsc.7.1. A further update concerning undocumented students was adopted by passage of 62.gsc.7.3.
- **The External Affairs Board was created** by passage of Resolution 62.gsc.7.2.

April 2016

- **Daniel Curtis was elected as the 1st External Affairs Chair** at the April GCM. Daniel began operating as Acting External Affairs Chair immediately.
- Legislative Action Chair Yuqing Cui announced that LASC would cease operations at the end of the 2015-2016 term and that its portfolio of activities and responsibilities would be transferred to the External Affairs Board.

May 2016

- The 63rd General Council and 1st External Affairs Board began on May 4th, 2016.
- The first meeting of the External Affairs Board was held on May 5th, 2016.

June 2016

- The External Affairs Board Subcommittees on Federal Affairs, State and Local Affairs, Events, and University Liaison were created at the June meeting of the External Affairs Board.

August 2016

- Chair Daniel Curtis and Vice-Chair Peter Su attended the NAGPS Leadership Summit at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, AR, August 1st through 3rd, 2016.

September 2016

- Chair Daniel Curtis and Federal Affairs Subcommittee Member Jack Reid attended the NAGPS Legislative Action Days in Washington, D.C., September 10th through 13th, 2016.
- The Advocating for Science Symposium and Workshop was held on campus at MIT, September 16th and 17th, 2016.
- President Arolyn Conwill led a team of 5 to attend the Ivy+ Summit at Brown University in Providence, RI, September 30th through October 2nd, 2016.

October 2016

- A special Legislative Platform update was adopted in the October GCM through passage of Resolution 63.gsc.4.

November 2016

- President Arolyn Conwill led a team of 5 to attend the NAGPS National Conference at Stony Brook University in Stony Brook, NY, November 3rd through 6th, 2016.

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December 2016

- The External Affairs Board Subcommittee on Public Outreach was created at the December Meeting of the External Affairs Board.
- Chair Daniel Curtis and Vice-Chair Peter Su represented MIT GSC in a special NAGPS member meeting to consider the NAGPS 2017 Budget.

February 2017

- Chair Daniel Curtis led a team of 4 to attend the AAAS Annual Meeting in Boston, MA, February 15th through 20th, 2017.

March 2017

- President Arolyn Conwill led a team of 4 on a campaign of 22 meetings with federal legislative offices in Washington, D.C. on March 7th and 8th, 2017.
- Federal Affairs Chairs Aaron Dy and Daniel Franke led a team of 5 to attend the NAGPS Legislative Action Days in Washington, D.C., March 11th through 14th, 2017. This event included a campaign of 19 meetings with federal legislative offices in Washington, D.C.

April 2017

- Federal Affairs Subcommittee Member Katie Shulenberger attended the Catalyzing Advocacy in Science and Engineering (CASE) Workshop in Washington, D.C., April 2nd and 3rd, 2017. This event included a campaign of 7 meetings with federal legislative offices in Washington, D.C.
- **Peter Su was elected as the 2nd External Affairs Chair** at the April GCM.
- The regular 2017 Policy Platform update was adopted in the April GCM through passage of Resolution 63.gsc.15.
- Chair Daniel Curtis and Secretary Orpheus Chatzivasileiou attended the NAGPS Northeastern Regional Conference at Columbia University in New York, NY, April 7th through 9th, 2017.
- State Affairs Chair Brittany Huhmann led a team of 6 on a campaign of 12 meetings with Massachusetts legislative offices in Boston, MA on April 12th, 2017.

May 2017

- The Panel on the Future of Manufacturing, the Workforce, and Society was held on campus at MIT on May 3rd, 2017.
- The 63rd General Council and 1st External Affairs Board ended on May 3rd, 2017.

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Major Accomplishments by Friends and Allies of GSC External Affairs in the 2016-2017 Term

The University of Pennsylvania (UPenn) Graduate and Professional Student Association (GAPSA) created an External Affairs Committee. UPenn GAPSA President Gaurav Shukla specifically cited the MIT GSC External Affairs Board as part of his motivation to attempt the reform to create the UPenn committee and reviewed the MIT GSC Bylaws for insights into our organizational structure. UPenn GAPSA elected their first External Affairs Chair, Brenda Salantes, in March 2017.

The Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) Graduate Student Assembly (GSA) created a Legislative Platform in spring 2017. CMU GSA had previously endorsed the NAGPS Legislative Platform and used it as the basis for all of their government advocacy efforts. The creation of an independent legislative platform was the signature project this year of Vice-President for External Affairs Nicole Rafidi, will make it easier for CMU GSA to expand their portfolio of advocacy activities, and may motivate increased interest in their external advocacy activities.

The Budget of NAGPS has been improved. The External Affairs team learned several unfortunate things about the NAGPS financial situation in fall 2016: (1) NAGPS had budget deficits in 2015 and 2016; (2) it was a common practice in 2015 and 2016 for the NAGPS Board to override the budget and allow additional expenses; and (3) the NAGPS Board was not prepared to provide an accurate financial report to members at the National Conference in November 2016. As a result, additional meetings after the National Conference were necessary to secure an appropriate financial report and make improvements to the NAGPS 2017 budget. External Affairs contributed to this work and made multiple proposals to improve NAGPS financial practices in 2017. We believe NAGPS is in much better financial condition this year.

NAGPS fired the lobbying firm Shaw, Bransford, and Roth (SBR). LASC and External Affairs contributors were consistently unimpressed by the quality of presentations and contributions by SBR toward NAGPS work in 2016. After formation of the Board and review of NAGPS business during the summer and fall of 2016, the External Affairs team became generally skeptical that contract lobbying is a worthy use of NAGPS resources in the near future and took the position that any resources NAGPS might direct toward contract lobbying would be better used by directly supporting the advocacy activities of member universities (by funding travel to DC for Legislative Action Days, as one example). As a result, the External Affairs team developed a proposal in fall 2016 to forbid funding for contract lobbying services in the NAGPS 2017 budget. This proposal was introduced as a resolution at the National Conference and passed. The External Affairs team assembled a coalition of supporters in the week leading up to the National Conference to help

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ensure the passage of this resolution. This coalition generally supported External Affairs efforts to improve the NAGPS budget throughout November and December 2016.

The University of Chicago Graduate Council will be invited to the 2017 Ivy+ Summit. The proposal to add the University of Chicago Graduate Council as a new official member of Ivy+ was the main item of business considered at the 2016 Ivy+ Summit. Since Ivy+ has no governing documents, ad-hoc rules of order had to be developed and adopted at the meeting. It is the position of the MIT GSC that this proposal was approved under duly agreed-to rules of order. However, these rules of order and the resulting decision were later disputed by a collection of Ivy+ members, and the issue does not appear to be permanently resolved at the time of this writing.

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Selected Recommendations for the 2017-2018 Board

Maximize sharing of advocacy material with friends and allies.

In Spring 2017, we set a record of 48 total federal legislative meetings across three DC events. These meetings were our most important venue for federal advocacy this year and were the most important venue for federal advocacy under the Legislative Action Subcommittee (LASC) since its beginnings. In the future, if we were to combine 2 standard DC events (2 day trip, team of 4) with a campaign of local congressional district office visits, we might be able to hold just over 50 federal meetings in a single semester. To exceed that level would likely require an overhaul of our strategy and methodology (and probably our budget).

Awareness of our federal advocacy has grown rapidly over the last 2 years among our friends and allies in the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS). Our extremely high overall activity level and our high number of scheduled meetings at Legislative Action Days (LAD) events has been noticed by representatives of many other universities. We have already motivated significant reforms and increased activity at some allied student governments, and some have demonstrated direct and specific interest in our methods and materials.

Together, these factors provide strong motivation to **focus on sharing our methods and material with other universities through NAGPS to maximize the volume, visibility, and cohesion of our federal advocacy.** The external affairs teams at many other universities have a lot of room to grow. Relatively few maintain their own policy platforms or prepare significant numbers of letters or statements, and most of them schedule only 3 to 6 meetings at a typical LAD. We should take every opportunity next year, and should create as many opportunities as we can, to motivate the external affairs teams at other universities to increase their activity, and we should provide them with any support, advice, and material we can to help them do that.

We have also found that there is interest in Massachusetts state government advocacy at some other Massachusetts universities. State and Local Affairs Chair Brittany Huhmann observed that groups from several other Massachusetts universities delivered testimony in an April 13th hearing of the Joint Committee on Higher Education of the Massachusetts General Court.

Because the Massachusetts State House is located so close to MIT, we likely have much more room to increase our number of state legislator meetings per semester. However, the visibility and impact of our state advocacy efforts could still grow much more quickly if we began coordinating in some way with the external affairs teams of other Massachusetts universities.

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We recommend that the incoming State and Local Affairs team and University Liaison **start reaching out immediately** to determine if convening a gathering of Massachusetts universities to coordinate state advocacy efforts is feasible next year.

Inform MIT grad students about the Cambridge City elections.

Cambridge will hold city government elections in November 2017. Nine councilors and six School Committee members are elected at large by Proportional Representation (PR) for a two year term. After members of the Council take the oath of office in January, they elect one of the nine to serve as Mayor.

Cambridge city elections have had seen [turnout below 30% of registered voters since 2005](#). About 18,000 voters participated in the Cambridge city elections of 2013. A concerted effort could result in an ambitious upper bound of about 3,000 MIT graduate students registered to vote in Cambridge. Particularly with the ranked-choice voting system in use in Cambridge, MIT students could play a very large role in Cambridge city elections if a large fraction of them turned out to vote.

The State and Local Affairs team should ensure that reminders about voter registration and the city election are broadcast to all MIT graduate students. The External Affairs Events team should conduct voter registration early in the fall semester and as part of Graduate Orientation.

We recommend that the incoming Chair, State and Local Affairs team, and External Affairs Events team **start brainstorming and meeting stakeholders immediately** to determine if hosting a city council candidate debate on campus at MIT is feasible. We consider it very likely that hosting such an event would substantially increase student interest in the election and, therefore, increase student turnout. Several concerns might need to be addressed, including fair scheduling of the event for both the candidates and the audience and fair opportunity for all candidates to participate and speak. If the State and Local Affairs team decides that they would like to pursue this opportunity, the full External Affairs Board should deliberate on the general approach to this type of event and, particularly, the extent to which a non-partisan and/or neutral stance must be displayed by the GSC. This deliberation should include consideration of possible partnerships with MIT Democrats, MIT College Republicans, and other potentially interested groups.

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Maintain the discipline and independence of our methods for government meeting preparation.

Many other NAGPS members are surprised that our Federal Affairs teams carry out the entire process of government meeting preparation, including scheduling all of their own meetings, with minimal direct input by the MIT administration. Although our preparation methodology requires substantial legwork in advance of each campaign of meetings, it also confers substantial benefits for the team, the GSC, and the MIT graduate student body.

- Confident, knowledgeable, and independent policy advocates can better handle unexpected questions and commentary in meetings and unexpected changes in the conditions or context of their meetings. As a result, it is likely that MIT GSC is represented *much* more effectively in government meetings than many other student organizations that carry out such advocacy efforts.
- Our independent methodology provides the option that the GSC could respond quickly, strongly, and effectively to sudden political developments. In the assessment of the Chair, very few all-student, all-volunteer organizations have this capability.
- Team members learn about sources of information on government offices and activities in great detail.
- Team members gain a great deal of practical policy communications experience.
- During the preparation for a standard campaign of government meetings, the team will update several detailed elements of our methodology. Team members, future advocates, and the GSC benefit from the extensive documentation created during this process and from continuous improvement of our methods. Our state advocacy efforts have seen particularly significant improvements in methodology over the last 2 years.

We recommend that all incoming Board Members continue improving our preparation methodology for government meetings, continue adding to our general-purpose documentation, create opportunities to present our methodology to other organizations at MIT or to students at-large, and create opportunities to present our methodology to external affairs teams at allied universities.

Reach out more frequently to issue-focused advocacy organizations.

Collaboration with issue-focused advocacy organizations (IAOs), or organizations created and operated for the explicit purpose of advocacy in favor of a certain outcome on a certain issue or set of issues, has previously played a very limited role in our preparation methodology for government meetings. IAOs have typically

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served primarily as a source of background information for position statements and letters.

So far, our most successful IAO collaboration, by a wide margin, has been our work with the GEIR Best Practices Community. This collaboration has provided us with much more accurate and up-to-date information about GEIR programs at Massachusetts universities, legal insights into the operations of GEIR programs, and partners who can help us expand our advocacy on this topic and might support us in advocacy on other topics in the future. This community has, further, provided MIT administrators with information on GEIR programs.

We recommend that leaders of our future government meeting teams reach out to IAOs concerned with our advocacy topics as a standard part of our meeting preparation methodology.

Inform MIT graduate students about our policy positions, methodology, and accomplishments.

In the assessment of the Chair, MIT GSC External Affairs is one of the largest and most capable all-student, all-volunteer government relations organizations in the country. However, it is also the assessment of the Chair that a majority of MIT graduate students don't know we exist.

This is part of a broader problem shared by many units of GSC - most of our constituents know very little about our operations. It is likely that even some GSC General Council members have relatively little detailed knowledge about GSC operations. There are a lot of things the GSC constitutional officers, Executive Committee (ExComm), and Publications and Publicity Board (P&P) can and should do to address this problem. **There are some specific steps the 2nd External Affairs Board can also take to help address this problem.**

- **Meet people and do things.** (And hand out business cards along the way!) Personal connections between External Affairs contributors and other MIT graduate students are likely to be the most effective method for building general understanding of our operations, gaining useful input and feedback, and recruiting new contributors.
- **Participate in Graduate Orientation.** Many current External Affairs contributors joined the team after meeting External Affairs or LASC leaders at Graduate Orientation in recent years.
- **Hold events often.** Although not all events will include discussion of our specific advocacy topics or operations, all of them provide opportunities to meet people (see point #1). Our events should also generally share information with attendees about policy problems, advocacy opportunities, or both, which should generally increase interest in our work.

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- **Ensure that Policy Platform Open House events are advertised widely and thoroughly.** Advertising for Open House events can also provide an opportunity to share other information about our work.

Hold regular External Affairs Discussion-focused Events.

This could support several of the other recommendations and provide an additional channel for MIT graduate students to communicate with GSC leadership. There are a lot of potential ways this could be implemented, and frequency of events could range from a small number per semester to weekly (depending on interest and on the logistical intensity of the implementation). These events could be mostly unstructured, or they could be structured around discussion of a variety of different types of topics:

- A particular policy topic for each event.
- Recent political news.
- The political landscape in general.
- Particular upcoming elections or other major political events.
- GSC advocacy topics, strategies, and priorities.
- Specific GSC letters, position statements, meetings, or advocacy actions.

If this type of activity were organized by the External Affairs Events subcommittee, it would result in a higher level of sustained activity throughout the term. This could result in substantially higher recruitment for the Events subcommittee and for other External Affairs efforts. A range of other potential benefits are possible, although they would depend heavily on the implementation details.

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Federal Affairs

The Subcommittee on Federal Affairs monitors legislation, policy changes, and other activities of the United States federal government, develops any statements or activities we need to respond to those changes, and manages our trips to DC to meet with federal government officials each semester. This section summarizes the major activities of the Subcommittee during the 2016-2017 term.

Fall Legislative Action Days 2016

- Trip participants: Daniel Curtis, Jack Reid
- National Association of Graduate and Professional Students (NAGPS) Advocacy Summit, September 10th and 11th.
- Meetings with legislative offices and other organizations, September 12th and 13th.
 - Senate Offices (1R, 2D), House Offices (3R, 2D)
 - NAFSA: Association of International Educators
 - Small Business Administration
 - Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Student & Exchange Visitor Program
- Advocacy topics
 - Continued work on student visa renewal and supported the International Entrepreneur Rule.
 - Alerted several offices to possible issues with student health insurance plans under ACA.
 - Opposed Scientific Research in the National Interest Act (based on NAGPS letter).
 - Supported FASTR.

Spring Legislative Action Days 2017

- Trip participants: Daniel Franke, Aaron Dy, Skylar Deckoff-Jones, Gregory Dreifus, Huma Gupta
- National Association of Graduate and Professional Students (NAGPS) Conference 3/11- 3/12
- Meetings with the House and Senate 3/13 - 3/14
 - Senate Offices (6R, 5D), House Offices (3R, 6D):
 - Advocated for strong and sustained science funding for both basic and applied research.
 - Advocated for policies that help scientists and federal agencies to maintain scientific integrity and independence from political influences.
 - Position Statements: [Science Funding](#), [Arts and Humanities Funding](#), [Infrastructure Research Funding](#), [Climate Change Research Funding](#)

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International Women's Day 2017

- New program started this fiscal year
- Trip participants: Arolyn Conwill, Kathleen White, Angela Crews, Sarah Goodman
- Meetings with the House and Senate 3/7 - 3/8
 - Senate Offices (4R, 8D), House Offices (2R, 7D), David Shahoulian (Democratic Chief Counsel, Subcommittee on Immigration, U.S. House Judiciary Committee)
 - Spoke out in support of a range of issues focused on retaining U.S.-educated international talent in the United States
 - Discussed several pieces of legislation regarding sexual misconduct.
 - Position Statements: [Retaining U.S.-Educated International Talent in the U.S.](#), [Prevention of Sexual Assault and Harassment](#), [Support of LGBT Students](#), [Gender Equality](#)

AAAS Catalyzing Advocacy in Science and Engineering 2017

- Trip participants: Katherine Shulenberger, Michelle MacLeod (SPI)
- CASE Workshop 4/2 - 4/4
- Meetings with the House and Senate 4/5
 - Senate Offices (5D), House Offices (1R,1D)
 - Advocated for a reliable funding of fundamental and applied science. Pointed out that the narrative that all applied sciences could acquire funding from VC is inaccurate. Along these lines, pushed for the passage of the FY17 appropriations bills.
 - Enforced that cutting all overhead from an agency is not only impossible, but also potentially damaging to the scientific work being done. Proposed an alternative of extending grants to five years from three to cut some overhead cuts at the agency level and improve efficiency at the research lab level.
 - **Leave-behind:** [Science Funding AAAS CASE](#)

[Summary of 2017 Spring DC Advocacy Trips](#)

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State and Local Affairs

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Statehouse Visit Day Spring 2017

- Trip Participants: Brittany Huhmann, Abigail Regitsky, Daniel Curtis, Peter Su, Michael Davidson, John Hardin
- Meetings with Massachusetts State Legislators, April 12th, 2017
 - 12 meetings total (all Democrats*)
 - 5 meetings with legislators present
- Issues Covered:
 - Sexual Violence on Higher Education Campuses – H.632/S.706
 - Preventing Bicyclist Fatalities and Making Streets Safer – H.2877/S.1905
 - An Act automatically registering eligible voters and enhancing safeguards against fraud – H.2091/S.373
 - An Act establishing election day registration – S.371
 - An Act relative to social media privacy protection – H.158/S.991
 - Global Entrepreneur in Residence (GEIR) Pilot Program – Budget Line 7002-1509
- Methodology improvements:
 - Assign issues/bills to specific participants on SVD so they can do a deeper dive into the bill and its context
 - Contact lead sponsors of bills we're advocating for before visiting to get a sense of how we could help them more successfully move the bill forward
 - Track and attend relevant hearings

* More than 80% of both Representatives and Senators in the Massachusetts General Court in 2017 are Democrats.

Local Activities

- Meeting with Cambridge City Councilor Nadeem Mazen, December 8th, 2016.
- Cambridge City Budget Meeting, January 18th, 2017
- Kendall Square Association Annual Meeting, March 26th, 2017
 - The Chair recommends that we keep attending this meeting in future years.
- Methodology improvements:
 - The Vice-Chair recommends that we start doing stuff and meeting with people at the local level.

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External Affairs Events

The Subcommittee on External Affairs Events puts on events on campus at MIT to provide information about policy developments, venues for discussion and debate, and opportunities to develop analytical and communications skills. This section summarizes the major activities of the Subcommittee during the 2016-2017 term.

Advocating for Science Symposium

The Advocating for Science Symposium was a 1.5-day event held on campus at MIT on September 16th and 17th, 2016. The event was jointly organized by MIT GSC, Academics for the Future of Science (AFS), and Future of Research (FoR).

The first evening of this event featured a panel and keynote addressing ways to effectively promote science and advocate for strong and sustained growth in science funding. The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Rush Holt, former member of Congress and current CEO of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

The second day featured a set of 4 workshops on publicity and advocacy methods. There were at least 100 attendees during the first evening session; attendance for the second day workshops was capped at 50.

Other Events

- Panel on the Massachusetts Clean Energy Bill
 - June 29th, 2016
- Voter Registration throughout Fall 2016
- 2016 Presidential Election Debates
- 2017 Call Congress Day
 - February 6th, 2017
 - We opposed the travel ban executive order.
- First 100 Days Panel
 - April 28th, 2017
- Future of Work/Manufacturing Panel
 - May 3rd, 2017

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University Liaison

The University Liaison serves as our ambassador to other universities and manages a subcommittee that represents us at national and regional association meetings. This section summarizes the major activities of the Subcommittee during the 2016-2017 term.

NAGPS Leadership Summit

- Held at the University of Arkansas (Fayetteville, AR)
- August 1st through 3rd, 2016
- Trip Participants: Daniel Curtis, Peter Su

The National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS) holds a Leadership Summit each summer, generally on campus at a member university. The Summit includes formal presentation sessions and informal networking opportunities.

The presentations at the 2016 Summit were not typically worthwhile, continuing a trend established over the past few years. The presentation content generally featured vague leadership or team-building advice.

The informal networking opportunities, however, were quite useful. The working relationship developed at this summit between MIT External Affairs Chair Daniel Curtis and CMU Vice-President for External Affairs Nicole Rafidi was extremely valuable throughout the year. This relationship helped solidify an alliance between MIT and CMU on nearly all NAGPS business throughout the rest of the year. In general, at least one GSC constitutional officer should try to attend in order for new faces to get introduced to the NAGPS leadership.

The 2017 Summit was held at Cleveland State University, June 28th through 30th.

Ivy+ Summit

- Held at Brown University (Providence, RI)
- September 30th through October 2nd, 2016
- Trip Participants: Arolyn Conwill, Angie Crews, Shahd Labib, Daniel Curtis, Zsigmond Varga

The Ivy+ Summit is an annual meeting, generally held in October or November, between the graduate student governments of the Ivy League universities (Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, Princeton, Yale, University of Pennsylvania) and MIT. One of the member universities hosts the summit each year on a rotating basis.

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There was extensive discussion about pro-union movements at many member schools during the summit. The External Affairs team found that graduate student governments have consistently avoided direct participation in union-related organizing on campus and have generally declared explicit neutrality on the issue of union formation when the issue has arisen.

The possibility of formally expanding the membership of Ivy+ had been discussed at the 2015 Summit, with a specific focus on potentially adding the University of Chicago Graduate Council, but no final decisions were reached. Instead, UChicago was invited as a special guest member to the 2016 Summit. The question about formally adding them as a member was the only substantive business item discussed in the last session of the Summit.

Since there are no Ivy+ governing documents or structure, special rules of order were established and verbally agreed to during this session. Each university would have one vote, and decisions would be made by simple majority. It was not clear if abstentions were valid.

By a vote of 5-3-1 (5-4 if abstentions were not allowed), UChicago was added to the group.

- In favor: Brown, Columbia, Harvard, MIT, UPenn
- Opposed: Cornell, Dartmouth, Princeton, Yale

After the meeting, the dissenting 4 schools wrote a memo indicating their unwillingness to follow the vote, which led to a conference call of Ivy+ member schools after the fact. Additional cost was cited as a reason to vote “no” and to object to the decision. Cost-sharing principles for hosting the summit and managing travel costs were discussed, but no agreement has yet been reached as of this writing. Typically, the host pays for entire conference and each attending delegation pays for its own travel costs, but the addition of a new member would change the rotation and potentially change the long-term average travel cost. Harvard University (the next host for Ivy+) has invited UChicago to attend the 2017 Summit.

The 2017 Summit will be held at Harvard University, time TBD (likely late October or early November).

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NAGPS National Conference

- Held at Stony Brook University (Long Island, NY)
- November 3rd through 6th, 2016
- Trip Participants: Michael McClellan, Peter Su, Daniel Curtis, Arolyn Conwill, Lisa Guay

The NAGPS National Conference is the primary gathering of NAGPS members each year and is typically held on campus at a member university. Generally, all business for the year which must be conducted by the members is presented at this meeting. The delegations from member universities may also give presentations at the conference on essentially any aspect of the activities of their graduate student government.

Starting several weeks before the conference, the External Affairs team prepared a "Resolution on Guidance for the NAGPS 2017 Budget," which would forbid NAGPS from budgeting for contract lobbying services in the 2017 budget. The primary goal of this effort was to require the NAGPS Board to end its contract with the lobbying firm Shaw, Bransford, and Roth (SBR), and ensure that they could not be promptly replaced. A secondary goal was to free up budget resources to more directly support NAGPS members in their advocacy efforts (by funding travel to DC for Legislative Action Days, as one example). During the week before the conference, the team reached out to counterparts at other universities to secure wider support. The resolution was submitted with 5 co-sponsors and easily passed; the co-sponsors were:

- MIT Graduate Student Council
- Carnegie Mellon University Graduate Student Assembly
- Syracuse University Graduate Student Organization
- University of Arizona Graduate & Professional Student Council
- University of Pennsylvania Graduate and Professional Student Assembly.

The External Affairs team entered the conference with serious concerns about the transparency of previous NAGPS budgets and the effect of previous decisions and recordkeeping on the 2017 budget. (It happens that the NAGPS fiscal year is the same as the calendar year.) These general concerns contributed to our motivations to forcefully address contract lobbying, which we understood to have taken up about 25% of the 2016 budget.

The 2017 budget was conditionally passed at the meeting, without sufficient information on the financial results from 2016 and 2015 to be fully presented to member schools. The External Affairs team, and counterparts from some other universities, directly communicated our concerns about the lack of information about financial results from past year to the NAGPS Board during the conference.

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The conditional passage of the 2017 budget allowed any member university to object and nullify the budget and directed the President (Kristoffersen Culmer) and Director of Finance (Joe Verardo) to provide a full report to members by December 5th, 2016. This report was not delivered on time, so External Affairs Chair Daniel Curtis conveyed the formal objection of the MIT GSC Delegation on December 6th, 2016. A special membership meeting was held in the evening of December 16th, 2016 to develop and approve a 2017 budget; the report on the financial results from 2015 and 2016 was finally delivered earlier that day.

NAGPS elections for the following year are held at each National Conference. Many MIT GSC allies (members of the so-called "Math Caucus" during the conference and special December meeting) were elected to leadership positions, but the Director of Finance (DoF) position remained vacant.

Michael McClellan ran for DoF in a special election conducted by the outgoing NAGPS Board of Directors in late December. Lingering hard feelings regarding the development of the 2017 budget led to election of a different candidate, Damon Chambers of Western Michigan University. Damon initially reached out to the External Affairs team in January 2017 to learn about MIT GSC financial procedures, but ended up missing both of the scheduled meetings for no clear reason.

External Affairs Chair Daniel Curtis and University Liaison Michael McClellan continued to collaborate in early 2017 with new NAGPS President Sam Leiterman and Director of Outreach Alex Howe to propose *ad hoc* committees on governing documents and financial practices to prevent the organization from repeating the negative practices of the previous couple years. NAGPS leaders have not acted to create the proposed committees as of this writing.

The 2018 NAGPS National Conference will be held at Syracuse University.

NAGPS Northeast Regional Conference

- Held at Columbia University (New York City)
- April 7th through 9th, 2017
- Trip Participants: Daniel Curtis, Orpheus Chatzivasileiou

NAGPS organizes regional conferences in most of its 5 regions each spring. Like the Leadership Summit, these conferences feature formal presentation sessions and informal networking opportunities. Most of the formal presentations given at the 2017 Northeastern Regional Conference were given by members.

Unfortunately, the organization of the event was sloppy and the session schedule ended up being thrown together at the last minute. External Affairs Chair Daniel Curtis reached out to several NAGPS Board members and conference organizers to offer advice on improving the agenda throughout the week before the

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conference. The MIT and CMU delegations prepared a joint presentation on government advocacy methods, which was well received by conference attendees.

Other University Contacts Developed

Trinity College Dublin

On January 11th, 2017, the External Affairs team met with President Shane Collins and Global Relations Ambassador Gordon Dunn of the Graduate Students' Union at Trinity College on campus at MIT. Shane and Gordon visited several United States universities over a 2 week period to connect with several graduate student governments. The two delegations shared information about the structure and operations of their respective governments during the meeting.

Student Advocates for Graduate Education (SAGE, <http://www.sagecoalition.net/>)
University Liaison Michael McClellan contacted SAGE in summer 2016. SAGE was not interested in working with us because we are a private university.

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Public Outreach

The Subcommittee on Public Outreach works to communicate the benefits of scientific research to Americans without scientific training, develop new methods the MIT community can use to carry out such communication more effectively, and provide graduate students with material, training, and incentives to reach out to their home communities. The Subcommittee on Public Outreach began operation in December 2016. The primary project of the Subcommittee during spring 2017 was the development of a process to distribute MIT News stories featuring graduate students from the United States to local news outlets near the students' hometowns.

2016 Graduate Student Council Orientation Committee
Fall 2016 Orientation Report

Jimmy Kaczmarek and Sarah Goodman
2016 Orientation Committee Co-Chairs



Graduate Student Council

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Executive Summary

This year's fall orientation was unique in several aspects, chief among them being the delay in appointing 2016-2017 Orientation Committee chairs and the difficulty in accessing documentation from previous years. Nevertheless, the orientation was a success, thanks to incredible support from GSC (both members and administration) as well as individual event coordinators. The main change implemented this year in terms of events was the use of food trucks for the welcome picnic. Overall, this went well, but some specific issues will need to be addressed for next year, such as which food trucks should be invited and how best to keep the line moving. We also ran into some issues in recruiting event coordinators, which, combined with historically low attendance, led to the rescheduling of the Volunteer Day event to a yet-to-be-determined time.

In addition, although all were successful in their own right, it was noted that there may simply be too many events (and some of them too long) for orientation to be as effective as possible. As such, our main recommendations for the future are to create a "Graduate Resources Midway" which will combine the informative aspects of Grad School 102/103, while leaving GS 102/103 open to be topic-based panels. Moreover, for ticketed events, we would recommend against doing multiple rounds of ticket sales, and would also recommend having a clear refund policy stated from the beginning of ticket sales.

In terms of administration, the core orientation team consisted of the two orientation chairs along with the GSC administrators, webmaster, creative media specialist, and secretary. Towards the beginning of the planning phase, the team also included an orientation fellow, however she ceased her work in July. With more consistent documentation, such as this report, the Orientation Chair Guide currently being written, the use of Slack for communication, however, we feel that the orientation fellow position may not be necessary, and future orientations would be justified in choosing not to hire one, or only hiring one on a temporary basis as specific needs arise.

The success of this year's orientation notwithstanding, everyone involved believed that the planning process could benefit greatly from more careful documentation of orientation events. Thus, in the spirit of similar reports made in the past, we present our complete summary of the 2016 GSC Orientation.

Planning

2016 Orientation Theme: OneMIT

The theme for the 2016 GSC Orientation was nominally the same as it had been in previous years: OneMIT. However, instead of focusing on unity between schools, we chose to focus on fostering a welcoming community for all students. Specific emphasis was placed on the planning of the One World One MIT event, as well as the new event focused on welcoming under-represented minorities.

The 2016 Orientation Team

At the head of the 2016 GSC Orientation effort were the two GSC Orientation Coordinators, Sarah Goodman (goodmans@mit.edu) and Jimmy Kaczmarek (jkaczmar@mit.edu). As coordinators, their main focus was “big picture” in nature. Their main tasks were to facilitate communication between the various moving parts involved in running specific events (e.g. recruiting event coordinators and ensuring they were in contact with the GSC administrator for event logistics) and to oversee the logistics of tasks that concerned the entire orientation (e.g. ordering the tshirts and getting the website launched). The division of labor between the two was ad hoc in nature, and naturally resulted in a roughly even workload. For example, Jimmy handled ticket sales and ordering the orientation gift while Sarah took charge of the orientation tshirts and assisted in planning some of the under-staffed events.

Equally, if not more, vital to the planning process were the GSC administrators, Lauren McLean (laurenm@mit.edu) and Betsy Granese (bgranese@mit.edu). Lauren and Betsy met with the coordinators for each event to finalize specific event logistics, including, but not limited to, catering, set up and tear down, payment for supplies, and contacting outside companies (in the case of off-campus events). Additionally, both Lauren and Betsy aided in making space reservations via the Campus Activities Complex (CAC).

Although all GSC officers were involved with orientation to some degree, the GSC secretary Orpheus Chatzivasileiou (orpheusc@mit.edu) was most involved due to his responsibilities over GSC publicity. Orpheus facilitated communication between the aforementioned members of the Orientation Team and the webmaster and creative media specialist. His involvement was especially helpful in ensuring that publicity tasks were completed on time and did not interfere with other GSC publicity efforts.

The GSC webmaster, Chi Feng (chifeng@mit.edu) designed and administrated the orientation website, which is discussed in detail later in this report. The GSC creative media specialist, Jeff Liu (jeffliu@mit.edu) was in charge of cleaning up the orientation logo design, as well as designing various graphics for use in both the website and print media advertisements.

Initially, the Orientation Team also included an Orientation Fellow. The fellow’s job position has always been somewhat nebulous and various from year to year, but for the 2016 orientation the main tasks were as follows:

- 1) Implement Slack event planning software and train both the planning team and event coordinators to use it effectively.
- 2) Assist the GSC administrators in organizing past orientation data (purchases, survey results, etc.) into a standard operating procedure for use by event coordinators.

Although the first task was accomplished, the second task was left unfinished as the fellow ceased assisting the team in July. However, the team seeks to render the second task unnecessary in upcoming years via more complete documentation of the 2016 orientation. Therefore, in the future, a fellow may be replaced by a temporary worker hired ad hoc to assist with any particular tasks that have become too much to handle for the Orientation Team.

In the future, we recommend expanding the Orientation Committee to function more like an actual committee. Namely, there should be more members than just the coordinators. This would allow for greater division of labor, and would likely also yield a much more accessible pool of event coordinators. The duties of each member could be ad hoc, but it may be beneficial to define specific positions within the committee. Examples could include tickets coordinator, treasurer, website-overseer, dorm event coordinator, etc. Defining such duties, or simply being able to delegate, would free up the chairs to be more innovative with tasks such as events list and orientation theme.

Slack

This year, the orientation team, as well as event coordinators, adopted the use of slack (www.slack.com), a group messaging software designed specifically for planning teams. Essentially, it is an easy to use instant-messaging system which also has file-upload and Dropbox sync capabilities. We created individual channels for each event, as well as a private channel for the Orientation Team. Overall, we found Slack tremendously useful, as it allowed for much more organization than hundreds of emails, and all information can easily be archived for future orientation planning purposes. We therefore highly recommend continuing to use Slack in the future.

Budget

Below is the OC budget for fiscal year 2017. Note that the Volunteer Day was voted to be rescheduled, and the funds were applied to the orientation gift.

External Support

The following external support was received for various events:

- ODGE: OneMIT Picnic: \$5,600
OneMIT Banquet: \$6,700
Grad School 101: \$1,000
Grad School 102/103: \$3,200
- ISO: ISO Welcome Dinner: Fully funded
Culture Shock Event: Fully funded
- Sloan: OneMIT Picnic: \$0
- FCU: Orientation Gift: \$2,500
- COOP: Orientation T-Shirts: Fully funded

Issues with the Budget and Future Recommendations

Although Orientation was kept within budget for the most part, there were a few issues that are important to take into consideration for the future:

- The assumed MITFCU donation towards the gift was \$3000, but only \$2500 was offered.
- Sloan annually insists on only supporting the picnic in terms of off-setting the food costs based on the number of Sloan students attending. This is problematic for several reasons:
 - Estimating the number of Sloan students attending such an event is nearly impossible
 - Planning an event budget is impossible if the amount of money to be received is nebulous
 - Food is not the only cost associated with the event (tent set-up, grounds, etc.)Thus problem has persisted for years, and it is unclear whether there are any “easy” ways to address it. In discussions with Sloan representatives, the above issues should be made clear from day 1 in an attempt to convince them the current means of negotiating the Sloan donation is far from ideal. On the GSC end, it is possible to lend more “visibility” for Sloan (e.g. having their logo at events) to the specific events they support (see also the OneMIT banquet below).
- Although the goal of the OneMIT banquet was to replace the Techlink banquet, which focused on collaboration between the Sloan school and the rest of MIT, no fiscal partnership was able to be established with Sloan for the OneMIT Banquet. Thus, the total budget for the event was the sum of the expected GSC commitment and the ODGE donation (\$9,700). While this was plenty of money to run the event this year, it is unreasonable to expect the ODGE to contribute this much to this event every year. Although the event was successful (see Event Summaries section), this budget will likely have to be reconsidered for next year. It would likely be possible to continue to ask the

ODGE for a smaller level of support, but there must be some push, specifically from Sloan students, for increased Sloan funding. If the Sloan students/leadership do not feel that this is a valuable enough event for Sloan to lend specific support to, then it should be discontinued or its scope should be changed.

Timeline of Tasks

The timeline herein approximates the series of major events that led up to the 2016 orientation. Note that this does not necessarily reflect an idealized timeline. Specifically, we would have liked to have a longer turnaround between the call for dorm events and the deadline for application, and would have liked to launch the website at least a month before the beginning of Orientation. T-shirt and gift delivery also ran quite close to the deadline, so moving those up would be helpful in the future. The finalized schedule, for obvious reasons, is ideally completed as soon as possible.

May 2016

May 17th – Sarah and Jimmy elected Orientation Chairs

May 31st – Deadline for orientation logo submission (11:59 PM)

June 2016

June 8th – Winning logo artist notified

June 9th – Email for orientation coordinators sent to grad dorm officers and admins

June 12th – Deadline for applying to orientation dorm funds (email to dorms ~2 weeks before)

June 14th – Orientation dorm funds allocated

June 21st – TLO contacted with finalized logo design

June 22nd – TLO approved logo design

June 22nd – Orientation Event Coordinator Information Session

July 2016

July 11th – Event coordinator list (mostly) finalized

July 28th – Design for T shirts finalized

July 31st – Initial meeting to discuss publicity

August 2016

August 1st – Order for orientation gift finalized with 4imprint

August 1st – Tshirt design and order sent to COOP

August 4th – Met with Student Disability Services about making events accessible

August 12th – Event Schedule finalized

August 12th – Orientation website live

August 15th – First emails to department admins about sending GSC reps to speak at departmental orientations

August 17th – First email to incoming graduate students

August 22nd – Tshirts arrived at MIT

August 22nd – Ticket sales for ticketed events live at tickets.mit.edu.

August 22nd – Email for orientation volunteers sent to grad dorm officers and admins

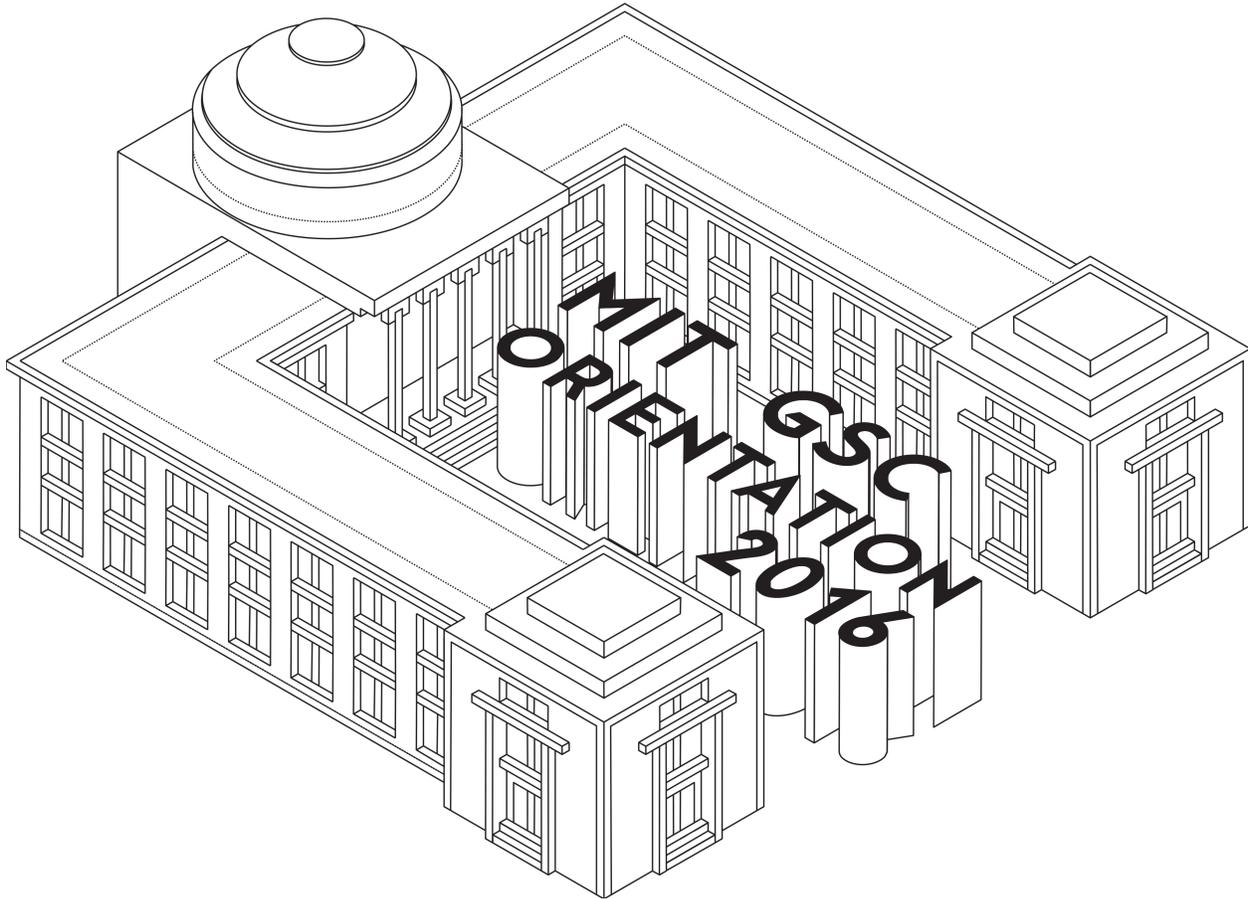
August 25th – Order for orientation gift shipped

August 29th – Orientation kickoff with OneMIT Picnic

Publicity

Orientation Logo and Other Creative Media

As one might expect, creative media for the orientation effort was handled by the GSC creative media specialist, Jeff Liu. Jeff's initial task was to "clean up" the winning logo design, arguably the most important piece of orientation-related media, for use in posters, website, and other media (e.g. make the logo symmetrical, convert to vector art, etc.). The logo design was chosen based on a winning submission to an artwork contest (see timeline in previous section), and was sent to the MIT technology licensing office (our contact was Peter Bebergal, bebergal@mit.edu) as soon as the design was finalized. It should be noted that the version of the logo sent to the technology licensing officer (TLO) reflected the final version processed by the creative media specialist and approved by the original artist. This final winning logo for 2016 is shown below:



The creative media specialist formatted the logo for all publicity purposes, such as the website and physical advertisement. In terms of non-website advertisement, the committee printed posters and displayed an orientation message in the infinite corridor (August 22nd – September 11th, cost \$225.00). We ran into trouble recruiting volunteers to hang posters in various building and dorms, and we therefore recommend that less physical posters be printed in the future or

that a better means of recruiting volunteers to hang posters in dorms (e.g. print posters earlier to allow for more time) be developed.

Website

The website for the 2016 GSC Orientation can be found at the following address: gsc.mit.edu/orientation/2016. The website was designed primarily by the GSC webmaster, Chi Feng, with some general formatting borrowed from the 2015 website. The website went live as soon as the schedule was finalized, and served as the main means of conveying information about orientation to the incoming graduate students. Some key features of the website are as follows:

- 1) Google calendar on main page with sync option
- 2) List of major sponsors, as well as welcome message from GSC president, on main page
- 3) Calendar page including:
 - a. A list of events and their dates, color coded for recommended, GSC-sponsored, and external events (sorting by color code available)
 - b. Event descriptions
 - c. Link to event location and ticket sales (when applicable)
- 4) FAQ page (similar from year to year)

A major change from previous years was giving the orientation chairs administrative authority to add/edit events. This made it much easier to update events in real time as the chair received information, especially considering external events rarely meet the deadline for inclusion, and often date/location changes or typos pop up quite often throughout the orientation process. Obviously, changes should ideally be kept to a minimum in order to avoid confusion for incoming students, but accepting that changes *will* be necessary, we found this policy to streamline our ability to keep the website updated.

Emails

Emails were sent to the students starting one week prior to the first day of orientation. Specifically, the most important emails sent were as follows:

- 1) Welcome email one week prior to orientation: Gave an overview of orientation, the GSC, and a link to the website
- 2) Email informing incoming students that tickets sales were online, and also described the process

This year, the email list was requested by the GSC admin, Lauren McLean, and was received in the form of a spreadsheet. This required GSC to create its own email group through webmoira. If possible, future chairs should request the MIT group email address for incoming students as well as the list of individual emails in order to reduce the logistical burden on the orientation chairs.

Gift and T-Shirt

T-Shirt

The T-Shirt was fully sponsored by the COOP, and featured the Orientation logo prominently on the front. This is somewhat different from previous years, as the GSC paid for the volunteer shirts (colored cardinal) in previous years. Time restrictions prevented the printing of the COOP logo on the back of the shirt this year. The shirts were printed in two colors: white (for students) and cardinal (for volunteers). The following numbers were ordered:

White Youth Tee:

50 - Small

White Adult Tee:

305 - Small

310 - Medium

45 - Large

25 - XL

White Women's Tee:

120 - Small

120 - Medium

20 - Large

5 - XL

Cardinal Youth Tee:

14 - Small

Cardinal Adult Tee:

28 - Small

28 - Medium

25 - Large

5 - XL

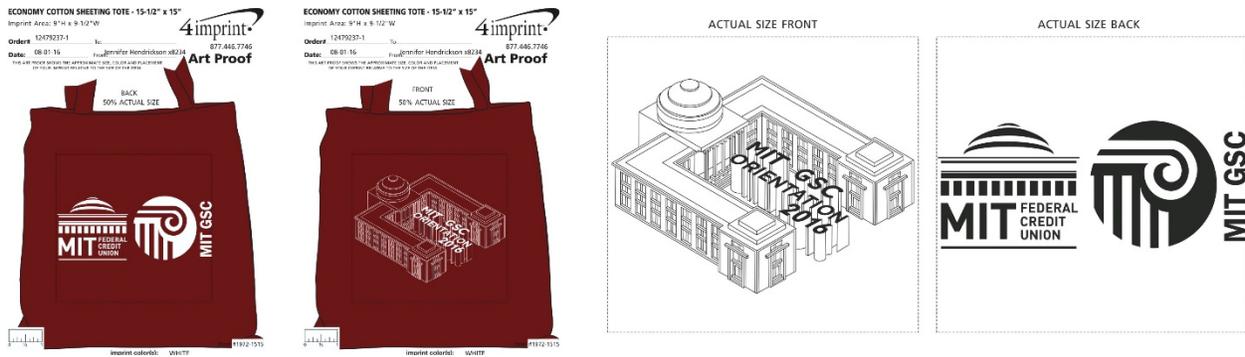
Initially, we met with Jerry Murphy (jpmurphy@thecoop.com) to discuss the COOP's continued sponsorship and how best to hand out the T-shirts. Jerry requested that the GSC oversee passing out the T-shirts at the welcome picnic, as well as a list of incoming student emails so that the COOP could give all incoming students a free membership and let them know about the shirts. Both requests were able to be fulfilled, but it should be noted that the GSC administration requested the list and then sent it the COOP (the COOP cannot request this list directly).

The design of the T-shirt was largely handled by the COOP; we simply sent them the Orientation logo in high quality PDF form. The artwork and size list were sent to Louise Petrozzelli (ljpetroz@thecoop.com), who assisted us in the shirt ordering process. Although the shirts made it on time for orientation, there was little time to spare (and led to the aforementioned issues with double-sided printing), and we therefore recommend that the shirt order be placed as early as possible (i.e. as soon as the logo is finalized) in the future.

In the future, we recommend ordering fewer youth shirts, although the extras were handed out at the family carnival. 20-30 additional large/fewer medium shirts could be ordered next year.

Gift

This year, we chose to distribute reusable bags as the Orientation gift. This was done in large part because of the bag ordinance passed in Cambridge, but also because designing and ordering the gift was relatively simple. The bag was sponsored in part by MITFCU, and we were in close contact with Scott Hanna (smhanna@mit.edu) for sponsorship and design approval. The final sponsorship by MITFCU was \$2500, and the bags were ordered on 4imprint.com. Below are the proofs for the bag:



1500 bags were ordered, which was roughly 65-70% of the incoming student numbers. There were plenty of bags to spare, so our expectation of level of attrition was reasonable. Although the final product was of high quality, 4imprint's turnaround time for delivery was less than ideal, taking almost a month from finalization of the order to receiving the bags. This is not to say they shouldn't be used again, but the slow turnaround should be kept in mind when placing any future orders.

Events

Event Schedule

Below is the official event schedule (including times and locations) for the events directly sponsored by the GSC. This schedule was not finalized until mid-August, initially due to difficulty in communicating with the CAC (conflicting vacation days, etc.), but ultimately due to planning/time changes of last-minute events (e.g. the OneMIT Graduate Diversity Welcome Dinner). Although we feel that the schedule was publicized with enough time for the students, finalizing the schedule earlier in the future could help in communication with the various departments.

Monday, August 29st:

OneMIT Picnic: 11 AM – 12:30 PM, Morss Hall, Dot Lawn (50-140)

Graduate Welcome Address: 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM, Main Kresge (W16-109)

Tuesday, August 30th:

Grad School 102: 12:30 PM – 4 PM, 26-100/34-101

International Students Office (ISO) Cultural Awareness/Culture Shock Presentation & Reception: 4:30 PM – 6:30 PM, Stata Center (32-141)

OneMIT Banquet: 7:30 PM – 10:30 PM, Morss Hall (50-140)

Wednesday, August 31st:

Grad School 103: 9 AM – 12:30 PM, 34-101
Graduate Resource Information Booths: All Day, Lobby 10
Spouses and Partners Learning Fair: 1 PM – 3 PM, W20-307
Boat Cruise: 6:30 PM – 10 PM, Off Campus

Thursday, September 1st:

ISO Welcome Dinner and MIT Police Presentation on Campus Safety: 5 PM – 7 PM, La Sala (W20-202)
Cambridge Pub Crawl: 8 PM – 12 AM, Off Campus

Friday, September 2nd:

Boston City Tour: 9 AM – 11:30 AM, Off Campus
ASA Midway: 3 PM – 5 PM, Johnson Athletic Center
Reception under the Dome: 5 PM – 7 PM, Barker Library

Saturday, September 3rd:

Outdoor Trip (NH Hike): 7 AM – 10 PM, Off Campus
Family Carnival: 3 PM – 6 PM, Morss Hall Porches and Lawn (50-140)

Sunday, September 4th:

Prudential Skywalk: 6:30 PM – 10 PM, Off Campus
Pride Welcome: 8 PM – 12 AM, Thirsty Ear

Monday, September 5th (Labor Day):

Apple Picking: 8 AM – 2 PM, Off Campus

Wednesday, September 7th (First Day of Class):

GSC Open House: 6 PM – 8 PM, Morss Hall (50-140)

Thursday, September 8th:

GradRat Orientation Reception: 5 PM – 7 PM, Morss Hall (50-140)

Friday, September 9th:

Graduate Women Welcome Lunch: 11:45 AM – 2 PM, La Sala (W20-202)

Saturday, September 10th:

One World One MIT Reception: 6 PM – 9 PM, 20 Chimneys (W20-306)

Wednesday, September 14th:

Stroller-Friendly Campus Tour: 1:30 PM – 5 PM, meeting location TBA
OneMIT Graduate Diversity Welcome Dinner: 5 – 7 PM, Samberg Conference Center (E52), 6th Floor Dining Rooms 3 & 4

= Highly recommended event

Event Summaries

Below are the event summaries, as written by the event coordinators. Some data (such as ticket sales) added by Orientation Chairs. In general, the chairs leaned heavily on the coordinators to plan the specific logistics of the event. Although this resulted in slightly less labor on the part of the chairs, it felt somewhat disorganized throughout the process because there was very little knowledge about what should go into each event. We suggest that future chairs continue to give great freedom to coordinators while using this report as a means of being more familiar with what, in general, is required to successfully run each event. This will help keep the planning process more organized, and will also help the coordinators by giving them a framework in which to start planning.

OneMIT Picnic

Graduate Welcome Address

Grad School 102/103

- 1) **Coordinator Name(s):**
Daniel Curtis

- 2) **Event Date, Time, and Location:**
GS 102: Tuesday, August 30th from 12:30pm to 4:00pm in 34-101
GS 103: Wednesday, August 31st from 9:00am to 12:30pm in 34-101

- 3) **Expected attendance (i.e. attendance planned for):**
About 150 each

- 4) **Actual attendance (can estimate if exact number unknown):**
Over 200 on Tuesday; under 150 on Wednesday

- 5) **Event summary (format, guest speakers/panelists invited, etc.):**
Multi-part event with lectures and panels on programs and services at MIT.
Each session started with a series of 15 or 20 minute individual talks, included a ~30 minute break in the middle, and ended with a 90 minute panel.
The GS 102 Tuesday panel talked about the theme of “Health and Wellness Resources at MIT.”
The GS 103 Wednesday panel talked about the theme of “Career and Entrepreneurship Resources at MIT”

- 6) **Food supplier (if applicable):** S&S Café, ordered through Elizabeth “Betsy” Granese in the GSC front office.

- 7) **Budget (please include a *line-by-line* summary of your purchases and their cost):**
3 House Roast Coffee (carafes) 24.95 each - 74.85 total
1 Decaf Coffee (carafe) 24.95 each - 24.95 total
1 Tea (carafe) 24.95 each - 24.95 total
5 Homemade Lemonade (gallons) 22.95 each - 114.75 total
150 Homemade Cookies and Dessert Bars 2.40 each - 360.00 total
Subtotal \$599.50 for each session

8) **What went well with your event:**

The turnout on Tuesday was excellent. It was actually overwhelming in some respects, since the lobby was severely overcrowded during the break.

We received feedback through several channels over the next few days that attendees appreciated the information and particularly enjoyed the panels.

9) **What could be improved with your event:**

The current format is exhausting for both organizers and attendees. 3.5 hours is a really long time to sit in one place listening to talks and presentations. Breaking GS 10x each into either 2 or 3 events, no longer than 1.5 hours each, would probably substantially improve the audience's retention of information.

There are probably several other topics that would be good for a 1.5 hour panel beyond Health and Careers. Scheduling 4 panel events for 1.5 hours each to cover some additional topics, then scheduling a 1.5 hour event for stand-alone 15 minute talks, would probably enable us to cover a lot more ground without wearing people out. Also, don't schedule this kind of thing in the morning before 10am. People just don't show up for talks that aren't required before 10am. The difference in attendance between the afternoon session and morning session was striking.

ISO Cultural Awareness/Culture Shock Presentation & Reception AND ISO Welcome Dinner and MIT Police Presentation on Campus Safety

1) **Coordinator Name(s):** Abiodun Olaoye (worked closely with ISO's Dana Riechman)

2) **Event Date, Time, and Location:**

Cultural Awareness/Culture Shock Presentation & Reception

Date: Tuesday, August 30th

Time: 4:30pm to 6:30pm

Location: Stata 32-123

Senior MIT Administrators Dr. Bernd Widdig, Director for International Activities, and Mr. Bhaskar Pant, Executive Director of MIT Professional Education, will discuss the role of culture and cultural variables in our daily encounters with people from different cultures at MIT and beyond. Strongly recommended for all incoming international grad students and their spouses and partners (due to limited space, we unfortunately cannot accommodate children).

Refreshments will be provided.

RSVP required.

ISO Welcome Dinner & Campus Safety Presentation

Date: Thursday, September 1st

Time: from 5pm to 7pm in the

Location: Student Center W20-202, La Sala

Strongly recommended for all new international grad students and their families to attend. Current grad students and spouses & partners will also be there to welcome new students and families and answer any questions. Buffet dinner will be served.

RSVP requested.

- 3) **Expected attendance (i.e. attendance planned for):** 199 pre-registered (including 22 spouses)
- 4) **Actual attendance (can estimate if exact number unknown):** about 130
- 5) **Event summary (format, guest speakers/panelists invited, etc.):**

Cultural Awareness/Culture Shock Presentation & Reception

PowerPoint/Interactive Presentation by Dr. Bernd Widdig, Director for International Activities, and Mr. Bhaskar Pant, Executive Director of MIT Professional Education.

ISO Welcome Dinner & Campus Safety Presentation

Schedule

5pm Start of event- buffet dinner
 5:30 Introductions- ISO staff- Dana will start and introduce David; David will say a few words and introduce ISO staff
 5:35 Spouses & Partners- Jennifer Recklet Tassi
 5:40 Emergency Preparedness Office- Suzanne Blake
 5:45 MIT Police- Sergeant Andrew Turco
 6:05 Q&A
 6:20 presentation section ends (students/families can mingle) 7pm event ends

*Note: Event may start closer to 5:40pm, depending on how long it takes for people to get food

- 6) **Food supplier (if applicable):**

Cultural Awareness/Culture Shock Presentation & Reception

Milk Street Café (appetizers/dessert/water).

ISO Welcome Dinner & Campus Safety Presentation

House of Cheng (Chinese food/soft drinks)

- 7) **Budget (please include a *line-by-line* summary of your purchases and their cost):**

All events were sponsored by the ISO and not directly funded by GSC

- 8) **What went well with your event:**

Cultural Awareness/Culture Shock Presentation & Reception

The timing worked out well because there was a break at 4pm and the next event was not until 7:30pm.

ISO Welcome Dinner & Campus Safety Presentation

The timing worked out well because many students were free at 5pm and there was not another orientation event until 8:30pm (the pub crawl).

- 9) **What could be improved with your event:**

Cultural Awareness/Culture Shock Presentation & Reception

- (i) This event does not need to have as much food; tea, coffee and snacks should be fine.
- (ii) It would make more sense to switch the timing of the event with the Dinner (it makes more sense to have the Welcome Dinner first, with an opportunity to publicize this presentation).

ISO Welcome Dinner & Campus Safety Presentation

We had too many RSVPs at the last minute, so we should have closed the registration form sooner. However, only half of the people who RSVPed came. We ran out of food. I think it would make sense to make this a reception instead of a dinner, with appetizers from around the world (this will feed more people).

Recommendations in general: publicize to grad admins earlier so that their departments can plan their schedule around the ISO events (whenever possible).
OneMIT Banquet

Graduate Resource Information Booths

- 1) **Coordinator Name(s):** Jimmy Kaczmarek
- 2) **Event Date, Time, and Location:** August 31st, All Day, Lobby 10
- 3) **Expected attendance (i.e. attendance planned for):** Transient foot traffic
- 4) **Actual attendance (can estimate if exact number unknown):** N/A
- 5) **Event summary (format, guest speakers/panelists invited, etc.):**
Various on-campus resources were invited to set up booths in Lobby 10 to share information with students. Representatives were responsible for their own set-up and tear-down (with the exception of table arrangement, which CAC took care of). It was assumed that the majority of foot traffic in Lobby 10 would occur between the hours of 10 AM and 2 PM, and therefore that is the time period that most of the organizations stayed in the area. The following is a list of organizations present at this year's event:
 - MITFCU (Contact: Scott Hanna, smhanna@mit.edu)
 - MIT Alumni Association (Contact: Greg Batcheler, gpbatch@mit.edu)
 - ODGE (Contact: Heather Konar, heatherf@mit.edu)
 - MIT Medical (Contact: Greg Baker, baker@med.mit.edu)
 - MIT Spouses/Partners Connect (Contact: Jennifer Recklet, Reck@med.mit.edu)
 - GradRat (Contact: Todd Incantalupo, todd.incantalupo@balfour.com)

It is worth noting that an invitation was extended to the COOP for this event, but they declined.

- 6) **Food supplier (if applicable):** N/A

- 7) **Budget (please include a *line-by-line* summary of your purchases and their cost):**
No cost associated beyond general CAC reservation
- 8) **What went well with your event:**
In general, it was a good opportunity for services which did not get the opportunity to present during the Grad School 10x series to get more information out about their event. It was also more interactive than other events, and allowed students to investigate the various MIT resources at their own leisure.
- 9) **What could be improved with your event:**
Our overall recommendation is to use the resource booths as a template to somewhat supplant the Grad School 102/103 events. In theory, a resource fair that was better advertised and in a larger space could fulfill the goal of educating first years about on-campus resources much more effectively. Such a "Graduate Resource Midway" would allow for more organizations to be included, would allow for a higher student attendance than Grad School 102/103, would give more face-to-face time between students and organizations, and would ultimately be a more efficient use of time as students would only have to visit the booths which they were interested in learning about.

Spouses and Partners Learning Fair

Boat Cruise

Cambridge Pub Crawl

- 1) **Coordinator Name(s):** Srinivasa Bhattaru
- 2) **Event Date, Time, and Location:** September 1st, starting at 8 PM, in front of Ashdown House
- 3) **Expected attendance (i.e. attendance planned for):** ~160
- 4) **Actual attendance (can estimate if exact number unknown):** ~150
- 5) **Event summary (format, guest speakers/panelists invited, etc.):**
 - a. 1st -- Arrive around 8:45 --> Everyone --> John Harvard's
Event leader would then request snacks immediately and start helping move the snacks around. Expect 8 dollar plates. No need to spend it all, it was difficult for us to try to finish them all.
 - b. 2nd -- Arrive around 9:45 --> Volunteer 1--> Daedalus
V2 --> Plough and Stars
V3 --> The Field
V4 --> Green Street
V5 --> Brick and Mortar

Note, this is a plan if we run into people who very much want a structure...because at this point in the night, almost everyone, and I mean

ALMOST EVERYONE, basically found a couple of friends to go do their own thing. Something volunteers might fare better in doing is in giving advice. A significant number can end up at Daedalus, it's large and can take a lot of people. Every other group can take 10 or 15 interested people to another bar.

- c. 3rd -- Arrive around 10:45 --> V1 --> Daedalus
V2 --> The Field
V3 --> Green Street
V4 --> Brick and Mortar
V5 --> Miracle of Science

By the time we're at this point, nobody is truly following the plan, but this schedule can allow us to check in to see where people might be. Your work is essentially done by this point.

- d. 4th -- Arrive around 11:30 --> Everyone --> Meet up at Asgard???

Did not happen for us. We can put it down as a plan, but this did not happen this year nor any other year. People are mostly on their own. Feel free to let volunteers go do their own thing.

6) **Food supplier (if applicable):** John Harvard's Bar and Grill

7) **Budget (please include a *line-by-line* summary of your purchases and their cost):**

Food @ John Harvard's:

Large Wings (16) -> 10 plates @ 18.00 = 180.00

Nachos -> 10 plates @ 11.00 = 110.00

Pretzels and Pickles -> 10 @ 10.00 = 100.00

Hummus -> 10 @ 9.00 = 90.00

Subtotal: 480.00

Gratuuity 18.00% (required): 86.40

Total: 566.40

8) **What went well with your event:** It was easy! Get 4 or 5 people who want to have a relaxed time, they basically just have to show up for around 1.5 hours, and really just lead people from John Harvard's to the second bar. After that, people take care of themselves. Budget is easy to handle and spend at once. Calling John Harvard's ahead notifying them of 150 people coming REALLY helps people get drinks.

9) **What could be improved with your event:** Plan for tip when you pay for snacks. John Harvard's has to fit a lot of people, its packed. It gets better after 30 minutes, but it's a little cramped at first. If you plan too heavily, you'll be disappointed as people do their own thing. Can switch up the bars a bit, these were just the ones that I enjoyed in particular. Bring printed tax exemption form, they printed mine for me but having your own helps.

Boston City Tour

- 1) **Coordinator Name(s):** Xueying Zhao
- 2) **Event Coordinated:** Boston city tour
- 3) **Event Date, Time, and Location:** Sep. 2nd, 2016 8:30-11:30, freedom trail
- 4) **Expected attendance (i.e. attendance planned for):** 50
- 5) **Actual attendance (can estimate if exact number unknown):** 30
- 6) **Event summary (format, guest speakers/panelists invited, etc.):**
Two tour guides met us at Park Street T station. From there we walked across Boston Common, Beacon Hill and all the way to Quincy Market. We were given a detailed history of the city.
- 7) **Food supplier (if applicable):** NA
- 8) **Budget (please include a *line-by-line* summary of your purchases and their cost):**
The purchases were basically on the train tickets.##
- 9) **What went well with your event:** Everyone in our group seemed to enjoy the tour.
- 10) **What could be improved with your event:** The group did not mingle that much. Maybe next year we can play some games in Boston Common so that people can get to know each other better.

ASA Midway

GSC involvement was limited, as this event was largely handled by the ASA.

Reception under the Dome

Outdoor Trip

Family Carnival

Prudential Skywalk

Pride Welcome

- 1) **Coordinator Name(s):** Nicole Moody
- 2) **Event Date, Time, and Location:** Sunday, September 4, 8 PM - 12 AM, Thirsty Ear Pub
- 3) **Expected attendance (i.e. attendance planned for):** 50
- 4) **Actual attendance (can estimate if exact number unknown):** 35

- 5) **Event summary (format, guest speakers/panelists invited, etc.):** The event was an informal social with a cash bar and free ice cream sundaes.
- 6) **Food supplier (if applicable):** Toscanini's
- 7) **Budget (please include a *line-by-line* summary of your purchases and their cost):**
Individual cups of ice cream, fudge, whipped cream, 3 dry toppings, and paper goods:
\$6.00 per person x50 people= \$300

Pub rental fee: \$55 event fee + \$200 staff fee= \$255
- 8) **What went well with your event:** People seemed to like the casual feel of the event, and the free dessert worked well since a lot of the attendees had already had dinner at the Sidney Pacific BBQ. The venue was also very conveniently located near the graduate dorms.
- 9) **What could be improved with your event:** The vast majority of the attendees were male. It would be great to advertise the event more to queer women at MIT. Also, it would be nice to have representatives from the Rainbow Lounge or at least some informational pamphlets to help answer attendees' questions about LGBT resources on campus.

Apple Picking

GSC Open House

Grad Rat Orientation Reception

One World One MIT Reception

- 1) **Name(s):** Nishanth Dikkala, Sarah Goodman
- 2) **Event Date, Time, and Location:** September 9, 2016, 6pm, Twenty Chimneys
- 3) **Expected attendance (i.e. attendance planned for):** 60
- 4) **Actual attendance (can estimate if exact number unknown):** 30
- 5) **Event summary (format, guest speakers/panelists invited, etc.):**
The event format we had planned was as follows:
 - a. Cultural performances – We had two cultural performances: a) Srivatsa Bhat gave a solo performance of classical Indian singing, b) MIT Techiya, the Jewish Acapella group of MIT. Both were short performances of around 10 minutes each.
 - b. Panel discussion – We had 4 panelists: Dr. Mandana Sassanfar (Director of Diversity and Science Outreach in Departments of Biology and Brain and Cognitive Sciences), Dana Riechman from ISO, Gloria Anglon (Assistant Director

of Diversity Initiatives ODGE), Angela Beth Crews (Graduate Student from Aero-Astro).

- c. Cultural Trivia game (didn't end up happening due to low attendance. But the game has been designed and could be used for other diversity events in the future!)
 - d. A student art exhibit in the back of the room (or the open space outside 20 Chimneys)
 - e. Food – Ordered from three places on Grubhub, Curry House, Thelonious Monkfish and Shawarma Falafel
- 6) **Food supplier (if applicable):** Grubhub: Curry House, Shawarma Falafel, Thelonious Monkfish
- 7) **Budget (please include a *line-by-line* summary of your purchases and their cost):**
Total amount allocated for the event: \$1000
- a. Food – Total \$678.62
 - i. Shawarma Falafel: \$244.61
 - ii. Curry House: \$205.65
 - iii. Thelonious Monkfish: \$168.36
 - iv. Fruit plate from Whole Foods: \$60
 - b. AV: \$105
 - c. Décor (table cloths): ~\$30 (Lauren in GSC has a better idea of the exact amount)
- 8) **What went well with your event:** I think we had a lot of ideas so as to make the event interesting and interactive like having a panel and a trivia game planned. We ordered food from three different caterers to go with the theme of diversity. Everyone enjoyed the food. What went well would be the panel discussion. We managed to get good speakers to speak on the panel and there was a nice conversation with the audience. The performances were good and I think they were the right amount of time. We took a total of about 20-25 minutes for the performance section of the event.
- 9) **What could be improved with your event:** Publicity was where we fell a bit short. The event could have been much better with an improved attendance. We ended up not going ahead with the trivia game planned as the number of people remaining by the end of the panel was a bit low. Not sure if the event being on a Saturday affected the attendance. There were about 30 people there, which was decent for the size of the room, though. I also think pushing this event up a bit in the orientation calendar would really help boost the attendance. Also getting cultural performers and student art was a bit tough given the timing of the event at the beginning of the semester when many people were away from MIT. This should be kept in mind for the coming years and performing groups should be contacted earlier in the summer ideally.

Stroller-Friendly Campus Tour

OneMIT Graduate Diversity Welcome Dinner

- 1) **Coordinator Name(s):** Sebastian Palacios

- 2) **Event Date, Time, and Location:** September 14th, 6PM, Samberg Conference Center.
- 3) **Expected attendance (i.e. attendance planned for):** 100
- 4) **Actual attendance (can estimate if exact number unknown):** 192
- 5) **Event summary (format, guest speakers/panelists invited, etc.):** Institute-wide orientation session for incoming graduate students of underrepresented minority racial and ethnic backgrounds. The format was a dinner with graduate students (current and incoming), and representatives of campus resources and student organizations that are focused on graduate diversity and inclusion. During the event, the following speakers provided remarks:

Gloria Anglon, Assistant Director of Diversity Initiatives. ODGE
 MIT's Chancellor Cindy Barnhart
 MIT's Vice-president Kirk Kolenbrander
 MIT's Senior Associate Dean David Randall
 Dr. Stephanie Pinder-Amaker
 Eboney Hearn, former Associate Dean of Diversity Initiatives, ODGE
 Sarah Goodman (Graduate Student, Event Organizer, GSC Orientation Committee Co-chair)
 Orpheus Chatzivasileiou (Graduate Student, Event Organizer, GSC Secretary)
 Summer Jackson (Graduate Student, Event Organizer)
 Tsehai Grell (Graduate Student, Event Organizer)
 Sebastian Palacios (Graduate Student, Event Organizer)
 Chibueze Amanchukwu (Graduate Student, Event Organizer)

Representatives of campus resources and student organizations had tables located around the room for students to approach and interact with them. An area was designated for attendees with children.
- 6) **Food supplier (if applicable):** Samberg Conference Center.
- 7) **Budget (please include a *line-by-line* summary of your purchases and their cost):** ODGE can provide this information; GSC did not directly fund.
- 8) **What went well with your event:** Attendance, location, organization, food, engagement, and outstanding support across the MIT community.
- 9) **What could be improved with your event:** Decrease the number of speakers, and convey the information in another form (e.g. website, booklet, email, etc.); that would enable more interaction among attendees. Attendance was significantly higher than normal, which is outstanding, but better prediction is ideal for planning purposes. Nevertheless, enough food and space was provided to everyone.

Ticketed Events

The following events were ticketed. The tickets were made available exclusively online through the adMIT One systems (tickets.mit.edu), and sales began on August 22nd, 2016. The events are listed along with their associated ticket cost, maximum tickets made available, and number of tickets sold:

Boat Cruise	\$15	700 tickets available	576 tickets sold
Apple Picking Trip	\$5	138 tickets available	138 tickets sold
Boston City Tour	\$5	91 tickets available	91 tickets sold
Outdoor Trip	\$10	72 tickets available	72 tickets sold
Prudential Skywalk	\$7	100 tickets available	100 tickets sold
Reception Under the Dome	\$7	150 tickets available	150 tickets sold
OneMIT Banquet	\$0	315 tickets available	315 tickets sold

In determining the total number of tickets to be made available, it is obviously important to consider the capacity for the events (e.g. number of bus seats, number of people that can fit on a boat, etc.), but one should also consider volunteers/coordinators/ExComm members attending. It is best to establish how many such people are going *before* the tickets get posted. This ensures that the number of tickets posted is actually in line with how many spots are still available.

Note that for the Outdoor Trip, there were 3 difficulties of hike, and thus 3 tiers of tickets made available (16 novice, 28 intermediate, 28 advanced). The intermediate and advanced sold out rapidly, and it may therefore be advisable in the future to make less novice tickets available. As for the OneMIT Banquet, the tickets were used solely as an RSVP system (thus the cost of \$0). While these sold out rapidly, there was a very high number of students who didn't attend after reserving a ticket. Thus, in the future, we recommend the OneMIT Banquet, and any other limited-capacity event, to have some cost associated with the ticket to discourage people from taking up a spot that do not seriously plan on attending.

In general, we were quite pleased with the ticket sales, as every event but the boat cruise sold out (and attendance for the boat cruise was still quite good). We had few student issues with the all-online sales format, and thus we recommend keeping all ticket sales through adMIT One, and continuing to post all available tickets at once (i.e. no rolling sales). The purpose of rolling sales in past events was to make sure everyone had a chance to sign up; however, waiting to post tickets until ~1 week before orientation, which means the students will have already received multiple orientation emails, should suffice to give everyone a fair chance. If possible, it may be good to look into setting up a waitlist for each event.

The only major issue with the adMIT One system is its inability to accept foreign credit cards. Therefore, students should be told in an email that announces the opening of ticket sales that they should open a TechCash account if they do not have a US-based bank. There were also some issues with students who weren't able to make events wanting a refund, and thus we recommend having a clearly stated refund policy when tickets go on sale (e.g. no refunds after the event).

Finally, we recommend raising the price for tickets across the board so that the GSC can at least break even on the events.

Dorm Events

The following dorm events were funded by the GSC. Dorm event funding was facilitated through the knack website (mitgscapp.knack.com) with the assistance of GSC Treasurer Lisa Guay (gsc-treasurer@mit.edu). Total allocations were designed to use up all of the funds allowed for in the budget. The deadline for applications was specifically set for 1 week before GSC funding board applications were due, to allow dorms to seek additional funding from FB if the OC was unable to fund their events.

The events are listed along with the allocated amount:

Eastgate	Eat and Greet	\$450
Ashdown	Dessert Night	\$1000
Ashdown	Ashdown Dance Party	\$1800
Ashdown	IKEA Trip	\$800
Westgate	Couples Restaurant/Sample Night	\$1000
Sid Pac	Sid Pac Dance Party	\$1350
Sid Pac	Sid Pac BBQ	\$2100
Tang	Orientation Olympics	\$1800
Edgerton	Edgerton Welcome BBQ	\$1300
Thirsty Ear	Thirsty Ear BBQ	\$1300

In choosing events to fund, preference was given to established, “traditional” events, as well as dorms which did not have much representation (i.e. Eastgate and Westgate). However, there were a number of interesting new events that we regretted being unable to fund. It may be worthwhile to consider splitting the dorm event funds into a main budget, which will focus on more traditional events, and a smaller funding pool which will go specifically towards newer events.

The process was somewhat rushed this year as we were pushed to get allocations completed before FB applications were due. Other than that, however, the process was fairly straightforward. Across the board, however, we noticed that all of the dorms requested more money than they had the previous year, despite running basically the same events. All of the dorms, however, were willing to negotiate their allocation. Thus, we do recommend adding a section to the application that requires dorms to justify increases in funding requests compared to previous years, which may prevent groups from asking for more money without justification, which could, in turn, simplify the budget negotiation process.

Event Accessibility

Our contact in the MIT Accessibility office was Samantha Tideman (tidman@mit.edu). She was able to give us details on the specific accessibility issues that incoming students would have, however we were unable to confirm with certainty which events these students would be attending. The official MIT policy is that *all* events should be accessible, however this presents significant logistical difficulties for certain events. In the end, it did not appear as if the accessibility issues became problematic during the events themselves, but we *highly* recommend working with the Accessibility office *during* the planning process as opposed to after

the schedule is already finalized, in order to minimize potential difficulties before things are set in stone.

In the future, it could be helpful to recruit someone for Orientation Committee who would be the disability services liaison and work with SDS and the event coordinators to determine what accommodations are needed and how to implement them.

Summary of Changes made in Orientation 2016

1. Food trucks at OneMIT picnic- was a success overall, but next time the lines could be managed better.
2. Sending GSC representatives to speak at departmental orientations- we sent representatives and ExComm members to 19 departments to speak about getting involved in GSC. Next year, reminding reps which orientations they signed up for would be helpful.
3. Women's t-shirts- in the past, only unisex "adult" t-shirts were available, and after receiving feedback that women's fits would be appreciated, we ordered women's t-shirts in addition to adult t-shirts. This seemed to be a success- the numbers ordered this year seemed to work well.
4. Format of One World One MIT event- in the past it was an info-booth style event for MIT cultural groups. This year, we had a more interactive event with performances, speakers, and discussion.
5. Addition of Graduate Diversity Welcome Dinner- ODGE provided the funding for this event, which was well-attended and featured speakers, food, and socializing.

Appendix A – Sample Emails

Call for Orientation Coordinators

Become an Orientation Coordinator!

Orientation Committee Meeting and Information Session

June 22, 6 PM

50-220 (GSC Office)

Contact: gsc-oc@mit.edu

Loved orientation? Want to help make this year's event a success? Become an Orientation Coordinator for the Graduate Student Council! Coordinators take the lead on each event during orientation - the boat cruise, presidential welcome, and the list goes on! Interested? Attend our upcoming Orientation Committee meeting! Please sign up [here](#).

To apply to be a coordinator, fill out [this form](#) and choose your top three events!

Note: If you are interested, but cannot make the information session, you are still eligible to be a coordinator.

Call for Volunteers from GCM

Hello General Council!

Those of you who took a look at this week's Anno have already seen that the time has come for us to (once again) ask for your help for Orientation! This time, we need volunteers! This is a one-day only commitment, and you'll even score a free T shirt! If you can help, please **sign up here**:

<https://signup.mit.edu:444/signup.php?id=339579748>

Note that we *especially* need volunteers for the OneMIT picnic. Speaking of which **we are looking for a point person to fill in for our coordinator the day of the picnic**. This would still be a one-day only thing, but you would be in direct contact with our coordinator who is out of town that day (i.e. you'd be a bit more "in charge" that day). Please shoot us an email at gsc-oc@mit.edu if you can help us in this way!

Thank you in advance for your help, and we look forward to working with you to make this year's Orientation great!

Dorm Event Funding Signup

As you have all probably noticed while walking outside, it seems summer is officially upon us! Among other things, this means it's time to

APPLY FOR ORIENTATION DORM EVENT FUNDS!

Similar to previous years, we are asking dorms to use the following link to pitch their event: <https://mitgscapp.knack.com/funding#applications/orientationdormeventsfund/>. We also request that dorms first apply for funding through the Orientation Committee, and *then* to submit any unfunded events to the GSC Funding Board. Because of the late turnover in some orientation leadership, we are asking for a relatively quick turnaround (sorry!) on this: **Applications are due by 11:59 PM on June**

12th. We will get results back to you by June 14th so you'll have time to reapply to the Funding Board if necessary (deadline 6/15) using a very similar application.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email us at gsc-oc@mit.edu!

Request for GSC Presence at Departmental Orientations

Dear Grad Admins,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Graduate Student Council (GSC) Orientation Committee. The GSC would like to reach out to as many incoming graduate students as possible, to make them aware of all that the GSC does and to offer opportunities to get involved. We are interested in having a GSC representative speak briefly at each departmental orientation, in order to ensure that we are reaching the entire graduate community.

If it would be possible to have a GSC representative speak for about 5 minutes at your department's orientation, please let us know!

First Email to Incoming Students

Dear Incoming MIT Graduate Students,

On behalf of the entire Graduate Student Council at MIT, we would like to extend our most sincere welcome to the MIT graduate student community! As the fall semester rapidly approaches, we, the 2016 Orientation Committee chairs, wanted to update you on the upcoming GSC Orientation.

What is Orientation? The MIT GSC Orientation is the largest student-run orientation in the country, although we have support from a variety of sponsors and amazing administrators! Each year, we host several events aimed at helping you all adjust to life at MIT, discover important resources, and make great friends!

When is Orientation? Orientation begins on August 29th and there are events up until September 14th. No events are mandatory, but we encourage you to attend many of them!

Where can I find more information? All the information you need for Orientation should be on our website: <http://gsc.mit.edu/orientation/2016/> Check back every now and then as we continue to update our events calendar!

Is there any cost associated? Some events are ticketed (typically ranging from \$5-\$15), and we will update you when ticket sales begin for those events.

Who is the GSC? The MIT Graduate Student Council is composed of students like you who work to improve the graduate experience and foster connections between students, faculty, staff, and alumni at MIT. We host the country's only student-run graduate orientation, plan campus-wide student activities, organize career development programs, fund the activities of other student organizations, and advocate on your behalf both within and outside the Institute.

If you still have questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at gsc-oc@mit.edu. We look forward to meeting all of you in just a few weeks!

Ticket Sales Announcement

Incoming Graduate Students,

Hello again from your 2016 Orientation Chairs! Believe it or not, orientation is only **one week away!** We are eagerly anticipating the start of the events, and we hope that the events help all of you to have a smooth transition to MIT.

Today, we will begin our ticket sales for the ticketed events! The tickets, as well as free events that require an RSVP, can be obtained from tickets.mit.edu. The events that will require a ticket/RSVP are noted as such on the orientation website (see below for link). Please note that some events may not yet be listed on the site, but will be put up this week. To purchase tickets, you will need to download **MIT Certificates for your browser**. Use the following link to learn how to set these up: ist.mit.edu/certificates

You will need your MIT kerberos ID (i.e. your email without "@mit.edu"), as well as your MIT ID number to get certificates for your browser. If you have not yet gotten your MIT ID card, which has your ID number, follow this link to see who to contact: <http://web.mit.edu/wtw/IDs.htm>

Finally, we understand that some of you may not have received our previous email, and those that had experienced some difficulty with the website link. That being said, almost all the information you need to know about orientation can be found at our website: gsc.mit.edu/orientation/2016

Please note that **if the link does not work**, try simply typing the address (without http://) into your browser manually and you should have more luck! As always, don't hesitate to email us at gsc-oc@mit.edu with any questions!