February 3 GCM
Agenda

1. Introduction (5:30-5:40)
   - New faces
   - Quorum check*
   - Approval of December minutes*

2. Updates from the RISE campaign (5:40-6:00)

3. Budget rescope introduced (6:00-6:30)

4. Graduate Research Advising Survey (6:30-6:40)

5. Stipend Working Group process (6:40-7:00)

6. Officer updates (7:00-7:05)

7. Committee updates (7:05-7:20)

8. Open Floor (7:20-7:30)

9. *Requires a vote
New Faces; Quorum; Minutes Approval

- In Google Chrome (or other browser that isn’t FireFox), go to: https://gsc.mit.edu/voting-authentication
In Memoriam: Matthew Brennan

Matthew was a lifelong MIT dreamer and accomplished scholar. He graduated undergrad 2016; was a 5th-year EECS doctoral student. He was heavily involved in student athletics, and part of EECS GSA.

President Reif: “In the shadow of the pandemic, even ordinary days can feel difficult; this is a time for taking special care of one another.”

Please take the time you need to grieve, feel what you need to feel, and care for your friends and neighbors.
RISE Campaign Updates

Kara Rodby
The Reject Injustice through Student Empowerment (RISE) campaign has worked hard to represent the community at-large.

Our petition has >1,000 individual signatures (including 34 faculty) & 73 signatures from student & staff organizations.

Further, we’ve hosted dozens of events to educate and engage the community in these topics, collaborating with many student groups.
4 Sections of Demands

I. Reform Graduate Admissions and Faculty Hiring
   a. Make strategic commitments to reform graduate admissions and improve URM graduate student retention
   b. Promote diversity in faculty hiring and tenure through evidence-based practices
   c. Increase student participation in hiring and tenure decisions

II. Increase Resources for Education and Support
   a. Expand educational programming and training
   b. Hire DEI Officers for departmental accountability
   c. Provide institute-wide support for anti-oppressive research and labor

III. Reform the Policies for Prevention and Response of Faculty Misconduct
   a. Reform the policies and procedures for handling allegations of misconduct against faculty and staff
   b. Publicize data and outcomes for allegations of misconduct against faculty and staff in annual IDHR reports
   c. Implementation of targeted policies for preventing and punishing retaliation
   d. Guarantee transitional funding

IV. Advance Funding Equity at MIT
   a. Guarantee 12-month funding for all PhD programs offered at MIT
   b. Establish non-competitive internal dissertation completion fellowships
   c. Guarantee a minimum annual cost-of-living adjustment for all graduate stipends
Summary

- **Institute-wide wins**
  - Transitional funding support

- **Department-specific wins**
  - Hiring DOs, reformed graduate admissions and hiring processes

- **Areas where we’ve hit a wall**
  - Faculty misconduct adjudication process
  - Guaranteed year-round living wage for all students

Fundamentally, while admin have been willing to meet with us, they do not recognize this as a campaign representing >1k people with serious demands.
The philosophy of the RISE campaign: DEI for all

- MIT’s decentralized nature means things are usually handled at the department level.
- This model is inefficient because it decentralizes student efforts, making them repetitive across time and across departments.
- This model is fundamentally inequitable, particularly as it relates to DEI:
  - Depends on department’s resources and viewpoint of leadership.
  - Incongruent with MIT’s Institute-wide commitments to DEI and creating a safe and supportive environment for all students.
- This model allows admin and faculty to maintain control and power over most processes.
Guarantee advisor-independent transitional funding for one full semester for PhD and SM/PhD students in unhealthy situations (e.g., the student is experiencing bias, discrimination, harassment, other violations of MIT policies, or other aggressive behavior from their advisor or colleagues in the unit they are wishing to transfer from).

Phase II:

- Financial support for all types of research advisor and group switches (i.e., for reasons outside of the advising relationship)
- Develop a process for addressing potentially problematic advisors that are made evident through the process of transitioning students in unhealthy advising situations
- Funding resources for the program to ensure equity of the program across the Institute.
Department-specific wins

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th># of Depts.</th>
<th>Avg. Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Hire a diversity officer</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Require racial bias training (for students, faculty, and/or staff)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Eliminate the GRE</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Review and/or reform student admissions processes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.333</td>
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</table>

**DEI Officers**
MIT hiring a lot more than they otherwise would have.

**GRE Exit**
7+ depts permanently removed. 9+ more suspended.

**Faculty Hiring**
Increased student roles in admissions and hiring (e.g. EECS).

Fundamental refusal to make institute-wide policies around these issues, however. There is hope some of this will be addressed in the Strategic Plan, though this remains to be seen.
Roadblocks - admin opposition to loss of control and centralization

- **Section 3 - reformations to the faculty misconduct adjudication and retaliation policies**
  - Some changes being made to IDHR documentation and procedures (largely superficial)
  - Refusal to review or change any official MIT policies or make larger procedural changes

- **Section 4 - funding equity (these issues were approached via COVID relief efforts)**
  - New research specialist position
  - The Institute is committed to addressing funding issues on a case-by-case basis rather than guaranteeing a year-round living wage for all doctoral students
RISE demonstrates the effectiveness of collective, public, and confrontational advocacy, but also the limits of student power.

Real change requires a shift in the power balance via a fundamental restructuring of how the Institute interacts with and values graduate students.
Thank you! Questions?

We always welcome new members!
Learn more at rise4mit.com
Email us at rise4mit@gmail.com
Join us every Thursday from 7:00-8:30 PM
Budget Rescope Introduction

Steven Burcat, Treasurer
Graduate Research Advising Survey

Noam Buckman, ARC Advising Subcommittee Chair
Survey open NOW until February 15

- Completely **anonymous**...kerberos used for authentication but NOT saved with responses
- Giving away PRIZES
- 8 Sections...median response time ~12 minutes:
  - Advisor Behavior, Research Guidance, Lab/Group Management
  - TA-ing, Funding, Advisor Satisfaction/Leaving Advisor, Support & Reporting
  - Open Response
- MIT-wide responses will be public
- Department-specific results delivered to department student groups and department heads
- Open responses will be summarized and shared to departments
We have a website...
www.gsc.mit.edu/advising-survey

Thanks: Irene Zhang + Rahul Jayaraman
Survey efficacy dependent on response rate...

As of this week...

- 469 responses
- By department...5-15% response rate

Our goal: 50% response rate

Some people received an email from GSC’s Engage...but not everyone
We could use GSC Department Reps’ help!

- Advertise the survey within your department!
- Things you can do:
  - Email your department’s grad student mailing list
  - Send it out on your department’s Slack
  - Ask/follow-up with your department’s student group
  - Ask a faculty member or department leader to forward blurb

We will share some text on the GSC Slack that you can copy/paste into an email or Slack.
Questions?

Ask here, check our FAQ or email us at gsc-arc-advising@mit.edu
GSC Stipend Working Group
Student Members of Stipends Committee

Jerry Ng
GSC Vice President
MechE

Nick Allen
Advocacy Co-Chair
DUSP

Denise Tellbach
Advocacy Co-Chair
MechE

Jonathan Behrens
HCA Chair

Sebastian Sandoval
DUSP

Vaishnavi Ramaswamy
AeroAstro

Jose del Aguila Ferrandis

Michael Luu
AstroAero
Student Veterans Assoc.

Vincent Zu
AstroAero; Student Veterans Assoc.
What Does Our Advocacy Do?

• Stipends Committee cost-of-living adjustment is usually adopted

• Successful recent recommendations
  – Maintenance of stipend increase during COVID salary freeze
  – Move to living-wage basis
  – Partial elimination of sub-12 month appointments (SA&P, SHASS)
  – Short-term and long-term hardship funds
Living Wage Approach

Previously, GSC tracked changes in the Boston area cost of living. But we lacked a measure of whether stipends cover a **survival budget:**

- **Housing rent + utilities + food + medical + local transport + essential goods + (childcare + child nutrition | child) + taxes**

A **grad student living wage** also includes **10% savings + 1 flight home**

**Living Wage Coverage (% of living wage)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Single Student</th>
<th>Full appointment</th>
<th>Full appointment</th>
<th>9-month PhD stipends</th>
<th>90% PhD stipend</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full appointment</td>
<td>96.5%</td>
<td>Single Student</td>
<td>53.9%</td>
<td>74.8%</td>
<td>88.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family, on-campus</td>
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<tr>
<td>9-month PhD stipends</td>
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2021 Recommendations

• We recommend an **increase of 2.0%** in the baseline stipend
• On-campus rent increases **should not exceed $43 per month**

**Policy Recommendations**

1. Eliminate “low-range” sub-100% stipends
2. Improve food security and family assistance
3. Address moving costs
4. Expand Yellow Ribbon program for U.S. veterans

Preliminary and subject to revision.
I. Eliminate sub-100% Stipends

MIT allows departments to pay 90% to 115% of base stipend

Poli Sci, EAPS, Arch, Econ (and potentially more) pay the 90% rate
2. Improve Food Security and Family Assistance

- Higher food insecurity among students with spouses and children. The need has only increased during the pandemic, as children don’t have access to food through school.

- Students with children indicate cost of living among the top few sources of stress, and obstacles to academic progress [Graduate Enrolled Student Survey, 2019]

- Students with children report having to resort to variety of methods to close the income/expense gap [Cost of Living Survey 2017]

- Among the 4 recommendations of MIT Graduate Families Support Working Group: Identify new ways to support students with children financially [Full Interim Report]
2. Improve Food Security and Family Assistance

Available Programs

• **Family Food Grant (Year 3 of 3-year grant)**
  Techcash awards, rolling application
  2019: 162 families
  2020: 278 families applied, not all were granted

  **Concerns:** Lack of transparency, not sure to what extent grant meets need

• **Grant for Graduate Students with Children 2020-2021**
  In its first year of roll-out; annual application cycle
  $2,000 for one dependent child; $3,000 for two dependent children

  **Concerns:** Grants are taxable, could reduce student loan eligibility for the academic year
2. Improve Food Security and Family Assistance

Other Problems

- Insufficient information about graduate student families  
  [Full Interim Report]
- Fragmented communication system to inform students about available programs and grants
- And quoting directly from “Students appreciated the different sources of funding to help with issues of food insecurity and hardship grants, but voiced frustration that it wears one’s dignity down to keep asking for help.” [MIT Graduate Families Support Working Group’s Report]
- We are planning to:
  - Get more information on grant amounts, number of applicants from DSL and OGE
  - Work on centralizing information on programs for students with families
  - Get more anecdotal information
3. Address Moving Costs

We are planning to ask about moving costs in 2021 Cost of Living survey

Moving cost estimates
- Wide range: ~$500 (single domestic student) - >$5,000 (international student with family)
- Students in unfurnished dorms (Edgerton, Westgate) and off-campus accommodation have higher cost
- International students have drastically higher cost (visa, travel)

Moving allowances at peer institutions
Range from $500 to $4,000 (majority providing $1,000)
4. Expand the Yellow Ribbon Program

Yellow Ribbon is a tuition subsidy for U.S. student veterans above the normal benefits of the GI Bill.

Current Status

- Graduate students underutilize the GI Bill/Yellow Ribbon (YR) program. Most departments do not advertise it to current or prospective students.
- Expansion would save department funds while increasing stipend to graduate student veterans.
- Yellow Ribbon adoption in departments remains unclear. This is a federal entitlement. Letting students use it is the right thing to do.
4. Expand the Yellow Ribbon Program

**GI Bill + Yellow Ribbon**
- 2020-21 tuition: $53,790
- GI Bill: ($24,477)
- VA Yellow Ribbon: ($14,657)
- Department Cost: $14,657

**MIT Student Benefit**
- VA Housing Allowance: $28,836
- Book Stipend: $1,000

**Department Cost (RA)**
- 2020-21 tuition: $53,790*
- Stipend (12 mo): $40,533
- **Total:** $94,503

82% savings. MIT could fund **6.4** students on Yellow Ribbon for every **1** student on RA.
4. Expand Yellow Ribbon Program

I. Establish a $300 K centrally-administered fund for 20 Yellow Ribbon graduate students per year (excluding Sloan). This would save $1.37 M in tuition/stipend funding. Unused funds could be swept back or rolled over to next year.

II. Expand the YR fund to meet the demand of each year so that every student who is eligible for YR is able to utilize it.
Questions? Ideas? Want to Help Make the Case?

HCA Advocacy Committee Co-Chairs

Denise Tellbach
tellbach@mit.edu

Nick Allen
nballen@mit.edu

HCA Advocacy List: gsc-hca-advocacy@mit.edu
Affected by the travel ban? Speak out!

• The Biden Administration has **extended COVID-19 travel bans**, and allowed for National Interest Exemptions for only **Schengen/UK/Ireland**

• If you are an impacted scholar from:
  • Brazil
  • Iran
  • Mainland China
  • Ireland
  • UK
  • Schengen Area
  • South Africa

Please report your experience here: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScJUqHFpsSMCn0dryRMe7MnrNLO7IMU_83KNRPwWdX8OExtw/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScJUqHFpsSMCn0dryRMe7MnrNLO7IMU_83KNRPwWdX8OExtw/viewform)

GSC External Affairs Board will use these testimonials to lobby for change at the federal level!
Tomorrow: Re-imagining Public Safety

“An educational community event about the ’defund the police’ movement and steps to invest in holistic safety.”

Webcast, Thu, Feb 4 from 1:00 - 2:30pm EST

Join at www.tinyurl.com/MITRPS
Who should be the next GSC Officers?

• All four positions (President, VP, Secretary and Treasurer) up for election every year

• Nominations open at the March GCM

• Until then, be thinking…
  • Do you want to help ensure MIT leadership hear the voices of all grad students?
  • Start initiatives that will improve life @ MIT?
  • Eat a lot of free food?
  • …then nominate yourself!!
  • Do you have a friend/colleague who’d be good at this job? Nominate them!
Committee Updates
Academics, Research and Careers Committee

Chairs: Emre Ergeçen and Simone Bruno
Email: gsc-arc@mit.edu
Committee updates

Next events:

1) “Academia vs. Industry” series (3 panels):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Who to invite</th>
<th>Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Panel (interactive)</td>
<td>• February 15-16-17-18-19</td>
<td>• 2-3 people from MIT + professors</td>
<td>• Data driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Length: 1 hr - max. 90 mins</td>
<td>(Wednesday/Thursday)</td>
<td>• 2-3 people from industry</td>
<td>• Engineering R/D</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 1 moderator + 4-5 people per panel</td>
<td>• March 1-2-3-4-5</td>
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<td>• Biological/medical sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Wednesday/Thursday)</td>
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<td></td>
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**VISTA Subcommittee**

No visiting students allowed to come to campus during Spring 2021

**Alumni Relations Subcommittee**

Event: Alumni Fireside Chat w/ Miguel Paredes (Chief AI Officer at Rimac) on Feb. 11th
SURVEY IS ONLINE:
https://mit.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bm9sGh6lZrvm1GB
  • For more info: http://gsc.mit.edu/advising-survey

We need to reach out to more grad students!
  • Mailing all grad students
  • ANNO submission
  • dREFS
  • Grad Admins
  • ARC mailing list

ANY HELP IS APPRECIATED!!!
  • Committee mailing lists, other resources, dept. Slack channels etc.
Interested in joining ARC?

Feel free to reach us anytime through gsc-arc-chair@mit.edu
Activities Committee

Chairs: Henry Tran and Somayajulu Dhulipala
Email: gsc-ac@mit.edu
Updates from January 2021

Past events –
• 1/29 – 5PM – Harvard vs MIT Games Night – We played Trivia and Pictionary. MIT WON!!

Upcoming events –
• 2/14 – HarvardxMIT Valentine’s Day event - algorithmically match students on Feb 14 based interests between the two schools. Partnering with Datamatch to help students find love/friendship on Valentine's day. Sponsoring free dinner/dates for up to 100 MIT Students ($20 per person).
• May 2021 – MIT Talent Show – Students can participate in teams of up to 5 people. Interest Declaration Deadline: March 14, 2021. Prizes (TBD) for teams that make a successful submission.
Association of Student Activities

President: Rebecca Black
Email: gsc-asa@mit.edu
IAP MIDWAY

• This Friday, 2/5/21 11AM – 1 PM ET

• midway.mit.edu

• ‘Map’ of participating groups at asa.mit.edu
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee

Chair: Bianca Lepe
E-mail: gsc-diversity@mit.edu
DEI Committee: What’s happened

• GSC DEI Fellows training completed
  • We have 30 fellows now trained in racial justice facilitation – bios and contact information will soon be available on the GSC website
  • Do you have any DEI/racial justice focused events you need facilitators for? Let us know so we can connect you to fellows!

• Looking to join GSC DEI?
  • We are recruiting for the upcoming year 😊
    • Chair
    • Vice Chair, Department & Inclusion
    • C-reps: Disabilities, First Gen-Low Income
DEI Committee: Data Info + Events

• Ongoing Data Access
  • Graduate Enrolled Student Survey: data request form
  • Black Lives Matter: departmental scorecard

• Upcoming Events:
  • Fridays, 2:00-3:00 pm: DEI Coordinator Meetings @ Zoom
  • Fridays, 3:00-4:00 pm: Working Meeting on Grad Admissions @ Zoom

• Next Committee Meeting: TBD!

Contact: gsc-diversity@mit.edu
External Affairs Board

Chair: Jordan Harrod
E-mail: gsc-eab@mit.edu
February 2021 Updates

• Statements Passed:
  • Public Comment on MBTA Forging Ahead Proposal (State)
  • Biden Transition Team/Administration Letter – Department of Education (Fed)
  • Biden Transition Team/Administration Letter – DHS + State (Fed)
  • Biden Transition Team/Administration Letter – OSTP (Fed)
  • Endorsing the College Transparency Act (Fed)
  • Endorsement of the STEM Opportunities Act and MSI Opportunities Act (Fed)

• Met with Biden Transition Team
Upcoming Events + Advocacy

• Statements In Progress:
  • Letter to the Department of Defense (Fed)
  • Missing Middle Housing Zoning Petition (Local)
  • Letter to the Biden Administration on Climate Change (Fed)

• Advocacy Topics:
  • LGBTQ+ Issues (Currently All-Gender Restrooms)
  • Virtual Statehouse Visit
  • Student Wellbeing + Mental Health
  • Accessibility
  • National Interest Exception

• Welcoming New Members! Reach out to gsc-eab@mit.edu
Research Slam!

- Hone your science communication skills and compete for hundreds in cash prizes with MIT's first Research Slam!
- Modeled after the 3-Minute Thesis format, participants will explain their research in 3 minutes or less.
- The Slam is open to all MIT postdocs & PhD candidates; see tinyurl.com/mit-slam-21 for details on workshops, deadlines, and submissions.
- Contact srosu@mit.edu with questions, and encourage your friends to sign up!
Housing and Community Affairs Committee

Chairs: Jonathan Behrens and Denise Tellbach
E-mail: gsc-hca@mit.edu
Stipend Recommendations

(discussed earlier)

Email gsc-hca-advocacy-chair@mit.edu to get involved!
Graduate Housing Working Group

- Focus on planned residence hall
- MIT administration has been evasive about what rents will be and about results from the ACC survey

Risk of repeating Site 4 debacle if we’re not careful
Heating Issues

• Reports that residence hall heating issues haven’t been fully resolved
• Units should be able to reach 68°F during the day (64°F at night) and be below 78°F
  • Anything less violates the State Sanitary Code!
  • If you have your own thermometer, record the temperature to show it’s not just a personal-preference issue
• Fill out service requests on Atlas
  • The instructions on the Ashdown website are broadly applicable
• Reach out to City of Cambridge Inspectional Services if necessary
Muddy Charles Pub Board

Chair: Jennifer Kaczmarek
E-mail: gsc-muddy@mit.edu
The Muddy Charles Pub wants you!

• Come be a part of the Muddy Charles Pub Board, it is the way.
• The board is looking for new graduate student members!
• **Next meeting 02/08/2020**
  @ 7 PM eastern
• **Zoom link:**
  https://mit.zoom.us/j/92942943400?pwd=K2jrS3hNZldMS21EQ25TZ0oyZDRLdz09

**Email Jennifer** with any questions!
  • gsc-muddy-chair@mit.edu
Orientation Committee

Chairs: Shashank Agarwal and Maytee Chantharayukhonthorn
E-mail: gsc-oc@mit.edu
Spring Semester

• With new students being mostly virtual, need to emphasize connection of students with MIT community
• Working with COOP, MITFCU and GradRat on a care package for 1st years, sending out ~March
Planning for Fall 2021

• Will likely retain virtual summer events for 2021 regardless of COVID situation
• Rollout of new web interface (Canvas) for 2021 that will streamline information dissemination
• Orientation is recruiting!
  • Email gsc-oct-chair@mit.edu if you are interested in shaping orientation for our newest graduate students!