

MIT Alumni Association ~ FY2019 Report to the President

Overview

In 2019, the MIT Alumni Association (the Association or MITAA) made significant strides in the second year of its Strategic Plan, staying on a path guided by its North Star vision statement: **To engage and inspire the global MIT community to make a better world.**

The year marked the strengthening of important partnerships between the Association, its Board of Directors, key Institute leaders, and many dedicated volunteers and donors. The results of these collaborations led to strong programmatic participation and robust attendance at events held in Cambridge, in China, and in other spots around the world; high philanthropic support for Annual Fund initiatives; and increased virtual engagement in today's digitally connected society.

In this fiscal year, 50 percent of living alumni had engaged with MIT in one or more of the ways noted above, with that figure representing a 3 percent increase over the previous year. In addition to sustaining relationships with the engaged 69,102 MIT graduates, the Association continued to foster connections with students and Institute friends, including parents, postdocs, and non-alumni donors.

Highlights

The Annual Fund raised nearly \$86.5 million in FY19 from 43,947 donors—the second-highest dollar total on record.

MIT Tech Reunions, MIT's largest gathering of alumni each year, welcomed more than 2,365 alumni and friends back to campus and saw \$130 million raised by reunion classes.

The MIT Campaign for a Better World global tour, in partnership with the Alumni Association, continued for the third year to visit major regional hubs where MIT alumni live and work, with six events and more than 1,750 attending.

Logins to the Infinite Connection—the alumni's virtual home at **alum.mit.edu**—increased 6 percent from last year, to 55,516.

The Institute saw a record rise in **volunteers**—alumni, students, and friends who contribute their time to help the MIT community make a better world—to 18,043, marking a 9 percent increase from FY18.

In its third year, **the MIT 24-Hour Challenge**, held on March 14 (Pi Day), both online and at events on campus and around the globe, saw a record 9,397 donors contributing \$3.7 million to 65 microchallenges in one day. In addition, 544 fundraising and social media volunteers promoted the give-a-thon.

MITAA partnered with the Black Alumni of MIT (BAMIT), the Black Student Union (BSU), and campus partners to produce the **BAMIT Capstone: Road to 50: The Power of Community.**

The MITAA's Parents Association hosted **978 families at Family Weekend 2018**, representing a new record and a 22 percent increase in attendance over the previous year.

The Association continued to lead its Ivy+ peers in **social media engagement**, with #1 ranking on Facebook, #2 on Twitter, #3 on LinkedIn, and #4 on Instagram.

The Annual Fund and MIT Student Alumni Association launched a new undergraduate giving initiative in FY19 with the **MIT Student Philanthropy Program**.

MIT faculty led 16 **MIT Alumni Travel Program** trips with 312 travelers.

More than 7,400 attended the Association's virtual **Faculty Forum Online** and **Faculty Forum Online, Alumni Edition** series, including a special event following the announcement of the MIT Stephen A. Schwarzman College of Computing.

The CASE Platinum Awards, which recognize excellence in programs in educational advancement internationally, honored the Association with its Grand Gold in Diversity Programs for the 2018 Women's unConference. CASE District 1 also honored the Association with one gold award and one bronze for the MIT Research Slam and the MIT 24-Hour Challenge video, respectively.

Quick Facts

At the end of FY19, living MIT alumni totaled 139,318. Some 53 percent have graduate degrees only; 25 percent of undergraduate degree holders also have MIT graduate degrees. In addition, 24 percent are female and 15 percent are international residents. By school, 46 percent hold engineering degrees; 20 percent, science; 19 percent, management; 7 percent, architecture; 5 percent, humanities, arts, and social sciences; and 3 percent, other. Other FY19 data of interest:

- An all-time high of 18,043 alumni and friends volunteered for MIT or the Alumni Association.
- The Association supported 1,173 events that drew 27,322 unique attendees.
- The MIT Annual Fund raised nearly \$86.5 million, the second-highest dollar total on record, with a 1 percent decline from last year.
- The Association maintains contact information for 96 percent of alumni, exceptional in the advancement world.

Annual Fund

Annual giving contributes to the financial footing that makes MIT the extraordinary place of education, research, and innovation it is today.

Over the past 75+ years, the annual engagement of the global MIT community—alumni, students, parents, and friends—has strengthened the Institute and supported its greatest advancements.

Highlights from the Annual Fund this year included its best showing to date on Giving Tuesday, with more than 2,300 donors contributing nearly \$1.1 million to the Institute on the November international day of philanthropy. Later, on March 14—Pi Day, and an unofficial holiday for the MIT community—the MIT 24-Hour Challenge saw a best-ever 9,397 alumni and friends

contributing \$3.7 million to one or more of 65 microchallenges supporting education, research, and innovation at the Institute.

Annual Fund fundraising results this year:

- \$86,490,699 was raised—the second-highest dollar total on record.
- 43,947 **alumni, students, parents, and friends** donated to MIT.
- MIT hit an **alumni participation rate** of 24 percent, representing 30 percent undergraduate and dual-degree undergraduate alumni, and 18 percent graduate student-exclusive alumni.
- \$9.27 million was raised for Institute **unrestricted giving** from 15,529 donors.
- The team made connections with nearly 800 alumni and friends, including 465 **individual visits**, that resulted in nearly 700 gifts totaling \$5.81 million.
- The Annual Fund, in partnership with the Student Alumni Association and campus partners, established the new MIT Student Philanthropy Program, with 24 percent of undergraduate students making gifts this year.
- **Class-based fundraising** efforts engaged more than 250 volunteers and set several milestone reunion records for the classes of 1944, 1949, 1959, and 1999, and a participation record for the Class of 1944.
- **The William Barton Rogers Society**, which stewards annual leadership donors making single gifts of \$2,500–\$100,000, recognized 6,338 alumni and friends.
- Comprising donors who give in consecutive years to the Institute, the **1861 Circle** honored 19,405 alumni and friends—2,542 of whom have given every year since graduation, including one donor who has given 74 years consecutively.
- The team managed 44 volunteer **Class Stewardship Agents**, who wrote more than 10,000 personal thank-you notes to donors.

[*MIT thanks all Annual Fund donors.*](#)

Alumni Relations

Alumni Relations develops and fosters an interactive global MIT community through quality programs and services designed to increase support for, awareness of, and interest in MIT.

Through this work, Alumni Relations engages its constituents to generate future volunteers, leaders, and donors. We serve as the connector for alumni, students, and friends to each other and the Institute.

Gatherings and Programs

This year, 1,156 reunion-year alumni and friends attended **Tech Reunions**—a 16 percent increase over the attendance of those classes five years ago.

The Cardinal and Gray Society and **Emma Rogers Society** held seven events around the US that drew 816 attendees.

The Events team worked with nine **departments, labs, and centers on campus**, supporting the production of 30 major events.

The Class of 2016 hosted **Pi Reunion**, marking its 3.14 years post-graduation, in Las Vegas, bringing together 699 MIT alumni and friends across 20 events, connecting with 40 percent of the 2016 class.

The Student/Alumni Relations team worked with 56 departments, labs, and centers on campus, supporting **outreach for 15 events**. It supported eight **DAPER** alumni events that brought 272 alumni, students, and friends together.

In partnership with the Black Alumni of MIT (BAMIT), the Black Student Union (BSU), and Institute partners, the Association helped to produce **BAMIT Capstone: Road to 50: The Power of Community**, a weekend-long event in November celebrating 50 years of the BSU, which drew one of the largest gatherings of black alumni ever.

The **Alumni Education** team collaborated on the Hacking for Inclusion hackathon, a collaboration between MITAA's Alumni Affinity Program and the Black Alumni of MIT (BAMIT)—as well as producing 32 Faculty Forum Online events that reached 7,400 alumni and friends.

Collaborating with MIT Alumni Association Board leadership, MIT alumni volunteers, and colleagues, the Alumni Relations team ran point on two **Strategic Change Implementation Committee sprints** on clubs, classes, and affinity groups and on reunions, in support of making recommendations in support of these key areas in the MITAA Strategic Plan.

The **Alumni Careers** program produced three Virtual Career Fairs and three Career Lunch & Learn webinars this year and expanded the alumni employer relations program to include live regional events at corporate headquarters. These programs drew 6,531 registrants in FY19. In addition, 2,950 alumni and students signed up for the Alumni Advisors Hub by the end of FY19, and over 9,000 alumni logged in to the MIT Alumni Job Board.

The **Club of Maine** celebrated its 100th anniversary and the **Club of Puget Sound** celebrated its 111th, with both events held in May.

A total of 613 travelers participated in 40 **Alumni Travel Program** trips this year. Three events were organized with local alumni, bringing together five local alumni, 14 current students, and 41 MIT travelers.

Strategic Communications and Marketing

The Strategic Communications and Marketing (SCM) team leads and executes against marketing and content strategies to help the MIT Alumni Association meet its goals of engaging its constituents with the Institute and with one another.

Key Accomplishments

- Centralized the creative team for the MIT Alumni Association; developed a new content track in its structure; and increased its partnership with the Annual Fund Marketing programs
- Worked with partners to drive traffic to the **MIT Alumni Association website**, with 646,000 visitors—an increase from FY18
- Completed more than 800 **communications and marketing projects** in support of the MIT Alumni Association

- Provided key marketing support for the MITAA’s “**Big Four**” events: Alumni Leadership Conference, Family Weekend, the MIT 24-Hour Challenge on Pi Day, and Tech Reunions
- Launched the **MIT Insights Forum**, a virtual focus group of 1,700 alumni offering up valuable perspective and insights on the MIT alumni experience
- Produced or consulted on 25 **original videos** to support the MITAA’s engagement goals
- Increased **social media followers** on Twitter and Instagram from FY18
- Saw the number of **Social Toaster** social media ambassadors rise to 224—a 43 percent increase from last year
- Supported the marketing and social media amplification around six **Better World global events**, including programmatic content development for Better World (Beijing)
- Partnered with the MIT News Office and MIT central communications to promote alumni-specific content on their main channels, including *The Daily* email, new in FY19, and the mit.edu Spotlight
- Liaised with the MITAA Board Legislative Advocacy Ad Hoc Committee to reimagine the **Legislative Advocacy Network** as a new communications platform for engaging alumni and the policy interests they may share with the Institute
- Worked with MITAA Board leadership, volunteers, and alumni to execute against a **Strategic Change Implementation Committee sprint** on brand and communications—a major focus of the MITAA Strategic Plan
- Oversaw the marketing and communications plans for the **BAMIT Capstone** and the **MIT Insights Forum**, two FY19 priorities for the Association
- Logged 433,080 *Slice of MIT* blog views
- Led creative development of President and Mrs. Reif’s **holiday e-greeting**, with increased collaboration with Resource Development
- Devised **email marketing strategies** that helped boost the MITAA email open rate to 45 percent—a 1 percent increase from FY18
- Developed **strategic marketing plans** for partners in several Alumni Relations, Information Services, and partner departments
- Provided editorial leadup and round-the-clock social media coverage for the **MIT 24-Hour Challenge** and **Giving Tuesday**

Information Systems and Volunteer Services

The Information Systems and Volunteer Services (IS&VS) team seeks to deliver value to alumni and other constituents by providing data input, analytics, online services, and volunteer services that strengthen opportunities for philanthropic, online, and face-to-face engagement.

In addition, IS&VS supports the organization’s infrastructure by providing world-class technology support to our staff.

Volunteer Leadership Development

Volunteers continue to power the MIT Alumni Association and all its activities. Every club and class activity, every interest and affinity group, every mentor and externship opportunity is made possible because of the countless hours alumni and friends devote to MIT. The FY19 statistics reflect this:

- 18,043 volunteers worked on behalf of MIT and the Alumni Association (up 9 percent

from last year).

- 16,880 were alumni volunteers (up over FY18); 1,163 were non-alumni.
- 13 percent were international.
- 34 percent were women (up over FY18).
- 40 percent were donors.

[*The Association thanks all MIT volunteers.*](#)

The **Alumni Leadership Conference**, held Sept. 21–22, 2018, drew a record 696 attendees. The event included Institute leaders, faculty, students, and volunteer speakers; workshops designed for volunteer roles; and the annual Leadership Awards dinner.

Infrastructure and Operations

The Office of Records maintains MIT’s database of records documenting contact and other information for alumni and friends of MIT, with key results in FY18:

- More than 210,000 combined **record updates and gifts/pledges** were recorded.
- The **annual email campaign**, bolstered by a refreshed marketing campaign, drew 27,000 alumni to update their information—a 1,201 percent increase over FY18.

Web, Database, and Support Services for the MIT Alumni Association also logged a number of achievements in its efforts to support its programmatic partners’ goals. In FY19, the team:

- Implemented **new security protocols** for internal data protection per FY18 audit
- Implemented two-factor authentication on the **Online Alumni Directory**
- Explored replacements for **Email Forwarding for Life**, migrated all accounts to **Microsoft Office 365**, and eliminated spam filtering through **Symantec**
- Updated “**My Account**” and Online Alumni Directory pages, allowing for such things as searchable interests and adding alumni children and other alumni relationships
- Made online enhancements to **tools for volunteers**
- Created online areas of the Infinite Connection specifically for **Sloan alumni and affiliates**
- Executed more than 2,000 **programming data requests**
- Implemented a new **Adobe Creative Cloud** licensing model and migrated half of the staff to **Microsoft Office 365**
- Provided two workshops for staff on effective use of **Dropbox and OneDrive**

Governance

In FY19, Charles Joseph (C.J.) Whelan ’92, ’93 served as the 124th president of the MIT Alumni Association Board of Directors, and R. Erich Caulfield, SM ’01, PhD ’06 served on the Board as president-select.

Board Highlights

- Worked with MIT Alumni Association CEO Whitney T. Espich and senior Association

staff to operationalize and socialize with volunteers around the world the five-year MITAA Strategic Plan

- Collaborated with MITAA staff to successfully execute against three Strategic Change Implementation Committee sprints on clubs, classes, and affinity groups; reunions; and brand and communications
- Promoted the Alumni Association's third MIT 24-Hour Challenge
- Partnered with the Office of Resource Development to deliver MIT Better World Campaign roadshow events around the globe
- Served as ambassadors for key Institute messages with their peers and networks
- Voted to approve affiliate status for MITx MicroMasters® program credential holders

Finance and Operations

The Finance and Operations (F&O) team supports all program areas by providing financial strategies and tactics and operations oversight to support the annual and long-term commitments and aspirations of the Alumni Association.

Budget Summary

In FY19, the Association's total expense budget was \$17,664,983, which included \$1,879,709 allocated for subscriptions to *MIT Technology Review*. The budget was funded by \$15,115,654 in General Institute Budget (GIB) funds, \$115,000 from the Association's reserves, and program revenues of \$554,720. At June 30, 2019, through a combination of open position savings, increased program revenues, and cost sharing with Resource Development on collaborative efforts in events and information technology, we were able to fund almost all of our FY19 activity. However, new investments in volunteer events, enhancements to reunions, and strategic change management initiatives driven by the Strategic Plan required additional support of \$52,000 from our Credit Union revenues. Also, this year:

- The F&O staff provided key support to the CEO of the MITAA in communicating and implementing the **strategic objectives** of the MIT Alumni Association Board and staff.
- On the operations front, F&O conducted a **building-wide assessment** of maintenance needs and continued space planning, both Bldg. W98 and Bldg. W20 (where Tech Callers have their offices).
- In terms of **building projects**, the team coordinated 18 interoffice moves, 41 office reconfigurations, 25 small- and large-scale paint projects, and 376 building maintenance requests.

Human Resources and Strategic Talent Management

The Office of Human Resources and Strategic Talent Management (HR/STM) was reconfigured this year as one team that assists the senior teams of both the MIT Alumni Association and Resource Development to attract quality talent, ensure their strategic engagement, and guide their performance and professional development in support of MIT's advancement goals.

The HR/STM team supports the work of all program areas within RD and AA relative to talent management including: staffing and retention, employee engagement, performance management, employee relations, diversity and inclusion, professional development for management and staff, compensation, and rewards and recognition. In addition, HR/STM facilitates all organizational

changes within RD and AA and drives the effort to create a comprehensive talent management strategy for the campaign and beyond.

- With the hiring of a new **Executive Director**, Ellen Gilmore, HR/STM took the opportunity to codify and document consistent standards for promotions, merit increases, and assignment of job titles in conformity with Institute guidelines.
- The team documented HR procedures and policies in a **new reference guide for frontline fundraisers** produced by the Campaign Office.
- HR/STM offered training on **Preventing Sexual Misconduct** customized to the Advancement business, which provided attendees with a framework to navigate conversations with alumni, donors, colleagues, and friends; the ways sexual violence shows up in our work as advancement professionals; and practical ways employees and managers can contribute to a culture of safety and respect.
- An **interactive active bystander workshop**, led by Daena Giardella of the MIT Sloan School of Management, demonstrated powerful approaches for responding effectively to inappropriate behaviors and comments that convey harassment, bias, bullying, or other incivility through practical Bystander Intervention Skills and Speak-up Steps that will enable bystanders to constructively influence a situation.
- HR/STM offered a workshop on **Conducting Effective Career Discussions** to help managers enhance the quality and frequency of career development conversations, encourage staff to ask questions about their growth, teach employees how they can take ownership of their career development, and provide resources and tools.
- To provide **better onboarding** for our new employees, HR/STM implemented several enhancements, including production of a new welcome brochure spotlighting resources about working at MIT and coordination of monthly orientation sessions on the MIT Better World campaign; policies and practices related to finance, HR, and privacy and confidentiality; preventing sexual misconduct; and emergency preparedness. These sessions were complemented by a quarterly discussion with AA/RD leaders and a Welcome New Employees Reception.

Whitney T. Espich
Chief Executive Officer, MIT Alumni Association

Learn more about the [MIT Alumni Association online](#).