

MIT Alumni Association ~ FY2020 Report to the President

Overview

This year, the MIT Alumni Association (the Association or MITAA), along with the rest of the Institute, experienced the challenging headwinds generated by the Jeffrey Epstein-MIT Media Lab matter, followed by the once-in-a-century Covid-19 pandemic that produced impacts on all aspects of society. Later in the academic year, the widespread antiracism movement, sparked by police violence, added further complexity and offered opportunity for connecting with our community. These extraordinary circumstances, though, did not deter the Association from staying the course in year three of its Strategic Plan with its North Star Vision: to engage and inspire the global MIT community to make a better world.

It was the foundational partnerships between the Association, its Board of Directors, key Institute leaders, and many dedicated volunteers and donors that helped to keep the MIT community of alumni and alumnae, parents, and friends close and engaged throughout the year.

Following the revelations of MIT's engagements with Jeffrey Epstein, the Association served as a conduit between the Institute and the alumni/ae community, providing senior leadership and the MIT Corporation with important insights on sentiment and offering opportunities for repair and restoration. This worked help diffuse tensions and kept our alumni community focused on the long-term health of MIT.

In the final weeks of the academic year, as the MITAA was pivoting its signature event, Tech Reunions, to a virtual global gathering, the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis and the calls for social justice prompted the Institute to affirm and energize its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Association encouraged regional activity on this issue and rolled out a global forum for equity as two early responses.

The community stayed close and engaged throughout. While the first part of the year saw continued strong attendance in signature in-person events and meetings around the globe, year-over-year virtual engagement rose significantly due to the increase of online programming developed in response to the Covid-19 public health guidelines and travel restrictions. The MIT Annual Fund also held steady, in context, with the number of donors slipping slightly but overall dollars remaining strong—following trends of MIT's peer institutions. This is remarkable given the challenges of the year.

At the close of FY20, 66 percent of living alumni had engaged with MIT in one or more of the ways noted above, with that figure representing a 16 percent increase over the previous year. In addition to sustaining relationships with the engaged 91,360 MIT graduates, the Association continued to foster connections with students and Institute friends, including parents, postdocs, and non-alumni donors.

All of this work was undertaken through effective partnership with our alumni volunteers and Institute colleagues.

Highlights

The MIT Annual Fund raised \$86.0 million in FY20 from 36,462 donors—the third-highest dollar total on record.

MIT Tech Reunions, MIT's largest gathering of alumni each year, went virtual for the first time ever this year, and welcomed more than 4,850 attendees around the globe and saw \$44 million raised by reunion classes.

In an effort to further unite the community during the virtual era, the Association created a **digital mosaic**, which saw more than 6,5000 alumni and friends submitting individual MIT-centric photos that, when combined, created an image of the iconic Great Dome.

The Association participated in the Institute's virtual **Commencement event** by producing a post-ceremony "welcome to the MIT alumni community" event that drew more than 6,000 viewers.

Working with the Association, the MIT Office of Resource Development, and the Institute's MIT Medical Outreach team, alumni volunteers from clubs in Greater China led a **personal protective equipment, or PPE, donation drive** that yielded 15,000 N95 respirator masks and 1,000 medical gowns for Massachusetts-area hospitals.

The Institute saw a year-over-year 2 percent rise in **volunteers**, with 18,412 alumni, students, and friends contributing their time to help the MIT community make a better world.

In its fourth year, **the MIT 24-Hour Challenge**, held on March 12, was refocused within hours in response to Covid-19 to raise critical, timely support for MIT students, online learning, and research efforts. The virtual give-a-thon, which also featured 58 microchallenges, raised \$2.95 million from 5,155 donors in a single day, aided by the efforts of 297 volunteers who supported the effort.

To foster connections between the Institute and the alumni community looking to support MIT during the Covid-19 crisis, the Association increased the frequency of **key communications**, like the *Tech Connection* e-newsletter, and launched dedicated how-to-help emails from the Association CEO and president.

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 three events and more than 600 attending.

Log-ins to the Infinite Connection—the alumni's virtual home at **alum.mit.edu**—increased 11 percent from last year, to 61,407, and the number of website visitors was 804,430.

The MITAA's Parents Association hosted **837 families with 2,196 attendees at Family Weekend 2019**.

The MITAA CEO and President devoted considerable time to individual outreach during the **Jeffrey Epstein-MIT Media Lab matter** to ensure that alumni and alumni leaders felt heard and that the Institute understood the range of sentiment found in our diverse community. This outreach resulted in summary memos to MIT leadership and to the MIT Corporation to inform governance.

MIT Alumni Travel Program launched 27 trips with 520 travelers, with 14 trips led by MIT faculty, prior to the program's suspension in March due to travel restrictions.

More than 6,177 attended the Association's virtual **Faculty Forum Online** series, which increased its frequency during the pandemic.

The MIT Alumni Advisors Hub saw an 80 percent increase in engagement in FY20, with 1,331 career consultations recorded and 780 new student advisee accounts created; 320 new alumni volunteered to be advisors. The Hub houses 2,200 alumni advisors, and 3,400 advisees hold accounts.

The CASE Circle of Excellence Awards, which recognize excellence in programs in educational advancement internationally, honored the Association with its Grand Gold for the MIT Alumni Employers' Showcase and a bronze award for the MIT Research Slam.

Quick Facts

At the end of FY20, living MIT alumni totaled 141,208. Some 54 percent have graduate degrees only; 25 percent of undergraduate degree holders also have MIT graduate degrees. In addition, 25 percent are female and 15 percent are international residents. By school, 48 percent hold engineering degrees; 20 percent, science; 19 percent, management; 7 percent, architecture; 5 percent, humanities, arts, and social sciences; and 1 percent, other. Other FY20 data of interest:

- An all-time high of 18,412 alumni and friends volunteered for MIT or the Alumni Association.
- The Association supported 1,004 events—a year-over-year 14 percent decrease that actually drew 3 percent more unique attendees than FY19, with 28,068.
- The MIT Annual Fund raised \$86.0 million, the third-highest dollar total on record, with a less-than-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 a strong **Giving Tuesday**, comparable to the previous year's best, with more than 2,300 donors contributing nearly \$1.1 million to the Institute on Tuesday, December 3. Later, on March 12—Pre-Pi Day, and an unofficial holiday for the MIT community—the **MIT 24-Hour Challenge** saw 5,155 alumni, students, and friends contribute \$2.95 million to one or more of 58 microchallenges supporting education, research, and innovation at the Institute, despite the disruption associated with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Annual Fund fundraising results this year:

- \$86,032,622 was raised—**the third-highest dollar total** on record.
- 36,462 **alumni, students, parents, and friends** donated to MIT.
- MIT hit an **alumni participation rate** of 20 percent, representing 26 percent undergraduate and dual-degree undergraduate alumni, and 15 percent graduate student-exclusive alumni.
- 17,373 donors contributed \$17.55 million to **unrestricted and scholarships** through the annual fund.
- The team made connections with nearly 800 alumni and friends, including 400 **individual visits**, that resulted in nearly 902 gifts totaling \$14.9 million.
- The MIT Annual Fund participated in a **special giving Tuesday** on May 5 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Featured funds included a Covid-19 Emergency Fund, a Covid-19

- Research Fund, and two funds to support students. More than 2,000 donors contributed over \$800,000.
- In the **MIT Student Philanthropy Program**, 447 undergraduate students made gifts this year totaling \$43,990. The dollars are comparable to FY19, yet the disruption to campus life forced us to discontinue the spring campaign, which resulted in a substantial drop in the number of student donors.
 - **Class-based fundraising efforts** engaged more than 230 volunteers and established two new class scholarship funds. Nine classes set a new class record, including a class participation record for the Class of 1970.
 - **The William Barton Rogers Society**, which stewards annual leadership donors making single gifts of \$2,500–\$100,000, recognized 4,569 alumni and friends.
 - Comprising donors who give five consecutive years to the Institute, **the 1861 Circle** honored 18,284 alumni and friends—2,312 of whom have given every year since graduation, including one donor who has given for 75 years consecutively.
 - The team managed 44 volunteer **Class Stewardship Agents**, who wrote more than 12,000 thank-you notes.

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. It serves as the connector for alumni, students, and friends to each other and the Institute.

Gatherings and Programs

In response to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, **MIT Tech Reunions** was held virtually for the first time this year. More than 4,858 users signed in to our platform, which featured more than 70 online programs. This included an all-time high of Graduate Student Exclusive alumni, with 1,144 in attendance.

The Association also produced a “post-show” for **MIT’s virtual Commencement**, with 6,057 logging in to view the program.

The Cardinal and Gray Society and **Emma Rogers Society** held four events in Massachusetts and California that drew 500 attendees.

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

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.

The Faculty Forum Online, MIT Research Slam, MIT Career Lunch and Learn, and MIT Alumni Employers' Showcase series, along with programs from MIT affinity and shared interest groups, collectively drew over 30,000 registrations from over 14,000 alumni.

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 "better world" perceptions and activities and metrics, in support of making recommendations for these key areas in the MITAA Strategic Plan

The **Alumni Careers** program produced 10 Career Lunch & Learn webinars this year and expanded the alumni employer relations program to include live regional events at corporate headquarters. These events drew 14,625 registrants in FY20. We reached 12,000 alumni accounts on the Alumni Job Board in FY20. The MIT Alumni Advisors Hub, in partnership with the Chancellor's Office saw an 80 percent increase in engagement in FY20, with 1,331 consultations recorded and 780 new student advisee accounts created; 320 new alumni volunteered to be advisors. The Hub houses 2,200 alumni advisors, and 3,400 advisees hold accounts.

The MIT Volunteer Summit for alumni volunteers on the West Coast took place in San Francisco with 106 attendees. The summit focused on three major themes: C^3 (communications, collaborations, and connections), personas and journeys, and leadership development.

The **Club of Austin and San Antonio** celebrated its 25th anniversary with a special event in partnership with the William Barton Rogers Society and MIT Solve.

In partnership with the Sophomore Class Ring Committee, Alumni Relations piloted the **Brass Rat Melt Project**, raising more than \$3,100 in donated Brass Rats and \$7,250 in outright gifts, for a total of \$10,396.05 given to the Class of 2022 Brass Rat Financial Assistance Program—providing aid to roughly 60 students.

Over 350 graduate alumni saved spots for the **Graduate Alumni Gathering**, scheduled for late March 2020. Three keynote speakers and 16 alumni speakers were confirmed for the event, which was ultimately canceled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Alumni Travel Program hosted 27 trips, 14 of which were faculty led. The program served 520 travelers in FY20, including 251 alumni. Due to Covid-19, 14 trips had to be canceled; those trips included 244 registered 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

- Worked with design partner Pentagram on a **visual and messaging rebrand** for the Association, with a visual direction, selected in consultation with the Board and key campus stakeholders
- Developed **new client/strategy and digital marketing tracks** in the SCM team structure, complementing existing creative and content teams
- Worked with partners to drive traffic to the **MIT Alumni Association website**, with

- 804,000 visitors—an increase of more than 158,000 from FY19
- Completed more than 800 **communications and marketing projects** in support of the MIT Alumni Association
 - Provided key marketing support for the MITAA’s **signature events**, including the Alumni Leadership Conference and Family Weekend in the fall, as well as the MIT 24-Hour Challenge—refocused during the pandemic—and for the first time ever, a virtual Tech Reunions
 - Provided full-press marketing support for the inaugural **MIT Graduate Alumni Gathering**, including communication guidance during its cancellation due to the Covid-19 pandemic
 - Partnered with Institute colleagues on the distribution and collecting of alumni/ae feedback to a number of presidential letters on key community topics, including the creation of discrete alumni/ae “how-to-help” **Covid-19 communications**
 - Worked to relaunch the MIT Parents Association site and design a new **Parents e-newsletter**
 - Logged 558,542 *Slice of MIT* blog views—a 29 percent increase year over year
 - Saw the Association’s **YouTube channel** views climb to more than 1.25 million views
 - Co-led, with Information Services, the first year of the **MIT Insights Forum**, a virtual focus group of 1,700 alumni offering up valuable perspective and insights on the MIT alumni experience. FY20 survey topics included regional engagement, Tech Reunions, volunteerism, and “better world”
 - Produced or consulted on 29 **original videos** to support the MITAA’s engagement goals
 - Increased **social media followers** on Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram year over year
 - Supported the marketing and social media amplification around three **Better World global events**, as well as regional alumni volunteer events in Northern California and Germany
 - Partnered with the **MIT News Office and MIT central communications** to promote alumni-specific content on their main channels, including *The Daily* email and the mit.edu home page
 - Liaised with the MITAA Board Legislative Advocacy Ad Hoc Committee to produce programming for the **Legislative Advocacy Network**, including a visit to Capitol Hill to meet with relevant Congress members representing volunteers’ districts
 - Continued to implement recommendations from the **Strategic Change Implementation Committee sprint** on brand and communications—a major focus of the MITAA Strategic Plan
 - Led creative development of President and Mrs. Reif’s **holiday e-greeting**, with increased collaboration with Resource Development
 - Devised **email marketing strategies** that contributed to nearly 76,000 alumni clicking on links in emails
 - Developed **strategic marketing plans** for partners in several Alumni Relations, Information Services, and partner departments
 - Provided editorial lead-up and round-the-clock social media coverage for the **MIT 24-Hour Challenge, Giving Tuesday, and the Day of Giving**

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 internship opportunity is made possible because of the countless hours alumni and friends devote to MIT. The FY20 statistics reflect this:

- 18,412 volunteers worked on behalf of MIT and the Alumni Association (up 2 percent from last year).
- 17,291 were alumni volunteers (up over FY19); 1,120 were non-alumni.
- 13 percent were international.
- 34 percent were women.
- 41 percent were donors.

The Association thanks all MIT volunteers.

The **Alumni Leadership Conference**, held Sept. 27 and 28, 2019, drew a record 704 attendees. The event included Institute leaders, faculty, students, and volunteer speakers; workshops designed for volunteer roles; and the annual Leadership Awards dinner. The event also featured a conversation with Association president R. Erich Caulfield SM '01, PhD '06 with President Reif and the 120th anniversary celebration of the Association of MIT Alumnae.

The Association also facilitated the nomination and selection of alumni/ae Corporation members, recent graduate members, and Visiting Committee Appointments.

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 FY20:

- More than 141,000 combined **record updates and gifts/pledges** were recorded.
- The **annual email update campaign**, bolstered by a refreshed marketing campaign, drew 21,009 alumni to update their information.

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 FY20, the team:

- Implemented a new, cross-functional tool for **volunteer-to-peer solicitation and event outreach**
- Rolled out **new alumni mailbox services** as part of newly configured Email for Life
- Created online areas of the Infinite Connection specifically for **MITx MicroMasters® credential holders**
- Implemented a series of **enhancements to the Giving site** to enable multiyear pledges, gifts by company, and recurring and one-time gifts in the same transaction
- Acquired **500+ new email addresses** for alumni without prior email addressability

- **Replaced platform for giving day** (MIT 24-Hour Challenge), with excellent results, through MightyCause
- Implemented **three new virtual platforms** for virtual event engagement
- Completed moving **all Association staff email/calendars** to Office 365 and built up SharePoint file storage structure for the department; provided staff training on cloud-based file storage
- Upgraded/replaced all **Windows 7 PCI workstations**
- Converted **VoIP system and upgraded to BroadSoft cloud**
- Supported recommendations of the **Strategic Change Implementation Committee** from FY19 and implemented KPIs through Metrics SCIC
- Worked with consultants and the Office of Resource Development to review Advance privacy and security in response to the Epstein-Media Lab matter. This work will continue into FY21.

Governance

In FY20, R. Erich Caulfield SM '01, PhD '06 served as the 125th **president of the MIT Alumni Association Board of Directors**, and Charlene C. Kabcenell '79 served on the **Board as president-select**.

Board Highlights

- Worked with MIT Alumni Association CEO Whitney T. Espich and senior Association staff to deliver on MITAA priorities during year two of the **MITAA Strategic Plan**
- Navigated the unexpected challenges of FY20 with as pragmatic Institute citizens representing the 140,000 alumni and alumnae of MIT.
- Collaborated with MITAA staff to successfully execute against two **Strategic Change Implementation Committee** sprints on metrics and “better world”
- Conducted with Brodeur Partners five in-person and four international virtual focus groups on “**better world**” **perceptions**
- Promoted the Alumni Association’s fourth annual **MIT 24-Hour Challenge**
- Partnered with the Office of Resource Development to deliver three **MIT Better World Campaign roadshow** events around the globe
- Served as ambassadors for key Institute messages with their peers and networks
- Made the **volunteer pipeline** more visible to the Board and its selection committees, created a process for an annual screening by the Board of Directors; illustrated volunteer path scenarios

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 FY20, the Association's total expense budget was \$18,047,935, which included \$1,879,709 allocated for subscriptions to *MIT Technology Review*. The budget was funded by \$15,498,506 in General Institute Budget (GIB) funds, \$115,000 from the Association's reserves, and program revenues of \$554,720.

During FY20, the F&O team continued to provide responsive and effective service to all units in both departments, emphasizing collaborative planning and teamwork to meet departmental goals. Senior members of the F&O team supported the Office of Resource Development (RD) associate vice president and chief operating officer and the executive directors, as well as the MITAA chief executive officer and the executive directors in managing the FY20 strategic planning and budget allocation process. The team also provided key support to the MITAA CEO in implementing the strategic objectives of the MIT Alumni Association Board of Directors.

Even before MIT officially announced that, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the campus would close and all business would be conducted virtually, the F&O team worked diligently with the AA staff to quickly stop payments and process refunds and event contract extensions due to Covid-19 event cancellations. This resulted in a helpful budget surplus being returned to MIT through substantial cost savings and cost avoidance measures. With the closure of campus, the executive director of Finance and Operations was asked to join the MIT Business Continuity Team. At the same time, operations staff continued critical on-site building management in support of gift operations, general building maintenance, and the MIT Facilities staff. In collaboration with the AA and RD Tech Support Teams, F&O facilitated the distribution of computer equipment for staff who were now working from home.

Also, in FY20, the F&O team:

- Engaged the **MIT Environmental Health and Safety Office** to conduct a thorough survey of W-98, including an indoor air quality survey. The results of the inspections and testing showed the overall building condition as good, and that air quality met or exceeded the benchmarks for acceptable air quality
- Continued its traditional work in support of Institute priorities, with senior members of the team working with staff from the VP Finance Office and the Recording Secretary's Office on quarterly updates of the comprehensive **Campaign Cost and Gifts Forecasting dashboard**
- Participated in the annual **Educational Advisory Board Advancement Benchmarking Initiative**
- Oversaw all contracting and financial management of the **FY20 Campaign Roadshows**
- Coordinated the collection of data and questionnaires from all advancement offices across the Institute on behalf of the **MIT Tax and Global Operations Office** in preparation for filing the 2019 IRS Tax Form 990
- Participated in the **annual Voluntary Support of Education survey** managed through the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education

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 Office of Resource Development (RD) 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 MITAA 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 MITAA and drives the effort to create a comprehensive talent management strategy for the campaign and beyond.

In FY20, the HR/STM team:

- Implemented the **Gallup Q12 Employee Engagement survey**. The survey gives every employee the opportunity to share information that helps the Association understand and improve commitment to the organization and its goals, and enables each unit to identify areas of focus to improve levels of engagement and our work environment
- Offered an **LGBTQ+ Diversity Dialogues Presentation** and initiated planning for **Unconscious Bias Workshops** to be held in FY21
- **Hired and conducted onboarding presentations** for 20 staff, managed 7 transitions to other positions within AA, and offboarded 11 staff to positions either internal or external to MIT

Whitney T. Espich
Chief Executive Officer, MIT Alumni Association

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