

MIT Alumni Association

Overview

In 2019, the [MIT Alumni Association \(MITAA\)](#) made significant strides in the second year of its strategic plan, staying on a path guided by its 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 around the world, high philanthropic support for annual fund initiatives, and increased virtual engagement in today's digitally connected society.

During FY2019, 50% of living alumni engaged with MIT in one or more of the ways noted above, with that figure representing a 3% 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, postdoctoral researchers, and non-alumni donors.

Highlights

The annual fund raised nearly \$86.5 million from 43,947 donors in FY2019—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 people attending.

Logins to the Infinite Connection—the alumni's virtual home—increased 6% 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% increase from FY2018.

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.

MITAA's parents association hosted 978 families at Family Weekend 2018, representing a new record and a 22% increase in attendance over the previous year.

The Association continued to lead its peers in the "Ivy Plus Universities" in social media engagement, ranking first on Facebook, second on Twitter, third on LinkedIn, and fourth on Instagram.

The Annual Fund and MIT Student Alumni Association launched a new undergraduate giving initiative in FY2019 with the MIT Student Philanthropy Program.

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

More than 7,400 people attended the Association's virtual faculty forum online, including the Alumni Edition series and a special event following the announcement of the MIT Stephen A. Schwarzman College of Computing.

The CASE (Council for Advancement and Support of Education) 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 FY2019, living MIT alumni totaled 139,318. Some 53% have graduate degrees only; 25% of undergraduate degree holders also have MIT graduate degrees. Of the total, 24% are female and 15% are international residents. By school, 46% hold engineering degrees, 20% science, 19% management, 7% architecture, 5% humanities, arts, and social sciences, and 3% other. Additional FY2019 data of interest include the following:

- 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% decline from last year.
- The Association maintains contact information for 96% of alumni.

Annual Fund

Annual giving contributes to the financial footing that makes MIT the extraordinary place of education, research, and innovation that it is today. Over the past 75 years and more, 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.

This year’s Annual Fund results are listed below:

- \$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%, representing 30% undergraduate and dual-degree undergraduate alumni, and 18% 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% 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.
- Consisting of donors who give to the Institute in consecutive years, 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 for 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. Alumni Relations serves 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% 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, laboratories, 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% 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 (Department of Athletics, Physical Education, and Recreation) alumni events that brought together 272 alumni, students, and friends.

In partnership with the Black Alumni of MIT, the Black Student Union, 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. The event drew one of the largest-ever gatherings of black alumni.

The Alumni Education team collaborated on the Hacking for Inclusion hackathon, a collaboration between MITAA's Alumni Affinity Program and BAMIT—as well as producing 32 faculty forum online events that reached 7,400 alumni and friends.

In collaboration with board leadership, alumni volunteers, and colleagues, the Alumni Relations team led two Strategic Change Implementation Committee sprints on clubs, classes, and affinity groups and reunions—helping make recommendations regarding these key areas of the MITAA strategic plan.

The Alumni Careers Program produced three virtual career fairs and three career lunch and learn webinars, and expanded the Alumni Employer Relations Program to include live regional events at corporate headquarters. These programs drew 6,531 registrants in FY2019. In addition, 2,950 alumni and students signed up for the Alumni Advisors Hub by the end of FY2019, and more than 9,000 alumni logged into 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 team leads and executes 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 Annual Fund marketing programs
- Worked with partners to drive traffic to the MIT Alumni Association website, with 646,000 visitors—an increase from FY2018
- 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 FY2018
- Saw the number of Social Toaster social media ambassadors rise to 224—a 43% 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 FY2019, and the MIT website spotlight feature
- 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 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 FY2019 priorities for the Association
- Logged 433,080 Slice of MIT alumni 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%—a 1% increase from FY2018
- 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 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, this team supports the organization's infrastructure by providing 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, interest and affinity group, and mentor and externship opportunity is made possible because of the countless hours alumni and friends devote to MIT. The FY2019 statistics reflect this.

- A total of 18,043 volunteers worked on behalf of MIT and the Alumni Association (up 9% from last year).
- Of those, 16,880 were alumni volunteers (up from FY2018) and 1,163 were non-alumni volunteers.
- Thirteen percent were international.
- Thirty-four percent were women (up from FY2018).
- Forty percent were donors.

The Association thanks all MIT volunteers.

The Alumni Leadership Conference, held September 21–22, 2018, drew a record 696 attendees. The event included Institute leaders, faculty, students, and volunteer speakers. There were 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.

- 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% increase over FY2018.

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 FY2019, the team:

- Implemented new security protocols for internal data protection per a FY2018 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 FY2019, 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 to implement the five-year MITAA strategic plan
- Collaborated with MITAA staff to successfully execute three Strategic Change Implementation Committee sprints on clubs, classes, and affinity groups; reunions; and branding 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 team supports all program areas by providing financial strategies and tactics, as well as operations oversight, to support the annual and long-term commitments and aspirations of the Alumni Association.

Budget Summary

In FY2019, 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 funds, \$115,000 from the Association's reserves, and program revenues of \$554,720. On 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, the team was able to fund almost all of its FY2019 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 Credit Union revenues.

- Finance and operations 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, the team conducted a building-wide assessment of maintenance needs and continued space planning in both Building W98 and Building W20.
- 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 Resource Development 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 Resource Development and the Alumni Association 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 human resources 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 can enable bystanders to constructively influence a situation.
- HR/STM offered a workshop, “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 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, human resources, and privacy and confidentiality; preventing sexual misconduct; and emergency preparedness. These sessions were complemented by a quarterly discussion with leaders from both offices and a “Welcome, New Employees” reception.

Whitney T. Espich
Chief Executive Officer