# MIT Values Statement Committee Draft Report 9/30/2021

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# Introduction

In a time when there is societal pressure towards polarization, a values statement, paired with a strong mission, creates a unified sense of purpose that can bring a community forward together. MIT's mission statement has been a clear beacon to help us all to decide what is worthwhile to pursue, while a values statement will define how we behave and treat each other in doing so. It has been clear, as the Committee has engaged in conversations across many parts of the MIT community, that we hold many distinctive values dear and can easily name the times in MIT's recent history that make us particularly proud to be here. Likewise, the sense of the times when MIT made choices that were questionable or harmful is remarkably consistent across the community.

The values statement aims to articulate and celebrate the best of MIT's long standing values – our "first principles" – but it is also deliberately aspirational.

In the MIT spirit of self-improvement, it acknowledges that our values sometimes exist in tension or even competition with one another, and that those moments may require hard discussions and confusing decisions. The values statement attempts a re-balancing to respect the dignity, humanity and contributions of all while we strive to live up to MIT's ambitious mission.

At peace with our messy human imperfection, the values statement nevertheless demands the best of us. Likewise, it seeks to represent concepts in a more nuanced way to grapple with the unintended impacts of multiple meanings of single words, such as meritocracy.

Community members asked a particular question many times: Why is a values statement necessary? A values statement highlights the qualities that most members of our community choose to admire though, at times, it is important to acknowledge how to manage their unintended impacts. Transparency regarding values is a meaningful way to empower every community member to stand up for those values when it is possible they are being disregarded. In short, we believe that when embraced by a community, a values statement can help build a sense of shared purpose, expectations, and accountability.

For these reasons, it is important to write down what will guide us as we accomplish our mission.

The opportunity to create a values statement is a momentous occasion for the community. In order to demonstrate the values that we have drafted in this report, we recommend that instead of concluding our work over the summer for the original July 31, 2021 deadline, when many in the community are away and new community members have not yet arrived, that we extend the engagement period into the next academic year, so that all community members have an opportunity to learn about this effort and join us on the journey. The final recommended statement will be stronger with continuing dialogue and engagement among stakeholders.

The recommended values statement is intended to be a living document, evolving as needed over time. It is also the responsibility of all in the community to make them meaningful in the life of the Institute. The committee recommends the following actions for bringing the values statement to life:

- As a way for the community to more easily recall what we care about, the committee suggests modifying the MIT motto from *Mens et Manus* to Mind, Hand, Heart.
- Visible commitment and action from MIT's senior leaders as well as the whole community.
- Stewardship of the values should be part of the work of the ICEO.
- Grow awareness of the values throughout MIT followed by ways to foster action to bring the values to life in every local context.
- Create ongoing practices to review and update the values statement going forward.

The committee's process (Appendix C) for crafting the values statement included two primary modes of inquiry and input (Appendix B).  To get a sense of how MIT has expressed a sense of values over the years, the committee reviewed the founding documents of MIT, reports, studies, and articles that have suggested possible values for the Institute (Appendix E for a complete list), as well as analyzing numerous quality of life surveys.  To understand the current sense of values lived in the community, we pursued direct input via a number of methods, including numerous meetings with stakeholder groups across MIT, feedback via the committee's website and by email.  The committee reviewed the notes and did text analysis to draw out themes.  To absorb and synthesize all that we learned, the committee also engaged in exercises to write what values we saw emerging from the inputs. Out of all these deliberations, we developed the following values statement. We will now begin a second community engagement process to seek input on this draft statement.

# A Proposed Values Statement for MIT: **Mind, Hand, Heart**

We begin where MIT began, with a belief in human potential.

Knowing that good ideas and talented people come from everywhere, we strive to make our community a welcoming place where people from a diverse set of backgrounds can grow and thrive – and where we all feel that we belong.

We know that attending closely to each other's wellbeing in mind, body and spirit is essential to doing our best work together.

We love discovery, invention and making. We believe in learning by doing.

Inspired by MIT's mission, we seek new knowledge and practical impact, in service to humankind – so, with humility, we acknowledge the limits of our understanding, explore deeply, look outward and learn from others.

We celebrate collaboration as the best path to fresh answers.

Drawing strength from MIT's distinctive roots, we delight in the wisdom of every discipline.

On a campus without gates, we champion the open sharing of information and ideas.

We prize originality, curiosity, ingenuity and creative irreverence – and we treasure quirkiness, nerdiness and hacking, as fruits of the same tree.

We strive for the highest standards of intellectual and creative excellence. In this pursuit, we must take special care that exceptional talent does not become an excuse for bad behavior and disrespect.

We believe that respect, decency, kindness, appreciation and compassion for each other as human beings are a sign of strength.

We value bold action and big ideas – so we know we must guard against arrogance.

To push the frontiers, we often need to move fast, so we know we must take special care to be transparent and worthy of each other's trust.

Just as we value scholarship of the highest rigor and integrity, we are willing to face difficult facts, admit our mistakes, speak plainly about failings in our systems and work to overcome them.

We invent tools of great power – so we have a distinct responsibility to help society use that power with humane wisdom.

We love the future – so we must take special care to reflect on and learn from the lessons of our past.

# Values in Action

**VALUES IN ACTION**

This proposed statement for the Institute articulates many values that have been part of MIT culture for decades – informal but deep rooted. Other values it expresses are newer and just taking hold.

In uniting these enduring and emerging values, this statement aims to inspire and inform our actions and choices, small and large, individual and collective. To spark that process, this section expands on the meaning of the values statement, suggests how it might apply in real life and offers examples of past MIT actions when these values shone through.

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> **We begin where MIT began, with a belief in human potential.**

By "potential," we mean the underlying possibility for learning, growth and excellence in everyone, regardless of the circumstances they start from. MIT has always distinguished itself as a place where ability, achievement and drive mattered more than "where you came from." It has also been a place where, through great effort and dedication, generations of people have transformed themselves and their prospects. A powerful example of this value in action is that MIT does not practice "legacy admissions."

MIT has tended to focus this belief in human potential on our students; today, it's vital to extend that belief to include everyone in our community.

> **Knowing that good ideas and talented people come from everywhere, we strive to make our community a welcoming place where people from a diverse set of backgrounds can grow and thrive – and where we all feel that we belong.**

Even with the best intentions, power and hierarchy tend to silence and devalue many voices. So, in real life, knowing that good ideas and talented people come from everywhere demands that we go out of our way to listen to voices not usually at the center, including, among others, staff, women, people of color and those with disabilities. Many of our alumni testify to how MIT developed them no matter where they came from. The current development of the Strategic Action plan for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion shows that MIT is serious about listening to all.

> **We know that attending closely to each other's wellbeing in mind, body and spirit is essential to doing our best work together.**

For generations at MIT, physical health, mental health and wellbeing have taken a backseat. We need to find a more humane path to excellence.

> **We love discovery, invention and making. We believe in learning by doing.**

A central source of energy for our community is the irrepressible human desire to know more, to know how, to know why – the spirit of discovery. It is the humming "Mind" in Mind and Hand. And "making" exemplifies the spirit in "Hand."

A cornerstone of MIT from the very beginning, the principle of learning by doing inspires how we teach – inside and outside the classroom. Examples outside the curriculum include UROP, UPOP, MISTI and the Public Service Center. The ethic of learning by doing is also connected to an open, practical, "try something!" attitude that infuses all of MIT, from our wind tunnel and network of maker spaces to our culture of entrepreneurship.

> **Inspired by [MIT's mission](#), we seek new knowledge and practical impact, in service to humankind – so, with humility, we acknowledge the limits of our understanding, explore deeply, look outward and learn from others.**
>
> **We celebrate collaboration as the best path to fresh answers.**

Coming up so often against the unyielding laws of nature keeps us humble. And because we seek out very hard problems very much worth solving, collaboration is essential to our success; it's sometimes said that if you're working alone at MIT, you're doing it wrong.

Though it can be baffling to people from other institutions, we even extend this principle to homework; students are *supposed* to work on their psets together. The most charming expression of this value may be [Mystery Hunt during IAP,](#) where teams of dozens of people with a huge range of skills voluntarily commit to two days of continuous collaborative puzzle-solving for the fun of it.

One extraordinary example of the pursuit of new knowledge through collaboration and learning from others was [LIGO's historic direct detection of gravitational waves](#), a project that united hundreds of researchers at MIT, CalTech and other institutions around the globe.

Two of many current expressions of MIT's deep engagement with others around the world to solve important problems are the network of researchers linked through J-PAL (the Jameel Poverty Action Lab) and the [many field projects D-Lab engages in](#), from Rwanda to Haiti, with a philosophy of seeking solutions in collaboration with local communities

> **Drawing strength from MIT's distinctive roots, we delight in the wisdom of every discipline.**

This line points to the way that all of MIT is infused with the problem-solving, science-centered, number-loving ethos of its origins as an engineering school – and acknowledges the ways that its work is increasingly informed by wisdom crossing over from other domains. A special strength of MIT is our enthusiasm for striding boldly over the traditional boundaries between disciplines, in pursuit of transformative insights and solutions.

This value also expresses the respect on our campus for discovery and invention, theory and practice, mind and hand.

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| **On a campus without gates, we champion the open sharing of information and ideas.** |

Examples of this value in action extend from the early days of the internet, when MIT pioneered the open-source software movement, to the phenomenon of MIT OpenCourseWare (OCW) and MITx, to the groundbreaking Open Access Policy that shares MIT's scholarship with the world.

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| **We prize originality, curiosity, ingenuity and creative irreverence – and we treasure quirkiness, nerdiness and hacking, as fruits of the same tree.** |

Reaching a new idea sometimes requires climbing over the fences of conventional thinking; MIT is a place that has rules about breaking the rules (the Hackers Code of Conduct) and a central campus space devoted to a gallery of hacking.

Two concepts in this passage – nerdiness and hacking – often have negative overtones for the general public, from stereotypes about social awkwardness to grave concerns about malicious cyberattacks. But we use these words here as they are widely understood by people at MIT.

We use "nerd" as Merriam-Webster now defines it – with the focus on passionate curiosity, irrepressible exuberance and exhaustive knowledge – and we embrace nerds of every stripe.

As a "Crusty Alum" once explained, in response to one of our Admissions blogs:

> "MIT revised my definition of nerd. Now I think a nerd is someone who obsesses about something because to them it's so cool they can't help themselves and it doesn't matter what anyone else thinks. The something doesn't have to be science-y…you could be a pro football nerd, or a Pink Floyd nerd, not necessarily a computer/math/etc nerd. And while I was at MIT I felt like a lot of people were nerdy in this way – that is, that they had some project (science-related or not) that they were really excited about and put a lot of work into, even if it wasn't for classes. Actually to me that was part of made MIT different and special…this kind of obsession about something is what makes someone great at that something, right?"

And in the words of *Nightwork*, a noted history of hacking at MIT, "an MIT 'hack' is an ingenious, benign, and anonymous prank or practical joke, often requiring engineering or scientific expertise and often pulled off under cover of darkness." It can also mean a clever, unexpected workaround, as in the sense of "life hacks," or a unconventional way of solving an important problem, as in President Reif's admonition to graduating seniors that they "hack the world" until they make it a little more like MIT.

> **We strive for the highest standards of intellectual and creative excellence. In this pursuit, we must take special care that exceptional talent does not become an excuse for bad behavior and disrespect.**
>
> **We believe that respect, decency, kindness, appreciation and compassion for each other as human beings are a sign of strength.**

Living up to MIT's mission is demanding work, but we have come to the collective realization that how well we treat each other in pursuit of that mission must be a central concern and a shared responsibility. One example of this value in action was the decision to shift to PE/NE grading for all spring classes during the first wave of the pandemic.

> **We value bold action and big ideas – so we know we must guard against arrogance.**
>
> **To push the frontiers, we often need to move fast, so we know we must take special care to be transparent and worthy of each other's trust.**

In a community of such ambition and drive, it is exceptionally important not to sacrifice our ideals in favor of a goal, no matter how important or tantalizing.

We value doing big things, and sometimes that means acting fast. We also value the wisdom we gain from broad consultation – a process that builds trust but takes time. These values are inevitably in competition, so it's important to get the balance right.

> **Just as we value scholarship of the highest rigor and integrity, we are willing to face difficult facts, admit our mistakes, speak plainly about failings in our systems and work to overcome them.**

The application of this principle made the community particularly proud with the public sharing of the [1999 Women in Science Report](#) and the corrective action it inspired.

> **We invent tools of great power – so we have a distinct responsibility to help society use that power with humane wisdom.**

When the College of Computing was established, this principle sparked the creation of the [Social and Ethical Responsibilities of Computing (SERC)](#). It is also the motive force behind the [MIT Task Force on the Work of the Future](#).

> **We love the future – so we must take special care to reflect on and learn from the lessons of our past.**

While we race to the horizon, this value guides us to pause and learn from incidents in our past where we fell short of our values and ideals, as in the Epstein case. An example of digging deeper into our

history is MIT's support for the class, "[MIT and Slavery](#)," and openness to sharing its findings, including the fact that our founder, William Barton Rogers, enslaved six people. Further intellectual excavations are ongoing in terms of MIT's relationship with Native people.

# Why a Values Statement?

From the committee's charge: "In recent years, various groups and individuals have examined MIT's culture and considered MIT's values, with many recommending that the Institute create a central statement of the Institute's values (See References for a partial list). …While MIT has a mission statement, we do not have an Institute values statement and the quantity and variety of past efforts to define our values tell us plainly that we need one…"

MIT Community members are often faced with difficult choices that the mission statement doesn't address and for which a values statement will provide guideposts for a way forward with deliberate thoughtfulness about tradeoffs that might be necessary.  A values statement highlights the qualities that most members of our community choose to admire though, at times, these do exist in tension with each other.  Transparency regarding values is a meaningful way to empower every community member to stand up for those values when it is possible they are being disregarded.

In recent times MIT's senior leaders have sought to listen to the challenges that members of the MIT community face in the course of their time here.  Many issues and challenges have been brought to light, across all parts of the community.  In order to find a pathway together towards resolution, despite inherent tensions and contradictions, a values statement will be essential to make sure that we are engaging in shared conversation together, providing a foundation for decision making that bears our values in mind.

The committee was charged to ground the values statement in universal ideals but also speak to MIT's distinctive character and culture.  To that end the committee explored the differences between core, aspirational, accidental, and foundational values[1].

- We learned that the best values statements are distinctive to the organization and not a generic list that any organization could have, for example values of MIT versus the values of any institution of higher education.
- Values statements should reflect what the community widely believes is true of itself, but should also recognize when those values are not yet universally lived and remain aspirational to some degree. For example, if diversity and inclusiveness is an important value, we must recognize that the lived experience of many shows that we are not yet all fully embracing or experiencing it.
- We learned that sometimes a value that people implement with the best of intentions can spin off detrimental accidental values.  For example, if bold leadership is a value, we must diligently watch out for arrogance or hubris or times when the value is in tension with inclusion.
- Foundational values can be made active in the life of the community via a code of conduct or community compact.  These tend to be widely held universal ideals expected of all community members, such as integrity, ethical conduct and behaviors, or academic and intellectual freedom. All academic institutions should adhere to these values and while they are admirable and essential, they are not distinctive of MIT.

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[1] Values categories inspired by "Make your values mean something"

This  draft values statement is situated firmly in the zone of core, aspirational, and some foundational values that speak to the unique character of MIT, while providing guardrails to help us watch out for those accidental values that do not serve us well.  We found in our research that many of the seeds of our strongest  values were planted long ago in the original founding documents of MIT and have sprouted and grown over the years via thoughtful and strategic actions and decisions.  The input we have gathered from the community enabled us to hone the list to something that reflects the reality of life at the Institute today while respecting MIT's noteworthy  past.

We present three ways to express and understand the values statement:  three words (Mind, Hand, Heart), a series of statements (page 4) , and an extended segment that shares ideas on the values in action (pages 5-8).  We chose these three representations to allow for a successively deeper expression and understanding of MIT's values, to capture the nuances and tensions associated with the sentences, and to provide concrete examples to illustrate what is intended.

## What about meritocracy?

There is a strong sense that "merit" is a core MIT value, and we often heard references, particularly from alumni and faculty, to MIT being a "meritocracy". We came to understand that many in those groups appreciate MIT as a rare place where an individual's worth is revealed by what they can "do" rather than where they came from, how much money they had, or how many connections they enjoyed. For those who see MIT this way and valued their experience, the idea of meritocracy is naturally bound up positively with their own identity, as in, "Peers and colleagues judged my effectiveness based on what I could do, not on where I came from." In discussions with faculty, they often acknowledged the term's intent, but also expressed that in practice it is not always upheld ("Elitism…"). Conversations with staff emphasized this difference. Staff members are much more likely to point out that, even at MIT, those born into advantages of class, race and gender are overrepresented in positions of influence. And for staff members who do not see their talents and efforts respected or recognized, the claim of "meritocracy" is a bitter pill. Merit, as a potential value, rarely came up in discussions with the student and postdoc communities.

With this background, the committee has discussed at length the limitations presented by the term "meritocracy".

In our deliberations, the challenge was to reconcile the multiple interpretations of the term and place it in the contemporary context. In coining the term in 1958, Michael Young (Young, 1958) intended to warn that meritocracy was not a benign substitute for hereditary elitism. He argued that meritocratic ideals would produce a different, though no less exclusive institution, eventually recreating the distinction among classes.

As we considered our individual experiences, the limitations of meritocracy in today's world became more sharply drawn. There is increasing evidence, including research done by faculty at MIT, showing that organizations that profess meritocracy as a value tend to spawn systemic discriminatory practices (Castilla, 2010).  Untethered meritocratic ambition and rewards returned us to the starting point:

- The distinction that arises from where we originate.
- The institutions we experienced growing up.
- The opportunities we enjoyed.

For many members of the MIT community, especially alumni, meritocracy distinguishes MIT from other elite institutions where legacy admissions and financial worth are legitimate bases of community membership. In stark contrast, examples of MIT's need-blind admissions and the absence of honorary degrees serve as signifiers of our valuation of individual effort rather than hereditary position. Throughout our deliberations, we confronted the tension between the value and recognition of individual merit and the systemic meaning and practice of meritocracy. Our discussions highlighted the distinction between personal gain resulting from a meritocratic system while recognizing that not everyone has access to such benefits.  The discussions led us to highlight the component values behind the aspirational intention of meritocracy, while also articulating the tensions we must navigate to avoid its unintended impacts.

In our deliberations, we saw first hand that the term meritocracy prompts very personal reactions. We spent more time on this than any other single topic; the depth and intensity of our conversations alone told us that the term today is "fraught," very complicated and perhaps inappropriate. But, with the anchor of time fastening the term not to our mid-19th-century origins but to critical moments in the mid 20th century, we also acknowledge that many great minds were able to flourish at MIT over decades who would not have been allowed through the gates at other elite institutions where the tyranny of class, race and religion prevailed for so long. Many members of our community otherwise kept out of these premier institutions found respect, self-worth and community at MIT.

In today's world, meritocracy still speaks to a distinctive and widely valued quality about MIT, which is this community's *comparative* openness to talent and good ideas, regardless of "pedigree."  Yet our identity is expanding. The Institute's growing diversity comprises our next frontier – and our purpose in creating and proclaiming our values is to celebrate and embrace it. We have learned from this exercise that when the need for change challenges us, we boldly confront it. We acknowledge there is work ahead.

# Recommendation for an Extended Engagement Process

This proposed values statement reflects the culmination of months of discussion and debate among the members of the Values Committee after consideration of the many voices we heard along the way. We each found our thoughts shift and evolve over time -- the end result is not necessarily what any of us envisioned when we first accepted our roles on this committee. But through those discussions and debate, informed by the inputs we received from the community, we reached consensus on the proposed statement.

We realize that not all of our readers will have had the benefit of the same level of engagement that we have had and recognize the critical importance of sharing our process with the community as all consider this draft. To that end, and with the support of our sponsors, we plan to seek additional community feedback and engagement following the release of this proposed statement. Rather than conclude our work with our initial July 31, 2021 deadline, our work will continue into the new academic year to provide our community with time to consider the draft, understand our process, and offer feedback. Our plans for additional engagement include the following:

- An event to share the work from the committee on values;
- Town halls and community meetings throughout the community;
- Civic dialogue sessions facilitated by MIT's Center for Constructive Communication (see below for more details); and
- Ongoing engagement through committee's website or by email (values-committee-input@mit.edu).

We hope that this continued engagement fosters a robust dialogue about values at MIT that will provide additional context for our work and help us refine the values statement, including ideas for how we bring the final values statement to life at MIT as described in the next section.

# Recommendations for implementing the values statement

[NOTE: This section will be substantially enhanced in the final report with community input collected during the comment period. Community members can share their ideas for how to embed the values at MIT by: sharing their thoughts in the idea bank on the committee's website or by email (values-committee-input@mit.edu), and/or via town halls to be scheduled]

Values statements can be a powerful force for positive change and building trust throughout a community, but those benefits come about only with sustained action and attention from all within the MIT community. Without cultivation and consistent use in all MIT policies, practices, and behaviors, the risk is an ineffective effort that erodes trust.

The recommendations outlined here serve to enable the values to shape the day-to-day activities and decisions throughout MIT and are informed by best practices and MIT community input. We believe these actions will support our collective responsibility to embrace and live according to the values.

**Update MIT's motto to Mind, Hand, Heart**

Mind, Hand, Heart succinctly captures how the MIT community wishes to enact its values in today's context. It respects MIT's past by building upon the foundational Mens et Manus motto, but calls on us to embrace the importance of valuing not just what a person thinks and does, but also how they exist in our community. Updating the motto should lead to further reconsideration of other important symbols at MIT to update to new standards of inclusion and care while we remain the foremost institute of technology in the world. Following these recommendations we share further analysis and rationale for updating the motto.

**Visible commitment and action from the MIT Corporation, senior leaders, and faculty**

The MIT community, the MIT Corporation, senior leaders, managers and the faculty play a unique part as influencers of the lived experience of students and staff. When members of this group do not act in accordance with the community's values there are far reaching impacts across MIT. It is therefore essential for these groups to recognize that they hold a greater responsibility for visibly behaving in accordance with the values.

To that end we recommend that these groups take transparent, bold steps in building accountability and addressing policies and practices where there are gaps to fill in demonstrating values.

As an extension of the Corporation, visiting committees are a powerful driver of accountability across the Institute and we recommend that the values be incorporated into their visits with the DLCs.

We ask the Senior Leadership of MIT to visibly commit to and promote the values, talking about why they are important and of benefit to MIT.  The Values Statement can be used as a rubric when making difficult decisions, particularly on contested issues for the community. When decisions are communicated we recommend that the leadership also share what values are being expressed in the decision.

The values statement must be stewarded by a senior officer and we suggest the ICEO is a natural place given the Office's part in fostering community.  The work of stewarding the values will be significant and our recommendation also includes properly resourcing the ICEO to take on the additional responsibility.  In addition to stewardship there must also be a group that holds responsibility to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to move the values forward from recommendations to approval.  We recommend that Academic Council be the group who accepts this work.

We ask the faculty to examine and build the values into the most impactful governance practices at the Institute, the standing committees, and promotion and tenure processes to demonstrate commitment and accountability.  Additionally, we recommend that the faculty seek to integrate the values into their interactions with students, postdoctoral fellows, and staff.  There are ample opportunities as well to determine how the values can be a part of the research and teaching mission of the Institute.

**Grow awareness of the values throughout MIT**

Strategies such as internal news coverage and press releases, posting prominently on the MIT website and in promotional materials, asking all leaders to spend time at organizational events covering and discussing values and making visible commitments to them will strengthen the impact of the new values statement.  The Institute could also create an annual event where scenarios are discussed and debated through the lens of values.

At MIT we also have a unique opportunity to enhance awareness of and engagement with the values statement via the design of dialogue frameworks and sense-making processes developed by MIT's Center for Constructive Communication (CCC) and the Local Voices Network (LVN).  We recommend that MIT provide resources to the Center to (1) build on the initial facilitated conversations they organized with members of the MIT values committee to organize a much larger number of conversations to surface the voices of people across the MIT community, and (2) create an interactive exhibit in a highly visible location, such as Lobby 10, that encourages passers-by to hear the voices of the community regarding values and to contribute their additional thoughts.

**Visible attention and action throughout MIT**

To build lasting change in accordance with the values, all departments, labs, centers, student governance groups, and administrative units could seek input from their community on what practices and policies could be improved to better reflect the values, and then develop an implementation plan to make needed changes.

In all parts of MIT, we recommend that the values statement be a part of any orientation or onboarding materials that prepare new members to join the MIT community.

We recommend that the Institute provide support and resources for all teams across MIT that design and implement the policies and practices that guide the community. This will enable these teams to prioritize and implement  the necessary work to enact the values in the everyday organizational structures of the Institute.  We recommend that all such groups broadly assess and address a number of areas, some of which include:
- Evaluate academic policies, hiring practices, personnel policies, performance review and management processes, and onboarding practices to build in the values.
- Review MIT's policies and procedures  to update according to values statements, ensuring that those policies also address the positive, foundational behaviors that are important to cultivate - respect, integrity, etc.
- Update or create training materials to support managers in adopting MIT's values.
- Update the Recognition programs to highlight community members who particularly demonstrate the values.
- Work with the community to  more deeply explicate what the values mean.

The work of examining all practices and policies takes time and capacity and we recommend that the Institute invest in this work to ensure progress.

**Make the values statement an ongoing and living endeavor**

Values should be a central feature in the ongoing life of the campus, but that won't come to pass unless ongoing attention and cultivation is part of the design.  While many values endure and are lasting, they may not stay constant and will likely evolve over time.  We recommend:

- A regular assessment of how well the MIT community feels the values are lived in the culture.  This will help provide data on potential areas of focus in implementing and sustaining the values.
- Create a cycle, of no more than every five years, to establish a group to renew the values statement guided by ongoing assessment and further community engagement.

## Rationale for a change to the MIT motto

At the beginning of civilization, humans recognized the need for discourse and study beyond immediate physical needs and communities devoted to the study of intellectual and spiritual ideas date from the start of recorded history.  Over the centuries, these groups evolved into universities and colleges.  With the Enlightenment and worldwide trade, places of learning began to secularize, focusing on the Mind - *cogito ergo sum.*

At its founding in 1861, MIT recognized that technology intertwined the physical and intellectual world, adopting *Mens et Manus*, "Mind and Hand" as MIT's [motto](). "Mind and Hand" has served MIT well --- emphasizing the balance between thinking and doing, hypothesis and experiment, idea and practice. "Mind and Hand" has broadened generations of MIT students and the idea remains a cornerstone of an MIT education.

Now, early in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we recognize that technology and our humanity go hand-in-hand – shaping each other in complex and important ways.  MIT has acted on this recognition in the last century with its commitment to Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences as an essential part of undergraduate education.

Sixteen values comprise our Values Statement given above and our committee worked to distill MIT's values to a succinct statement.  Even so, keeping all sixteen in mind as we go about our day presents a challenge and we propose a shorter entry point to MIT's Values Statement that grew from MIT's motto:

**Mind, Hand, Heart**

We recommend,

1. Formalizing this recognition by adopting, "Mind, Hand, Heart" as MIT's motto.
2. Retiring the use of the Latin form of the motto in favor of the English.
3. That full adoption of our new motto take place over a suitable period of time.

The idea to [change the motto has been proposed before]() and the phrase has become well established in campus life through [Megan Smith's 2016 commencement address]() and subsequently via the MindHandHeart Initiative.  We recognize that adopting the phrase as our new motto can initiate major change for MIT, a series of actions that we cannot expect to take place overnight.  "Mind, Hand, Heart" represents an aspiration of MIT to move to the view that combines technology with humanity.  Changing our seal, letterheads, and the other signifiers of MIT can come later as we realize our aspirations.

In accordance with the values statement we propose, we believe that changing the motto speaks to taking bold action, while recognizing that we must balance the demanding work of adopting a new motto with respect and compassion for those of us who may need longer to make this change.

# Acknowledgements

Creating a values statement requires the work of many throughout the Institute. So far in the committee's work we wish to thank and acknowledge the contributions of many colleagues who made the draft report possible.

> Our colleagues in IS&T created the committee's website, idea bank and responded to many changes after that.

> Myles Crowley, from the Libraries Department of Distinctive Collections, researched and shared an extensive list of MIT's foundational documents and texts relevant to the committee's work.

> The team in the Institutional Research Office provided expert consultation and analysis of past survey data to pull out meaningful information related to values.

> Professor Deb Roy and Visiting Professor Dimitra Dimitrakopoulou and their colleagues from the Center for Constructive Communication and the Local Voices Network.

> Conducting dozens of focus groups requires the coordinated efforts of many. We'd like to thank all of the volunteer moderators who facilitated discussions and captured notes, our colleagues who managed the logistics of the sessions, as well as all of the participants who shared their thoughtful input through the focus groups, website form, and direct contact with the committee.

> The work of the committee stands on the shoulders of all past committees and individuals who recommended the creation of a values statement and who did thoughtful work to articulate the values of MIT.

# Version control

| Version No. | Date | Description |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | September 30, 2021 | Submitted to the Chancellor and Provost, designated "Draft Report." |

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Committee Charge

In recent years, various groups and individuals have examined MIT's culture and considered MIT's values, with many recommending that the Institute create a central statement of the Institute's values. Examples abound:

- In 2013, a group led by Professor Dick Yue created this statement.
- Many departments, labs, and centers, including Physics, Biological Engineering, and Aeronautics and Astronautics, have found that creating their own values statements was a powerful way to build a sense of shared purpose.
- In his 2015 report, Advancing a Respectful and Caring Community, then Institute and Community Equity Officer Ed Bertschinger conducted an extensive review of MIT's core values (pp. 35–45) and called for the creation of an MIT Compact.
- The Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Outside Engagements proposed a list of MIT values, noting the opportunity "to guide our behavior and evaluate how it impacts the community." (p. 6)
- Similarly, as part of their response to the National Academies' report on sexual and gender harassment of women in academia, the Academic and Organizational Relationships Working Group also called for a unified values statement, observing that, "Our values govern our attitudes, decisions, actions, behaviors…values are the foundation upon which our culture at MIT is based." (pp. 5–6)
- Many MIT community members feel that the actions of MIT in the Overlap case as well as the creation of OpenCourseWare and the 1999 Study on the Status of Women Faculty in Science (and the Institute's response to it), were an expression of MIT values in action for which they are very proud.
- Task Force 2021 and Beyond is considering recommending an expansion of the MIT mission statement to reflect the goal of educating the whole student. The task force would benefit from the values statement committee's consideration of the specific MIT values—existing or new—that support the goal of educating the whole student.

In short, while MIT has a mission statement, we do not have an Institute values statement; the quantity and variety of these past efforts to define our values tell us plainly that we need one—and their thoughtful results give us a running start.

To build a sense of shared purpose, expectations, and accountability, an Institute-wide committee of staff, faculty, students, postdocs, and alumni will engage the MIT community this semester in the foundational work of developing a statement of shared values. It will be important that this statement is grounded in universal ideals but also speaks to MIT's distinctive character and culture.

As the committee members take on this assignment, we ask that they:

- Consider and weigh the results of the previous efforts cited above, and others they may find relevant, from MIT or elsewhere, as well as current initiatives that touch on developing values and community shared purpose.
- Share a draft values statement for comment by May 31, 2021 and solicit feedback in a variety of ways from MIT community members—staff, students, faculty, alumni, and members of the Corporation.
- After considering that feedback, submit a final recommendation by July 31, 2021.
- Recommend practical short and long-term strategies for building the Institute values statement into our institutional habits, rhythms, rituals, and communications, and encouraging people to embrace it in their daily life and work.

## Appendix B: Summaries of Inputs

Since a successful values statement must reflect the current lived values within the organization, the committee pursued two main modes of inquiry to uncover the zeitgeist of the MIT Community's sense of values.  One important component of our process was to familiarize ourselves with previous discussions, articles, and committee reports related in some way to discussions of values (Appendix E for complete list).  To further contextualize what we discovered in the document review, a centerpiece of the committee's work included broad engagement with MIT community members of all types to uncover common understandings of MIT's currently lived values.  Summaries of these inquiries are included below.

## **Analysis of Documents and Artifacts**

The vision for MIT was first articulated in 1861, during a period of industrial revolution in the United States. Like any institution, MIT bears the mark of its context, both in its founding and in key decisions through its history.[2] As the Institute has evolved, its values have sometimes been reaffirmed or elaborated, and sometimes revised, at least in emphasis.

In "Objects and Plan of an Institute of Technology" (1861) William Barton Rogers and his committee, imagined MIT in contrast to "the great seats of classical and scientific education in the Commonwealth," (p. 28) presumably exemplified by Harvard, and "Schools of Practical Science, and the Polytechnic Institutes" (p. 24) that offer "instruction in mere empirical routine which has been vaunted as the proper education for the industrial classes." (p. 28). The goal was to create an institution that would provide "for the intelligent guidance of enterprise and labor, as may make our progress commensurate, step by step, with the advances of scientific and practical discovery" (p. 5). According to Barton, "the most truly practical education, even in an industrial point of view, is one founded on thorough knowledge of scientific laws and principles, and which unites with habits of close observation and exact reasoning a large general cultivation" (p. 28).  Such practical education was intended for "the industrial classes" including "manufacturers, merchants, mechanics, and agriculturalists" (p. 28) where they might "at small expense secure such training and instruction…" (p. 22).  The follow-up document, "Scope and Plan of the School of Industrial Science of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology" (1864), proposed general courses "given chiefly in the evening…and open to both sexes," to accommodate teachers and laborers, and a professional school that would offer degrees.

The MIT motto "mind and hand" was a codification of Barton's idea that MIT should promote knowledge that is of use to industry and, more broadly, to the good of the Commonwealth and its people. To achieve this practical knowledge, it is necessary to create close collaboration between those in science, technology, and the arts.[3]  Rather than encouraging the development of knowledge only for its own sake,

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[2] *Kaiser (2010) is a tremendous resource for understanding the evolution of MIT's values over time.*
[3] *Note that at the time, "the arts" did not primarily refer to "the fine arts."  Science was considered a body of knowledge; the arts involved creating or producing something. We might say that according to this*

the founders' focus was on expertise.  Expertise is an ability to put knowledge into practice; this is developed through application of cutting-edge knowledge to real cases, in other words "learning by doing." The aim of genuine collaboration between those in industry and academics also built into the Institute a deep anti-elitism. Practitioners have valuable knowledge that those in academia can learn from; and academic success – on MIT's terms – requires that the knowledge produced here inform practice.

In the 20th century, MIT's commitment to collaborate with industry in service to the broader community, including the nation, led it into extensive work on defense. By the end of the World War II, there were significant shifts in thinking, including: concerns about ongoing funding for facilities that supported the war effort and an over-reliance on sponsored research (1949, 4; 15-16); a desire to shift back from an emphasis on technology to a better balance with basic science, social sciences, humanities, and architecture (1949, 17; 21; Ch. 3 passim); a renewed recognition that education and research are a democratic imperative (showing a sensitivity to the threats of authoritarianism); and, more generally a commitment to social responsibility (1949, 5; 16-17; 23) and an appreciation of individual creativity, non-conformity, and leadership (1949, 5; 23).

Perhaps due to the harrowing years of war against fascism in Europe, the point of MIT's practical education was somewhat reconceived in the mid-century.  The goal became, not simply to contribute to the wealth of the community through technology and industry, but to pursue science and engineering with and for the community, guided by solid values.[4] World War II made clear that social responsibility requires more than an education in science and engineering. The MIT graduate should be able to understand the social context of their work and be in a position to lead, not only through their analytical brilliance, but also their ability to solve real world problems with insight and integrity.  The "practical knowledge" achieved by combining mind and hand was thereby extended to include a kind of judgment that could only be gained through a broader exposure to humanities, social sciences, and the arts. (The School of Humanities and Social Sciences was founded in 1950.)

The social and political context again had an impact on MIT in the 1960s and 1970s.  For example, the Anti-War Movement prompted questions about the relationship between scientific inquiry and social responsibility.  On March 4, 1969, the campus paused for "a public discussion of problems and dangers related to the present role of science and technology in the life of our nation" (quoted in Kaiser (2010, 126) from Magasanik et al (1969, 517)). More specifically, the March 4 protest, or what was also called a "day of reflection," called into question MIT's defense work at the "Instrumentation Laboratory" (now Draper) and Lincoln Labs. In the wake of the controversy, MIT divested from Draper and forty-eight faculty formed the Union of Concerned Scientists.

This particular decision to disinvest from Draper Lab is an instance of MIT's ongoing self-reflection about the social responsibility of science and technology in both research and education.  During the 1970s, the life sciences became the focus: should MIT be engaged in research on recombinant DNA (Kaiser 2010, 11; Ch. 7)? And to whom is MIT accountable? When challenged by the local community "[MIT] did

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*usage, scientific competence is* knowledge that *something is the case, whereas competence in an art requires* knowledge how *to do something. Expertise requires both.*
[4]*This is articulated in several documents.  See also the eleven principles, especially Principle Nine (Task force on Student Life and Learning (1998)).*

not retreat into the ivory tower.  Instead, it reached out in a process of constructive engagement with citizens and community representatives" and eventually the research continued with community support (Kaiser 2010, 160).  After September 11, 2001, similar issues arose concerning "surveillance, computer and information security, cryptography, and potentially at least, (anti)biological warfare" in connection with the "war on terror" (Kaiser 2010, 139). These concerns persist, and this very effort to articulate a values statement is part of a process of self-reflection concerning MIT's integrity, responsibility, and accountability. Throughout these challenges, Noam Chomsky's words have carried force: "In an institution largely devoted to science and technology, we do not enjoy the luxury of refusing to take a stand on the essentially political question of how science and technology will be put to use, and we have a responsibility to take our stand with consideration and care" (quoted in Kaiser 2010, 123; from Review Panel 1969, 32).  Socially responsible science and technology depends on mind and hand, informed by social science, arts, and humanities; but it also requires *heart.*

The Civil Rights and Women's Movements of the 1960s and 1970s also prompted MIT to take a hard look at itself.  The anti-elitism of MIT's founders was mainly focused on the inclusion of those in industry and teachers.  Women often served as teachers, and so they were included in the general education efforts. Diversity itself was not articulated as an explicit commitment. The Civil Rights Movement, however, drew attention to the lack of racial diversity.  Clarence G. Williams, in his extensive collection of oral histories *Technology and the Dream: Reflections on the Black Experience at MIT 1941-1999* (2001), divides the experience of Black students at MIT into three periods: 1941-1954, 1955-1968, 1969-1999. The period 1955-1968 was one of Black activism: "[The students during this period] viewed racial prejudice as an issue to be confronted head-on rather than placed to one side in the interest of furthering academic or career goals." (2001, 25) Under pressure from these students, MIT began to implement programs to recruit and foster Black students, staff, and faculty. The extent to which these programs have changed the MIT culture is a matter of dispute, but one can find statements affirming the value of racial diversity in document after document over the past fifty years. Principle Eleven in the Report of the Task Force on Student Life and Learning (1998) is a good example:

> The Task Force believes that diversity of the students, faculty and staff of the Institute is critical to the educational mission. MIT has always been and should remain a meritocracy where intellectual achievement and capability are paramount. Within this context, diversity of the community will serve to enhance the educational experience through interaction and exposure of people with different experiences, beliefs and perspectives. This will become an increasingly important aspect of the educational experience as society and industry become more diverse and international. In striving to encourage diversity within its community, MIT must also strive to maintain an environment in which such diversity is appreciated and every student has a sense of place.

Diversity here is represented not only as a matter of equity, but as a key component of MIT's goals of educating students for social responsibility and leadership. And MIT's responsibility is not simply to include individuals of diverse backgrounds, but to do so with consideration and care for each and every one. Again, heart is crucial to how we do things.

Racial diversity has been a central challenge for MIT; another has been the inclusion of women (Kaiser 2010, Ch. 8). On Friday, 19 March 1999, a group of seven women faculty sent a report on gender

discrimination in the School of Science to the faculty, saying that a story on the report would be published by the *Boston Globe* the following Monday.  The report was roughly five years in the making and was based on data and extensive interviews with the tenured women in the school; a crucial claim in the report was that regardless of good intentions, gender discrimination was a serious barrier to women's success at MIT. On Tuesday, 22 March, the New York Times published an article with the headline "MIT Admits Discrimination against Female Professors."  The administration did not back away from the report, but embraced it and took steps to follow through on its recommendations.  This willingness to take responsibility and act had a huge impact, not only on women in the School of Science, but women in academia globally.

For many, the administration's response to "The Women in Science Report," as it is often called, exemplifies many of MIT's values, including commitment to: following the evidence where it leads; equity and anti-elitist bias; a "we can solve this" approach to problems; and both transparency and accountability. As in the case of racial equity, there are questions about the extent to which MIT has followed through on the lessons learned from the report.  But the report and response are an example of how science can illuminate and support justice claims, and how MIT can exemplify its commitment to mind, hand, and heart.

## Community Input

### First phase of Community Input

This committee felt it was essential to solicit input from the community for several reasons:  (1) To ensure that we hear and incorporate as many perspectives and viewpoints from the beginning of and throughout our work, (2) to ensure that we uncover not only values, but also associated tensions, including ways in which MIT may not be living all of its aspirational values, and (3) to strengthen the confidence that the community might have in both the process and the product of this committee's effort.  We intend to continue all of these practices in the second stage of the statement development process.

The committee used three modes of input to inform the process:

#### Meetings with community members

The centerpiece of our input-gathering efforts was a series of 24 community engagements of more than 600 students, faculty, staff, and alumni.  All of these were discussions facilitated by one or more committee members and used a common set of questions (Appendix C).  They ranged in attendance from a dozen to hundreds, a notable example of the latter being an Administrative Officer/Financial Officer meeting in May.  The general themes found in each category of session is listed below. Although we proactively sought the input of a number of groups, we also offered to make ourselves available to any other

groups on campus who wanted to participate.  Through that mechanism, we were able to meet with several additional groups on campus.

**Analysis of survey data from recent all-community surveys**

In order to get some information about portions of the MIT community that we were not able to systematically reach via the engagement process outlined above, we partnered with our colleagues at the Institutional Research Office to analyze a subset of the Quality of Life Survey. Recent surveys of the MIT Community posed open-ended questions that the committee thought would provide additional insights into what members of the MIT community might value.  Community members were asked to indicate what they liked and disliked about MIT. Staff members were surveyed in 2016 and students were surveyed in 2017. The responses are open ended.

An analysis of responses from staff indicates staff members like working at MIT. They like the people, the environment, the opportunity, and the benefits that working at MIT can provide.  Staff members report MIT is a collaborative, family style environment with many exciting opportunities for growth. But the results also indicate that communication can often be difficult, expectations can be unclear, interactions can be competitive, and advancement hard. While staff members enjoy the work and their teams, they have concerns about workload and salary.  If we step away from the details of the responses, we can see the implications of how we work. Decentralization allows for an exciting, and autonomous work environment. And yet with decentralization there are challenges including a lack of transparency and accountability and the potential for bias and discrimination.

Responses from students reveal a similar pattern. One part of the student responses focuses on the broader academic community defined by faculty and students.  The environment provides great opportunities for research. Another part highlights collaboration. Students enjoy collaborating with diverse peers and colleagues. But the student environment is also competitive and challenging. It is no surprise that the environment can be stressful and overwhelming.  A final set of responses focuses more explicitly on the work environment. The work environment contains smart, friendly and supportive peers. And yet again we hear how stressful work can be because opportunities for collaboration occur in a challenging and competitive setting. It is no surprise the students struggle to find balance and maintain their well-being.

There is some overlap in how students and staff experience MIT. Both enjoy the collaborative environment. Each group also has reservations. While staff members worry about transparency, expectations and accountability, students primarily worry about their personal well-being and health.

**Direct input from individuals via email or website forms**

> The committee established a [website](website) that was shared in an all-community email by our Chairs ([Appendix D](Appendix)).  The website and email invited further input directly through a committee email address ([values-committee-input@mit.edu](mailto:values-committee-input@mit.edu)) or through a "Share Your Views" form on the website.  We received approximately 70 responses through those online options.

**Analysis**

The similarities and differences expressed by community members were fascinating and illuminating. This first table captures a sampling of common themes within several categories of community members:

|  | **Students** | **Staff (including research staff)** | **Faculty** | **Alumni** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Values** | <ul><li>Compassion</li><li>Dedication to using science to improve the world</li><li>Support</li><li>Authenticity</li><li>Collaboration</li><li>Innovation</li><li>Activism</li><li>Leadership</li><li>Working hard</li></ul> | <ul><li>Brilliance of students, also quirky, playful</li><li>Excellence</li><li>Transparency</li><li>Leadership - impact in the world</li><li>Passion for innovation</li><li>Team spirit</li><li>Succeeding on the basis of one's contribution</li><li>Hard work</li><li>Impact oriented</li><li>Compassion/ empathy</li><li>High pain threshold</li><li>Caring/ community</li></ul> | <ul><li>Caring</li><li>Practical research to change the world</li><li>Integrity</li><li>Curiosity</li><li>Transparency</li><li>Hard working</li><li>Bold</li><li>Embrace the unconventional</li><li>Ethical conduct</li><li>Fairness</li><li>Rewarding technical achievement</li></ul> | <ul><li>Rigor and hard work in pursuit of excellence</li><li>Meritocracy</li><li>Work on hard problems</li><li>Innovation</li><li>Humility</li><li>Resourceful-ness</li><li>Creativity</li><li>Proactive leadership</li><li>Perseverance</li><li>Intellectual courage and conviction</li><li>Openness</li></ul> |
| **Tensions** | <ul><li>Lack of transparency</li><li>Push to raise $ vs service</li><li>Contradictory financial relationships</li></ul> | <ul><li>Lack of accountability</li><li>Class-based inequities</li><li>Sense of elitism</li></ul> | <ul><li>Work/life balance</li><li>Ruthless meritocracy</li><li>Unacknowledged disrespect</li></ul> | <ul><li>Arrogance</li><li>Forces that limit rigor or speed of innovation</li><li>Contradictory financial</li></ul> |

| | ● Limited support for those from marginalized backgrounds<br>● No values-based education<br>● Overwork | | | relationships |
|---|---|---|---|---|

Bringing that information together we can see that there are common themes of values and tensions expressed by students, alumni, staff, and faculty:

Values

- **Compassion/Caring/Empathy/Support** (see "Elitism…" below)
- **Innovation**
- **Hard Work** (see "Overwork" below)
- **Impact beyond MIT**
- **Collaboration/Teamwork**
- **Leadership/Boldness**
- **Excellence/Fairness/Contribution-Based Reward** (see "Inequities" below)

Tensions

- **Elitism/Disrespect** (see "Compassion…" above)
- **Overwork** (see "Hard Work" above)
- **Inequities** (see "Excellence…" above)

As noted above, we observed two examples of values and tensions expressed by all stakeholder groups that are counter to each other:  "Hard work" vs. "overwork" and "excellence…" and "meritocracy" vs. "elitism…"



Among the rest of the input several additional contrasts also emerged.  Interestingly, while "transparency" and "authenticity" were values expressed widely by students, alumni, staff, and faculty, "lack of transparency and accountability" was expressed as a tension with greater frequency by staff, students, and alumni than by faculty.  "Fairness" was a value often noted by faculty groups, and the contrasting "class-based inequities" was a tension heard expressed in staff discussions.  Another example:  "Integrity" vs. "conflicting financial relationships."

Please note that these are generalizations based on impressions of conversations and feedback received, not on scientific investigations with appropriate controls.  Moreover, it is not our intention to convey that, for example, no faculty expressed concern about class-based inequities (tension) or that all faculty deem MIT wholly fair (value).  Rather, it is simply our impression that various sentiments were expressed with greater frequency by different groups of the MIT

community as summarized above.  These apparent differences in impressions expressed may reflect overall differences in experiences, yet such an analysis is beyond the scope of this committee's charge.

## Second phase of community input

Upon publication of this draft report the committee will begin a second phase of community input, the goals of which are:

1. Enable further input on values via additional invited meetings and via an in-depth civic engagement process designed by Professors Ceasar McDowell and Deb Roy, and Visiting Professor Dimitra Dimitrakopoulou.
2. Seek input on the draft report and values statement
3. Seek additional ideas for recommendations for implementing the value statement at the conclusion of this committee's work
4. Further awareness building

The description and analysis of these efforts will be detailed in the final report.

## Appendix C: Committee Process

While over the years, there have been many attempts to write down the values of the MIT community, the MIT community made it plain that an inclusive process to extract the values was essential. The committee tried to be inclusive across many dimensions – ensuring broad representation on the committee; analyzing historical documents for existing perspectives; engaging in committee exercises to extract themes and values; meeting with numerous groups across campus; and providing mechanisms for community input through the committee's website. The following is a description of the steps the committee has taken.

Committee Composition

Although it is nearly impossible to guarantee representation from every segment of the MIT community, the committee's sponsors sought to come as close as possible.  The committee membership includes at least one representative (and in some cases, several representatives) of faculty, administrative staff, support staff, post-doctoral associates/fellows, graduate students, and undergraduate students.  The committee also includes representation from both campus and Lincoln Lab.  Recognizing that we were only 21 voices, we knew the voices on the committee alone were not enough to help us craft MIT's values statements.  As a result, as described below, we deliberately sought broad input from across MIT to ensure that we provided an opportunity for as many voices to be heard as possible.

Committee Meetings

The committee met as a group for at least one hour each week from the time the committee was formed in early January 2021 through the present. Additional subgroup meetings were also regularly scheduled during the week as well.  All committee members were encouraged to participate in the meeting discussions and through written exercises outside of scheduled meeting times.  Committee members actively shared resources and notes by email and through a committee Dropbox.

Framework Development

Our work evolved through several phases.  Our initial meetings focused on developing a framework for our analysis, by exploring internal and external articles and statements on values. From there, we worked on determining strategies for engagement with the community.  During this initial phase, we worked to develop an understanding of our charge and a shared understanding of categories of values.

Once we established a framework for our process, we took a deeper dive into underlying documents and artifacts to gather, review, and begin to extract insights and understandings around values both generally and at MIT.  Thereafter, we developed a structure for community engagement.

Initial Community Engagement

Critical to our work was the need to build awareness of our charge throughout the community and to solicit input from as broad a range of the community as possible.  Although we sought input from governance and leadership groups, we also made an effort to build awareness and solicit input broadly from groups throughout MIT, with a particular focus on ensuring that we solicited the input of staff,

students, and postdocs.  During this phase of our process, members of the committee met with the following groups:

| Date of event | Engagement title | Approx. # of attendees |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2/8/21 | Engineering Council | 15 |
| 2/18/21 | AeroAstro staff | 19 |
| 2/25/21 | AeroAstro postdocs | 8 |
| 2/25/21 | SoE senior staff | 36 |
| 3/1/21 | Sloan Leadership - Dean's group | 15 |
| 3/2/21 | SA+P Council | 20 |
| 3/4/21 | SHASS Council | 20 |
| 3/9/21 | Science Council | 16 |
| 3/9/21 | Employee Resource Groups | 24 |
| 3/16/21 | Academic Council | 30 |
| 3/18/21 | Computing Council | 10 |
| 4/1/21 | Faculty Policy Committee | 15 |
| 4/8/21 and 4/13/21 | Libraries staff | 37 |
| 4/12/21 | HR Advisory Council | 28 |
| 4/14/21 | MITAA Board of Directors | 30 |
| 4/21/21 | Assistant Deans Meeting | 15 |
| 4/28/21 | Joint undergrad, grad, postdoc town hall (included invitations to many student groups) | 37 |
| 4/28/21 | Working Group on Support Staff | 15 |
| 5/7/21 | Discussion with RD staff | 5 |

| 5/10/21 | Discussion with RD staff | 9 |
|---|---|---|
| 5/3/21 | Discussion with AA staff | 7 |
| 5/19/21 | AO/FO meeting | 700+ |

*This list will continue to grow through phase 2 of committee's input gathering

Our format for engagement varied slightly from group to group but generally involved sending the group a document in advance of the meeting that included definitions for values as described in the report, and discussion prompts.  Recognizing that we were unlikely to foster deep discussion by just asking participants to name MIT's values, we instead developed four questions that we hoped would foster more robust discussion:

- Reflect on a time or event that made you especially proud to be a part of the MIT Community. What values were reflected in that circumstance? Was there a time or event where you were not proud of the MIT Community? What values were neglected in that circumstance?
- What characteristics of MIT were compelling to you when you chose to join this community?  Are there characteristics you consider as evolving or needing improvement?
- How do people at MIT interact with each other?  What part of our culture, if amplified, would mean it felt more like MIT?  What part of our culture, if taken away, would lessen the spirit of MIT?
- Think of a person who you think best embodies the spirit of MIT.  How would you characterize those attributes?

Notable for the town hall for students and postdocs were invitations to many student groups to attend to specifically invite in participants across a broad spectrum of localized cultures in the community.

Student Engagement

Our representatives from the student and postdoc populations (Undergraduate Fiona Y. Chen, Graduate Student Cadence Payne and Post-Doctoral Fellow Tigist Tamir) organized a town hall gathering to hear input specifically from students to ensure their perspectives were heard. This group utilized the committee's questions and tailored them specifically for the student group. Each reached out to their individual communities, advertised using flyers, email newsletters and social media (Instagram and Twitter). They broke the town hall into eight breakout rooms with 3-5 attendees each. The feedback and themes from these meetings significantly helped shape the final values. The emphasis on compassion, support for one another and equity for all was deeply heard in these sessions and supported the committee's instinct to highlight these important factors.

Although we proactively sought the input of a number of groups, we also offered to make ourselves available to any other groups on campus who wanted to participate.  Through that mechanism, we were able to meet with several additional groups on campus.  Finally, we established a website that was shared in an all-community email by our Chairs (Appendix D), who were also interviewed by MIT News for The Three Q's. The website and email invited further input directly through a committee email

address or through a "Share Your Views" form on the website.  We received more than 70 responses thus far through those online options.

Because it was particularly challenging to reach out to and get input from research staff, the committee supplemented our understanding of this important part of the community by working with the Office of Institutional Research to do an analysis of open-ended responses from the 2020 Quality of Life Survey.

Center for Constructive Communication (CCC)

We were also able to leverage the expertise of faculty, researchers, and students at MIT who have studied precisely how to engage with the community to improve communication and increase opportunities for the inclusion of underheard communities.  This team, led by Professors Ceasar McDowell and Deb Roy, and Visiting Professor Dimitra Dimitrakopoulou, met with the committee and designed a pilot dialogue framework  to facilitate a set of conversations on MIT values with the committee members and invited guests on April 9, 2021. Using the data gathered, CCC was able to use their sense-making protocol to surface and identify prominent themes and patterns in the facilitated conversations. The designed process demonstrated CCC's capacity to support the committee in the co-formation of insights on shared values across the MIT community.

Preparation of the Draft Report

After engaging in this community outreach, the committee turned to drafting the proposed values and this report.  Each member of the committee was asked to review the notes of the community outreach meetings and the summaries of artifacts and articles to assist with their input.  The committee spoke at length about the values to include, how to categorize them, how to address tensions between values, and how to structure the ultimate report.  Input from the student's engagement forum significantly informed the committee's ultimate recommendations. We also contributed to a list of recommendations for strategies to implement these values into our everyday lives at the Institute.

Next Steps

Following the release of this draft report, we intend to engage the community a second time – through discussions about values, comments on the document, an idea bank, and further town halls and community meetings. This continued engagement will help us enlist input from more community members, test the draft values statement, and assess the degree to which we have captured the right points.  Additionally, we will need the community's input on how we implement and integrate the values statement.  During this stage of engagement, we plan to further utilize the expertise of CCC.

Once we have had a chance to gather and analyze those reactions and feedback, we will further refine and revise the final statement. We plan to present a final report and recommendations to the Chancellor and Provost by early 2022.

## Appendix D: Letter to the MIT Community - April 2, 2021

To the members of the MIT community,

We write to let you know about the ongoing work of the MIT Values Statement Committee and to alert you to ways you can contribute your ideas, including through our new website.

At President Reif's direction, last December Chancellor Barnhart and Provost Schmidt established the committee and asked us to serve as co-chairs; the committee's work kicked off in late January as the new semester approached.

Building on previous efforts, including the Ad Hoc Committee on Guidelines for Outside Engagements as well as values statements developed by various departments, we have been asked to gather further community input, draft a formal statement of MIT values, and recommend strategies for building it into the Institute's habits, rhythms, rituals, and communications. Our committee takes on this assignment with seriousness and enthusiasm, in hopes that the statement we produce can help foster a sense of shared purpose, culture, expectations, and accountability for us all.

This spring, we're doing research and community outreach. In June, we will invite all members of the campus community to share their perspectives on our draft statement through an online survey. Ultimately, we will review and analyze the material we collect through our collaborative work as a committee and with the help of text analysis tools. We expect to provide our final recommendation by July 31.

Through our new website, you can now find our charge, the roster of our members, a list of reports and articles we are reading, some definitions we find helpful, and an outline of our process.

You can learn more about the committee's work from this 3Q.

As part of our research, we also invite you to share your views with us through this interactive form. (The form is open to anyone in the campus community through Touchstone, as well as to alumni through MIT Infinite Connection.)

We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Daniel E. Hastings, Co-chair

Cecil and Ida Green Education Professor

Head, Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics


Tracy Gabridge, Co-chair

Deputy Director, MIT Libraries

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