AROUND CAMPUS

An MIT education should prepare students for life through an integrated educational program composed of academics, research, and community. Academics establish a place for rigorous study of the fundamentals of science, engineering, social science, and the humanities, as well as a format for developing problem-solving skills, familiarity with quantitative and qualitative analysis, historical and literary insight, and an understanding of the scientific method. Participation in research provides a foundation for professional competence and opportunities for learning-by-doing. Community interaction enables students to become familiar with their responsibilities, hone their leadership and communication skills, and gain self-mastery. Although each of the three components forms a distinct area of a student’s education, the contribution of each reinforces and adds to that of the others. To provide a uniquely excellent education, MIT brings students and faculty together to learn from one another through academics, research, and community.

To enable MIT’s mission of advancing knowledge and educating students in science, technology, and other areas of scholarship that will best serve the nation and the world, we continuously work to improve our residential campus. Strengthening campus community and supporting innovation are principles that guide our campus planning. Over the past decade, the Institute has added one million square feet of new facilities to the campus—smart residence halls and common spaces to inspire innovative collaborations, cutting-edge laboratories to support the emergence of new technologies, and visionary architecture to reinforce the intensity, curiosity, and excitement that are a defining value of the Institute, and of an MIT education.

To envision how our campus and surroundings could evolve to meet future academic and research needs, we developed MIT 2030: a flexible framework that helps the Institute make thoughtful, well-informed choices about its physical development and renewal in support of its mission. Renewal and stewardship are critical elements of MIT’s plans for the future. To ensure that its buildings are able to support the educational, research, and student life activities essential to our mission, the Institute continues to pursue programs of renovation, renewal, and comprehensive care.

These efforts reflect the Institute’s commitment to removing boundaries between life and learning, inspiring freedom of imagination, and reinventing the substance of education in the 21st century.

Students and Faculty

MIT enrolled 11,319 students in 2014–2015, including 4,512 undergraduates and 6,807 graduate students. These MIT students came from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, three territories, and 116 foreign countries. The broad international student representation of 3,220 students made up 10 percent of the undergraduate and over 40 percent of the graduate population.

In the same year, there were 1,021 faculty members in MIT’s professorial ranks, including 224 women. The total teaching staff numbered 1,830. Most faculty members at MIT teach both undergraduate and graduate students. Undergraduates frequently register for graduate classes, and many undergraduates and graduate students participate, often together, in advanced research.

The confluence of ages, disciplines, and nationalities so characteristic of MIT brings together students and teachers, biologists and architects, humanists and engineers, young and old, and deeply influences the life and experience of every member of the academic community. The result is an academic environment with a strong focus on excellence and a diverse range of interests.

The Campus

MIT’s 164-acre campus extends for more than a mile along the Cambridge side of the Charles River Basin facing historic Beacon Hill and the central sections of Boston. Many academic activities occur within a group of interconnected buildings designed to permit maximum flexibility and easy communication among the departments and schools. The extensive athletic plant and playing fields are an integral part of the campus, as are the recreational buildings, dormitories, and dining halls. This arrangement contributes greatly to the sense of unity and community involvement that characterizes the Institute.

At the eastern end of the campus is an array of buildings for studies in management, economics, international studies, and political science, including Building E62, the new home of the MIT Sloan School of Management. The 215,000-square-foot building with a 190,000-square-foot underground garage was designed by Moore Ruble Yudell Architects & Planners and Bruner/Cott Architects and opened in June 2010. The building is one of the most sustainable on campus and received LEED Gold Certification in 2011. An indoor corridor connects to the Alfred P. Sloan Building. This building, E52, is currently undergoing a full renovation and is scheduled to be ready for occupancy early in 2016. When completed, it will house the Department of Economics, administrative offices for the Sloan School of Management, and an expanded Faculty Club/Conference Center. The nearby Arthur D. Little Building, which also connects to Building E62, underwent a major renovation in 2011. Next to them is the Grover M. Hermann Building that houses the Dewey Library for Management and Social Sciences. Adjacent to these academic buildings is Eastgate, a 29-story student family apartment tower.

Also located on the east end of the campus are buildings housing the Institute for Medical Engineering and Science, and MIT Medical’s Health Services Center. The Health Services Center provides a pharmacy and facilities for medical, dental, surgical, and other specialties.
Adjacent to the Health Services Center is I. M. Pei’s Wiesner Building, housing the Media Laboratory, the Office of the Arts, and the Albert and Vera List Visual Arts Center, comprising three exhibition galleries and a film/video theater. In fall 2009, a new building opened that nearly doubled the space for the Media Lab and School of Architecture and Planning. The 163,000-square-foot extension was designed by a team headed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Fumihiko Maki and executive architects Leers Weinzapfel Associates. The new building links to the Wiesner Building through a multi-tiered central atrium flanked by nine fully visible laboratories, allowing the researchers in both buildings to interact easily.

A commanding feature of East Campus is McDermott Court, featuring a great sculpture by Alexander Calder that rises in bold contrast to the facade of the 20-story Center for Earth Sciences (Cecil and Ida Green Building). Besides the Calder, MIT’s outstanding collection of contemporary environmental sculpture includes works by Henry Moore, Louise Nevelson, Pablo Picasso, Jaume Plensa, and Tony Smith.

The Institute’s main buildings, enclosing Killian Court, were designed by Welles Bosworth (Class of 1899) and dedicated in 1916. Banked by rhododendrons and lined with tall shade trees, Killian Court opens to a wide view of the Charles River, the low brick buildings of old Boston, and the concrete and glass towers that rise above them.

The most significant expansion of the main group of campus buildings since the 1930s was completed in fall 2007. The cornerstone of the project is the Green Center, named for Cecil and Ida Green, whose leadership gift for Physics initiated a major renovation of the historic Bosworth Buildings by providing significant infrastructure renewal and modernization.

Interconnected with these central buildings are the Center for Life Sciences (the Dorrance and the Whitaker buildings), the Karl Taylor Compton Laboratories (for electronics and nuclear science), the EG&G Education Center (with lecture and laboratory facilities for the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science), the Center for Materials Science and Engineering (the Vannevar Bush Building), the Sloan Laboratory, the Guggenheim Laboratory, and the Center for Advanced Engineering Study.

An outdoor area known as North Court sits adjacent to several cafés and features benches and tables for eating outside. The area has pathways leading to several buildings, including the Koch Biology Building and the new home of the Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research at MIT. Building 76 was completed in December 2010 and received LEED Gold Certification in 2011. The building is located on Main Street across from the Broad and Whitehead institutes. The 360,000-square-foot building was designed by Ellenzweig of Cambridge, MA.

Next to the Koch Institute is the Ray and Maria Stata Center for Computer, Information, and Intelligence Sciences, designed by Frank O. Gehry—a cluster of irregular shapes wrapped around a central meeting area. The Stata Center was created to foster the kinds of creative collaborations that can arise when curious, talented individuals and teams are brought together in the right environment. It is the home of the Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, the Laboratory for Information and Decision Systems, and the Department of Linguistics and Philosophy.

Across Vassar Street from the Stata Center are facilities for brain and cognitive sciences. Dedicated in fall 2005, the 411,000-square-foot complex provides state-of-the-art laboratories, classrooms, and offices for the Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences, the McGovern Institute for Brain Research, and the Picower Institute for Learning and Memory. It received a LEED Silver certification from the US Green Building Council in 2008.

Down the street and across Massachusetts Avenue is the West Campus, anchored by the Stratton Student Center with social rooms, cafeterias, student activity offices, music rooms, a spacious reading room, and recreational and commercial facilities. A recent addition to the area is Alchemist, a major sculptural work by Spanish contemporary artist Jaume Plensa. The Student Center Plaza is bounded on the west by Kresge Auditorium and on the east by the MIT Chapel. Both buildings were designed by Eero Saarinen.

The chapel is used regularly for religious services by all faiths and is open throughout the day for meditation. The chapel’s unusual design includes an exterior moat that reflects light in ever-changing patterns on the interior walls.

Also located on the West Campus are the du Pont Athletic Center and playing fields for soccer, lacrosse, baseball, softball, touch football, rugby, cricket, track, and tennis. The Howard W. Johnson Athletics Center includes an indoor ice rink and field house, and Rockwell Cage accommodates varsity and intramural basketball, volleyball, and badminton. MIT’s Steinbrenner Stadium includes a six-lane, 400-meter, all-weather running track, the first of its kind in North America. The stadium also includes facilities for the steeplechase and other field events, with a game field inside the track oval for intercollegiate football, soccer, lacrosse, and field hockey. In 2008, a new synthetic turf was installed and lighting improvements were made, enhancing activities on Roberts Field.

These athletic facilities are complemented by the impressive Albert and Barrie Zesiger Sports and Fitness Center, designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Kevin Roche, John Dinkeloo & Associates, and Sasaki Associates. This luminous complex contains an Olympic-class 50-meter pool, seating for 450 spectators, a training pool, an 11,000-square-foot fitness center, and six squash courts built to international competition standards.

The Charles River Basin—two miles long and a third of a mile wide—is a major feature of MIT’s physical environment. The Pierce Boathouse and the Walter C. Wood Sailing Pavilion provide centers for extensive activity in crew and in sailing.

At the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Memorial Drive is Fariborz Maseeh Hall. The dormitory formerly known as both
W1 and Ashdown House was renamed in recognition of a $24 million gift from MIT alumnus Fariborz Maseeh and the Massiah Foundation. This transformational investment allows MIT to expand the undergraduate student body to 4,500 students, an increase of about 250 from recent enrollment figures. The building reopened in August of 2011 and received LEED Gold certification for its sustainable, extensive renovation.

Lining Memorial Drive and facing the Charles River are additional student residences, among them the serpentine Baker House, designed by the Finnish architect Alvar Aalto and internationally recognized as a masterpiece of modernism. Renovated in conjunction with its 50th anniversary, Baker House is one of the most popular dormitories at the Institute, in part because of the extraordinary residential experience it provides. Down the road from Baker House at the end of Amherst Alley is the Westgate apartment complex for students with families and the Tang Residence Hall for graduate students.

Simmons Hall, an undergraduate dormitory on Vassar Street, was created by architect Steven Holl in collaboration with Perry Dean Rogers and Partners and acclaimed for the inventive ways it opens to the community. The Warehouse, a residential complex developed from a renovated industrial warehouse built in 1890, offers graduate students an alternative to off-campus housing. The Sidney-Pacific Street graduate residence offers recreational and retail services at street level, giving the building a lively neighborhood presence. Added to the graduate community in fall 2008 is a 275,000-square-foot complex that includes 550 beds, a dining hall, and the Thirsty Ear Pub. The complex is located next to the Sidney-Pacific residence hall and is named Ashdown House after Avery Ashdown, the late housemaster for Building W1, the former home of the graduate students who now live in the new building. Ashdown House was the first LEED Gold-certified building on campus. It was awarded that distinction for optimizing a sustainable design, using nontoxic materials, and incorporating innovative sustainable solutions.

In 2016, MIT will celebrate the centennial anniversary of its move to Cambridge. As the Institute honors these past hundred years, plans for the future include critical elements such as renewal and stewardship of campus buildings and infrastructure. One important change to the campus is the new MIT.nano facility, to be completed in 2018. It will house state-of-the-art cleanroom, imaging, and prototyping facilities supporting research with nanoscale materials and processes—in fields including energy, health, life sciences, quantum sciences, electronics, and manufacturing. Dedicated to experimentation and instruction, MIT.nano represents one of the largest commitments to research in MIT’s history and will support the activities of 2,000 MIT researchers. It will streamline delicate experimentation and prototyping by bringing together complex research activities that are currently distributed around campus.

The Boston and Cambridge Environment

MIT is in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on the north bank of the Charles River, facing the city of Boston. The city of Cambridge, well known as the residence of MIT and Harvard, is home to many students and professionals. About 35 percent of its residents are college and graduate students, and one out of every six jobs is in higher education.

With over 105,000 people located within a 6.5 square mile area, Cambridge is a unique community with a strong mix of cultural, demographic, and social diversity; intellectual vitality; and technological innovation. The city’s diversity is reflected in its international community, with almost 27 percent of residents being foreign born, representing over 70 countries and speaking more than 40 different languages.

Within a two-mile radius of MIT are Boston’s Museum of Science and Museum of Fine Arts, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, the New England Conservatory of Music, Symphony Hall, the New England Aquarium, and the Boston Public Library, as well as Fenway Park and TD Garden for professional baseball, basketball, and concerts. Students can also travel easily to Boston’s theater district, where Broadway plays are previewed and local productions are staged.

Among the cultural organizations enriching life in the area are the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Pops, the Boston Ballet Company, the Opera Company of Boston, the Boston Center for the Arts, Boston University’s Huntington Theatre Company, the Loeb Drama Center, and the American Repertory Theatre.

MIT is one of more than 50 schools located in the Boston area, including Boston College, Boston University, Brandeis University, Harvard University, Lesley University, Northeastern University, Simmons College, Tufts University, Wellesley College, and many specialized professional art and music schools. The concentration of academic, cultural, and intellectual activity in this area is one of the most significant in the country.

An hour or two away from MIT by car are the mountains of Vermont and New Hampshire, the ocean beaches of Cape Cod, the lakes and rivers of Maine, the small clusters of fishing towns along the New England coast, and many places of historical interest in Massachusetts alone—Salem, Sturbridge, Lexington, Concord, and Plymouth. With its varied landscapes and four distinct seasons, New England offers unlimited possibilities for recreation—skiing, mountain climbing, hiking, sailing, canoeing, kayaking, swimming, and camping.