Welcome, Dean Colombo

Constantino “Chris” Colombo joins MIT as the Institute’s second Dean for Student Life. “As dean for student life I will have the opportunity to continue the great work already begun by the Institute,” said Dean Colombo in a News Office article announcing his appointment.

Colombo, a native of New York, received a BS from the University of Maryland and a master’s degree in applied behavioral science with a concentration in organizational development from the Johns Hopkins University. From 1975 to 1992, Colombo worked at Johns Hopkins in a variety of positions, including dean of students and Dean of Homewood Schools Services.


Colombo will live on campus in Next House with his wife, Bette, and sons, Michael and Paul.

Noah Jessop, president of the Undergraduate Association, said “Having had the opportunity to meet with him on one of his visits to campus, I can attest that he fervently cares about his students, understands how to represent them in the context of an academic institution, and tirelessly thinks about the betterment of the community around him,” Jessop said. “I expect he is exactly the kind of advocate students want and need; we are fortunate to welcome him to MIT.”

A welcome breakfast for Dean Colombo will take place on Thursday, October 2nd at Morss Hall. Invitations and details will be announced soon.
in recognition

MIT Excellence Awards Nominations

Know someone who provides exceptional customer service? Creates an inclusive and positive workplace? Collaborates well to create innovative solutions?

Team and individual nominations for the ninth annual MIT Excellence Awards are being accepted online. These awards recognize outstanding accomplishments by support, service, sponsored research, administrative, and other academic staff. Nominations can be made in seven different categories. Awards are for MIT employees in any position who set a high standard of performance and are role models for others. Previous recipients in the Division of Student Life include: Alison Hynd, Public Service Center; Paul Dill, DAPER; Daniel A. Trujillo, Community Development and Substance Abuse Program; Lynn A. Roberson, Student Support Services; Stephen D. Immerman, Dean’s Office.

Nominations are due by October 27. For more information and to submit a nomination, visit hrweb.mit.edu/rewards/excellence or contact the Excellence Awards chair, Kande Culver, at 253-5986 or excellence@mit.edu.

2008 Infinite Mile Winners

Pictured from left to right with Dean Larry Benedict. **Back row:** Claude Muhinda Rwakagwa, Jason McKnight, Kathryn Beaudry, Scott Fleming, James Walsh, David Bull, Peter Cummings, Dean Larry Benedict, Fran Charles, Marc A. Lo, Elizabeth Otto. **Front Row:** Marsha Whelan, Dimana Macdonald, Jed Wartman, Emily Do, Lee Finnegan, Dawn Warfield, Lauren Wojtkun, Marlena Martinez, Donna Denoncourt, Kaya Miller, Barbara Baker, Emily Flores. **Not pictured:** Hilary Dent, Brian Callahan, Laura Capone

The Beat 2
OME’s Mentor Advocate Partnership focuses on quality relationships between students and mentors.

Inspired by research that says students who connect to faculty/staff are more likely to succeed in college, the Office of Minority Education (OME) developed the Mentor Advocate Partnership (MAP), a volunteer mentoring program for first-year MIT students. All students are encouraged to participate in MAP, especially underrepresented minority students.

In MAP, each student is paired with a mentor from a network of committed MIT staff and faculty. The focus of the program is on maintaining these quality relationships between protégés and mentors.

“It’s a simple concept,” says Lisa Mullen Strack, Program Coordinator for Academic Programs in OME. A simple concept that is extraordinary in its rewards for both mentors and protégés. The successful program, which was piloted in 2007, will double in size this coming year thanks to a grant from the Edwin Webster Foundation.

“Students really like getting to know someone outside of academics,” says Strack. By offering fruitful advice or just being there to listen, these mentors proactively connect students to people and resources.

“The experience as a mentor has been very rewarding because you get to know people for people, apart from their academics,” says Robert Randolph, Chaplain to the Institute and MAP Mentor.

MAP gives both students and staff a chance to connect outside of academics, with mentors monitoring both academic performance and overall well-being.

Khalea Robinson, an MIT sophomore and MAP protégé says MAP can “afford a budding undergraduate sound source advice and counsel, exposing them to individuals who have created for themselves realities, careers, and lives that often mirror the aspirations of their protégés.”

Current mentors in DSL include Robert Randolph, Chaplain to the Institute; Camilla Shannon, Public Service Center; Sally Susnowitz, Public Service Center; Heather Trickett, Public Service Center; Jed Wartman, Student Activities Office; Amy McCreath, Chaplain and Sam Seicol, Chaplain.

Mentors are asked to make a minimum two-year commitment with training and support provided by the OME. If you would like to recommend a colleague for MAP, or a student, please contact Lisa Mullen Strack at lstrack@mit.edu or 617-324-3573. To learn more about MAP, please visit http://web.mit.edu/ome.
iHouse focuses on Global Leadership

International House for Global Leadership (iHouse) is the Institute’s newest living-learning community. Opened in September 2007, the new residence is geared toward students committed to international development and global leadership. “iHouse is the epitome of diversity, says Sophia Mian, MIT junior in bioengineering and iHouse president. “It is unique in that very few schools have anything like it.

At iHouse, students live, laugh, learn, and value the different ways of life and opinions represented in the multicultural environment. It all started when Raja Bobbili, a 2008 graduate in electrical engineering and computer science, had the idea to launch a living community with a global purpose. “I envisioned a house that would develop leaders, develop a strong community and create a positive impact in the world,” says Bobbili. iHouse strives to stimulate and cultivate discussion about technology, policy, and service in the context of making a difference in international development.

With the support of the Department of Urban Studies and Planning, the MIT Public Service Center, and international scholars, the members of iHouse plan, coordinate, and participate in hands-on experiences designed to positively impact international development. “iHouse has grown into the vibrant community it is today because of our ideas, hard work and lots of help from the MIT administration, specifically from our Housemaster, Sandra Harris,” says Priyanka Jain, MIT senior and former iHouse President.

This fall, iHouse will begin a mandatory, freshmen seminar, giving freshman a better base in order to do international development. Mian says, “iHouse is meant to be about global leadership and how to work effectively in a global setting.”

iHouse is not all work though; it’s a fun and comfortable space within which students can not only develop creative solutions to problems on an international scale, but also relax, hang out, and play video games. They think globally, but live locally with a culture that is richer, food that is spicier, and music that is livelier. Mian says iHouse is “hoping to have a bigger presence on campus this year, so watch out!”

iHouse residents hosted a number of dinners with interesting and inspiring people, both in the field of international development and outside.
Working with his hands, brain, and heart, Dayan Paez, a Mechanical Engineering senior, found a place where he could make his ideas become reality: the Hobby Shop. A quiet leader, Dayan, joined the Hobby Shop in his sophomore year as the Associate Advisor for the Design / Build Freshmen Seminar. “Dayan is extremely generous with his time; always volunteering” said Ken Stone.

At the time, Dayan was also taking the lead as set designer for Next Act, a student produced musical, set up in the lobby of Next House. Having noted that the set desperately needed improvements, he redesigned it, safely securing the back wall with a cable system. He also created a removable working lamppost that supported the lead dancer swinging around it in the musical, Singing in the Rain. Spinning panels for set changes, curtains and new lighting were constructed by Dayan in later years. In 2007, Dayan directed Beauty and the Beast, but notes he “felt most at home when I was building…”

For Dayan, “home” is an important concept. Dayan emigrated to the U.S. from Cuba when he was 10, seeing infinite, unrestrained possibilities in America. His dreams along with lots of encouragement from teachers and family brought Dayan from Miami to MIT. Growing up in two different cultures has given him a unique perspective. Ken Stone noted that “His convictions and beliefs really shape his actions, growing up in Cuba with little resources he learned the discipline needed here when it seems you can have everything.”

Dayan made the most from his time at MIT, balancing academics with a variety of interests beyond his studies. “It is good to go sailing and not overload yourself with classes, otherwise you can’t explore. You can fill up your time really quickly here, but you get to choose what you fill up your time with.” he says.

Dayan's looks forward to expanding upon this experience as a graduate student at MIT. His convictions, beliefs and generous heart will continue to guide him through life. To learn more about Dayan and his projects, visit his Web Page at http://web.mit.edu/paez/www/.

**Hobby Shop: a place for students’ ideas to come to life.**

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**Smoot Celebrates 50 Years**

Smoot: An unconventional and nonstandard unit of length, equal to the height of Oliver Smoot ’62 (5 feet 7 inches).

Commemorate the day when Smoot first became a unit of measurement by joining in the celebration on October 4, 2008. Activities include a nostalgic 50’s party at the MIT Museum, a concert by The Platters, and painting the railings on the MIT-Harvard Bridge. Visit http://web.mit.edu/smoot/ for a schedule of events and more information.
Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a partnership between a local farm and its shareholders. Members pay an upfront fee for the season, and each week are given fresh, seasonal produce from the farm. This summer, Red Fire Farm delivered fresh, organic veggies to MIT for CSA members. Over 75 members signed up for the CSA.

“CSAs have become more popular, as more people take an active interest in what they are eating and where their food is coming from,” according to Working Green at MIT.

To join the CSA for next year, check out the Working Green @ MIT Website, web.mit.edu/workinggreen/ or visit the Red Fire Farm Web Site at www.redfirefarm.com/.

The word “green” as it relates to food might make you think of lettuce, peppers or other vegetables. However, a number of recent trends in the food service industry have given a lot more meaning to “green” in the world of food.

Eating right no longer refers solely to choosing the right mix from the USDA Food Pyramid, it also means making food decisions that are right for the planet. Recognizing this, MIT Campus Dining is working to lessen the environmental impact of food operations across the Institute.

More and more diners are looking for meal options that are locally grown, produced through sustainable agriculture practices, or have a lower carbon footprint. Chefs in House Dining Rooms (Baker House, Simmons Hall, McCormick Hall and Next House) use seafood from sustainable fisheries, cage free eggs and locally grown fruits and vegetables to prepare their menus. Low carbon menu items are also available and dishes are marked to help diners make educated food choices.

Energy savings can have an impact too. In House Dining Rooms and beyond, service equipment that needs replacement is evaluated for energy efficiency and, wherever necessary, is improved. Infrared technology is now used in some locations to adjust exhaust fan speeds based on smoke and grease particle density. This cuts back on energy waste and saves the Institute thousands of dollars in utilities.

Speaking of “saving,” Campus Dining and the student group SAVE (an acronym for “Share A Vital Earth”) teamed up to reduce the number of paper cups MIT sends to landfills every year. A 10-cent discount is now given to any customer who uses a standard-size, reusable mug. For one person with a “cup every workday” routine, this saves five cups a week from ending up in the trash, or 260 cups a year.

Plans for future dining operations further recognize the need for environmentally responsible practices. The dining projects in the new Sloan and W1 buildings, for example, are being designed primarily for china and glassware service which will cut down on paper waste. These new facilities will also allow diners to compost food waste. For more information on these or other initiatives, email foodstuff@mit.edu.

Green Campus Dining
by Anne Wilson, Dining

The Beat 6
New Ashdown House receives LEED Award

by Abigail Licnikas, EHS Program Manager

The new Ashdown dormitory, which opened August 13th 2008, has been awarded the LEED level of gold for its environmentally friendly aspects. The LEED award (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), is based on a set of criteria, giving buildings a silver, gold, or platinum designation.

Gaining LEED recognition is difficult. There are a variety of criteria to follow, including Indoor Environmental Quality, Water Efficiency, Innovation and Design, Energy and Atmosphere, Sustainable Sites, and Materials and Resources. Each area has a set of checks that determine if the building gains a point towards LEED certification. For example, a check under Sustainable Sites in Alternative Transportation requires the building to be near public transportation, have bicycle storage and changing areas available. Ashdown met these criteria, among others, to gain points towards a LEED certification.

Ashdown is also an excellent model for changes that can be made in any dorm or home. It is equipped with Energy Start appliances, which are designed to use less power. It uses low emitting materials, such as low VOC paints and adhesives, which will maintain a clean, healthier environment. Even the roof has reflective material and room for solar panels to be added in the future.

If you want to see what buildings of the future will look like, check out the New Ashdown house!

i n f i n i t e  M i l e  A w a r d s
go green!

At this year’s Infinite Mile Awards, compostable cups, plates and flatware were used in place of plastic ware. Compostable flatware is made from potato starch, sugar cane and/or corn starch. It takes less energy to produce than plastic and has a positive impact on the volume of waste sent to landfills!

tip: What is Buying Green?

Buying green is about making purchasing choices that conserve natural resources and reduce or prevent pollution. Buying green can include:

* Choosing products that use recycled, less hazardous and/or less polluting materials, less water and energy consumption, and less packaging.
* Renting/leasing goods rather than buying them.
* Buying local, which helps reduce carbon dioxide emissions from shipping food and materials over long distances. Carbon dioxide emissions have been strongly linked to climate change.

For more tips, visit web.mit.edu/workinggreen/.
Student Life WebSite

Offices throughout the division have spent the summer months collaborating and working with outside web developers to create a student life web site to aid students in finding information and resources they need to make their MIT experience rewarding, supportive and educational.

“We are all very excited that students now will be able to find the information they need and want,” said Sharon Westerfeld, Assistant Director of Communications for the Division of Student Life.

The new web site’s dynamic architecture will allow students to find information by office/area, by question or topic, or with a search tool. It will offer information about student services and ways to get involved, as well as resources and information students seek about living at MIT. Content will be managed by each individual office, allowing individuality to thrive, and the open-source content manager and forms creator tools will simplify the workload for all.

Participating offices include: Student Activities Office, Student Leadership Development, Student Support Services, Religious Life and the Chaplain to the Institute, Enterprise Services, DAPER/DSL Office of Advancement, Audio Visual, and DSL Administration.

After the launch, scheduled for October 3, 2008, a training on posting and managing content will be offered for all who are interested in learning more, including their content, or participating in the next stage of development. For information, contact Sharon Westerfeld at sharon7@mit.edu.

Check out the Student Art Exhibit in the Student Center Reading Room, which explores the theme of student life. Most works are winners from the Student Art Contest in the Spring of 2007, sponsored by the Undergraduate Association. The artwork will be up for three years.

Coming Up

August

24 Freshman Orientation

September

1 Labor Day
MIT Holiday
3 First Day of Classes
MIT Service Fair
8 First quarter Phys Ed Classes begin
11 Procurement Vendors Fair

October

2 Dean’s Welcome Breakfast
3 New DSL Website Launches
Campaign for Students Kick-off
4 Smoot Anniversary Celebration
8 Ideas Generator Dinner
13 Columbus Day
MIT Holiday
17 MIT Family Weekend
27 2nd quarter Phys Ed Classes begin

November

5 Events Fair ’08
11 Veteran’s Day
MIT Holiday
27 Thanksgiving
MIT Holiday
28 MIT Holiday

To request that your events be included in the DSL calendar, please email skeeler@mit.edu.