

Promoting a Culture of Wellbeing

Community education, services, and spaces at MIT



Students spend time together cooking in a dormitory community kitchen. Common spaces such as shared kitchens, student lounges, and gyms all help create a sense of belonging in residence halls.



Enriching student wellbeing at MIT

To fulfill MIT's mission of advancing knowledge and educating students to serve the nation and the world, we must be committed to the health and wellbeing of our students. Through a strong support network, education and prevention efforts, and dedicated spaces, we envision a culture that allows all of our students to find a sense of purpose, to develop positive relationships, and to flourish in mind and body.

Specific efforts that can influence wellbeing include offering services that help students manage stress, adopt healthy exercise habits, and attain financial stability and food and housing security. Unfortunately, students are struggling on college campuses across the country: a recent national Healthy Minds Study found that nearly 40% of college students reported a significant mental health issue. Meanwhile, at MIT, a recent survey revealed that 71% of undergraduate respondents and 52% of graduate respondents reported feeling overwhelmed by all they had to do *often* or *very often*.

Fortunately, MIT students are resilient and resourceful. The Institute has strengthened its support resources to help students during challenging times, and students have embraced these services and initiatives. For example, approximately 25% of undergraduate and graduate students visit Student Mental Health and Counseling Services and 75% of all undergraduate students visit Student Support Services during their time at MIT. Collectively, students access approximately \$35,000 in emergency resource funds on an annual basis to cover unforeseen expenses such as needing winter clothes and taking unplanned trips home. SwipeShare, MIT's meal-swipe donation program that helps to address food insecurity, supports hundreds of students with thousands of meal donations every year.

We have significantly bolstered our student support network in recent years, and these initiatives have helped many students to unlock their full potential. To continue to make a positive impact on our campus culture, we must strengthen wellbeing education and services. Creating dynamic spaces that promote student health and wellness will also be critical in advancing these goals.



“We want MIT to be known for its culture of wellbeing, where students live healthy, meaningful, and purposeful lives. Students’ mental and physical health is fundamental to our educational mission.”

Suzy M. Nelson, Vice President and Dean for Student Life

MindHandHeart, one of MIT's signature wellbeing programs, is a coalition of students, faculty, and staff working collaboratively and strategically to strengthen the fabric of our MIT community.



Students from the Class of 2019 challenge members of the MIT community to walk a slackline during their first-year orientation.

A Foundation for Student Success

Our goal is to propel MIT's wellbeing programs and initiatives forward by focusing on the following areas.

Dynamic spaces: Renovating and updating campus spaces helps MIT create an inviting and welcoming environment where community wellbeing can be celebrated. A renewed Student Center, additional graduate housing, and the new Vassar Street residence community are examples of spaces that will make a profound impact on students' experiences.

Robust services: We will continue to strengthen support resources such as the CARE Team, GradSupport, Student Mental Health and Counseling Services, and Student Support Services. We will also improve the coordination of wellbeing programs offered by Community Wellness, the Department of Athletics, Physical Education and Recreation, and Student Support and Wellbeing.

Community education: Through data-driven strategy, we will build wellbeing into the fabric of the MIT experience for students, faculty, and staff. This effort will include distributing resources such as the Faculty Guide, training faculty and staff, and implementing student programs dedicated to wellbeing.

“Making MIT known for its culture of wellbeing will be a collaborative effort. It will include promoting healthy environments, educating the whole community, and enhancing services and spaces to address student needs. We look to MIT's friends and supporters to be a part of this defining initiative at MIT.”

David Randall, Senior Associate Dean
Student Support and Wellbeing

Learn More

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