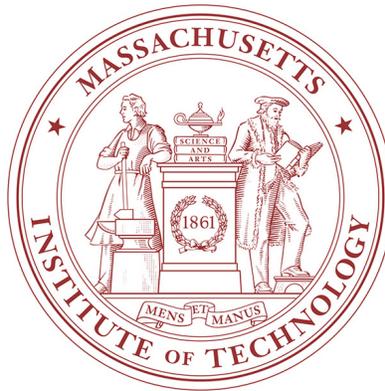


Planning for summer and fall at MIT

In a letter to the MIT community, President L. Rafael Reif sketches out the big picture for the coming months.

MIT News Office
March 12, 2021



The following letter was sent to the MIT community today by President L. Rafael Reif.

To the members of the MIT community,

After 40 years in Massachusetts, I know the shift from winter to spring is governed by a dial, not a switch – and that dial can go backwards. Today on Killian Court, the grass is working up the courage to turn green. But we all know that it’s too early to stow our snow boots.

The shift from a long season governed by Covid to something better will feel this way too: not a switch, but a dial, and a dial that may at times go backwards. Maintaining movement in the right direction will require every one of us to sustain the care, carefulness, new routines and vigilant protocols of this past year.

It will feel wonderful, overwhelmingly wonderful, to relax the restrictions that have constrained our lives. We are not quite ready for that yet. But we are ready to begin planning for a summer and fall that will look different.

I would like to sketch out the big picture. And then, over the next few weeks and months, you will be hearing more about specific plans and expectations.

A slow “dialing up” this summer

From the pace of vaccination to the rise of new viral variants, uncertainty still reigns. So we are looking at summer as a time for slowly “dialing up” toward fall. For instance, we expect to run a few summer programs, but not all and not at full capacity. The idea is to test how well our systems do with a rising challenge but not to push them – or any of us – to the limit as we prepare for fuller operations in the fall and catch our collective breath.

In that spirit, I would like to express, once again, my warmest appreciation and admiration for the exceptional efforts every one of you has made on MIT’s behalf this year.

Planning for full operations in fall

If all goes well these next few months, our goal is to resume full academic and research activities on campus by the start of the new academic year in September. This means we will be inviting our full population of students to be in residence, as well as in classrooms and labs. For MIT faculty and to all employees, we intend to be ready to welcome you all back then, too – and some of you, especially those whose work centers on student life and learning, may need to come back sooner than that.

We feel confident about this basic framework – while recognizing, with humility, that there is a great deal we do not and cannot know yet. But we do expect that our lives together will be different in some important ways, and we are exploring those ideas deliberately now.

Exploring better ways of working

Following up on one of the principal recommendations of Task Force 2021, we are weighing new working arrangements that emerged during this year, when so many of us worked remotely.

Led by VP for Human Resources Ramona Allen, VP for Campus Services and Stewardship Joe Higgins, and Associate Provost Krystyn Van Vliet, a cross-Institute planning team we call “Work Succeeding” is beginning to assess how various hybrid approaches to work life could play out for MIT staff. By systematically testing a variety of models, the project will produce a range of useful blueprints for how, as this pandemic era gradually recedes, we can arrive at a new normal that offers new and better ways of working, in service to our mission. As this assessment and testing get underway, we will have more to share on this subject.

Over the next few weeks, watch for more detailed updates addressing other questions, including messages specifically for employees; for students, including those with remote international appointments; and for everyone involved in summer programs.

* * *

Reflecting on the past year and considering what lies ahead, I fervently hope that the coming summer – EAPS assures me it is coming – will allow time and space for each of you to rest, relax, recuperate and reconnect.

For now, let’s hope for spring! And please remember, the best vaccine is whichever one you can get the soonest!

Sincerely,

L. Rafael Reif

Work Succeeding Steering Committee

Ramona Allen, Vice President for Human Resources

Robin Elices, Executive Director
Office of the Executive Vice President and Treasurer

Amy Glasmeier, Professor
Department of Urban Studies and Planning

Joe Higgins, Vice President for Campus Services and Stewardship

Timothy Jamison, Associate Provost

Erin Kelly, Professor
Sloan School of Management

Thomas Kochan, Professor
Sloan School of Management

Christina Lo, Director of Strategic Sourcing and Contracts
Office of the Vice President for Finance

Todd Robinson, Senior Campus Planner
Office of Campus Planning

Krystyn Van Vliet, Associate Provost

Work Succeeding Working Group

Gabrielle Accardi, Human Resources Manager
Office of Strategic Alliances and Technology Transfer

Sharon Bridburg, Director of Human Resources
Office of the Vice Chancellor

Chris Caplice, Executive Director
Center for Transportation and Logistics

Peter Cummings, Executive Director for Administration
Division of Student Life

Tolga Durak, Managing Director
Environment, Health and Safety Office

Dahlia Fetouh, Counsel
Office of the General Counsel

Bill Fitzgerald, Executive Director, Finance and Operations
MIT Alumni Association

Ellen Gilmore, Executive Director of Human Resources and Strategic Talent Management
Office of the Vice President for Resource Development

Eamon Kearns, Senior Director, Emerging Solutions
Information Systems & Technology

Elizabeth Lennox, Assistant Dean for Finance and Administration
School of Engineering

Colleen Leslie, Assistant Provost for Research Administration

Jennifer Marshall, Assistant Director
Office of Campus Planning

Ann McNamara, Executive Director, Finance, Administration, and Operations
Office of the President

Lesley Millar-Nicholson, Director of Technology Licensing Office and Director, Catalysts
Office of Strategic Alliances and Technology Transfer

Eileen Ng, Assistant Dean for Administration
Schwarzman College of Computing

Greg Raposa, Space Administrator
Office of the Provost

Mary Ellen Royer, Manager, Human Resources Operations
Human Resources Department

Brian Schuetz, Executive Director
MIT Medical

Ann Warner-Harvey, Director of Administrative Services and Operations
Office of the Vice President for Finance

Heather Williams, Assistant Dean
School of Science

Carol Wood, Director, Research Administration Systems Support
Office of the Vice President for Research

