

Source: Roryrory

The ODGE strives to increase the diversity of the graduate student body and to foster a nurturing, caring, and inclusive campus environment which is critical to retention, time-to-degree, and academic excellence for all students.

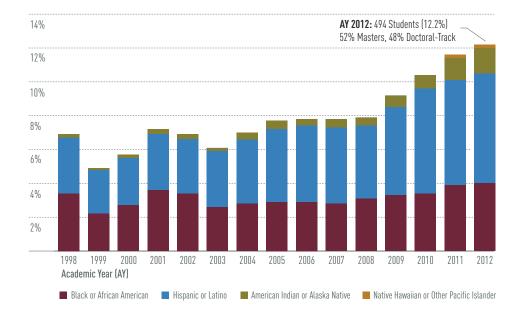




We have seen significant increases in the diversity of the graduate population at MIT, and we must continue our efforts to increase the applicant pool and yield.

MIT's graduate students come from a wide variety of backgrounds and countries. Currently, 38% of our graduate students are international and hail from 98 countries. However, there is still much work to be done to increase the domestic diversity of MIT's graduate student body. The ODGE advances this goal through the ongoing work of recruitment through the MIT Summer Research Program (MSRP) and by partnering with other universities that educate the undergraduates we wish to attract. Over the last decade we have seen significant increases in the percentage of under-represented minority (URM) and female students attending MIT, and we must continue our efforts to increase the applicant pool and yield. Simultaneously, fostering a nurturing, caring, and inclusive campus environment is critical to retention, time-to-degree, and academic excellence for all students. Current initiatives include the Power Lunch series, the First-Year Mentorship Program, the Graduate Women's Group, the Jeanty Teas for international students, and various projects under the Graduate Community Fellows Program.

Figure 4: Percentage of under-represented minority graduate students of US citizens and permanent residents disaggregated by ethnicity (1998-2012)





The ODGE can take these efforts even further through the following initiatives.

Climate Enhancement

The following methods will foster an inclusive climate that intellectually and socially engages, embraces, and values all members of the MIT community in order to promote retention and academic excellence.

Assessment

In collaboration with the Office of Institutional Research, qualitative and quantitative information will be gathered to assess and monitor the experiences and climate for the graduate population. Surveys and focus groups, among other methods, will be used to identify and understand barriers and contributors to success.

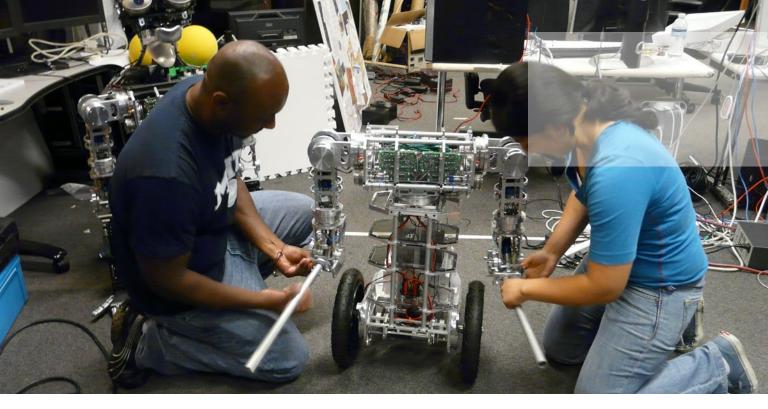
Cohort and Community Building

Cohort and community building activities (for example, support of student groups and clubs) will be strengthened and supported to combat isolation, facilitate networking, encourage work-life balance, provide a motivating support structure, and enhance information exchange.

"Bridging" Activities

The ODGE will provide support and information on best practices to graduate programs in order to more closely connect students with their laboratories and departments and to facilitate intellectual and social interactions between groups of different nationalities and cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Examples may include:

- » orientation activities which acclimatize new graduate students to the culture of doctoral education
- » adviser matching assistance
- » facilitating the creation of a network of mentors, including peer, post-doc, faculty, and alumni, compiling and disseminating best practices for mentoring of a diverse cohort
- » tutoring programs and peer mock oral qualifying exams
- » dissertation boot camps
- » establishing best practices for information dissemination of resources, financing, transparency of policies, and nomination opportunities.
- » encouraging participation in student government and student groups



Institutional Culture of Inclusivity

In order to foster a culture that embraces diversity, we aim to:

- » acknowledge, celebrate, publicize, and articulate the academic excellence, accomplishments, intellectual contributions, and impact of individual graduate students of diverse backgrounds in oral, electronic, and print materials.
- » emphasize prestige and awareness in all diversity initiatives, programs, and fellowships and the positive correlation between diversity and excellence.
- » facilitate student engagement at the Institute level (i.e. on Institute committees).
- » establish recognition and rewards for students and mentors as they progress over the academic hurdles.

Data Collection and Management

An autonomous annual data template, collection, and analysis process for diversity data on admissions, yield, retention, time-to-graduation, and job placement will be created.

Figure 5: Graduate Climate Trilevel Strategy

Target Individual Graduate Students

Cohort and community building; social and intellectual

Bridging Activities

Resources and finances

Transparency of policies and opportunities

Faculty and postdoc advising and mentoring

Participation in student government and student groups

Professional development

Alumni engagement

Rewards and Recognition

Institutional Environment

Publicize, acknowledge, and celebrate accomplishments

Emphasize prestige and excellence; positive correlation between diversity and excellence

Student engagement at the Institute level

Increasing Diversity in the Applicant Pool

The ODGE has crafted additional strategies to attract greater numbers of URM applicants to MIT. One method is to focus on external recruitment efforts. A targeted regional strategy will be developed and implemented to recruit externally from our peers and key Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) using pool data from the Integrated Post-Secondary Educational Data System (IPEDS). For example, the existing Grad Clinic will be expanded; groups of key faculty from MSIs and from MIT will engage with each other more deeply; geographic nodes of alumni of color will be leveraged; and key academic programs such as Minority Access to Research Careers (MARC) and the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP) will be leveraged.

Another method will be to develop web and print materials to support recruitment efforts at other colleges, universities, symposia, and career fairs. The ODGE will also explore online recruitment opportunities—such as developing an online version of our Grad Clinic—and will survey current enrolled students to assess which recruitment mechanisms are most effective.

Yield

To increase our yield of diverse students matriculating to MIT, two strategies will be implemented. In collaboration with the departments, schools and faculty supervisors, multi-year diversity fellowship commitments will be developed. Secondly, the ODGE will assist in the recruitment of diverse students who are admitted to MIT graduate programs by providing more individualized attention. For example, one of the Deans will call the student personally to congratulate him or her and send personalized congratulations letters.