



Massachusetts Institute of Technology

**Preliminary Report –Initiative for Investigation of Race Matters and Underrepresented
Minority Faculty at MIT**

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Race Initiative Team Members:

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Background:

On April 2, the Provost charged a committee of faculty to investigate the undertaking of a key Initiative at MIT on the issues of race at MIT and its impact with regard to underrepresented minority faculty at the Institute. The core team members of the Race Initiative, listed above, represent members of each of the Schools at MIT; this group was asked to define the process by which this important Initiative would be conducted, in close consultation with the minority faculty and Diversity Council members, as well as others at the Institute. Furthermore, the team was asked to determine the resources needed for a comprehensive, rigorous and systematic study of these issues as the initial stage of the Initiative. This preliminary report represents the results of this consultative and developmental process, and describes an outline of the means for conducting the study, approaches for implementation of Initiative recommendations during and following the study, a projected timeframe for the proposed work, and a brief description of expected outcomes and deliverables from the Race Initiative Study. It is anticipated that resources will be implemented and the Initiative will be fully launched at the start of the 2007-2008 academic year.

To address the urgency of the issues regarding minority recruiting and retention, this team chose to select a few simple early recommendations for the Provost that could help to increase the efficacy of minority faculty recruitment. These recommendations are based on observations and discussions of School recruiting methods and informed by the MIT 9 discussions and data, and could be implemented immediately in the 2007-2008 year. These suggestions are not meant to replace the far-reaching goals and objectives of the Race Equity Studies described in this report.

Committee Activities:

To discuss best practices and approaches, the Race Initiative met several times as a group and with other individuals and groups, including but not limited to the following:

March 30	Meeting - with Rafael Reif to charge committee
April 13	Meeting - Brainstorm, Discuss key issues that study must cover
April 22	MIT9 Meeting, Washington D.C. - Two members of Initiative (Paula Hammond, Christine Ortiz) attended this meeting, which included Provosts and Presidents of MIT 9, discussion of minority faculty issues.
April 23	Meeting – discuss MIT 9 meeting, including data across universities, recruiting and retention methods of practice
April 24	Brief update of Race Initiative progress discussed at Diversity Council
April 30	Meeting – address minority faculty recruitment practices and procedures in each School, discuss potential readily implemented means of impacting recruiting of minority faculty
April 30	Minority Faculty Dinner Meeting – describe Initiative objectives and framework with minority faculty and address questions, input from faculty.
May 14	Meeting with Evelyn Hammonds, Sr. Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity at Harvard University to discuss Harvard study and perspective and imperative issues to address in MIT study, suggestions for MIT study.
June 4	P. Hammond – phone teleconference with Caroline Turner, author of “Faculty of Color in Academe: Bittersweet Success”, an extensive qualitative and quantitative study of minority faculty in Midwest universities in 7 states. Addressed nature of study, scope, research tools utilized, resources.
June 5	Meeting - discuss conversation with Caroline Turner, outline preliminary report and budget

Nature and Details of the Study:

The details of the study described below are based on careful consultations with Evelyn Hammonds and Caroline Turner, who have carried out similar studies varying in scope, on input from faculty involved in the Gender Equity Study at MIT, and on formal and informal input from minority faculty members. The committee was strongly advised that the report generated by the MIT Race Initiative must be strong, credible, and innovative. A short and minimal report will not yield results substantive enough to convince and induce change, will diminish perceptions of MIT’s commitment to the effort, and could possibly damage MIT’s credibility in this critical area. It was suggested that such a study could not take place over several weeks – the committee was encouraged to use the time needed to generate a deep and penetrating review of the issues at MIT, which could take 1 to 2 years.

Several parties, including members of the minority faculty and academics at other institutions such as Evelyn Hammonds, suggested a close look at MIT’s past efforts over the past several decades to increase diversity; such history can teach about limitations that must be overcome in MIT’s culture, as well as efforts that lead to success in the MIT environment. Furthermore, many minority faculty indicated a need to look at the large body of existing data and literature on minorities in academia. The report would greatly benefit from having an extensive literature review section, which could be generated in parallel with the research work of the study. A strong literature review section that summarizes recent efforts at similar institutions could prove invaluable both within and without MIT, and would also lead to a wide use of the study for its value and contribution.

The context of the study should include both key quantitative and qualitative data on the experiences of underrepresented minority faculty at MIT. Quantitative data includes statistics on application, interview and hiring processes by department and School, salary and salary merit increase data, rates of promotion, involvement in labs and centers, internal and external research funding, allocated and accessible lab space etc. The quantitative data can be extremely compelling when specific trends are seen across given fields or with specific age or gender groups, for example, and was proven to be key to persuasive change in the Women in Science study. A survey will be used to quantify some of the experiences, perspectives and levels of satisfaction of minority faculty with regard to their research and teaching work, collegial experiences and general feelings about the Institute. The survey will be detailed and will be given to both underrepresented minority faculty and to peer-matched majority faculty.

Key to the study will be qualitative data to be gathered with in-depth interviews of minority faculty, in which a trained interviewer and a faculty member from the Initiative team will work in tandem to address specific questions regarding the MIT experience. Both current and past minority faculty from MIT will be interviewed. It was also suggested that a sampling of minority faculty who were students at MIT and are currently faculty at other institutions be interviewed to gain insight from the MIT perspective of other academic environments. This interview will also be used as an opportunity to receive input from the minority faculty, based on their desire to do so, on some of the issues and challenges for minority faculty and how they might be addressed at MIT. The interviews will also include a smaller number of controls for gender, nationality, and peer-matched majority faculty (a proposed 10 well matched pairs as a small subset of the total interview pool, perhaps 2 matched pairs per school). Peer-matches are faculty from the majority group with similar fields and time in career. Although the past studies of women at MIT have found key motivations in the quantitative data, it is anticipated that the qualitative data on experiential issues may be of similar or greater importance for underrepresented minority groups. Interviews will be transcribed, coded and entered into analytical “NVivo” software to generate data indicating more general qualitative trends.

Although the focus of these studies will be on the underrepresented minority groups as defined by MIT’s employment and equal opportunity policies and practices, controls will also be included for minority faculty groups that are not underrepresented at MIT, such as those of Asian descent. Additional controls will be needed for gender and nationality.

During the process of the study, the Race Initiative Team will need to actively engage the Deans of the Schools as well as department heads. This will be accomplished by arranging meetings with the Initiative team to be added to the agenda of Academic Council and the School Councils during this Academic year, and by meeting with faculty search chairs to address hiring practices. Furthermore, a panel interview will be arranged with the Deans of the Schools to address some of the challenges and approaches that might be considered. Deans and department heads will be trained via retreats and workshops. It will be key that these administrators view this issue as a high priority; this can be accomplished with strong support from both the President’s and Provost’s offices. Finally, during the time period of the study, when issues are identified that can be readily addressed, efforts at every level must be made to enable the implementation of change.

Resources and Personnel for Initiative Study:

Modeled after efforts undertaken at comparable universities, the study will be carried out as a collaborative effort between the core faculty members of the Initiative team and a key dedicated PhD level scholar with the an excellent background in organization studies, sociology or related fields and experience in issues of race in organizations. This person would be appointed as an MLK Scholar. There will also be a dedicated statistician with appropriate

background who will work with the Office of Institutional Research in designing the survey and generating and evaluating the quantitative data. To provide guidance and input during the course of the study and the undertakings of the Initiative, we propose to convene an Advisory Board consisting of academic experts and colleagues that can provide insight on the execution of the study, the generation of approaches and solutions to challenges at MIT dealing with race and minority faculty, and means of implementing plans for increasing minority faculty recruitment and retention. This Advisory Board would meet with the Team on a quarterly basis for progress reports and open discussion. The board may include a number of external as well as internal board members, including distinguished and experienced alumni, faculty members from peer universities, scholars in the areas of race and diversity in the academy, and MIT Corporation members.

The Race Initiative Team would consist of one or more faculty representative(s) from each School and the Associate Provost for Faculty Equity; it may also include one or two additional members with relevant or needed backgrounds as required. Team members will continue to shape the Initiative Research Study, guided by literature background reading, discussion with external consultants and colleagues, engagement of university faculty and administrators at MIT, and development of recommendations for best practices. As needed and where possible, teaching release time will be made available for these faculty to focus on the Initiative efforts, to be determined with each individual member, their department and the Provost. In certain situations based on the discretion of the Provost, in which the department is unable to arrange release teaching time, a discretionary fund will be made available to individual committee members to be used for the hiring of a critical RA or postdoctoral associate, or similar personnel to cover other responsibilities as a means of providing available time for the extensive committee work involved in this endeavor.

It is anticipated that the equivalent of one graduate student research assistant (40 hours/week) will be needed for data coding from the interviews, assistance with interviews, literature searches and writing of the review article. This person would work directly with the postdoc/scholar.

A statistician will be needed to work with the team on designing the survey and collecting the quantitative data, and to assist in refining the survey and setting it up for web-access. The statistician should be a person from the Office of Institutional Research, Lydia Snover's organization in the Provost's office, who could be directly connected to the work for this Initiative, or someone who can be affiliated with the office during the time of the study. This person would also be able to advise the group on historical data that would be relevant to the study and design of the data tools. It is key that, if possible, the same person be assigned to the project throughout its lifetime.

Finally, one staff person would be needed to help administer the efforts of the Race Initiative, including coordination of meeting rooms, meeting arrangements, minutes, and scheduling. This person would also be affiliated with the Provost's office.

Personnel

1	Postdoc/Scholar	(salary, overhead, travel)
1	Statistician (Snover's office)	(quantitative data on salary survey, web based)
1	RA (for coding, lit review)	(40 hours/week, or 2 half time people)
1	Staff person (20% time)	(to manage the project and interface w/ committee)

A full budget containing the above items will be submitted to the Provost's office under separate cover.

Other

Transcription service (5 hours transcription per one hour interview at \$30/hr)

Travel for consultations with outside experts in field

Digital Recorders (2-3)

Release time for committee members * (see above)

Community Input:

It will be critical to engage the minority faculty in every aspect of the Initiative's efforts. To ensure complete opportunities for minority faculty members to give input to the Initiative: 1) broadly advertised informational and open forum-style discussion meetings with members of the Initiative Team will be held during the academic year at multiple dates and times to maximize participation; 2) A representative from the Team will give an overview of progress of the Initiative to the Minority Faculty Group, and 3) separate meetings with the junior and the senior minority faculty will be arranged to address the specific needs and concerns of each group. Additional input from the minority faculty may be arranged as needed via interactions with the minority faculty dinner group. Input from other members of the MIT community will also be sought, including the input of the minority alumni groups, current and former Deans, the Officers of the Faculty and the Corporation.

Deliverables:

Deliverables from the Race Initiative will include:

- 1) A final public report that can be shared with the MIT community and broader academic community. The report will include the general and important trends observed in the study, and key areas where significant change can be accomplished.
- 2) A confidential report to the Provost containing full details from the report that would compromise anonymity if published publicly.
- 3) A list of recommendations to be implemented on the department, School and Institute level to increase numbers of minority faculty recruited, retain current minority faculty, and enhance the experiences of minority faculty at MIT.
- 4) A plan for the implementation of recommendations, including the follow-up, the metrics, and the accountability at all levels for implementation and impact from the Department to the Schools and Institution.

Early Recommendations for Immediate Implementation:

Although many substantive recommendations will result from the extensive study executed in the first stage of the Initiative, the committee believes that some simple changes implemented now could positively impact the recruiting of minority faculty even in the upcoming recruiting year, and could increase awareness of the needs of existing junior faculty. Below are recommendations from this group that can be incorporated immediately:

- The Provost should mandate that in early Fall the Deans collect and review pre-search plans for all searches being conducted in their school, and then discuss them in Dean's Council, summarizing *the specific recruiting efforts* being used to identify underrepresented minority candidates.

- Develop consistent Institute-wide templates for departments to use in tracking searches and URM faculty appointments (that can be submitted electronically to the School Deans). The Provost should mandate that the Deans aggregate this data and bring it to Academic Council.
- Alert and inform Visiting Committees to ask about URM hiring and retention, including asking specific questions about the department's plan of action for recruiting URM faculty, to which they would be held accountable on the next visit.
- Create a name exchange with the MIT9 universities containing lists of URM graduate students and postdoctoral fellows for prospective faculty candidates.
- To heighten the awareness of junior faculty mentorship needs, the Provost or the Associate Provost for Faculty Equity should meet individually with the Department Heads of those departments that have minority junior faculty members to review each of the junior faculty members' current Faculty Personnel Records, discuss their progress and the department's means of advocacy and mentorship for the junior faculty members.