



# MindHandHeart

Academic Year 2017-18

# Annual Report

Image: Students handing out flowers during RAK Week, February 2018



## A Letter from MindHandHeart's Faculty Chair & Executive Administrator

Every day, members of the MIT community invent, engineer, and strive to change the world for the better. From advancements in [artificial intelligence](#) to envisioning the [future of work](#) in an era of technological innovation to sharing in the [Nobel Prize](#) for confirming Einstein's theory of gravitational waves to winning a [Tony Award](#), MIT's breakthroughs this year were vast.

It bears mentioning that all of these milestones were achieved by people. Working in teaching, learning, research, administration, and operations, every member of our community has contributed to MIT's global impact.

Our job at MindHandHeart, supported by our many campus partners, is to ensure that our communities are healthy, welcoming, and inclusive. When all of our community members feel valued and that they belong, we do our best work in making a better world.

As we complete the third year of MindHandHeart's efforts, we have much to celebrate. We expanded our reach into academic departments with our new Department Support Project. Working strategically and collaboratively with five departments, we used data to identify their strengths and opportunities for growth, and shared best practices for building community and promoting overall health.

Additionally, we received nearly double the usual number of Innovation Fund applications, and funded a record 29 projects advancing mental health, wellness, and inclusion in novel ways. We supported over 160 events attended by over 6,000 community members. And, 84% of academic departments participated in Random Acts of Kindness Week, a week consisting of spontaneous acts of generosity and loosely planned events. Through these activities and in every page of our annual report, MIT's vibrant and open heart can be seen and felt.

Sincerely,

Rosalind Picard  
Professor of Media Arts and Sciences, MIT; Faculty Chair, MindHandHeart

&

Maryanne Kirkbride  
Clinical Director for Campus Life, MIT Medical; Executive Administrator,  
MindHandHeart

Image: Malte Ahrens '18 and MIT President Rafael Reif at a MindHandHeart sponsored study break in the new UA social space (26-110), May 2018



## MindHandHeart's Mission and Strategy

MindHandHeart (MHH) is a coalition of students, faculty, and staff working to strengthen the fabric of our MIT community. Co-sponsored by the Office of the Chancellor, the Office of the Provost, and MIT Medical, and led by "Team Kirk and Picard," Executive Administrator Maryanne Kirkbride and MHH Faculty Chair Rosalind Picard, MHH is filling a strategic niche in areas shown by research to promote mental health and well-being, and build welcoming and inclusive communities.

In academic year 2017-18, MHH did this through four main channels:

1. Our **Innovation Fund** seeding novel approaches to well-being and mentoring passionate students, faculty, and staff as their innovative ideas develop.
2. Our **volunteer coalition** bringing voices from across the Institute together to solve problems and develop opportunities for collaboration.
3. Our **Department Support Project** enhancing MIT's welcoming and inclusive academic climates.
4. And, our **strategic partnerships** designed to connect MHH with other culture-shaping initiatives promoting respect, health, and our shared humanity.

Guided by the [Jed Foundation](#) Campus Program, now supporting nearly 200 colleges, MindHandHeart is tapping into the creativity of the entire MIT community to spur action and positively shape our culture. Over time, we aim for awareness of our "heart" to be fully alive on our campus; inseparable from "mind and hand" and equally valued as a component of our success in making a better world.



# MindHandHeart AY 2017-18

## By the Numbers

**Over 6,000**  
Attendees at  
MindHandHeart  
events

**29**  
Innovation Fund  
winners\*

**22**  
MIT student groups  
engaged with  
MindHandHeart

**2268**  
MIT students  
participated in  
At Risk\*\*

**84%**  
of academic  
departments  
participated in  
RAK Week\*\*\*

**5**  
Members of the  
first Department  
Support Project  
cohort\*\*\*\*

**14**  
AY15-17  
Innovation Fund  
projects are now  
self-sustaining

**160**  
MindHandHeart  
sponsored  
events

\*69 Innovation Fund projects funded to date.

\*\*"At Risk" is an online training module providing strategies for supporting peers in distress.

\*\*\*Random Acts of Kindness "RAK" Week is a week devoted to connecting members of the MIT community through loosely planned events and spontaneous acts of generosity.

\*\*\*\*The departments participating in this year's Department Support Project pilot include: Mechanical Engineering, Earth Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences, Math, Biological Engineering, and Linguistics/Philosophy.

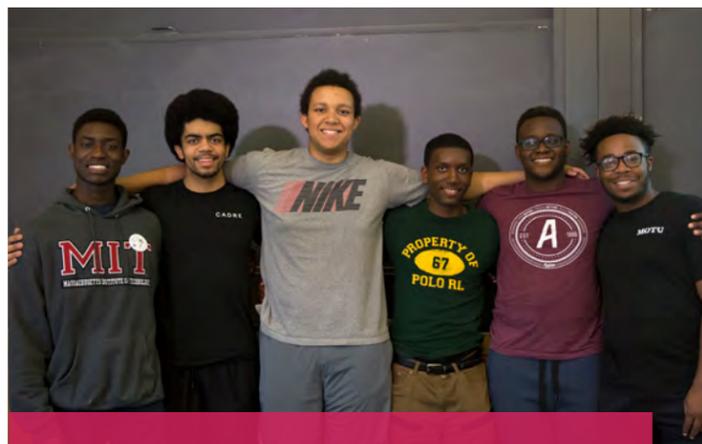


# MindHandHeart Featured Stories



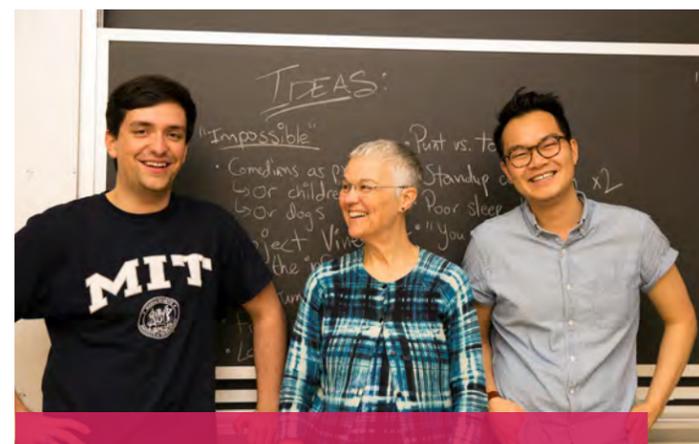
### New DSL Courses

Image: Students participate in a new DSL meditation class



### The Standard

Image: Members of The Standard pose before a workshop



### Humor Working Group

Image: Humor Working Group co-chairs with our Executive Administrator



### Portraits of Resilience

Image: Professor Daniel Jackson and the Portraits of Resilience cover

The MIT Physical Education department added two new classes in AY 2017-18. Piloted through the [MindHandHeart Innovation Fund](#), students will now be able to take “Meditation/Fitness” and “Healthy Relationships/Fitness” courses for physical education credit.

MIT student Sean Noriega '18 took the meditation course, which filled to capacity in all four sections. When asked about how the class improved his time at MIT, Noriega said, “My biggest takeaway is that so many techniques to improve my mood and productivity can be done at home.”

These courses complement MIT’s existing physical education and wellness courses, and aim to keep students mindful of their health and well-being. Carrie Sampson Moore, director of MIT Physical Education and Wellness, said these classes will continue into next year. “Wellness is an area of growth for our program,” said Moore. “Students reported that these classes helped them manage stress.”

A new program called The Standard is working to support the academic, personal, and professional achievements of MIT’s undergraduate men of color. Sponsored by the Office of Minority Education (OME), The Standard was awarded a grant to pilot their first cohort through the [MindHandHeart Innovation Fund](#).

Students join as first-years and are paired with upperclassmen and alumni who serve as mentors. The program offers an array of workshops, guest lectures, and fun outings.

DiOnetta Jones Crayton, associate dean in the Office of the Vice Chancellor and director of the OME, envisioned The Standard and reflects on its progress, saying: “We are extremely excited about The Standard because it is something that young men at MIT have been asking us to create for years. We believe that we have developed a program that not only utilizes high impact practices set by similar initiatives across the nation, but that directly meets the needs of MIT men of color.”

MindHandHeart founded a Humor Working Group composed of individuals working to bring humor and joy to campus. Led by Comedian, Author, and MIT Graduate Student [Jonny Sun](#) and MindHandHeart Communications Intern Kollin Wasserlein '19, the group is organizing digital campaigns and comedic events for the upcoming year.

Additionally, MindHandHeart was awarded funding from the [DeFlorez Fund](#) to commission a series of cartoons from [Larry Gonick](#), an illustrator specializing in educational texts. The cartoons will focus on a range of topics, including student-faculty interactions and imposter syndrome, and will offer a lighthearted take on campus life.

This spring, MindHandHeart co-sponsored an event with the Alumni Association featuring Comedian and MIT Alumna [Dhaya Lakshminarayanan](#). Lakshminarayanan spoke to students about her time at MIT and establishing a unique career as a storyteller, performer, and speaker.

In 2017, [MindHandHeart](#) participated in the [MIT 24 Hour Challenge](#), where alumni raised funds to provide every first-year undergraduate student with a copy of the newly released book [Portraits of Resilience](#) (POR). Created by Computer Science [Professor Daniel Jackson](#), POR is a photography narrative series in which MIT students, faculty, and staff members share personal stories of overcoming adversity.

Days before the start of the spring 2018 semester, the Division of Student Life helped MHH distribute 1,105 books throughout ten dorms. Resident peer mentors and graduate resident tutors used the book to facilitate conversations on several of the topics covered in the book, including mental illness, suicide, alcoholism, death, forgiveness, sickness, burnout, disabilities, and relationships. Additionally, McCormick Hall hosted a discussion with two students whose stories were featured in the book. These students described the personal challenges that led them to take academic leave from MIT and the campus resources that supported them upon returning. We are planning to distribute the book to graduate students in the upcoming academic year.



## Campus-wide Community Achievements

Among many other valuable resources, MindHandHeart has partnered with JED Campus, a national research-based program focused on comprehensive mental health promotion that provides guidance to nearly 200 colleges. A primary goal of JED Campus is to engage campus communities in strengthening overall well-being in addition to traditional mental health services. Since MIT became a member in 2015, MindHandHeart has served as MIT's liaison to JED Campus, helping individual campus services and departments to tap national promising practices, provide a high-level overview assessing our collective gains, and highlight areas for continued enhancement.

Under the leadership of MIT Chancellor Cynthia Barnhart, Medical Director Cecilia Stuopis, and MHH Faculty Chair Rosalind Picard, we are making progress. [Survey data](#) from 2013 and 2017 shows a significant increase in students rating the Institute as friendly, caring, and safe. While it is difficult to determine the exact reasons for this shift, we are encouraged by campus efforts to make MIT a more supportive and welcoming place.

Examples of campus-wide gains include:

- A new CARE Team and CARE Team Network to support our students, an expansion of the residential peer mentor program, and a fitness referral program for students reporting increased stress, sponsored by the Division of Student Life (DSL).
- An increase in the Student Mental Health and Counseling service capacity to care for our increasingly diverse student body.
- A targeted focus on increasing faculty awareness and skills in inclusive pedagogy through the Teaching and Learning Laboratory's YOU Belong @ MIT program.
- On-line training to support peers in distress delivered to 100% of our incoming first-year undergraduate students through the Office of the First Year in the Office of the Vice Chancellor.
- Mandatory sexual misconduct training for all faculty and staff, through Human Resources, the Title IX Office, Violence Prevention and Response (VPR), the Committee on Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response, and the Office of the Provost.
- Creation of the Bias Response Team within the Title IX Office in the Office of the Chancellor.
- A revised [medical leave policy](#) was implemented to enhance support for students.

All of these achievements by campus experts have strengthened the capacity of MIT's support network to serve students, in alignment with the goals of the JED Campus program. In our distributed campus environment, MHH works in a bridging capacity to collaborate across departments and coordinate the implementation of future enhancements.

Image: Chancellor Cynthia Barnhart meeting with students involved with the MIT Solar Electric Vehicle Team, June 2018



Image: Yifan Lu, Sloan MBA '2020, founder of the indoor lawn in the Student Center, November 2017



MindHandHeart  
Innovation Fund

In AY17-18, MindHandHeart supported a record 29 Innovation Fund projects. Sponsored by the [Office of the Chancellor](#) and [MIT Medical](#), the Fund aims to harness our community's ingenuity and compassion to spearhead projects that make MIT a more healthy, welcoming, and inclusive place.

Applications were reviewed by members of the MindHandHeart volunteer coalition and a review committee comprised of past Innovation Fund winners and representatives from the Graduate Student Council, the Undergraduate Association, and MindHandHeart's leadership team.

Awarded projects address an array of topics, including life skills, mental health, wellness, community building, enhancing academic climates, and increasing help-seeking behavior. Of all the 29 awarded projects, 55% were spearheaded by students, 7% were driven by faculty, and 38% were driven by staff. 45% of this year's winners are supporting diversity and inclusion work on campus.

To date, MindHandHeart has supported [69 Innovation Fund projects](#), 14 of which are now self-sustaining. Past Innovation Fund winners include the [Puppy Lab](#), [Random Acts of Kindness \(RAK\) Week](#), [My Sister's Keeper](#), and [MIT Connect](#), which has since incorporated. This year, MindHandHeart supported additional student-driven projects outside of the Fund, including: [Tea with Teachers](#), [Tech Twinkles](#) tree lighting, MIT Innovation Week, the MIT Admissions cookbook, a Thirsty Ear paint night, Peer Ears finals care packages, a Tales from the Homefront open mic event, the Senior House mural exhibit, and Fail!, an event devoted to sharing important stories that often go unspoken.



Image: Duane de Four, Senior Prevention Specialist at MIT's Violence Prevention Response office, during RAK Week



Image: Tea with Teachers, a student group interviewing MIT professors about their lives outside of the classroom



MindHandHeart  
Communications

James H. Williams Jr., MIT School of Engineering Professor of Teaching Excellence and Professor of Writing and Humanistic Studies, was visionary in coining the phrase "MindHandHeart" in 2004 to describe how caring for the welfare of others and oneself is an integral part of the MIT ethos, inseparable from "Mind" and "Hand." This year, MHH worked on an array of communications projects to advance this vision.

We collaborated with colleagues from across the Institute to promote health-related resources and events; coordinate and strengthen wellness and mental health messaging; increase the production of digital content showing the "Heart" at MIT; and use analytics to gauge our progress. In doing so, we aimed to raise awareness about vital resources, build community, and help students, faculty, and staff members feel cared for and supported.

Some of the initiatives we have undertaken include:

- MHH's Innovation Fund projects were featured in 22 articles that were published in MIT News, The Tech, the Alumni Association's 'Slice of MIT' blog, The Boston Globe, WBUR, and PBS.

- MHH's communications team worked to support the communications needs of this year's 29 Innovation Fund winners— nearly double the number of winners as last year. We supported the marketing of their events and activities, contributed photography, and wrote articles documenting their work.

- MHH sent out a monthly e-newsletter, The MindHandHeart Beat, to approximately 900 subscribers with an average open rate of over 40%.

- MHH developed a calendar of events focused on wellness, community, and mental health that was disseminated during finals periods in December and May.

- MHH organized 13 study breaks in MIT dorms, the Student Center, Lobby 10, and the new Undergraduate Association social space (26-110) to promote the Innovation Fund.

- MHH showcased the initiative and its mission at many community-wide events, including Orientation, the Parents Forum, the EVPT Poster Session, the Chemistry Resource Fair, the Sloan Resource Fair, Lobby 10 tabling sessions, as well as the Wellness Fair and MIT Day of Play, which MHH co-sponsored.

- MHH maintained a website offering a comprehensive list of resources available to MIT students ([resources.mit.edu](https://resources.mit.edu)). The site provides information on everything from housing to academic planning to recreation to mental health and wellness services.

- MHH partnered with MIT Medical on a series of question and answer videos featuring clinicians from MIT's Mental Health and Counseling department. The videos seek to encourage help-seeking and increase students' familiarity with available resources.

- MHH also produced three animated videos on the topic of sleep, making friends, and meditation, in collaboration with MIT students and Zan Barry, senior program manager in Community Wellness at MIT Medical.



Image: Professor James H. Williams Jr., School of Engineering Professor of Teaching Excellence



# MindHandHeart Quotes

"I loved the chance to sit down and have tea with [MindHandHeart Innovation Fund winner] **Tea with Teachers**. What a great program to help students connect with teachers!"

-Professor of Biology Eric Lander

"I think people are more and more comfortable talking about **wellness and mental health topics**, which are still a bit taboo, but having these conversations is really important to encourage help-seeking."

-Tchelet Segev '18

"Supporting undergraduate men of color is a priority for the OME, and we are thrilled to receive funding for **The Standard** from MindHandHeart to expand our efforts and reach more students in new and exciting ways."

-DiOnetta Jones Crayton, Director of the Office of Minority Education (OME)

**"Just being who you are is already enough."**

-Zan Barry, Senior Program Manager, Community Wellness, MIT Medical

"I did one of the conversations with a potential at-risk student [in the training]... and found it very engaging. There was a **depth to the content** that was surprising and useful."

-Faculty member on At Risk, a training module recommended for MIT faculty and instructional staff to support students in distress

"There's always a basic need for a **community** like ours to be social and open."

-Mathematics Professor Steven Johnson '95, PhD '01 and MindHandHeart Innovation Fund winner

"I'm from Colorado, and one of the first things I've noticed since being here is the lack of open grass and parks. Being at this indoor lawn brought back an **element of home** I didn't realize I needed."

-Attendee at the indoor lawn Innovation Fund project in the Student Center

"There's a component of gardening which is relaxing on its own. We wouldn't have been able to [found the MacGregor House hydroponic garden] without the **MindHandHeart Innovation Fund**."

-Rachel Weissman '21

"Always be open to **lending a hand** because you never know when you might need one."

-Miller Tan '20

Image: MIT Day of Play, co-sponsored with the Division of Student Life, May 2018



# MindHandHeart Department Support Project Overview

In its first two years, MHH focused on student and campus-wide efforts, tapping our community's creativity and innovative spirit to address student mental health and well-being. Building on that success, MHH was charged with piloting an effort in several academic departments to share best practices and coordinate enhancements to strengthen the welcoming and inclusive nature of our academic climates.

Each academic department is unique, and our goal is to build on the strength of existing practices while incorporating new insights and approaches that will have a positive impact on all members of our department communities.

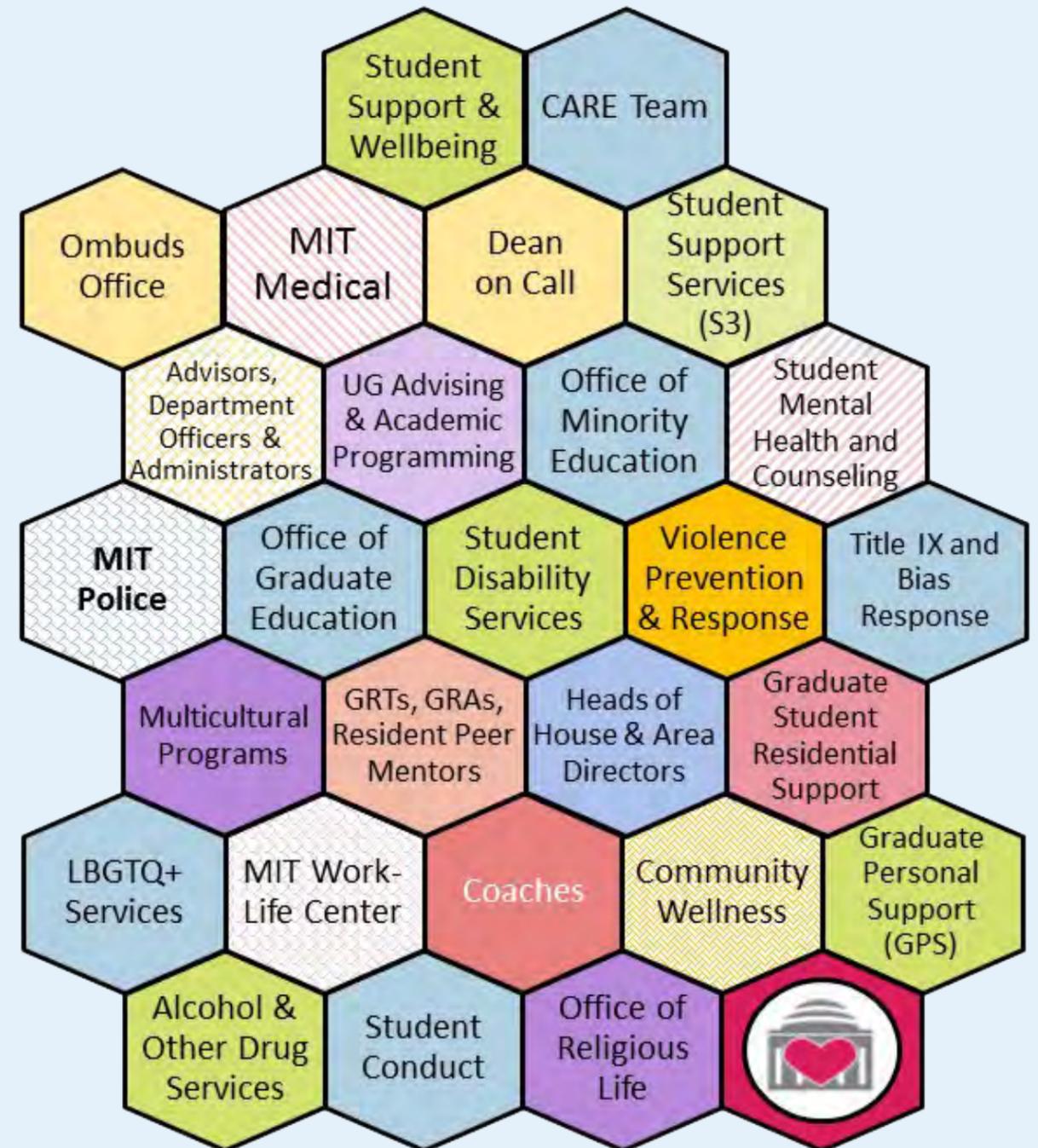
Working with the Provost and the Chancellor, MHH serves in a bridging capacity, bringing together department leaders, data analysts, students, and key campus experts in the areas of student life, teaching and learning, diversity and inclusion, and human resources. The pilot - called the MindHandHeart Department Support Project (MHH-DSP)-- is an innovation in itself, exploring the potential of reducing 'silos' and helping departments learn from one another.

Each semester, MHH will work with the departments that will be welcoming their visiting committees during the following semester. This ensures that we will reach every department over a two year period. In addition, MHH is working with the Undergraduate Association and the Graduate Student Council to coordinate on key department climate opportunities. Within our first cohort of departments, including Mechanical Engineering, Earth Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences, Math, Biological Engineering, and Linguistics/Philosophy, MHH is meeting with student groups and individuals to share promising practices, understand student experiences, and consider specific enhancements.

To reach our highest levels of excellence, we need broadly diverse academic environments where the climate is such that everyone feels at home and able to bring all of their talent to bear on making a better world. We are using a combination of survey data and qualitative assessment measures (focus groups and interviews) to identify departments' initial strengths and challenges, and measure our progress over time.

Image: MIT's collaborative, interconnected support network

## Strong Support Structure





# MindHandHeart Department Support Project - First Year Results

Image: Department Support Project materials

- 45 minutes
- Accepted for review in the National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP)
- Listed in the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC)/American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) Best Practices Registry
- Co-created with mental health experts and educators

## Testimonials from

"I did one of student th

MindHandHeart is a coalition of students, faculty, and staff working collaboratively and strategically to strengthen the fabric of our MIT community.

Data gathering and development of strategies for understanding and improving



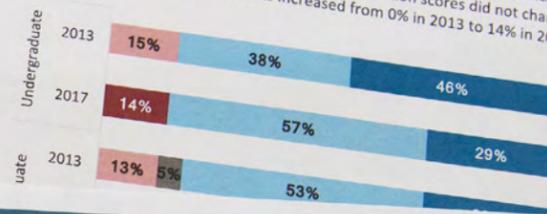
MindHandHeart Department Support Project

Co-sponsored by the Office of the Chancellor, the Provost,

Overall, how satisfied are you being a student a  
[Scale: 1 Very dissatisfied - 5 Very satisfied]

How has DEPT respondents' satisfaction changed over time?

- Mean graduate respondent satisfaction scores improved significantly between 2013 and 2017.
- Mean undergraduate respondent satisfaction scores did not change statistically. Of "dissatisfied" respondents increased from 0% in 2013 to 14% in 2017.



MindHandHeart

## Department Support Project

Enhancing welcoming and inclusive academic climates at MIT in four key ways



### Deliver More Actionable Data

- Easily see how students, faculty, and staff in departments are faring on measures related to satisfaction, well-being, academic support, and bias/inclusion.

### Provide a "Concierge" to Tap Existing MIT Resources More Easily

- Tailor support to meet departments' needs and priorities.
- Get help with scheduling and coordinating.



### Make it Easy to Share Promising Practices, and

To strengthen our welcoming and inclusive academic communities, we are building on MIT's tradition of department-level innovation. In our first pilot year, we tested many concepts, had some early successes, and generated lots of learning.

We were honored to work with five departments hosting visiting committees this spring. In each department, welcomed by the department head, we gained an understanding of the development of the departments' [diversity statement](#), challenges, and opportunities as seen by the faculty leadership, key administrative staff, and students.

Although each department is unique, themes arose in several areas. First, every department is already working to advance the student experience. Whether they are convening a diversity committee, incorporating graduate students into faculty meetings, conducting department-specific student surveys, expanding mediation support, or providing learning opportunities for faculty - they are all working to promote belonging and a supportive climate.

Second, we observed that there was limited formal capacity for departments to share their promising practices. Departments are often humble and don't realize that the advancements they have made have the potential to be of considerable value to others.

Third, survey data show that while all of the departments have many strengths, students, faculty, and staff of color, women, and members of the LGBTQ community frequently do not feel as welcome as others. It became clear that survey data is often unable to shed light on the experiences of these students. As a result, we have piloted a qualitative assessment process, and with leadership from Institutional Research in the Office of the Provost, we are determining our next steps.

Lastly, MIT has distinguished itself as a place that brings new meaning to the word 'multidisciplinary'. The Department Support Project is no different. As partner academic departments create action plans, campus experts are ready to contribute. Whether it is the Office of the Vice Chancellor's renewed focus on professional development, the Dean for Student Life's efforts to increase our community's capacity to respond to students in distress, the Libraries ability to support a diversity of disciplinary resources, student-faculty leadership collaboration, or Human Resources availability for staff training - many options exist to create climates where everyone can do their best work.



Donate to  
MindHandHeart

A donation to MindHandHeart enables students, faculty, and staff to carry out innovative projects that approach mental health, wellness, and inclusion from diverse perspectives and with wide-ranging talents.

Our generous donors have increased opportunities for connectedness and caring; sparked conversation; encouraged help-seeking; and raised awareness of mental health issues. They have empowered students, faculty, and staff to work together to create the many innovations highlighted in this report, as well as the many others not mentioned, which are helping to instill community, compassion, and health into the culture of MIT.

On behalf of all the MIT community members involved with MindHandHeart: thank you for helping us to infuse 'cor' (heart) into 'mens et manus' (mind and hand).



Image: Spring 2018 Innovation Fund Winners

Image: Members of MIT Spouses and Partners during R.A.K. Week, March 2018





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Summer 2018