Who is MAS Now?

Mahy El-Kouedi, Director, Academic Program Administration
Mahy manages the academic administration of the MAS program in partnership with MAS faculty and the academic heads. She works to improve faculty relations, appointments, promotions, as well as the program’s policies and procedures.

Monica Orta, Director, Diversity and Student Support
Monica manages all diversity, community-building, and student support initiatives of the program along with recruitment and admissions. She works to improve the climate and culture of the Lab and MAS through policies and programming.

Sarra Shubart, Graduate Administrator
Sarra manages and supports students’ progress through the program. She coordinates MAS courses, registration, grading, and degree requirements. She is the first contact for student questions.

Lily Zhang, Manager, Graduate Student Professional Development
Lily manages the career advising and professional development of our graduate students. She is the best contact for connections to alumni, career path advising, job application material review, and interview preparation.

Rebecca Cuscaden Marvin, Program Assistant, Diversity and Student Support
Rebecca provides administrative support for the MAS program. She works closely with Monica on the diversity, community-building, and student support initiatives and programming, as well as admissions, UROPs, and communications.

Mark Grinstein-Camacho, Administrative Assistant
Mark provides administrative support to Mahy including assistance with meetings, finances, communications, and document preparation.
Recruitment Efforts

MIT Summer Research Program (MSRP)

MSRP brings undergraduate students from across the United States to conduct research at MIT for nine weeks over the summer. In addition to gaining research experience, interns learn about applying to and succeeding in graduate school. In the summer of 2019, the Media Lab hosted four MSRP interns in different research groups.

Mikayla Buford
Object-Based Media
Project Title: (Don’t) Touch My Hair: Exploring Consent Education through Interactive Art

Lelia Hampton
Space Enabled
Project Title: Design of a Low-Cost Water Quality Sensor Kit to Monitor Coastal Ecosystem Health in Benin

Christopher Shallal
Biomechatronics
Project Title: Control and Characteristic Analysis of Antagonist-Agonist Amputee Volitional Movement

James Spann
Human Dynamics
Project Title: OPAL: A Decentralized Solution to Data Privacy
In Fall 2020, MAS will welcome 21 new masters and 17 new PhD students.
Community Building

**Trick-or-Treating**

Remember doing stuff on campus? This annual tradition brings the community together for an afternoon of trick-or-treating on Halloween. Research groups and ML operations teams distributed candy and dog treats in their spaces. MAS provided trick-or-treat bags, decorations, and snacks in the 3rd floor atrium. Participants joined the fun by showing off their costumes!
Diversity Series

The MAS Diversity Series brings the Media Lab community together each semester to develop skills and explore ideas of diversity and social justice through presentations and discussion.

Chatty Cathys and Quiet Keiths: A Primer on Cross-Personality Communication
Speaker: Beth L. Buelow
PCC, Founder, The Introvert Entrepreneur

Informed by her expertise in entrepreneurship and leadership coaching for introverts, Beth Buelow led a presentation and interactive discussion about bridging the personality gap between introverts and extroverts through trust and cooperation. Her presentation to the Media Lab community taught attendees how to trust and use their natural preferences to connect with and navigate the diverse personalities with whom we live, learn, and work.
Random Acts of Kindness (RAK) Week

As part of the Mind, Hand, Heart Initiative, Random Acts of Kindness (RAK) Week took place across MIT March 9 - 13, 2020. MAS Diversity supplemented the Institute-wide events with our own RAK Week activities, which were limited this year due to COVID-19.

Monday 3/9
Take Someone to Lunch
We encouraged the Media Lab community to spend time with a friend or meet someone new by inviting them to lunch, which was reimbursed by MAS. Over 65 people participated and made an effort to get to know their colleagues!

Friday 3/13
Community Shout Outs
MAS encouraged the community to shout out their friends, mentors, colleagues, anyone and everyone that has made a difference in their time at the Media Lab. We received 150 shout outs which were shared with the community and posted online.

Improving Lab Culture Workshops

In order to improve the Media Lab’s culture and environment we partnered with the Violence, Prevention, and Response Office (VPR) and the Institute Discrimination and Harassment Response Office (IDHR) to hold workshops for the entire Media Lab community. All staff, faculty, and students were required to participate in these workshops which were held throughout the IAP and Spring 2020 terms.

The workshops were created specifically for the Media Lab community and address harassment, assault, discrimination, and community values. Everyone participated with their organizational or research group in order to facilitate individual group discussion and support of these topics. All attendees have also been encouraged to continue these discussions regularly outside of the workshop format.

In total we have held 17 workshops for operational and research groups and will hold four more in the near future to be sure everyone in our community has had the opportunity to participate.
Women’s Lunch Series

These monthly lunches serve as a space for our women graduate students and postdocs to connect and build community with one another. Each session features a dynamic speaker who addresses some aspect of professional or personal development.

- **Feed Your Feelings**
  Monica Orta, Director of Diversity & Student Support, MAS
- **Attacks Against Women Online and the Future of Democratic Discourse**
  Sarah Sobieraj, Director, Digital Sexism Project, Associate Professor of Sociology, Tufts University
- **Intersectional Feminism: What Is It and Why Do We Need It Urgently in Tech, Data, & Design?**
  Catherine D’Ignazio, Director, Data + Feminism Lab, Assistant Professor of Urban Science and Planning, MIT
- **Mechanics-Based Design for Computational Fabrication**
  Emily Whiting, Assistant Professor, Computer Science Director, Shape Lab
  Co-Director, Computer Vision & Graphics Group, Boston University
- **Raven Mothers (and Fathers), the New Superheroes?**
  Margarita Mora, Managing Director Partnerships, Nia Tero; Director’s Fellow, MIT Media Lab
- **Salary Negotiation Strategies**
  Tavi D. Sookhoo, Career Development Specialist, MIT Career Advising & Professional Development
Professional Development

Professional Development Series

Lily Zhang, Manager for Graduate Student Professional Development, organizes programming around professional and career development, including a monthly lunch series. These workshops focus on career-building skills for traditional and non-traditional trajectories.

• Academic Job Search 101
  Cindy Kao, Assistant Professor, Design + Environmental Analysis, Cornell University
  & Lily Zhang, Manager, Graduate Student Professional Development, MAS
• Research Leadership, Inclusive Inquiry, & Funding Paths
  Allison Druin, Associate Provost for Research, Pratt Institute
• Using Narrative to Explain Research
  Tony Eng, Senior Lecturer, MIT EECS
• Optimize Your Presentation
  Sue Acton, Assistant Director, MIT Career Services
• What is a PM?
  Emily Salvador, Associate Product Manager, Verizon Media
• Remote Interviewing
  Tavi Sookhoo, Career Development Specialist, MIT Career Advising & Professional Development
Alumni Roundtables

The alumni roundtables provided a chance for MAS students to meet with three MAS alumni working in either industry or academic research, in a casual setting over lunch. Alumni discussed their current research work, career paths, and gave students advice on their possible post-MAS careers.

Five MAS alumni participated in the roundtables:
- Mary Farbood – Associate Professor of Music Technology at New York University
- Mako Hill – Assistant Professor of Communication at the University of Washington
- Ehsan Hoque – Assistant Professor of Computer Science at the University of Rochester
- Ehi Nosakhare – Machine Learning Scientist at Microsoft
- Sajid Sadi – Vice President of Research at Samsung

Left to Right: Mary Farbood, Sajid Sadi, Ehsan Hoque, Mako Hill, Lily Zhang
(Not Pictured: Ehi Nosakhare)