

MEMORANDUM TO SEARCH COMMITTEE

To: Members of the Search Committee for the Vice President for Student Life
From: Cynthia Barnhart
Subject: Charge and Responsibilities
Date: September 2015

Thank you for your willingness to serve on the Search Committee for the Vice President for Student Life (VPSL)¹. The choice of VPSL is a critical decision for the Institute, and I very much appreciate the important role this committee will have in the decision process. In serving on the Committee, you are making an important contribution to the future of MIT and to the life of our students.

I am thankful to Professor Krishna Rajagopal for agreeing to chair this search. Given the importance of this position and of filling it in a timely fashion, we have retained Isaacson, Miller— a recognized search firm that we have successfully worked with before. Ponneh Varho, a principal at the firm has agreed to take on this role. Ponneh specializes in higher education searches, including public and private research universities.

Your charge is to identify a short list (about three) candidates for the position of Vice President for Student Life and to share with me your rationale for including each candidate on the short list. I encourage the Committee to seek broadly for candidates. We are especially interested in identifying minorities and women for this position, and you should make special efforts to identify candidates from these groups. I have asked Fred Melkey, Assistant Director, Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action, to serve as the affirmative action officer for this search.

The new Vice President for Student Life will report directly to me and will play a central role in shaping all aspects of the student experience. The attached position statement has what I see as goals for the person in this role as well as the opportunities and challenges for the new vice president.

At the conclusion of your search process, I ask that the Committee prepare a final written report to me that includes the following:

- An unranked short list (about 3) of the most outstanding candidates you are able to identify, reviewing their strengths and weaknesses within the context of the particular needs of the Division and the particular challenges and opportunities the new VPSL will face. You should include an assessment of the record of accomplishment in diversity issues and difficult student life issues for each of these final candidates. Each individual on this short list should be someone the Committee would welcome as the VPSL;
- The list of women and minority candidates who were considered by the Committee; and
- A brief summary of the process used to reach your findings and recommendations.

I hope to receive your report at the conclusion of your interviewing process, likely during IAP or at the start of the spring semester. The goal is to recruit an individual to take up the VPSL role before or by June 2016.

Please keep in mind that all of your work, especially including discussions of and with candidates, should be treated confidentially. You should make every effort to protect the privacy of individuals considered as candidates. Your written report to me will be a confidential document. When you have finalized your report and candidate list, I will be responsible for interviewing and recruiting the new VPSL. Near the conclusion of the process, I will meet with you to hear your views on the leading candidates.

¹ To align with current practices and to attract candidates with the deepest expertise and experience, the position of Dean for Student Life has been renamed the Vice President for Student Life.

I very much appreciate your willingness to serve on this Committee. During the course of your search, do not hesitate to call on me for help in clarifying any questions or concerns that arise.

Cynthia Barnhart
Chancellor

Members of the Committee

Krishna Rajagopal, Professor of Physics & MacVicar Faculty Fellow (Chair)
Kathleen Alexander, Graduate Resident Tutor; Graduate Student in Materials Science and Engineering
Steve Baker, Chair, Association of Independent Living Groups
Matthew Davis, President, Undergraduate Association; Senior in Aeronautics and Astronautics
John DiFava, Director, Campus Services and Chief of Police
Mark DiVincenzo, Vice President and General Counsel
Suzanne Flynn, Professor of Linguistics & Second Language Acquisition; Housemaster
Dennis Freeman, Dean of Undergraduate Education and Professor, EECS
Lorraine Goffe-Rush Vice President for Human Resources
Caitlin Heber, Executive Vice-President, Dormitory Council; Senior in Mathematics
Howard Heller, Associate Medical Director, MIT Medical
Michael McClellan, President, Graduate Student Council; Graduate Student in Earth, Atmospheric & Planetary Sciences
David Singer, Associate Professor, Political Science; Housemaster
Obasi Onuoha, Vice President, Interfraternity Council; Junior in Electrical Engineering & Computer Science
Christine Ortiz, Dean for Graduate Education, Professor DMSE
Julie Soriero, DAPER Department Head/Associate Professor
Ian Waitz, Dean, School of Engineering
JoAnne Yates, Sloan Distinguished Professor of Management
Jag Patel, Director, Special Projects (Staff to the Committee)

Brief Job Description

Vice President for Student Life

Massachusetts Institute of Technology Cambridge, MA

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) seeks an accomplished and visionary leader, adept at both strategy and operations, to serve as its new vice president for student life. MIT is intellectually challenging, strikingly practical, and vigorously meritocratic, attracting and having high regard for students who are independent and entrepreneurial. MIT is committed to an educational vision in which the students' experience of MIT as a community reaches the same high standard as its academics and research, while preserving an appropriate degree of student autonomy.

Working closely with the Chancellor, the vice president for student life will play a pivotal role in shaping this vision and overseeing efforts to implement it. The person in this role will work with MIT students and the Chancellor to:

1. Create supportive, responsible, and inclusive student communities
2. Design new and renovate existing residence halls that support a diverse student life experience
3. Develop a strategic plan for fraternities, sororities, and independent living groups
4. Champion student support systems, within the residence halls and across the Institute, to ensure the well-being of all MIT students
5. Build stronger bonds across class-year cohorts and campus communities
6. Foster trust between faculty and students and the administration
7. Partner with faculty around the integration of living and learning, in the classroom and in residential life
8. Provide students with broadening experiences related to communication, leadership, and life skills

The new vice president will be central to MIT's commitment to offer excellence in all aspects of the undergraduate and graduate student experience.

Reporting to the Chancellor, working in close collaboration with the Dean for Undergraduate Education and the Dean for Graduate Education, and in close consultation with students, the vice president for student life oversees the broad portfolio of services within the Division of Student Life. The Division has a combined annual operating budget of approximately \$119 million, and a total staff of approximately 400 staff members and 200 contract employees.

The successful vice president for student life candidate will be an inspiring leader and effective advocate and ally for MIT students, leading the Institute's efforts to provide the very best student experience. The position requires a leader with vision, a thorough understanding of best practices in student affairs, and the skills and experience necessary to manage a large budget and complex business enterprises. To succeed in this challenging role, the vice president will need to develop an appreciation for MIT traditions and the social dimensions of undergraduate and graduate student life; the resolve to foster new cultural norms while respecting the value of tradition; a recognition of the interplay between individual and collective values in the MIT community; a proven track record for creating a climate of openness and mutual respect; a strong commitment to community building; an ability to forge partnerships with housemasters and other faculty; deep organizational, planning, and public speaking skills; and an understanding of the interdependence of both academic and non-academic aspects of student education. The new vice president will be a valued and respected colleague of the president and his Council, and will provide counsel as the Institute makes strategic decisions that shape the undergraduate and graduate student experiences at MIT. The new vice president will also provide strong leadership to the Division of Student Life and serve as a respected and engaged mentor and model for staff and students.