MIT unveils new measure of R.E. value

Annual investment returns for U.S. holdings in commercial real estate—a sector favored by big pension funds—hit an unprecedented high of 34 percent in 2005, the MIT Center for Real Estate announced last week.

The finding is one of many from a first-of-kind index, just unveiled by the center, that tracks the value of commercial real estate, which over the past 30 years has joined stocks and bonds as a major investment vehicle.

Historically, it has been difficult to keep current on investment performance in this sector. While the performance of stocks and bonds can be tracked daily because they are publicly traded, holders of commercial real estate don’t reveal comparable information.

The MIT quarterly index, the first tool released by the Center for Real Estate’s New Commercial Real Estate Data Laboratory (CREDL), uses sophisticated statistical techniques and proprietary transaction data provided by the National Council of Real Estate Investment Fiduciaries (NCREIF) to create an accessible source for this information.

NCREIF is a nonprofit industry-governed organization consisting of firms that invest pension money; together the firms hold more than $200 billion in commercial real estate in nearly 5,000 properties nationwide.

“The index addresses the need for a ‘fundamental asset class research’ index of real estate investment performance and market conditions,” according to center director David Geltner. “It is designed to tap the capabilities of modern econometrics to distill information from transaction prices. The result is an index that provides the academic and industry investment research communities with information not currently available.”

Last year’s record 34 percent return made institutional private real estate investment a champion performer compared to other major asset classes in

New battery developed for hybrid cars

Researchers at MIT have developed a new type of lithium battery that could become a cheaper alternative to the batteries that now power hybrid electric cars.

Until now, lithium batteries have not had the rapid charging capability or safety level needed for use in cars. Hybrid cars currently run on nickel metal hydride batteries, which power an electric motor and can rapidly recharge while the car is decelerating or standing still.

But lithium nickel manganese oxide, described in a paper to be published in Science on Feb. 17, could revolutionize the hybrid car industry—a sector that has “enormous growth potential,” says Gerbrand Ceder, MIT professor of materials science and engineering, who led the project.

“The writing is on the wall. It’s clearly happening,” said Ceder, who added that a couple of companies are already interested in licensing the new lithium battery technology.

The new material is more stable (and thus safer) than lithium cobalt oxide batteries, which are used to power small electronic devices like cell phones, laptop computers, rechargeable personal digital assistants (PDAs) and such medical devices as pacemakers.

The safety risk posed by lithium cobalt oxide is manageable in small devices but makes the material not viable for the larger batteries needed to run hybrid cars, Ceder said. Cobalt is also fairly expensive, he said.

The MIT team’s new lithium battery contains manganese and nickel, which are cheaper than cobalt.

Scientists already knew that lithium nickel manganese oxide could store a lot of energy, but the material took too long to charge to be commercially useful. The MIT researchers set out to modify the

Brains, not brawn, takes alumnus to Olympics

Brains, not brawn, takes alumnus to Olympics

MIT alumnus Patrick Antaki (S.B. 1984), a self-employed engineer and entrepreneur living in Texas, is not your typical Olympian. He’s never even been much of an athlete, except for some recreational rugby. So how did he end up competing in the Winter Olympics in Torino?

He decided to make it happen.

Antaki saw televised coverage of the sled racing sport called skeleton four years ago during the Salt Lake City Olympics, when the sport reappeared after a 54-year hiatus. He’d never had visions of Olympic glory, but Antaki was looking for something different to do. Different types of knowledge and skill are needed to succeed in skeleton.

“Nothing was for sure, of course, but I did my homework, read everything I could about the sport, talked to a bunch of people, and actually tried

The glass wall of the Zesiger Center reflects the winter sky and the Stratton Student Center on a sunny February day.

Winter blues

The glass wall of the Zesiger Center reflects the winter sky and the Stratton Student Center on a sunny February day.

MIT Alumni Association

NEW MATERIAL

Patrick Antaki (S.B. 1984) competes in the skeleton event in the 2003 World Championships in Nagano, Japan.
Dean calls for wider adoption of OpenCourseWare

Jon Poul Potts
MIT OpenCourseWare

Speaking before a distinguished group of leaders from government, industry and academia, MIT Dean of Engineering Thomas L. Magnanti recently issued a clear call for a new way of thinking about American higher education.

“I would offer two recommendations. First, launch the OpenCourseWare for Secondary Education, a web site that will allow students and educators, in academia and on the job, to access educational materials from MIT, particularly in science, engineering and mathematics. That would help close the achievement gap in science and engineering education. That would help close the achievement gap in basic education,” Magnanti said. “Second, I would say that concerns us all,” Magnanti said. “And, create incentives to catalyze the development of OpenCourseWare projects at universities and colleges across the United States, enabling the open sharing of educational materials from a variety of institutions, disciplines and educational perspectives.”

Magnanti strongly endorsed the OpenCourseWare (OCW) model, developed at MIT, before a public meeting of the U.S. Secretary of Education’s Commission on the Future of Higher Education held in San Diego on Feb. 3. The commission – among them former MIT President Charles M. Vest – asked speakers to discuss innovative ways to improve higher education in the United States.

After presenting evidence of OCW’s impact on students and learners around the world, Magnanti stressed the benefit to the United States that deriving value from MIT’s unique experiment in open sharing: “OpenCourseWare users come from all over the world,” Magnanti stated in his testimony, “but right here in the United States, student self-learners and educators are finding MIT’s open sharing resource to be a valuable resource.”

He cited as an example Allen Kovacs, an adjunct member of the faculty at Wayne State University in Detroit, Mich., who wrote: “We have a problem with students entering our engineering program with deficiencies in math and science. Your offerings may be of great influence and assistance to these kids who don’t get enough preliminary training in K-12 curriculums.”

Exploring the stories of these OCW users, Magnanti said, “OpenCourseWare demonstrates that this initiative is attracting an increasingly global audience of self-learners, students and educators, including a core group of returning visitors each week.”

Magnanti also addressed potential cost savings through wider adoption of the OpenCourseWare model. “We know that high-quality educators in both online and web-based resources can be expensive to develop,” Magnanti stated. “While, institutions share them openly on the web through programs such as OpenCourseWare, there are savings to be realized across higher education.”

U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings formed the Secretary of Education’s Commission on the Future of Higher Education in fall 2005. The commission is charged with developing a comprehensive national strategy for postsecondary education that will meet the needs of America’s diverse population and also address the economic and workforce needs of the country’s future.

For fuller text, visit web.mit.edu/newsof fice/2006/magnanti.html.

V.P. Avakian to retire in May

Laura Avakian, vice president for human resources since 1995, will retire at the end of May, announced interim Executive Vice President Magnanti.

“Laura’s leadership has played an important role in positioning MIT as an employer of choice for talented and dedicated staff,” he said. “She has guided the development of new HR programs and has implemented procedures for our departments, labs, and centers. Our successful Rewards and Recognition programs, Leader to Leader development program, and expanded child-care services all illustrate Laura’s effectiveness in meeting critical challenges in a rapidly changing workplace, while the establishment of the Staff Diversity Council reflects her personal commitment to a diverse and inclusive MIT.”

In his letter to the MIT community, Greenblatt wrote in a letter to members of the MIT community.

Laura Avakian

In his letter, Greenblatt invited the MIT community to join him in thanking Avakian for her contributions to the Institute. Under her leadership, the Human Resources magazine and The Working Mother magazine designated us one of the nation’s 100 Best Places for Working Mothers, and twice, the latter one for40 years. AARP has named us one of the country’s 50 best employers for working caregivers. Well-known to HR professionals around the country, Laura is currently president of the 4,000-member Coalition of Human Resources Associations,” he said.

Avakian said she has enjoyed the unique challenges MIT presents and said she is particularly proud of the Rewards and Recognition program.

For fuller text, visit web.mit.edu/newsoffice/2006/avakian.html.

Pinsky shares projects poetry

Sarah H. Wright

Former U.S. poet laureate Robert Pinsky talks about his work at an MIT Communications Forum event on Thursday, Feb. 23, in Bartos Theatre.

Pinsky was poet laureate from 1997 to 2000. A Pulitzer Prize winner, he is the author of six books of poetry, including “The Figured Wheel” (1996), and “Jersey Rain” (2000). He is a professor at Boston University and poetry editor of the online journal Slate.

By turns amiable, passionate, funny and grave, Pinsky made it clear why he is not only the poet to hold the laureate’s chair for three terms. He engaged the audience in Bartos in his incomparable way, reciting from his 1999 project, “Americans’ Favorite Poems,” an anthology with DVD.

“I invited Americans to send me the title and author of their favorite poem. I had an advertising budget of $7, and I received tens of thousands of responses. The project revealed a true elite — people responding to a poem and communicating their response to others — as opposed to the false elite, the academic, who may even hear the poem,” he said.

To illustrate, he showed a video of a young man reciting Walt Whitman’s “Song of Myself” while leaning against a backhoe. “He’s an artist,” Pinsky said. “The ancient art of poetry has an ancient audience.”

David Thornburg, professor of literature and director of the Communications Forum, moderated the MIT event.

Minority staff development

In other news related to minority staff development, five MIT staff members have been chosen to participate in the 2006 career development programs offered by The Partnership for Minority Inc., an organization whose mission is to strengthen the Boston area’s minority attract, retain and develop talented professionals of color. Chancellor Philip L. Clay is a member of the organization’s board of directors.

Gabrielle McCaulley, administrative assistant in the Office of Minority Education, will participate in the early career program. Christopher Jones, assistant dean of the Graduate School Office; Bryan Nance, director of minority recruitment in the Admissions Office; Lorraine Ng, associate director in resource development; and Etaine Smith, human resources officer, will participate in the mid-career program.

MIT’s faculty and staff members have also helped to create Connex, a new Boston-area program. Launched earlier this academic year at the MIT School of Management, Conexion seeks to provide professional development oppor tunities, executive coaching and academic instruction to highly accomplished early to mid-career professionals.

For fuller text, visit web.mit.edu/newsoffice/2006/Avakian.html.

Nicolette Stark named YMCA Black Achiever

Nicolette Stark, director of the MIT Sat
turday Engineering, Enrichment and Dis
coverry (SEED) Academy, was select ed as the 2006 winner of the YMCA Black Achiever Award at MIT. She is the 46th member of the National YMCA Black Achiever program to receive this designation since the Institute began participating in the YMCA program in 1979.

Stark and more than 30 other award winners were honored during the 28th Annual In ni D. Johnson Awards Banquet at the Copley Place Marriott in Boston.

The Black Achievers program recognize s African-Americans in the Boston area and more than 100 other regions served by the YMCA. The honorees are nominated for their professional accomplishments and their commitment to community service for young people.

As part of the pro gram, recipients agree to serve at least 40 hours with the Black Achievers Community Service programs.

Stark came to MIT in 2002 to direct the activities of the MIT SEED Academy. SEED provides traditionally underserved high school students and a curriculum that strengthens their foundational math, science and communication skills; a college preparation program; and internships with high expectations; and access to positive role models.

“Nicolette is a smart, talented, personable and accomplished professional with a personality that warms everyone in contact with,” said Dean Shei la Kanode in her nominating letter. “She is especially effective in motivating young people.”

HOW TO REACH US

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PAGE 2 March 1, 2006
As coordinator for the MIT Hosts to International Students (HISP) program, Jeanna Moss now gets to see the other side of a program with which she had some personal experience.

Close to 15 years ago, Moss and her then-husband arrived at MIT. He was here as an electrical engineer, but the transition from Slovakia was difficult for them both. The two enrolled in HISP which smoothed their transition considerably, Moss said.

Moss was matched with Deborah Levey, a student in the Materials Science and Environmental Engineering Program, and her family. Levey invited Moss to her house, shared stories, customs and even cooking tips with Moss to help her acclimate to life in the United States.

"I felt very much at home from the first moment," Moss of Levey. "I can always count on her.

These are the relationships HISP was designed to cultivate when it started in 1960, Moss said. The program is open to any one of the nearly 400 international students who come to MIT each year, many of whom have never even visited the United States.

Some host families take multiple students at a time, integrating them into their homes, having them over for dinners, movies and conversation. “Many students feel homesick when they first arrive,” Moss said. “It really just makes their life a little easier.”

The program is entirely student-led and driven, SWE holds the charter certificate for the MIT chapter, said Levey, who has had many host students in the 20 years she has been involved with the program. “You say to students ‘we need more than one family’.”

Over the years, Levey has cultivated many traditions with her students. Each Halloween they carve pumpkins together and each February, they are invited to the Levey’s home.

The students benefit from the exposure to American culture and the homestay they create with their family. But the host families also benefit from the experience.

For their family, being part of HISP has been an opportunity to travel without leaving the United States.

For Janet Fischer, special assistant in the Office of the Provost, HISP offers an opportunity to form other social networking connections she might not otherwise make.

Over the years her family has hosted students from India, Romania, Malaysia, Argentina, Taiwan and more. “Their observations constantly remind us how many viewpoints we don’t necessarily encounter in the American media,” said Levey.

When her host students come to dinner, the conversations cover much ground, from the First Amendment to American cuisine. “One common question is, ‘Is the dorm food typical of American food?’”

For Janet Fischer, special assistant in the Office of the Provost, HISP offers an opportunity to form other social networking connections she might not otherwise make.

“When I joined MIT in 1980, I found myself ‘the only woman on a 12-story office building jobsite.’” (S.B. 1980) found herself “the only woman on a 12-story office building jobsite.”

Since the organization is almost entirely student run, and each chapter is a different flavor of student, it is now a collaboration effort between the senior class, the Graduate Student Council and SWE. The 2005 career fair at the Johnson Athletic Center attracted more than 3,500 alumni, graduate and undergraduates.

Back in the spring of 1980, the career fair was a brand new concept, said Fowler.

“This was a major undertaking, as nothing like it had been done at the school,” said Fowler. “It was a huge success and one of my fondest memories and proudest moments at MIT.”

Fowler remembers what it was like to be one of the few women at MIT, but does not remember it as a major stumbling block.

“Through my eyes most of the other students were men and I usually didn’t notice that I was different. It sounds simple, but I really did not feel discriminated against at MIT,” said Fowler.

Still, it was important for the few women students to network, both at MIT and with professionals in the field. And that’s still part of SWE’s mission. “We keep working on new events,” Garg said.

SWE’s events over the past year included information sessions with various companies, meals with faculty members and community outreach events as well as many other social networking activities.

“For me, the program has brought nice friendships and a growing awareness of multicultural issues,” said Fischer. “SWE has grown considerably in its 25 years on campus. Each fall, SWE co-sponsors the annual career fair, which is now one of the largest campus events of the year. First sponsored by SWE alone, this year is a collaboration effort between the senior class, the Graduate Student Council and SWE. The 2005 career fair at the Johnson Athletic Center attracted more than 3,500 alumni, graduate and undergraduates.”

“SWE’s mission is to ‘stimulate women to achieve full potential in careers as engineers and leaders, expand the image of the engineer profession as a positive force in improving the quality of life, and promote the advancement of women in a male-dominated industry,’” Fowler said.

According to the National SWE web site, SWE’s mission is to “stimulate women to achieve full potential in careers as engineers and leaders, expand the image of the engineer profession as a positive force in improving the quality of life, and promote the advancement of women in a male-dominated industry.”

During her time as the first female to serve as an SAE advisor in the 1980s, still remembers how different the personal experiences of men and women once were.

“By the end of the decade (the 1980s), women really felt they were equal to their male counterparts. SWE may have had a lot to do with that.”

Since the organization is almost entirely student-run and driven, participants have always been participatory.

Much has changed since SWE’s early years. The number of female students has grown from 13 percent in 1970 to nearly 25 percent today, according to the Women’s Guide Around MIT, published in 2005 by the Pan-Hellenic Association to help freshwomen women. Despite these changes, MIT SWE continues to maintain a strong presence, says current president, junior Nupur Garg. A welcoming organization that encourages diversity, SWE is open to anyone — male or female — who has an interest in engineering, regardless of major.

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When individual neurons fire independently, their electrical recordings sound like static, all noise and no signal. When a group of neurons fire in synchrony, a tone emerges that resembles the one that precedes radio Emergency Broadcasting System announcements. Like that tone, the neurons’ synchronous firing allows us to detect important events.

A specialist in the form and design of cities, Beinart is a graduate student in Ceder’s lab. Ying Shirley Meng, a postdoctoral associate in materials science and engineering at MIT, and Julien Breger and Clare P. Grey of the State University of New York at Stony Brook are also authors on the paper.

The research was funded by the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Energy.
Picower reports neuron growth in adult brain

Deborah Halber
News Office

Despite the prevailing belief that adult brain cells don't grow, a researcher at the Picower Institute for Learning and Memory reports in the Dec. 27 issue of Public Library of Science (PLoS) Biology that when exposed to high-oxygen conditions, neurons in the adult brain can generate new dendrites.

Researchers led by an MIT graduate student have discovered a bacterium that is a magnetic misfit of sorts.

Magnetotactic bacteria contain chains of magnetic iron minerals that allow them to orient in the Earth's magnetic field, like compass needles. These bacteria have long been observed to respond to high-oxygen levels in the environment by swimming toward geomagnetic north in the Northern Hemisphere and geomagnetic south in the Southern Hemisphere.

But now researchers from MIT, the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) and Iowa State University have reported in the Jan. 20 issue of Science, believe there must be other explanations for why some magnetotactic bacteria swim in particular directions.

The team dubbed the bacterium the barbell for its appearance. In a study reported last January, in the issue of Science, they describe how they used genetic sequencing and other laboratory techniques to find magnetotactic bacteria in salt pond in Cape Cod.

Magnetotactic bacteria are found throughout the world in chemically stratified marine and freshwater environments, said Sheri Simmons, a graduate student in the MIT Department of Biology and the WHOI Joint Program in Oceanography and Applied Ocean Science and Engineering.

The existence of magnetotactic bacteria

Continued from Page 1

2005. The S&P 500 return was 4.9 percent in 2005 (its highest during the past 20 years) and total return was 21.8 percent. The NAREIT Equity REIT Index came in at 12.5 percent in 2005, the highest in the past 20 years at 37.1 percent in 2003. Returns for the Bofaon Small Stocks Index were 29.5 percent in 2005 for the four major commercial property types -retail, office, industrial and apartments were all high, ranging from 29 percent to 40 percent.

The index is based on transaction price of properties sold each quarter from the quarter previous to the quarter reported. The index has been calculated since the period 1984-2005, and will be updated quarterly by the CRELI report of the CRELI Index.

This work was supported by the WHOI Coastal Ocean Institute, Ocean Life Institute and Ocean Ventures Fund, as well as the National Science Foundation and a National Defense Science and Engineering Graduate Fellowship.

John M. Wozenzcraft, professor of electrical engineering and computer science, is the 2006 recipient of the Alexander Graham Bell Medal of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). The medal is one of the most prestigious awards of the IEEE and recognizes Wozenzcraft for his pioneering work in the development of sequential digital and signal space approach to digital communication.

Wozenzcraft invented sequential decoding in 1957, providing the first practical technique for the reception of convolutional encoded messages. The work resulted in the use of error correction in digital communications.

Three MIT undergraduates have won scholarships from the National Italian American Foundation (NIAF). Lusk, a sophomore majoring in brain and cognitive sciences, Steven Russo, a sophomore majoring in mathematics, and John Thomas, a junior majoring in physics, received the National Italian American Foundation Eleanor and Anthony DeFranco Scholarship.

Kayan Sahin Distinguished Professor of Music Evan Ziporyn is one of 20 composers chosen by Carnegie Hall to have their music performed during Carnegie Hall's 2006-2007 season. As part of Carnegie Hall's mission to nurture talent, two emerging composers will join Ziporyn and 18 other selected composers to write new works for string and percussion instruments indigenous to the ancient trade route known as the Silk Road. The works will be performed in concerts by Yo-Yo Ma and members of the Silk Road Ensemble. In addition, Carnegie Hall has announced that its 2006-2007 season will include a new composition by Institute Professor John Harbison.

Decavat Shah, assistant professor of electrical engineering and computer science and engineering systems, recently received an Early Career Development Award from the National Science Foundation's Division of Information and Network Systems. The award, which grants $80,000 per year for five years, will be used to fund Shah's research in implementable network algorithms, randomization, belief propagation and heavy traffic.

Daniel D. Frey, the Robert N. Noyce Career Development Professor and assistant professor of mechanical engineering, recently received the 2005-2006 Junior Bose Award for Excel- lence in Teaching. The award, established by the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science alumns, was established to recognize exceptional faculty members who are being proposed for assistant professorship. The award includes tenure. MIT's Engineering Council selects the recipient as part of its promotion deliberations.

The award includes a prize of $3,000.

AWARDS & HONORS

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Week of events highlights diversity

MIT’s Campus Committee on Race Relations (CCRR) Week is intended to educate, entertain and promote further awareness and appreciation for its cultural difference within the MIT community. Most of the events are free and open to the public.

This year, the committee is focusing on fewer events in hopes of drawing more attention. More information is available in the Office of the President and one of the CCRR Week organizers.

Events will include an “Islamic Equal- ity” dinner, which will feature a discussion with Harvard African-American Studies professor Michelle Mendes-Ferreira, on March 7. The dinner will begin at 6 p.m. in Seaver Hall, 35 East Cambridge Street. More information on this and other events can be found at http://chapmandesigns.html.

NNYS NEWS YOU CAN USE

Nominations are now being accepted for awards to be given out at the 2006 Institute Awards Convocation in May. Awards will honor students, faculty and staff who have made special contributions to the life of the MIT community.

Deadline for nominations is March 15. For more information, e-mail awards@mit.edu, call Fran Miles at x57456 or visit the Awards Committee in W26-540.

Entrepreneurship award

The MIT Sloan School of Management is now accepting nominations for the 2006 Entrepreneurship Mentorship. The deadline for nominations is March 15.

The award, created to honor the memory of MIT graduate Abraham “Sunny” E Monsonon 48, recognizes entrepreneurial men and women who have shown a deep commitment to creating business opportunities and to help new businesses of business pioneers.

Last year’s inaugural award went to Aron Kleinler, co-founder and former chair of the MIT Enterprise Forum and founder of the University City Club for assisting early-stage firms.

Professor Edward B. Roberts, the David Sarnoff Professor of Management at MIT Sloan and the founder and chair of the MIT Entrepreneurship Center, heads the committee that administers the award. Nominations for the 2006 award should be sent to Roberts at 66 Memorial Drive, Cambridge, MA 02142, or to eroberts@mit.edu.

Meeting slated on construction

A “town hall meeting” will be held Thursday, March 2, to address the next step in the construction of the new PDI (Power Distribution Infrastructure) building—crane mobilization and its impact on East Campus and the surrounding area. The meeting will be held from 3 to 4 p.m. in Room 11-240.

Blood drive

A blood drive will be held Wednesday, March 1, and Thursday, March 2, in La Sala de Puerto Rico at the student center. Blood drive hours are noon to 6 p.m. For more information or to make an appointment, visit web.mit.edu/blood-drive/.

MIT to host young inventors

MIT’s Public Service Center will host the first United States-Based Young Inventors Inventing the Future Conference on March 17-18.

The annual conference of Young Inventors International, headquartered in Canada, brings together students, entrepreneurs and innovators together with established entrepreneurs to work through a case study.

For more information or to register for the event, visit www.younginventorsinternational.com/conferences/inventingthefuture/.

OBITUARIES

Elaine Cook

Elaine Cook of Lexington, Mass., a former administrative assistant at MIT, died Jan. 24. She was 72.

Cook worked at MIT for more than 35 years. Her husband, John Cook, also worked at MIT. He was a photographer.

In addition to her husband, Cook is survived by two daughters, Sarah Steinberg of Framingham, Mass., and Jamie Patterson of New York, N.Y., both in California; one granddaughter; and many nieces and nephews.

For donations information, visit web.mit.edu/newsoffice/topic/obituary.html.

Nathaniel W. McCaughey

Nathaniel W. “Tim” McCaughey, a retired security officer at Lincoln laboratories, died Feb. 15. He was 86.

McCaughey worked at Lincoln Laboratory for 15 years before retiring in 1985. He was survived by his wife, Ruth McCaughey of Silver Spring, Md.; two daughters, Sharon Nyhus of Silver Spring and Kathlene Wright of Whitefish, Mont.; and four grandchildren.

He was predeceased by his son, Timothy McCaughey.

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

Position for student with work-study eligibility, open to all seniors and to a few junior students. The student will work as part of a team that will work with a class of students as they prepare for the English MCAS exam. The position offers students a chance to work in an attractive area in which to settle down.

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MISCELLANEOUS

Looking to share nanny in Cambridge/Brookline. Up to 40 hours per week. More stimulating for kids. My nanny’s never had snow or sick day. And she’s fun. Call Audrey at 617-864-3266.

The faculty officially approved Biologi cal Engineering as Course 20 at its meet ing on February 15.

After the vote, the faculty heard Provost L. Rafael Reif discuss two new faculty committees that will focus on recruiting and retaining minority faculty members.

The Minority Faculty Recruitment Committee, co-chaired by Paula T. Ham mond, associate professor of chemical engineering, and Akintunde Akinwande, professor of electrical engineering and computer science, and the Commit tee on the Retention of Minority Faculty, chaired by Wesley L. Harris, department head and professor of aeronautics and astronautics, will submit a report to the provost by May 1 and begin work on a plan for the next academic year by Oct. 1.

“We want to attract the best faculty, learn what makes them want to join, attrac ting minority faculty, and once they are here, do a good job keeping them,” Reif said. MIT currently has around 25 minority faculty members.

The committee devoted to retaining minority faculty will interview minority faculty members to understand their heads about faculty development; assess best practices inside and outside MIT for retaining minority faculty; gather recommendations about recruiting minority faculty; conduct a review of rec recommendations on mentoring junior fac culty; develop a plan to mentor every year to the provost and Academic Council on the progress of minority faculty; and recommend changes that would help keep minority faculty at MIT.

Targeting undergraduates and gradu ate students who might pursue an academ ic career is one of the ways to keep an eye on and nurture up-and-coming talent, said Hammond.

“My bottom line is we are here to serve you to make MIT better,” Harris told the faculty, noting that the “real test” will be whether faculty across the board feel strongly enough about increasing the numbers to make a concerted effort to hire and keep more minority faculty. The recruitment committee will catalog successful approaches to faculty recruit ment at MIT and elsewhere; advise the administration and Faculty Diversity Council; talk to minority candidates about their concerns about an academic career; find out how best candidates who turned down jobs at MIT did so; and consider the Martin Luther King Jr. and other visiting professors programs as recruiting opportunities.

Chancellor Philip L. Clay pointed out that a discussion of life in the Boston metro politan area needs to be included in efforts to hire minority faculty to MIT, and that potential faculty will need to see that this is an attractive area in which to settle down.

The award, created to honor the memory of MIT graduate Professor Edward B. Roberts, the David Sarnoff Professor of Mission, is most well known for protesting U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War.

In the film, Latina students who came to MIT from Chile, Cuban, Domini-

can, Mexican and Puerto Rican families share their challenges and successes. The screening starts at 4 p.m. in the Meza
nia Lounge at the student center. True Colors, a Cambridge-based dance troupe of LGBT students aged 14 to 22, will perform at 6 p.m. Thursday in Simmons Auditorium. The troupe’s educa
tion director, Brenda Cotto-Escaler, is a former MIT professor of theater arts and music.

All events are open to all members of the MIT community. For more informa
tion, visit web.mit.edu/ccrr/ccrrweek.

Faculty meeting focuses on recruitment

Deborah Halber

News Office correspondent

Biological engineering

approved as new course

The faculty officially approved Biologi
cal Engineering as Course 20 at its meet
ing on February 15.
New directions for digital design on display

Digital_minimal,” a new exhibition in the School of Architecture and Planning’s Wolk Gallery, explores a num-
ber of alternative directions for our digital future, from
the use of mobile devices that describe urban space in
real-time to new tangible user interfaces that redef-
ine the design process.

Italian architect and planner Carlo Ratti and his design
team, Carlo Ratti Associati, based in Turin, Italy, and Cam-
bridge, collaborated on the exhibit with colleagues in the
MIT Senseable City Laboratory.

The exhibition is a presentation of some of the projects
under development by the Senseable City Lab and Ratti,
who currently holds joint appointments in the Depart-
ment of Urban Studies and Planning and the Media Labo-
ratory.

The collaborative projects include iSPOTS, which was
developed as a way of studying wireless usage on the MIT
campus. Completed in October 2005, iSPOTS now allows
researchers to track when and where members of the
MIT community take most advantage of the school’s 9.4
million-square-foot wireless network.

Most of the exhibition is interactive, featuring video
and live computer links.

The one stand-alone object in the gallery is part of the
SaniScape project, developed with the Tangible Media
Group at the Media Lab.

A digital sandbox of sorts, SanScape projects images
onto a surface of tiny glass beads through which visit-
ors may run their hands, thus changing the “landscape.”

The project aids design and understanding of landscapes
through computational simulations that analyze such natu-
ral elements as slope and drainage.

As a measure of its success, SandScape has taken on a
double life as an analytic tool and an artwork.

Although this project was started to support land-
scape design, interactive art museums such as the Arts
Electronics Center (in Linz, Austria) commissioned us to
exhibit SanScape as a ‘media art piece,’” said Hiroshi
Ishii, associate professor of media arts and sciences and
founder/director of the Tangible Media Group.

The Wolk Gallery is located in Room 7-338. The exhibit
is open weekdays from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and runs through
March 29.

Karger moves in the best circles

Engineering prof to perform in folk dance festival

When David Karger isn’t teaching algo-
rithms in the Computer Science and Artifi-
cial Intelligence Laboratory (CSAIL), he’s
got dancing on his mind.

Karger, a professor of electrical engi-
neering who specializes in information
retrieval, and three of his four children will
be among the dozens of performers tak-
ing part in the Israel Folkdance Festival, a
gathering of folk dancers from across the
country, on Sunday, March 5, in Kresge
Auditorium at 3 p.m.

Israel folk dancing has a mysterious
appeal for Karger, he said. Is it the music?
The movement? “Maybe it’s just fidgeting
expressed to an extreme,” he joked.

Karger started folk dancing at MIT when
he was still a junior in high school in Brookline, adding modern dance to his
repertoire while in college.

Dancers in the Israel Folkdance Fes-
tival create specially choreographed rou-
tines, some drawn heavily from the
standard folk dancing, but modifying the
formations and steps, said Karger.

Others create entirely new steps to
traditional music, he says, and some
groups use entirely new music and move-
ment.

Karger associates dances with par-
ticular memories, he said. One dance is
special because it was the one he shared
with his wife at their wedding, while
another is special because he broke his
foot doing it.

Mainly, dancing is a “nurturing kind of social
experience in which you interact with a
large group of people without an extensive
spoken dialogue,” he said.

According to Miriam Rosenblum, direc-
tor of MIT Hillel, several people from the
MIT community are involved in the festi-
val, including some who helped found the
event 30 years ago.

George Kirby (S.B. 1977) originated
the festival in 1977; remains active,
serving on the coordinating committee
and coordinating the sound system this
year; Ira Vishner (S.B. 1974) danced in
the first festival and is now on the coor-
dinating committee; and Joshua Mushar
(S.B. 1987), who danced in the festival
while a student, remains an active partici-
pant. This year, his children are also per-
forming.

Admission to the Israel Folkdance Fes-
tival is $12, $11 for seniors and children
under 12.

The performance, sponsored by MIT
Hillel and the Israel Folkdance Fes-
tival of Boston Inc., a nonprofit, tax-exempt
organization, will be preceded by an
Israeli market, with booths selling Israeli
merchandise and crafts, from noon to 3 p.m.

For more information, call x3-2082.

Students fold under pressure

The winning entries from the fourth annual juried Student Origami
Competition are on view at the Wiesner Student Art Gallery on the
second floor of the Stratton Student Center, through March 15.

Freshman Jason Ku submit-
ted an origami model of one of the
Nazgul, or ringwraiths, from 'The
Lord of the Rings’ trilogy (right
photo). Ku’s entry won a prize for
Best Original Model.

Above is a model of MIT’s
mascot, the beaver, submitted by
Brian Chan, a graduate student in
mechanical engineering.

N.E. Philharmonic to premiere Peter Child choral work

The orchestra presents “Americana” on
Saturday, March 4, in Kresge Auditorium
at 8 p.m. Admission is free with an MIT
ID.

“The Sifting” will be performed with
the Simmons College Chorale, directed
by Sharon Brown, and the Boston Con-
vener’s Women’s Chorus, directed by
Miguel Felipe.

Child selected the three Langfellow
poems with the Philharmonic’s theme in
mind, he said. The trio express a “compel-
ing Romantic philosophy,” he said.

“They condemn worldly ambition,
express a sense of ideal reality that under-
lies appearance and everyday illusion,
and extol a sense of divinity contained in
human beings. It is this transcendentalist
quality, combined with their lyricism, that
attracted me,” Child writes in his program
notes.

The concert will also include Elliott
Carter’s “Variations for Orchestra” and
Gunther Schuller’s “Violin Concerto No. 2”
(Danielle Maddon, violin), and Charles
Ives’ “Three Places in New England.”

For more information, visit www.nephil-
harmonic.org.

Lynn Heinemann
Office of the Arts

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### MIT EVENT HIGHLIGHTS MARCH 1-5

#### WEDNESDAY March 1
- **Iraq Talk by Fred Kaplan of Slate magazine.** Noon, Room E38-815, 253-7529.
- **Jewish Cartoon and Sitcom Series**
- **Israeli Dancing Every Wednesday**
  - 6-7:10 p.m. Room W20-407, 253-FOLK.
- **Lottery for Spring Beginning Glass Blowing Seminar**
  - All members of the MIT community are eligible to participate in lottery for Glass Lab class. To enter the lottery for the class you must be present. No proxies allowed.
  - 7 p.m. Room 6-120, 253-5203.

#### THURSDAY March 2
- **Networking with Faculty: How to Approach a Professor**
  - Topic of approaching faculty members on a variety of topics including references and job opportunities. Noon. Mezzanine Lounge, Student Center.
- **MIT Chapel 18th-century Violin Recital**
- **Technology Executive Lecture @ MIT Lecture Hall**
- **"Proof" LSC spring 2006 film series**
  - $3. 10 p.m. Room 26-100, 253-3791.

#### FRIDAY March 3
- **"Products That Are Processes: Consumer Activism and Chemical Processes for Man-portable Power Generation"**
  - Talk by Paul I. Barton, professor of chemical engineering, 3:4 p.m. Room 26-4965.
- **"The Importance of Nanoscale and Multidisciplinary Research"**
  - Chemical Engineering Seminar Spring 2006 Seminar Series. Talk by Jefferson T. Tester, 3-4 p.m. Room 6-110, 253-6500.

#### SATURDAY March 4
- **Freshman Sophomore Career Week Career Exploration and Networking Fair**
  - Students are encouraged to come prepared with a resume to help facilitate discussion with employers. 1:30-3:30 p.m. Walker Memorial.
- **MIT Faculty Concert**
  - The New England Philharmonic performs music by MIT composer Peter Child. 8 p.m. Kresge Auditorium, 253-2826.

#### SUNDAY March 5
- **Israel Folk Dance Festival**
  - A celebration of Israeli folk dance and song with more than 250 performers, $12. 3 p.m. Kresge Auditorium. 253-2982.

### MIT EVENT HIGHLIGHTS MARCH 6-12

#### MONDAY March 6
- **Special Science Seminar**
  - Professor Jim Burge of the University of Arizona discusses mirror technology for the Giant Magellan Telescope. 3-4 p.m. Room 17-252.

#### TUESDAY March 7
- **"Sound, Light and Video Works"**
  - Talk by Ann Lisegaard, the 2006 Ida Ely Rubin Artist in Residence. 7 p.m. Room 3-133.

#### WEDNESDAY March 8
- **"Integrated Water Resources Management in the Middle of Chaos and Credibility: Lessons from Hurricane Katrina."**

#### THURSDAY March 9
- **"Products That Are Processes: Consumer Activism and Chemical Processes for Man-portable Power Generation"**
  - Talk by Paul I. Barton, professor of chemical engineering, 3:4 p.m. Room 26-4965.

#### FRIDAY March 10
- **Women's Studies Open House**
  - Learn more about women's studies, check out syllabi for women's studies classes, meet and talk to faculty, staff and students, enjoy refreshments, etc. 1:30–3:30 p.m. Room 14-316, 253-8846.

#### SATURDAY March 11
- **"First of May"**
  - 9 p.m. Room 6-110, 253-6500.
- **"Wish Upon a Star"**
  - 11 p.m. Room 6-110, 253-6500.

#### SUNDAY March 12
- **"Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire"**
  - 8 p.m. Room 26-100, 253-3791.

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**Jazz-amatazz**

The MIT Festival Jazz Ensemble, with Frederick Harris, Jr. conducting, will perform a program called ‘Fabulous from the Underground,’ on Friday, March 3, at 8 p.m. in Kresge Auditorium. The evening will feature music by Charles Mingus, Duke Ellington, John Coltrane, Woody Herman and J.J. Johnson. Above, Jonathan Krones, Matthew Abrahamson and Ethan Fenn perform with the MIT Festival Jazz Ensemble.

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**EDITOR’S CHOICE**

**WRITER’S SERIES: DOROTHY ALLISON**

**Mar. 1**
- Talk and reading by the acclaimed author of “Bastard Out of Carolina” and “Cavedweller.”

**MAGVICAR DAY**

**Mar. 3**
- Student posters showcase work in laboratories and beyond. MacVicar Faculty Fellows announced at Corporation Lunch.

**STATEC STRATEGIC SEMINAR**

**Mar. 3**
- 3:40 p.m. Statia Center Student Street

**LAITEK VS. HAMENTSHEIN**

**Mar. 6**
- Three professors on the latke side and three professors on the hamentshein side argue for their favorite Jewish delicacy.

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**Go Online!** For complete events listings, see the MIT Events Calendar at: [http://events.mit.edu](http://events.mit.edu)

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**MIT TECH TALK**

**Burge of the University of Arizona**

**Mar. 3**
- Discusses mirror technology for the Giant Magellan Telescope.

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**EDITOR’S CHOICE**