

# Individuals

## Community

### **Robert Dolan**

*Global Education & Career Development*

Bob has been instrumental in creating a community around postdoctoral scholars' career needs and goes above and beyond to make sure postdocs are receiving the support needed during their time at MIT. During a post-doc's first career appointment, Bob tells them "You are not alone in this journey." As a visual to support this statement, he has a world map in his office and encourages postdocs to use a pin on the map to indicate one's home. That map is full of over 1100+ postdoctoral scholars that Bob has worked with and tangibly demonstrates how he actively creates a supportive community for current and former postdocs.

Bob provides career counseling at a high level to postdoc from every academic and research discipline at MIT. In one day, Bob might see postdocs from any of the five schools ranging in disciplines from Cancer Research to Business Leadership. Yulin Pan, a postdoc in Mechanical Engineering, commented on the effectiveness of meetings with Bob, "Bob is extremely helpful in my preparation of faculty interviews this year... provided invaluable information from previous students. Thanks to his help, I got a few onsite opportunities, for which I am now waiting for the final decisions. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Bob for his crucial help on my career." Breann Brown, postdoc in Biology, commented, "I always found Bob to be engaged and thoughtful about his advice. Not only did Bob help me pertaining to my stated needs, but he also gave me additional resources that I would have never thought to ask for. Meeting with Bob gave me the information and confidence I needed going into an extremely stressful and difficult process."

Yulin's, and Breann are just two of the many who benefited from Bob's service and positive influence. Bob creates avenues for postdocs and their advisors to have better communication. Recently, Bob facilitated a workshop on how to optimize the Postdoc and Advisor relationship. The program created an open dialogue on the best ways to communicate and discussed some of the differences that may arise between the advisor and advisee. Bob also shares his knowledge and expertise with those outside of MIT by presenting at the National Postdoc Association and other conferences and writing articles in scientific journals providing career advice to thousands of postdocs around the world.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Taylor Hubbard**

*Air Force ROTC*

Taylor Hubbard works as a technical instructor in MIT Air Force ROTC and in this capacity has contributed to fostering an inclusive community here at MIT. In addition to his instructor roles he serves as a liaison to the Admissions Office. He served as an instructor and mentor for the

first-year seminar course entitled Foundational Leadership for Young Professionals contributing immensely to a number of our students' first year experience.

Taylor is passionate about creating an inclusive community by connecting; prospective MIT student hopefuls, current MIT students, and MIT alumni. The relationships he creates are critical to recruiting future MIT scholars and helping them feel a part of the MIT community throughout what can be a stressful application process. Taylor helps applicants cross this bridge and expand their academic and career horizons before they even enroll. This, in turn, reflects directly onto the quality, motivation, and excitement of student applicants that extend into their matriculation. These students receive early exposure to the inclusive MIT community and boundless opportunities available to them. Through Taylor's guidance, students are better able to make a confident decision in choosing MIT and are more than ready to experience the many challenges they will face with a support system in place.

Taylor's devotion to community is witnessed firsthand through his desire to mentor his first-year seminar students and become an active part of their support system at MIT. In preparation for his seminar course, Taylor worked tirelessly to connect current MIT students to the alumni community in Massachusetts and the United States as whole through his work as an active duty member of the United States Air Force and as an Air Force ROTC instructor.

He completed a tremendous amount of work and outreach to connect MIT ROTC cadets to alumni at Andrews Air Force Base in Washington DC. Through his efforts the Air Force ROTC cadets had the unique opportunity to fly on a UH-1N helicopter above the national capital region and meet MIT and Air Force ROTC alumnus, Brigadier General Teichert '94, and other high ranking & distinguished personnel. It is these opportunities that provide students with real life exposure to the Air Force and MIT community in a way not commonly experienced by regular students. This activity is just one of many that MIT ROTC cadets are afforded a glimpse into how they might take on their own leadership duties and become true professionals. These initiatives would not be possible without the relationships Taylor has created through his hard work and dedication to our students' development.

### **Sher Vogel**

#### *D-Lab*

Sher Vogel leads D-Lab's efforts to support participatory innovation trainings around the world, which requires complex coordination and relationship building with diverse teams of stakeholders across multiple time zones, supporting teams from Mexico to Morocco, Colombia to Thailand. While much of this work is outwardly facing, Sher's positivity, creativity, enthusiasm and deep commitment to the common good is a major force within D-Lab. She is a community builder, connector, coach, facilitator, cheerleader, leader and friend.

The core philosophy of all of this work is to build relationships among people that are excited to use participatory innovation to address poverty related challenges in their communities, and through her passion, skill and hard work, Sher has excelled at doing just that. Sher's role as a

community-builder, however, is not limited to off-campus activities: she is integral to building a culture of mutual support, joy and excellence within the D-Lab community. Even with a million things on her plate, Sher always takes the time to appreciate, cheer on, and listen to her colleagues. She brightens each and every day at D-Lab and inspires everyone around her to not only be a better colleague, but to also be a better person.

Sher leads by example when it comes to building a culture of appreciation and of valuing the contributions of everyone with whom she is working; as a result, she contributes constantly to building a strong sense of morale among her teams as well as within our staff at D-Lab. Sher is an enthusiastic, well-prepared, vigorous ambassador of D-lab's values and philosophy and has shown consistent leadership and initiative in finding new ways to foster teamwork and collaboration across time zones, across cultures, among highly diverse groups of people, and within our own organization.

Sher is always experimenting with new ideas to build community at D-Lab and with our network around the world. This spring, she started the #MakerThursdays initiative, gathering a handful of students and staff around D-Lab to build something together in the workshop on Thursday mornings. Posting a few photos on Facebook, she sparks a global conversation, inspiring friends from Colombia to Ghana to post lively projects of their own.

If gratitude is the key to happiness, then Sher can take credit for creating the environment of joy, respect, and love felt at D-Lab. Her ability to give back and create community will have long lasting benefits for D-Lab and MIT as a whole.

## **Diversity & Inclusion**

### **Amanda Pickett**

#### *Global Education & Career Development*

Amanda has been at MIT for less than a year and she has already made her impact stretch far beyond her primary work on the Prehealth Advising team and the larger Global Education and Career Development (GECD) Office. She reminds others in the office to think about diversity and inclusion in a very intentional way. Akunna Rosser, Assistant Director for Prehealth Advising, puts it best when he says, "Amanda is always reminding staff of the many forms of diversity and for us to be inclusive." Several members of the GECD community have shared how impressed they have been with some of Amanda's contributions to improving diversity and inclusion on campus, including how we can improve areas on our website, flyers, and brochures to be more inclusive in language and tone.

Amanda has successfully collaborated with MIT's LGBTQ Center to foster awareness on best practices for supporting transgender students. She has also thought strategically about relationships outside of the Institute, where she has transformed the traditional model of panels at MIT with discussions underscoring professions that provide support to victims of sexual trauma and harassment as well as understanding how power and privilege are woven

into fields of medicine. Tyrene Jones, Assistant Director for Career Counseling shared, “Amanda is constantly thinking of new ideas to encourage others to be thought partners in this critical work. She is understanding and sensitive in her approach and lends helpful tools for staff to be empowered in providing service that demonstrates OVC’s values.”

Amanda has successfully collaborated with staff in the Rainbow Lounge, MIT Medical, MHH, and local organizations like Boston Area Rape Crisis Center (BARCC) to provide high-quality programming to the MIT community. Amanda’s passion is impossible to ignore and challenges/inspires her colleagues to acknowledge differences and promote a more inclusive environment. Her colleagues are consistently impressed with her commitment to helping our prehealth students become more compassionate and effective physicians. Amanda’s workshops have helped inform students on their future personal and professional roles in addressing issues of inequity and inclusion so they can be stronger advocates for their patients, as well as for themselves as diverse professionals in the medical establishment.

Amanda has upheld OVC values of diversity and inclusion by offering creative programming that emphasizes intersectionality and how power structures impact our work and career decisions. Amanda continues to break down barriers in her quest to dismantle systematic oppression and has successfully built bridges that spark initiatives to make the MIT community more inclusive and intentional in celebrating diversity.

## **Everyday Leadership**

**Eric Sacca**

*Student Financial Services*

Eric is the Associate Director of Operations in SFS and oversees the daily processes associated with student account payments, managing incoming financial aid documents and creating financial aid files, providing walk-in services, and overseeing student account receivables collections and third party sponsored billing. Eric’s teammates commented that since joining the SFS, Eric has taken the time to truly understand every facet of the work they perform. This enables him to easily and ably step in when necessary to fill a void or to simply lend a hand.

By demonstrating his "all in" attitude, he has made his team stronger, more organized and efficient, while minimizing manual tasks that can be automated to improve efficiencies and streamline processes. The teams continuously focuses their efforts on what they feel is for the 'benefit of our students', and this mantra stems from Eric's own commitment to his team, his department, and the Institute. In fiscal year 2017: the SFS Operations team processed: \$49.8 million in checks, and \$5.02 million Wire Payments. The bulk of processing is completed in a short window in August/September and January/February so this is truly an extraordinary accomplishment for the team.

Eric has a keen desire and willingness to know how processes work and he makes time in his busy schedule to join additional meetings to review processes that affect the department as a whole. Eric increases his job knowledge and understanding of the overall flow of the SFS

department as a whole and the big picture. It is a well known fact on his team that Eric has an affinity for creating highly effective process documentation that has proven to be invaluable as the department has undergone a number of system enhancements, all of which require team members to work differently. Eric is always looking for additional ways to collaborate that allow us to be more efficient.

## **Innovation & Creativity**

**Trinidad Carney**

*Admissions*

Campus Preview Weekend (CPW) is one of MIT's largest events; over four days, we host 1100 admitted students, welcome 1300 parents, and facilitate almost 700 events. Trinidad has a lot of responsibility for this program; coordinating event logistics, the hosting process, and the design and implementation of new technologies. Her work with new technology platforms at CPW has fundamentally transformed how Admissions communicates with our campus partners and admitted students; in the process, saving us thousands of dollars and countless hours of work, enabling new functionalities, and improving our ability to attract the brightest minds to MIT.

Trinidad has made a huge impact in the area of innovation with her keen eye for identifying areas ripe for cost savings, improvements in the experience of admitted students and partners, or increases in our efficiency. She takes the initiative to thoroughly research potential solutions, choosing the best option on a variety of dimensions. Upon her recommendation we moved to "Pathable", a virtual event system that has dramatically improved the experience for our admitted students – it allows us to provide disability and access maps, searchability of key words, personalization of individual schedules, direct messaging to attendees about event changes and cancellations, and many other features. The system proved so popular with admitted students that we plan to expand it to the parents of admitted students and activate new functionalities like direct messaging and profile creation. Most impressively, Trinidad discovered a way to add events to individual student's schedules, allowing us to suggest specific events that highlight a variety of aspects of the MIT experience. We can now better connect the needs and interests of admitted students with resources and partners here on campus.

This year in seeking to continue to improve how we communicate about CPW to the MIT community, Trinidad spearheaded the development of a brand-new community website: [community.mitcpw.org](http://community.mitcpw.org). This involved streamlining and updating content, creating an easy to navigate format, coordinating a CPW rebrand with our communications team, and liaising with IS&T. Throughout the project, we encountered numerous technical hurdles. She adapted, developed new competencies, and ultimately produced an elegant and streamlined resource for the MIT community.

Trinidad goes out of her way to support those around her and her boundless energy and enthusiasm, coupled with her genuine desire to work with others allows for a high level of buy-in for our projects.

## **Serving the Client**

**Jessica Landry**

*Office of Graduate Education*

Over the past year, Jessica she has proven to be a true advocate in her role as Policy and Programs Coordinator in OGE. She has passionately and admirably transformed this role into more than anyone could have expected, especially in such a short period of time. When she was asked to connect with Graduate Women at MIT regarding their child care interests; she went above and beyond by helping them to revise their proposals, introducing them to broader networks of support, working with the Work Life Center and doing everything she possibly could to be helpful to them.

When asked to review the proposals for funding for a few student groups, she met with the students reviewed their budgets, made suggestions for revisions on how to improve efficiencies and continuously followed up to extend assistance as needed. Jessica has continued to broaden her own portfolio by volunteering to be the point person for graduate families needing financial support. She sits with the grad student, and sometimes their spouse or partner, and reviews the family budget and needs, and as she has done with student groups, she helps them think through how to better allocate their resources. She has also volunteered for the student food insecurities working group and has trained for and is now leading Notice and Respond workshops with staff and students.

With reference to the policy side of her role, Jessica has been caringly and diligently guiding the new Chair of the Committee on Graduate programs through his first year and has become his main go-to-person. She suggests agenda items and researches every aspect of a challenging policy issue to inform the next steps. This is only her second year in this role, so if there is an institutional process that is unfamiliar to her, and in order for her to be helpful to the Chair or any office/organization head, she takes the time to research the topic in detail (history, purpose, how it's been used, current status), and then she not only provides information, she brings critical thinking to bear and offers findings and recommendations that make sense.

Jessica anticipates the needs of diverse constituencies to whom she has some responsibility, she is proactive in making an effort to provide excellent service and seeks to improve the process and content in each area and to each person or group. She is always willing to step in to help staff, including more senior office staff with decision making, takes on student support related matters and problem solves with the students or facilitates a referral. She never leaves a student, administrator or faculty member hanging and ensures that the appropriate follow-up occurs. She has become the person you can always depend on in the office and always going far beyond what we ever expected someone to be able to do in this role.

# Teams

## **Communication & Collaboration**

**Gen Filiault, Kathleen MacArthur and Rudy Mitchell**

*Registrar's Office and Teaching & Learning Lab Study Group on Undergrad Majors*

When the Faculty Committee on the Undergraduate Program charged a Study Group on Undergraduate Majors Selection, they launched an innovative and comprehensive study that includes many of the usual elements (gathering and analyzing existing data, talking with a small sample of students and departments, and making recommendations), but added an additional series of five surveys of the Class of 2021 and two interviews with a cohort of 34 first-year students. The significance of the coordinating function cannot be overstated when the size and scale of the operation is so large. None of this would have been possible without the cross-office collaboration of Associate Dean Kathleen MacArthur (Registrar's Office), Assistant Dean Genevieve Filiault (Registrar's Office), and Associate Director for Assessment and Evaluation, Rudy Mitchell (Teaching & Learning Lab).

As the project lead, Gen has been indispensable in directing the many elements and participants in this study. Gen also serves as Executive Officer to the CUP and its Study Group. In this role she must communicate effectively to be sure that the discussion points from one meeting are relayed clearly and accurately to the other. Both Institutional Research (IR) and Rudy have worked closely with her to develop questions for surveys and interviews, accordingly and respectively. When there is a request for data from the Faculty, Gen interprets the need and provides clear insight through intricate communication with the requester. She then is able to impart direction to the data provider by translating what is sometimes a "general request" to one that is specific enough to allow the information to be gathered effectively. Rudy in turn, has spent countless hours interviewing students providing consistency and comparability. Their partnership led to a unity of action with the result being a real richness of the data collected.

Kathleen provided overall encouragement and wisdom in this collaborative effort. The aggressive academic year timeline with such high Institutional expectations for the project required Kathleen to work closely with Gen and Rudy to do a large amount of background work and research before each Study Group meeting. Kathleen communicated the importance of integrating several parts into an orderly whole to achieve the purpose of understanding.

The superb collaboration and communication of Kathleen, Gen and Rudy on the Study Group on Undergraduate Majors Selection promises something unique--a new window into the student experience as they make one of their first of many important decisions at MIT. As a result of the collaboration of Kathleen, Gen and Rudy, we will not only have rich data, but also evidence of the power of cross-office collaboration.