Dear MIT Alumni and Friends,

At MIT we define ourselves not only by what is or is not, but also by what might be. Boldness and a general impatience with the status quo are woven into our DNA. But the audacity that drives us to take on society’s great challenges is possible only because of the generosity of alumni and friends like you. I am extremely grateful for your gift and for the faith you have shown in MIT’s capacity to change the world.

Unrestricted gifts are critical to supporting nearly every facet of MIT’s mission. For instance, in May MIT launched a major new initiative aimed at identifying solutions to complex environmental problems. To promote transformative, cross-disciplinary research on issues of environmental significance requires a substantial commitment of resources, including space, grant funding and personnel. With your support, we are able to foster an atmosphere in which our faculty and students are free to pursue the kinds of innovative research projects that often lead to groundbreaking advances.

The single most effective way that we sustain MIT’s creative brilliance is by attracting exceptional young faculty every year. They arrive on campus with an unbridled enthusiasm for discovery and invention. But we must provide the research and teaching resources – including laboratories, staff support and equipment – to realize their potential. Unrestricted funds make this possible.

Finally, MIT remains one of a very small group of US institutions committed to need-blind admissions. The Institute firmly believes that if you have the talent to make the most of an MIT education, a lack of financial means should not stand in your way. Each year – thanks to the support of our alumni and friends – we welcome to our campus an extraordinary class of students who can focus on curing cancer or designing the city of the future rather than on how to pay for the education they need to reach their dreams.

In short, your generosity – and your confidence in MIT – inspires our faculty, researchers and students to remain bold, and it enables the Institute’s global leadership in education and research. Please accept my deepest gratitude for supporting our mission.

Sincerely,

L. Rafael Reif
MIT is widely regarded as a pioneer of progress in a world that is changing at an increasingly rapid rate. As federal funding continues to decline, MIT relies on flexible support from private sources to keep our community ahead of the curve. Unrestricted gifts provide students and faculty alike with the resources they need to explore, test ideas, and discover new ways to bring their ideas to life. With your support, MIT stands poised to tackle the world’s greatest challenges for the betterment of humankind.

YOUR GIFT HELPED HARVEST INNOVATION.

Impact of Unrestricted Dollars:

Student Financial Support
scholarships, fellowships, internships

Research and Academics
professorships, residencies, labs, faculty start-up costs and seed funding

Student Life
athletics, student development and support, recreation, religious life, residential life

Facilities and Services
modernization for state-of-the-art facilities, public safety, transportation, medical services
This past May, MIT announced a new plan to invest in environmental research and encourage campus and nationwide conversations about climate change. Under the direction of Susan Solomon, the Ellen Swallow Richards Professor of Atmospheric Chemistry and Climate Science, the MIT Environmental Solutions Initiative will promote interdisciplinary collaboration across the campus, bringing together the brightest minds in engineering, urban planning, policy, and physical and social sciences to address scalable ecological solutions to a wide range of issues.

The cooperative atmosphere that permeates the MIT community puts the Institute in a unique position to approach these looming issues from multiple angles. “The initiative will take advantage of the traditionally open atmosphere at MIT, which fosters interactions among people working in very different fields of study,” said Professor Solomon. “That spirit of collaboration, and the possibilities it unleashes, are very powerful.” Powerful enough, perhaps, to affect legislation and ensure a safe and sustainable future. But the comprehensive research required to put those changes into action would not be possible without the support of unrestricted funds—and the collective acumen of MIT.
SMALL SCALE SCIENCE WITH LARGE-SCALE IMPACT

The Laboratory for Multiscale Regenerative Technologies at MIT can be found in the 500 micrometer overlap between electrical engineering, computer science, and health sciences and technologies. That’s where Professor Sangeeta Bhatia and her team of graduate students spend their time, exploring new ways to apply computer nanotechnologies to the realm of human health.

“Mother Nature is agnostic to the discipline,” Bhatia explains. “Human disease doesn’t know if you came from chemistry or physics or engineering. We’ll bring in whatever we need to solve the problem.” These problems range from cellular regeneration, to cost-effective cancer tests, to nano-guided chemotherapy that targets tumors on a microscale to mitigate unwanted side effects. Unrestricted funds provide resources such as laboratories, support staff, and equipment, to ensure that researchers like Bhatia can dedicate themselves to groundbreaking work instead of concerns about funding. With top-of-the-line, cutting-edge technology readily accessible, imagination is the only limitation.

THE SCIENCE OF HUMAN NETWORKING

The director of the MIT Human Dynamics Lab, Toshiba Professor Alex “Sandy” Pentland, is a pioneer in wearable technology, Big Data, and the intersection of computer science and sociology. His vision of the present looks like the future, and his vision of the future—well, you wouldn’t be the first to call it science fiction. But with the support of unrestricted funds, researchers like Pentland can mine the future and turn it into reality.

The work done by Pentland and his students has laid the groundwork for revolutionary technologies from smartphones to FitBit to GoogleGlass. While much of his work is driven by data, Pentland is less concerned with marketplace trends than with the way that technology affects people on a personal level, and society as a whole. “Wearable technology is inherently social, where computer technology isn’t,” he explains. “The wearables of the near future could improve collective intelligence, the way society functions on the broadest level.”
Meeting the financial need of every student who has earned admission to MIT is and always will be a top priority. Nearly one-quarter (23%) of all scholarship aid at MIT this year came from unrestricted funds. The availability of these funds allowed MIT to continue to operate with need-blind admissions and need-based financial aid.

Scholarship aid is particularly important in keeping MIT a place of opportunity for students from all educational backgrounds. Over two-thirds of the Class of 2018 came to MIT from public high schools and nearly one-fifth are first generation college students. Unrestricted gifts help ensure that no deserving student is prevented from enrolling due to financial constraints.

“I would like to express my sincere gratitude...

MIT has given me the knowledge and skills to further my future beyond anything that I or my parents could have ever imagined.”

Thuan D. Doan | Class of 2015

“Thanks for giving me the scholarship without applying any restrictions. You have helped create a fair world that gives opportunities on the basis of people’s skills, not their money. Thank you.”

Omar K. Obeya | Class of 2018

“It’s encouraging to know that 45 years after graduation there are ways to be involved and continue to contribute to this community.”

Kirstyn Hein | Class of 2018