

ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018



Exploring ethics at the center
of science and technology

Dear Friends,

"I'll start by challenging the title," Tom Kochan said as he began his remarks for the J. Herbert Hollomon Memorial Symposium. The program, held on May 10, was titled *Humans Need Not Apply? Reflections on Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Work*. In his scholarship and his work as a labor mediator, Dr. Kochan has seen workers, unions, and employers throw up their hands as if there is nothing they can do in response to the increasing automation of tasks. "Humans need not apply?" he asked. "No! Humans need to take charge" and ensure that machines are developed and introduced in a way that respects the wisdom and experience of workers.

During the symposium, Liz Reynolds noted that our subtitle, "the future of work," implies a question: Will human labor as we know it disappear? The new MIT Initiative which Dr. Reynolds co-leads is intentionally called "the Work of the Future," to signal that, however the economy changes, people will continue to have a meaningful role in it. Our third panelist, Andrew McAfee, co-author of *Machine, Platform, Crowd: Harnessing Our Digital Future*, similarly encouraged us to look for the ways that our future work can be safe, flexible, creative, and fulfilling.

At the end of the evening's lively conversation, our moderator Lucas Stanczyk, a professor of Philosophy at Harvard University, invited one last question from the audience. A woman stood up and said, "The most important word in the title of tonight's program is *humans*." She asked the panel, "If we started from our humanity—what we believe philosophically and what we need personally—what kind of work would we create?"

For me, these exchanges about the symposium's title represent the heart of what we do at Radius. In an institution that runs on problem sets with correct answers, we invite the kind of open inquiry where people don't just answer the question, but challenge the premise behind it. We frame conversations about complex issues in ways that encourage people not to get overwhelmed, but to get engaged. We look for hope and new opportunities in every situation, and we foster reflection on the fundamental beliefs that shape our humanity.

This has been another great year for Radius, with an abundance of engaging courses, workshops, and speakers. Everything that we offer depends on you, our community of partners, supporters and friends. Thank you for believing in the future of our work.

With gratitude,

The Rev. Thea Keith-Lucas



Massachusetts Institute of Technology

RADIUS PROGRAMS 2017-2018

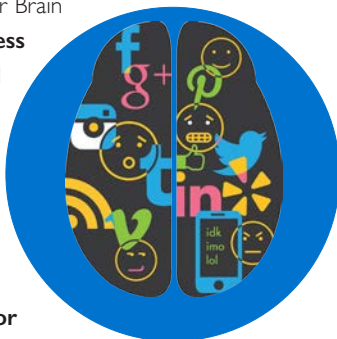
For more information about all of our programs, check out the program archive and blog at our website: radius.mit.edu

ARE WE THE ENEMY? NOVEMBER 30, 2017

We invited Emile Bruneau (Annenberg School for Communications, University of Pennsylvania) to discuss the **neuroscience of conflict and empathy** in conjunction with the exhibition *The Enemy* at the MIT Museum. In this virtual reality installation by Karim Ben Khalifa, viewers experience face-to-face conversations with six combatants from opposing sides of conflicts in El Salvador, Israel/Palestine, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Together with respondent Karen Ross (UMass Boston), Dr. Bruneau explained the benefits and limits of empathy, and offered alternate strategies for changing our mental responses to people we perceive as enemies.

HACK YOUR MIND

This year we added two excellent presentations to our ongoing series on the science and technology of mindfulness. On November 17, Susan Whitfield Gabrieli (McGovern Institute for Brain Research) explained how **mindfulness meditation changes the structure and function of the brain**, supports healthy development for children, and can suggest treatments of brain disorders such as schizophrenia. Zan Barry of MIT Community Wellness led a fun and substantive program on February 22 on the use of **mindfulness techniques for better quality sleep**.



REDUCING THE THREAT OF NUCLEAR WAR APRIL 7, 2018

Along with Mass Peace Action, the American Friends Service Committee and many other co-sponsors (please see our website for a complete list), we hosted the second annual comprehensive day-long program on **nuclear proliferation**. This year's theme, *Investing in Minds, Not Missiles* highlighted the importance of campus activism, bringing student leaders from 15 campuses in New York, New Jersey, and New England, along with experienced scholars and activists, to share strategies for education, divestment, and challenges to the military focus of our federal budget. A special thanks to Jonathan King, Steering Committee member, for his tireless work organizing this important event.



Student leaders gather with panelists at the day-long conference on nuclear proliferation

HOLLOMON SYMPOSIUM ON THE FUTURE OF WORK MAY 10, 2018

We are entrusted with the **J. Herbert Hollomon Memorial Symposium**, a series of forums on the pressing ethical issues of our times that honors Herb Hollomon's distinguished career in science policy and his love of a good debate. This May we offered **Humans Need Not Apply? Reflections on Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Work**, a substantive and lively program with Thomas Kochan (MIT Sloan), Andrew McAfee (MIT Initiative on the Digital Economy), Elisabeth B. Reynolds (MIT Industrial Performance Center) and moderator Lucas Stanczyk (Harvard University). Professor George Heaton (Worcester Polytechnic University), who worked with Herb Hollomon at the MIT Center for Policy Alternatives, offered a remembrance of his mentor and a hope that our discussion would be "haunted"—or at least inspired—by Dr. Hollomon's spirit. We are grateful to the Hollomon Planning Committee: Sally Haslanger, Jay Keyser, Josué Lopez, Ken Oye, Dan Roos, John Tirman and, with very special thanks, Jake Jacoby.



Hollomon Symposium speakers (left to right) Elisabeth B. Reynolds, Andrew McAfee and Thomas Kochan

YOUTH SUMMIT ON CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY MAY 19, 2018

Our hosting of the 12th Annual Youth Summit with Boston Latin School YouthCAN was, once again, a joy. This long-standing partnership is a cornerstone of our spring semester and an exciting way to connect with the youth of Boston, Cambridge and the metropolitan area. Speakers included Elena Letona, Executive Director of Neighbor to Neighbor Massachusetts. Her delivery and message were perfectly honed to the young audience and her stories were full of hope and inspiration. To kick off the afternoon session, Doannie Tran, Assistant Superintendent of Boston Public Schools, gave spirited and lively encouragement to the young activists. Very special thanks to Cate Arnold, teacher advisor, and her incredible cohort of students for organizing this amazing event!



Students enjoy the 12th Annual Youth Summit on Climate and Sustainability

ETHICS SEMINAR

PARTNERSHIPS

BEING, THINKING, DOING (OR NOT!):
ETHICS AND YOUR LIFE

“In my classes, I don’t get to think about what the impact of my work is. My UROP is chemistry but I’m wondering what is happening with this research? I have no idea. This class has made me think a lot.”

“This class really opened my perspective and I did extra reading, actively going out and learning about things I don’t know about.”

“Make sure you’re having uncomfortable conversations.”

“I’ve been made so aware of my privilege.”



*Ethics Seminar students with instructors
Prof. Sally Haslanger and Patricia-Maria Weinmann*

These are a few brief excerpts of students’ final presentations for our **Spring ethics seminar**. For the last class, students share their experiences and their perspectives on the issues we’ve discussed. It is always deeply moving to hear them speak about how they’ve been changed over the semester: Our guest speakers and discussion leaders covered community values and individual choice, the nature of forgiveness, and ethical responses to immigration, racism and climate change. We had a record number of students take the class: twenty-nine. We hope this turnout represents an increasing awareness of the importance of ethical reflection among our MIT undergraduates. Again, our deep thanks to Professor Sally Haslanger (MIT Philosophy) for sponsoring and teaching the class with Trish Weinmann.

In the Fall semester, we co-hosted **MIT Philosophy’s** undergraduate seminar, **Language, Information and Power**, which explored foundational issues of censorship and dissent; trigger warnings; harm, hate and intentionality; post-truth politics; lying; propaganda; and communication in non-cooperative contexts. Special thanks to Professor Justin Khoo for leading the class!

This Fall, with **MIT Women’s and Gender Studies**, we hosted **Women Organizing**, a series featuring five films that show how women can hold men with power to account if they use their leverage well.

On October 17, we co-sponsored the **Bustani Middle East Seminar’s** October 17 presentation by Peter Krause, author of **Rebel Power: Why Nationalist Movements Compete, and Win**.

This year, we joined the **MIT Communications Forum** to co-sponsor a number of fascinating programs: On November 30, **Has Silicon Valley Lost Its Humanity?** focused on the rise of a class of Silicon Valley tech titans who wield immense economic and political influence with little regard for the marginalized; **Neurodiversity at MIT and Design for Everyone** was a moving and insightful discussion on March 1 about designers’ responsibility to create products that serve every member of our neurodiverse communities; and finally, **Bunk and the History of Hoaxes**, on April 26, featured a lively conversation with poet and media critic Kevin Young about the deep roots of fake news.

Together with the **PKG Public Service Center**, we hosted three programs: **Backdate Your Resume**, a conversation on September 21 about rediscovering childhood interests as a tool to find meaning and purpose in work; **Power and Influence: Reflective Practice**, a workshop on November 7 for students engaged in development work; and **Climate Conversations**, a vibrant networking event at the MIT Museum on February 7 to connect MIT students, local environmental organizations, government agencies, and MIT faculty and staff who are committed to tackling climate change.

On January 26, we co-sponsored a substantive panel discussion on the **Impacts of the Federal Budget for Massachusetts Residents and Institutions** with **Mass Peace Action** and the **MIT Faculty Newsletter**. Topics included increasing inequality for families and students, impacts on housing and healthcare, and the future of education, research, transit, energy and the environment. Jonathan King was instrumental in organizing this important event and we are very grateful to him.

On March 5, the organization **Build Up** offered an engaging presentation of their recent experiments using social media bots and trained volunteers to move social media users away from polarizing activities and towards constructive engagement with each other. We plan to co-sponsor additional events during the fall semester as a lead up to the November elections.

On April 17, we joined a wide coalition of MIT departments, centers, and organizations to offer the second annual **MIT Day of Action**, a well-attended program with over 60 workshops designed to educate and inspire action on the pressing issues of our times.



STEERING COMMITTEE & STAFF

STEERING COMMITTEE 2016-2017

Samuel M. Allen, *Materials Science and Engineering*

Nazli Choucri, *Political Science*

Leo deCastro, '18

Sally Haslanger, *Linguistics and Philosophy*

Alison Hynd, *Public Service Center*

Henry Jacoby, *Sloan School of Management*

Jay Keyser, Emeritus, *Linguistics and Philosophy*

Jonathan King, *Biology*

William R. Leitch, '56

Ruth Perry, *Literature*

Robert Plotkin, '93

Balakrishnan Rajagopal, *Urban Studies and Planning*

Bishwapriya Sanyal, *Urban Studies and Planning*

STAFF

The Rev. Thea Keith-Lucas, *Coordinator*

Patricia-Maria Weinmann, *Associate Coordinator*

Christina English, *Communications Coordinator*

RADIUS SUPPORTERS

Endowment Leadership

William R. Leitch

Albert O. Wilson

Visionaries

William R. Leitch

John Suhrbier

Campbell Searle

Leadership Circle

Samuel Allen

Jake Jacoby

Jeremy Johnson

Jonathan King

Jay Keyser

Tracy and Mark Lively

Jeanne Paradise

Robert Plotkin

Sustainers

Aron Bernstein

Peter Cebon

Nazli Chourci

Diane Davis

Jane Gould

Sandra Morgan

Ruth Perry

Bishwapriya Sanyal

Marvin Sirbu

Merritt Roe Smith

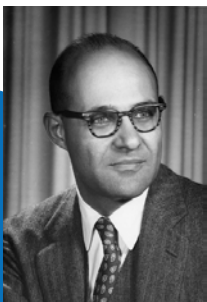
Brigitte and Stephen Steadman

Peter Tarpgaard

Leon Trilling

Kristen and Christopher Wendell

Special thanks to Bill Leitch, Cam Searle and the rest of our loyal donors and friends for their generous support.



Leon Trilling, a decades-long friend and supporter of The Technology and Culture Forum (Radius), died on April 20. Although retired as an active faculty member, Professor Trilling continued to teach at MIT and was dedicated to improving educational opportunities for young people, especially young people of color. We are honored to have had Professor Trilling in our circle and mourn his passing.