

Technology and Culture Forum at MIT



Annual Report 2009–10



TAC: The Year in Review

One of my mentors, an outdoor educator named K.V. King, used to remind us aspiring educators to “teach only when necessary. Otherwise, be quiet and get out of the way.” KV was open source before open source was a concept. His pedagogy of creating a framework within which young adults could be challenged to grow into their capacities and coaching them from the sidelines has inspired me for over twenty years. In this, my ninth and last year as Coordinator of Technology and Culture Forum, I think we finally did it! I can say with one hundred percent conviction that this was our best year yet at TAC. And with equal conviction I point to the MIT students and young adult interns who made that possible. From organizing programs (see stories in boxes below), to facilitating small group conversation, to speaking on panels, young adults pulled us into the future of responsible action as citizens, scientists, and engineers.

From beginning to end, our programs this year were timely, lively, and well-attended. Starting with our “What Matters to Me and Why” gathering during Grad Student Orientation, our speakers shared not only analysis and information, but personal narrative and motivation, helping those listening think more deeply about their own convictions and how they did or did not live them. We replicated the “What Matters to Me” model in a series of residence hall study breaks, organized and led by students. The International Development Fair in October brought hundreds of students into contact with the ever-growing array of opportunities to do development-related work while at MIT. Associate Coordinator Patricia Weinmann again worked for months with a committee of students and staff to maximize the potential for this gathering to transform lives. In its second year, our undergraduate



The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, (L) gathers with Dr. David Urion, Harvard Medical School, Amy McCreath and Dr. George Daly, Children's Hospital, Boston following a panel discussion on the Social Responsibility of the Scientist. This important event was part of TAC's 45th anniversary celebration.

seminar on ethics allowed sixteen MIT students to meet academics and professionals who are modeling principled leadership and deep engagement with critical ethical issues. We were thrilled that several students from last year's seminar were so inspired by their experience that they took on leadership roles in TAC this year.

As we perennially do, this year TAC prodded people to confront the cost of business as usual and challenge existing paradigms in the name of peace, justice and human dignity. In October, Peter Singer carefully but forcefully challenged an overflow crowd, including dozens of robotics and computer science students, to understand how little control they

continues on next page



UNDERGRADUATE ETHICS SEMINAR

In Spring 2010, TAC once again offered a six-credit undergraduate seminar on ethics, co-sponsored with the MIT Philosophy Department. The seminar, *Being, Thinking, Doing (Or Not): Ethics and Your Life*, provided students with skills for clarifying their personal and vocational principles and solving ethical problems. This popular seminar met weekly over dinner with guests, representing various disciplines, who shared their expertise. Our guests this year included Professor Bish Sanyal from the Department of Urban Studies and Planning, TAC Steering Committee member and grad student Yoda Patta, Professor Richard Parker from Harvard's Kennedy School, Professor Caspar Hare from MIT, and Stona Fitch, author and founder of the Concord Free Press. Students also attended at least three pertinent events, wrote reflection papers and made a presentation at the end of the semester. Professor Sally Haslanger, TAC Steering Committee member and Patricia Weinmann, Associate Coordinator of TAC, served as advisors.

have over the technology they create and recognize the cultural and political complexity of burgeoning robotic warfare. At the “Building an Ethical Economy” conference, Sir Partha Dasgupta highlighted our need to redefine “wealth” to include natural capital, and Brandeis economist Catherine Mann urged us to exercise our right and ability to speak up when economic policy does damage.

It was our joy this year to mark the forty-fifth anniversary of TAC. We celebrated all the ground covered so far, remembered the community of people who have participated in this work, and affirmed that there is much more yet to do. I am deeply thankful to the many people who wrote letters thanking the Diocese of Massachusetts for their support for this program through the years, to Clayton Hainsworth and Craig Milanesi who produced a top-notch video chronicling the history of TAC, and to an amazing panel of speakers who discussed “The Social Responsibility of the Scientist” at our December 5th celebration.

The next TAC annual report you read will be written by someone else—my successor, The Rev. Janie Donohue, whom I ask you to greet and support generously. What an extraordinary blessing it has been to work with this program for nine years, especially in the good company of Patricia Weinmann,



Longtime supporter of TAC, Campbell Searle, attended Amy's farewell celebration on May 13th at the MIT Faculty Club. Joining Cam and Amy is TAC Associate Coordinator, Patricia-Maria Weinmann.

Christina English, and a wise Steering Committee, who all move our mission forward with conviction and grace. I look forward to reconnecting with you in new ways in the years ahead.

Amy McCreath

END VIOLENCE

At a TAC steering committee meeting in the winter of 2009, graduate student Yoda Patta wondered aloud about the increasing pandemic of violence against women around the world. Shouldn't MIT do something about this? What might scientists and engineers in particular have to contribute to preventing such violence or alleviating the damage done? From this conversation, the “end violence” campaign was born. This year, Yoda, along with Graduate Community Fellows Sharmeen Browerek and Pei-Lin Chua, spearheaded a remarkable series of educational events to raise awareness surrounding this problem. In the spring, they began exploring ways to move from awareness to action—efforts that will continue in the next academic year. Many thanks to the Office of the Dean of Graduate Students for supporting this important work.

The Forum inspires a bracing examination of the ethical questions that surround scientific and technological innovation, and the Institute is the better for it.

—Susan Hockfield, President of MIT



TAC Programs 2009–10



On November 10, Peter Singer captivated a SRO crowd in 6-120 as he discussed the prospects and perils of robotic warfare. Missy Cummings, MIT Security Studies Program and CSAIL, acted as moderator and respondent.

September 10, 2009

WHAT MATTERS TO ME AND WHY: A PERSONAL LOOK AT ETHICAL ISSUES

TAC Steering Committee members:

Christopher Csikszentmihalyi,
MIT Media Lab

Sally Haslanger, *Philosophy*

Megan Palmer, *G, Biology*

Yoda Patta, *G, Materials Science and Engineering*

October 2, 2009

8TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FAIR

A showcase of the 50+ groups and programs at MIT offering ways for students to do development-related work, sponsored by the MIT International Development Network (web.mit.edu/idn), of which TAC is a founding partner.

October 8, 2009

RACE AND POLITICS IN THE MEDIA

Juan Williams, *National Public Radio* and *Fox News*

David Thorburn, *Director, MIT Communications Forum*

Philip Thompson, *Associate Professor, Urban Studies and Planning, MIT*

Co-sponsored with the MIT Communications Forum and the Center for Future Civic Media

October 21, 2010

THE BOY WHO HARNESSSED THE WIND: ELEGANT DESIGN OUT OF JUNK AND SPARE PARTS

William Kamkwamba, *2007 and 2009 TED Global Fellow*

Introduced by Amy Smith, *founder of D-Lab, MIT*

Co-sponsored with the Edgerton Center

October 27, 2009

FILM SCREENING: MAKING WAVES, SAVING LIVES

Golzar Selbe, *filmmaker*

October 28, 2009

FILM SCREENING: A WALK TO BEAUTIFUL

October 29, 2010

MALALAI JOYA, AFGHAN PARLIAMENT

These programs were part of a year-long series on Violence Against Women co-sponsored with the MIT Program in Women's and Gender Studies and MIT Amnesty International

November 5, 2010

FILM SCREENING: EXAMINED LIFE—PHILOSOPHY IN THE STREET

Co-sponsored with the MIT Department of Linguistics and Philosophy

November 10, 2009

WIRED FOR WAR: THE PROSPECTS AND PERILS OF ROBOTIC WARFARE

Peter Singer, *Senior Fellow and Director of the 21st Century Defense Initiative, Brookings Institution*

Moderator and Respondent:
Missy Cummings, *Associate Professor, CSAIL*

Co-sponsored with the MIT Security Studies Program and CSAIL



Lisa Tacorante, founder of Global Cycle Solutions and a 100K finalist, speaks with visitors at the always-popular ID Night @ the MIT Museum on April 9. The event was held in conjunction with Harvard's International Development Conference and drew over 400 guests.

November 30, 2009

FILM SCREENING: SKID ROW—WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE HOMELESS IN AMERICA?

Co-sponsored with the Lutheran Episcopal Ministry at MIT

December 3, 2009

THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SCIENTIST

TAC 45th Anniversary

Dr. George Daley, *Director of Stem Cell Transplantation Program, Children's Hospital Boston*

The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, *Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church*

Dr. David Urien, *Associate Professor of Neurology and Director of the Division of Service Learning, Harvard Medical School*

continues on next page



On April 2, TAC hosted Booker Prize winner and global activist Arundhati Roy (R) in conversation with Professor Emeritus Noam Chomsky on the future of democracy. Amy Goodman (C) moderated the discussion. This ticketed-only event posted over 10,000 video views via TAC's website within days after the program had taken place. The event was co-sponsored with the MIT Women and Gender Studies program.

April 2, 2010

**DEMOCRACY'S ENDGAME?
A CONVERSATION WITH ARUNDHATI
ROY AND NOAM CHOMSKY**

Moderator: Amy Goodman, Host of
"Democracy Now!"

Arundhati Roy, author of *The God of Small Things* and *Field Notes on Democracy*

Noam Chomsky, *Professor Emeritus, MIT Department of Linguistics and Philosophy*

Co-Sponsored with the MIT Program in Women's and Gender Studies

April 9, 2010

**INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
NIGHT @ MIT**

A fascinating expo and reception hosted by the International Development Network at MIT.

Held in conjunction with the 2010 Harvard International Development Conference

April 27, 2010

**PRIVACY RECONSIDERED
IN THE AGE OF FACEBOOK**

Betsy Masiello, *Policy Analyst, Google Public Policy Team*

Flourish Klink, G, *MIT Comparative Media Studies*

Jesse Sowell, G, *MIT Engineering Systems Division*

Hal Abelson, *Professor of Computer Science and Engineering, MIT*

Moderator: Robert Ellis Smith, *Publisher, Privacy Journal*

Co-sponsored with the ACLU of Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Technology Leadership Council

May 22, 2010

**YOUTH SUMMIT ON
GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE**

A full day of workshops for Boston-area high school students (www.blsyouth-can.org)

Co-sponsored with the Boston Latin School Youth Climate Action Network

February 5–6, 2010

**BUILDING AN ETHICAL
ECONOMY: THEOLOGY AND
THE MARKETPLACE**

Hosted by Trinity Institute, New York

Archbishop Rowan Williams,
104th Archbishop of Canterbury

Sir Partha Dasgupta,
Frank Ramsey Professor of Economics, University of Cambridge

Kathryn Tanner,
Dorothy Grant Maclear Professor of Theology, University of Chicago Divinity School

Catherine Mann,
Professor of Economics, Brandeis University

Joan Martin,
Associate Professor of Christian Social Ethics, Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge

Anthony Zuba,
Lead Organizer, Massachusetts Interfaith Coalition for Worker Justice

Co-sponsored with the Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, MA; Boston Faith and Justice Network; the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts; Life Together: The Young Adult Internship Programs of the Diocese of MA; and the Massachusetts Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice

February 15–March 8th, 2010

DROPPING KNOWLEDGE CAMPAIGN

TAC hosted an unusual campaign by inviting the MIT community to consider "What is the most important question for the world?" Questions were collected and organized and possible outcomes may include hosting future events around specific questions, creating discussion groups on-line or virtually, and taking action. Conducted in cooperation with droppingknowledgeinternational.org

March 16, 2010

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
IN PAKISTAN**

Humaira Awais Shahid, *journalist, activist, and former legislator, Provincial Assembly of the Punjab, Pakistan*

Co-sponsored with the MIT Program in Human Rights and Justice and the MIT Program in Women's and Gender Studies

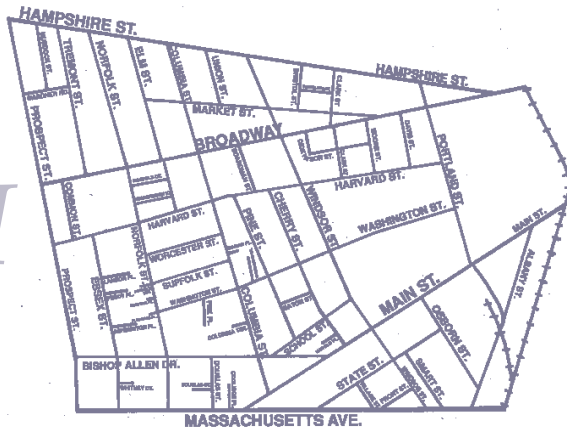
March 30, 2010

**PARTY WITH A PURPOSE!
END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

Co-Sponsored with the Office of the Dean of Graduate Education

These programs were part of a year-long series on Violence Against Women co-sponsored with the MIT Program in Women's and Gender Studies and MIT Amnesty International

Area VI



HOPE IN ACTION

Have you heard of Area IV? It is the neighborhood in Cambridge right next door to MIT, which struggles with poverty, low educational scores, and crime. Led by Nicholas Hayes, a young adult intern from the Hope in Action Campaign of the Diocese of Massachusetts, a team of MIT students worked this year to draw over eighty people from the MIT community to commit one percent of their time or income to working for justice in Area IV. In partnership with the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House, this project will allow MIT students to address educational, technological, and environmental needs in the community. The people and resources of TAC helped launch this exciting new program, and we look forward to watching it grow in the years ahead. Many thanks to Nicholas and the student Leadership Team for their great work!

Annual Support

Endowment Leadership

Betsy and William Leitch
Albert Wilson
Mrs. Henry Worcester

Visionaries

Jay Forrester
Priscilla and Paul Gray
Betsy and William Leitch
Campbell Searle

Leadership Circle

Nancy and Norman Beecher
Beverly and Homer Eckhardt
Frances Elliott
Jay Fay
Large Event Funding Grant-
Association of Student Activities
Tracy and Mark Lively
MIT Coop
Office of the Dean of
Graduate Education
Jeanne and Scott Paradise
Martha and Phillip H. Smith
John Suhrbier

Sustainers

Samuel Allen
Linda Anthony

Sustainers, continued

Harold Clark
Alan Davidson
Richard Goldhor
Elias Gyftopoulos
Jeremy Clayton Johnson
Jay Keyser
Ruth and David McCreath
Kitty and David Rush
Leon Trilling

Supporters

Carson Agnew
Rajagopal Balakrishnan
Aron Bernstein
Peter Cebon
Noam Chomsky
Nazli Choucri
Jane Gould
Sally Haslanger
Sarah Johnstone
Heather Lechtman
Ruth Perry
Robert Plotkin
Fleming Ray
Bishwapriya Sanyal
Merritt Roe Smith
Brigitte and Stephen Steadman
Theodore T'so
Peter Tarpgaard
Bernhardt Wuensch



Technology and Culture Forum at MIT

77 Massachusetts Ave.
MIT Building W11
Cambridge, MA 02139
web.mit.edu/tac

STEERING COMMITTEE

Samuel M. Allen, *Materials Science and Engineering*
Laurie A. Boyer, *Biology*
Nazli Choucri, *Political Science*
Christopher Csikszentmihalyi, *Media Lab*
John Durant, *Director, MIT Museum*
James Fay, *Mechanical Engineering; Professor Emeritus*
Sally Haslanger, *Philosophy; Director, Women's and Gender Studies Program*
S. Carol Huang, *G*
Henry Jacoby, *Sloan School of Management*
Evelyn Fox Keller, *History and Philosophy of Science*
Jay Keyser, *Linguistics and Philosophy; Special Assistant to the Chancellor; Professor Emeritus*
Jonathan King, *Biology*
William R. Leitch, '56
Nergis Mavalvala, *Physics*
Mary Beth Mills-Curran, *G*
Sophie Monahan, '11
Christopher Moore, *Brain and Cognitive Sciences*
Megan Palmer, *G*
Yoda Patta, *G*
Ruth Perry, *Literature*
Robert Plotkin, '93
Balakrishnan Rajagopal, *Urban Studies and Planning; Director, MIT Program in Human Rights and Justice*
Bishwapriya Sanyal, *Urban Studies and Planning*
Ali S. Wyne, '08

STAFF

The Rev. Amy McCreath, *Coordinator*
Patricia-Maria Weinmann, *Associate Coordinator*
Christina English, *Program Associate*
Marianne Tierney, *Intern*