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Newsletter of the Association of MIT Alumnae  FALL 2007
Web Address:  http://alumweb.mit.edu/groups/amita

A Wave of Events for Women in Science and Technology

It’s hard to know which way to turn these days for activities about women and technology, engineering, and math—they’re everywhere! The NSF and National Academy recently released reports on women’s status. The Alumni/ae Association of MIT just wrapped up women’s and alumni leadership conferences. While on-ramping seminars, the Women’s Congress ©, the Massachusetts Conference for Women and similar events in CA, TX, PA, etc, all occurred within the span of a few months.

AMITA Boston was a “Strategic Partner” for Technology Review’s Women in Technology Workshop and an organizer for the MIT PanHel Women’s Professional Day. Joyce Chung, ’85, and the NorCal AMITA Chapter, have plugged into the flexible work and on-ramping discussions, while Tara Bishop ’97 and AMITA NY has several career and networking events planned, as well as a welcome for the new Ellen Swallow Richards Professor, Sara Seager, Earth and Planetary Science, when she visits NY in May.

On the horizon, the MIT Math Department’s Women in Mathematics: A Celebration. (at MIT April 12-13, 2008) will have good lessons for alumnae, while the National Conference for Women and Girls (at Hunter College, NY November 10-11, 2007) celebrates the 30th anniversary of the first national women’s conference in Houston in 1977.

What have you seen advertised? Many of the issues and speakers are relevant to our 51% majority, but our chosen fields also have some very specific challenges. Should, or how should, AMITA be involved? What issues are relevant to us now and in the future, and how should they be addressed by AMITA? These are

President’s Message

Sarah Simon

AMITA is gaining momentum in this 135 AE (After Ellen Swallow graduated). The alumnae alliance that has been AMITA for over 100 years will be building larger and stronger networks in the upcoming year.

We continue to make a difference as we help to:
- Expand women’s participation in our professions, education, and AMITA.
- Share experiences and concerns in facing life’s challenges and opportunities.
- Promote, help nurture and enjoy alumnae ideas, creativity, and contributions to our communities.

Our connections and activities with MIT undergrad, graduate and faculty women are expanding. We are organizing an AMITA Women in Academia group, under the leadership of Professor Catherine Mavriplis, ’89, University of Oklahoma. And the Regional Chapters are flourishing.

AMITA is developing a program in Cambridge under our “Next Moves” initiative that will help alumnae prepare for a return to professional life after focusing on family duties. A Sloan alumna and an alumnus placement officer are working with us. And we’re looking for books to share and talk about.

AMITA is looking at some Biotech issues for women, starting with Professor Fiona Murray’s program in November (in Cambridge) about the disparity between men and women getting patents and developing enterprises. And we’ll try to let you know when the MIT women faculty members are visiting your area.

Be a member this year, a part of our AMITA community. With your support, we can develop further as a recognized resource and advocate for MIT women.

You will find membership information at the end of this newsletter.
Upcoming AMITA Events

AMITA Norcal Networking lunches:
AMITA members in the San Francisco Bay Area have been meeting and networking at three different monthly lunches. For more information please contact the respective organizers.

South Bay Monthly Networking Lunch
November 27, 2007, 12:00 (Fourth Tuesday this month due to Thanksgiving)
Mayuri Indian Cuisine
2230 El Camino Real (Santa Clara)
Contact: Nicole Pelton - nskinner@alum.mit.edu or nicole.pelton@gmail.com

San Francisco Monthly Networking Lunch
November 20, 2007, 12:00 (third Tuesday of every month)
Elephant & Castle (424 Clay Street)
Cost: Free (except each person pays for their lunch, @$15)
RSVP to Alisa Mosler, alisa@alum.mit.edu

Peninsula Monthly Networking Lunch
November 6, 2007, 12:00 (first Tuesday of every month)
Palo Alto Sol Mexican Restaurant
408 California Ave, Palo Alto, CA 94040
RSVP to Anh Thu Vo at avo@alum.mit.edu or 408-218-0002

AMITA Women in Biotech Series
Buying Science & Selling Science: Gender Differences in Biotech Commercialization, with Professor Fiona Murray
Wednesday November 14, 2007 – MIT Campus, Cambridge MA

Professor Fiona Murray of the Sloan School of Management was involved in an extensive study of potential gender differences in the life sciences work and companies, and will bring her findings to the Nov 14 AMITA meeting in Cambridge. The study found significant disparities in the participation of university life science faculties’ commercial activities, including patenting, scientific advisory board membership and firm founding.

Why were these levels of participation so different? Come hear Prof Murray’s presentation and findings about the relative role of women and men on the commercial side of the life sciences including in management and investment.

Fiona Murray is the Sarofim Family Career Development Professor and an Associate Professor of Management at the MIT Sloan School of Management. She studies and teaches innovation and entrepreneurship with an emphasis on the life science sector. Her research focuses on the academic industry nexus with a broad agenda that aims to uncover the relationships and influences that characterize the growing interchange between academic and industry scientists. Her research has been published in Science, Nature Biotechnology, the New England Journal of Medicine as well as more traditional management and economics journals.
Potluck and Ellen Swallow Richard’s Birthday Party
Sunday December 2, 2007

Alumnae and their families are invited to join AMITA on Sunday December 2 for a potluck luncheon and birthday party for Ellen Swallow Richards, "the woman who put the science in the domestic science movement" (NYTimes 11/17/1912). The event will be held in the Brown Living Room at McCormick Hall. The potluck starts at 1:30. Current MIT students will be invited to join us at 3:30 for cake and ice cream to celebrate the birthday of MIT’s first woman graduate. Please sign up to contribute an appetizer, main dish or side dish to the potluck. The event fee covers beverages, cake and ice cream. Look for an email invitation soon or go through the AMITA website to sign up.

https://alum.mit.edu/smarTrans/user/Register.dyn?eventID=17701&groupId=182

Save the Date: Annual IAP Career Networking Nights
Wednesday, January 16, 2008

Our annual student/alum career networking night will be Wednesday January 16. Put it on your calendar now. Dinner at 6:30; networking from 7 to 9pm. Women alums from the graduate and professional schools are especially encouraged to participate. Would you like to help organize this event? Two or three volunteers would be very welcome to assist with setting up the event and helping out that evening. Please contact Kim Vermeer at kvermeer@alum.mit.edu for more info or to volunteer.

Past AMITA Events

Alumnae were also connecting at events such as:

Senior Student Academic Awards
Wednesday May 9, 2007 – Cambridge, MA

Each year AMITA presents its Senior Academic Award to an outstanding senior woman who has demonstrated the highest level of academic excellence and professional promise through her coursework and academic endeavors at MIT. The award is presented at the Institute’s Awards Convocation in May and includes a cash prize.

AMITA was delighted to present the Senior Academic Award to Yaim Cooper of the Department of Mathematics. Yaim was described by her professors as “brilliant”, “mature”, and having an “uncanny ability to ask perceptive/penetrating questions”. She had already done distinguished research in mathematics that resulted in two papers—on submitted and one already accepted for publication.

Two students received honorable mention. Stella Young, Economics, had a perfect GPA. She published a paper based on original research, was President of the MIT Red Cross chapter at MIT, and was an associate advisor. Her professors cited her inquiring mind, keen intellect and dedication.

Mandeep Virdi, Chemistry, worked in a research lab starting during freshman year, providing strong leadership as a Chemistry Club officer, and as a Teaching Assistant. Students described her as “incredibly patient”, “extremely knowledgeable” and “articulate”.

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Past AMITA Events (continued)

AMITA Norcal: Women in Science and Technology: Challenges and Changes through the Generations
Thursday September 20, 2007 – Mountain View, CA

Alumnae gathered to hear a panel of remarkable women from industry and academia. The event focused on how the science and technology workplace has changed over the last 30 years, and what challenges are still faced by women in science and technology today.

What was it like to be a woman in science and technology in the 1970s and 1980s? How did the social attitudes of the day create challenges? What lessons can we take away from past successes? These questions and more were addressed.

Technology Review’s Women in Technology Workshop
Tuesday September 25 2007 – Cambridge, MA

President Sarah Simon, ’72, attended this workshop and heard life balance and corporation presentations and a session on getting girls into the pipeline for science and engineering. Opening remarks were provided by President Hockfield, while Chancellor Bob Birgeneau, University of California Berkeley, shared his insider’s view of the Study on the Status of Women Faculty in Science at MIT, the effort for equity started by Professor Nancy Hopkins in 1994. (viewable at the National Academies Press Website www.nap.edu).

As Dean of the MIT School of Science, Professor Birgeneau was the lead for the study. Sloan School Professor Lotte Bailyn led a panel on Choices and Change, identifying the constraints on job choice, breadwinning and care that most professionals face. The Third Path (www.thirdpath.org) described work/life integration through job re-engineering that makes better teams and creates flexible schedules that allow time away from work.

Alumni Leadership Conference
Women Alumni Dinner @ La Groceria
Friday September 28, 2007 – Cambridge, MA

This year’s ALC featured Dine-Arounds after the Friday evening Welcome Reception hosted by the MIT Museum. At the AMITA hosted dinner at La Groceria, over a dozen women gathered to share food and conversation. The group included long-time alumnae activists Susan Kannenberg and Sandy Yulke, AMITA board members President Sarah Simon, Program Chair Kim Vermeer, Sze-Wen Kuo, Ruth Nelson and new ALC participants like Educational Counselors Ranu Boppana. Others present included Barbara Ostrom and Joanna Zarach.

The AMITA board members love meeting women from other parts of the country and exchanging ideas about programming and events that appeal to women alums and that could encourage new AMITA chapters to form. If you plan to be at ALC in 2008, be sure to put the dinner in your plans.
Past AMITA Events (continued)

Conference Awards Dinner

Saturday September 29, 2007 – Cambridge, MA

At the Alumni/ae Leadership Conference Awards Dinner 9/29, the Alumnae Leadership Series received the Alumni Association’s Presidential Citation. We are so proud that the AMITA and the Sloan Alumni Club of Boston (SACB) partnership was so successful and was recognized with this honor.

Left to right: former AMITA President Sandra Yulke ’74; Archivist Sze-wen Kuo ’73, former VP of AMITA, Marissa Martinez ’82 (ALS co-chair), AMITA Program Chair Kim Vermeer ’82, Rebecca Schecter, ’96 Sloan Alumni Club of Boston (ALS co-chair)

Alumnae Leadership Series 2007 – Spotlight on MIT Women’s Research

Wednesday, Oct 17 2007

Mariam Shaik, an undergraduate researcher at Langer Laboratory, was awarded the “Best Presentation of Innovative and Promising Research by an Undergraduate Woman” for her poster on “Targeted iron oxide nanoparticles for prostate cancer therapeutics and imaging”, presented at the Alumnae leadership series (ALS) Spotlight on Women’s Research.

AMITA NY Mixer

Wednesday, October 24, 2007

AMITA NY had their 2007-2008 kick off event at Bar Vetro in the Upper East Side in NYC! Approximately 15 Alumnae attended the event from the class of 1976 to 2005. The women were very excited to meet fellow alumnae and also about becoming involved in organizing further events. Upcoming events will likely include a Holiday Party, Women in Finance Events, and other social Happy Hours.

We are looking for one or two Regional Vice Chairs of Membership to further expand our group. If you would like to get involved, please contact the Regional Chair of AMITA NY, Anusha Prasad at nush@alum.mit.edu.

AMITA Norcal: “Embracing Flexibility in the Workplace”

Monday, November 5, 2007 – Mountain View, CA

AMITA Norcal, along with Harvard Business School Northern California and YourOnRamp presented Sylvia Ann Hewlett, author of On-Ramps and Off-Ramps, Keeping Talented Women on the Road to Success. In the panel event, Sylvia addressed engaging questions such as: Are you ready to OnRamp, re-enter the workforce? Do you want to get back in, in a capacity that is right for you, but need some help? Even if you are not ready to get back in, have you developed an OffRamp plan, making it easier to re-enter?
Alumna wins MacArthur ‘Genius’ Grant

http://www-tech.mit.edu/V127/N43/macarthur.html

Yoky Matsuoka, ’95, now an associate professor and robotics expert in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at the University of Washington in Seattle, was chosen for "devising complex prosthetic devices and rehabilitation strategies that hold life-changing potential for those suffering from brain injuries and manipulation disabilities," the foundation said.

Other women faculty at MIT who have won MacArthurs include: Angela Belcher, Linda G. Griffith, Evelyn F. Keller, Heather N. Lechtman, Daniela L. Rus, Amy B. Smith ’84.

Matsuoka’s plans for the award money include starting a company that creates robotic devices used by disabled people and writing a book about balancing her engineering career with having a family. “A lot of women want to do that, but it’s intimidating,” she said. She hopes she can convince more women to stay in the field and still pursue what they want in their personal life, she said.

House Panel Hears Ideas on Increasing Number of Women on Science and Engineering Faculties

Several higher-education leaders testified before Congress on Wednesday, Oct 17th on the continuing underrepresentation of women in tenured faculty positions in science and engineering, outlining the existing barriers and biases. The proposals they put forth included the creation of an NCAA-style organization to monitor the hiring practices of academic departments and urge them to comply with federal laws banning gender discrimination.

Kathie L. Olsen, deputy director of the National Science Foundation, said that "women have earned 23 percent of the doctoral degrees in the physical sciences since 1997, yet held only 14 percent of academic physical-science faculty positions in 2003." Rep. Vernon J. Ehlers of Michigan, the subcommittee's senior Republican member, expressed the tone of the hearing. "Higher education must change both the culture and structure of its institutions so that obstacles to women advancing in science and engineering are removed," said Mr. Ehlers, who is a former chair of the physics department at Calvin College.

For the Chronicle of Higher Education subscribers, this article can be found at: http://chronicle.com/daily/2007/10/403n.htm

AMITA Women in Academia

AMITA recently formed AWIA with the goal of building a community of MIT alumnae in academia to work toward change in academia that will benefit women, increase candidate pools for open professorships and awards, etc, and share life/professional challenges and experience.

For more information about events and volunteering opportunities, please contact the Chair, Catherine Mavriplis, AA ’89, at mavripli@alum.mit.edu.

AMITA Scholarship Fund

Congratulations, the 77 donations collected in the last 3 years from our contributing members (15 of whom are repeat contributors) means that AMITA has recently contributed an additional $770 to the AMITA Student Aid Scholarship Fund to support undergraduate students with financial need. The current scholarship awardee is Ouqi Jiang ’08, a management major.

Thanks again to our members who have made this possible.
AMITA Nominations
The Nominating Committee’s main purpose is nominating alumnae to the AMITA Board, but AMITA and other groups’ officers are also asked to make nominations to various committees of the Alumni Association and other groups with alumni representation (e.g. the MIT Corporation and the Corporation Visiting Committees.) In keeping with AMITA’s goals, we are interested in placing well-qualified alumnae, preferably those who are AMITA members, on these committees.

The criteria for serving are available at the Web sites below. Please review them carefully and send suggestions, well before the date indicated (the nominees need to consent, and letters need to be written) to Sandy Yulke’74, Chair, AMITA Nominations Committee at yulke@alum.mit.edu.

The next deadline is November 23 for alumni awards. These are:
Bronze Beaver Award; Kane Award; Lobdell Award; Morgan Award; Presidential Citations; Honorary Membership.

Detailed information on criteria is available through the links above or at: http://alum.mit.edu/gv/volunteer/recognition/awards/index.html

Nominations for alumni boards and the Board of Directors are due January 18, 2008. These include the: Alumni Fund Board, Awards Committee, Committee on Nominations to Corporation Visiting Committees, Enterprise Forum Board, and Technology Day Committee. Detailed information on criteria is at: http://alum.mit.edu/gv/volunteer/recognition/nominate/national-boards.html. Or check with AMITA Program Chair, Kim Vermeer ’82, who is Chair of the Tech Day Committee this year.

Also due January 18, 2008 are nominations for Alumni Association Officers. In particular, AMITA would like to find alumnae for the District Directors for Districts 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 (near DC; TX southeast through the US Virgin Islands; southern CA and SW; Northern CA; and international) http://alum.mit.edu/about/governance/index.html

Nominations for Corporation Visiting Committees can be submitted at any time. There are committees for all academic departments and other entities as well. The complete Department list is at: http://web.mit.edu/education/. The Athletics, Physical Education, and Recreation also takes alumni advisors, as does:
Dean for Student Life
Dean for Undergraduate Education
Libraries
Music and Theater Arts
Sponsored Research
Whitaker College

AMITA Web Logo Design Contest
AMITA is holding a contest to design a new “logo” image for the AMITA webpage banner. Please help us find a cover image that reflects the spirit of MIT students and alumnae and/or AMITA’s own history. The winning image will replace the current logo at the top of our website pages. There is a prize of either an annual membership to AMITA or a $25 iTunes gift card!
For official contest rules, please go to: http://alumweb.mit.edu/groups/amita.old/news/contest.htm

Designs should be entered to AMITA.Feedback@gmail.com by December 20, 2007. Remember to include your contact information in the entry email (name, address, phone, degree, year of graduation).
### Personal Updates from our Members!

We are interested in hearing from you, our members. Do you have updates on the personal and professional level? Please write in and let us know about it. Your entry will appear in the next edition of our newsletter. AMITA’s mission has always been to provide a way for former women students to maintain contact with each other and MIT and support women students.

### AMITA Jobs listserv

Are you looking for a job or know of a position that is available? Join the AMITA Jobs listserv on the MIT alumni website or post your job description (don't forget location and contact information) to amita_jobs@mitvma.mit.edu. Contact Sarah Simon at sarah.simon@alum.mit.edu with questions.

### Get Involved

AMITA’s network of alumnae of all ages is eager to connect with you and support you on concerns we all share. Our activities include:

- student programs like supporting the Pan-Hellenic Women’s professional day

- professional events such as networking lunches, discussions with professors and experts on developing research; or panels and lectures on women in technology

- plain FUN like Ellen Swallow Richards’ Birthday celebration in early December

And we’re looking for people to work with our committees - archives/history, programs, news and publicity, job listings, membership, Women in Academia, and regional chapters. If you are interested in getting more involved with AMITA, contact any of our officers.

**Better still, Join AMITA now!** (Or renew your Membership)

AMITA membership is available to any woman who has attended at least one semester at MIT as either an undergraduate or graduate student.

### Why join AMITA?

The Association of MIT Alumnae is dedicated to providing a means for former women students to maintain contact with each other and MIT. AMITA events held in Boston, New York, the San Francisco bay area, and other cities are bringing together women from MIT for exciting and fun events. AMITA also sponsors student awards and an oral history project. AMITA is active in supporting women students and faculty at MIT.

For more information on AMITA, visit the website at [http://alumweb.mit.edu/groups/amita/](http://alumweb.mit.edu/groups/amita/).

Link to our membership webpage (use your Infinite Connection sign-in) or go directly to [https://alum.mit.edu/smarTrans/dues-login.vhtml?groupId=182](https://alum.mit.edu/smarTrans/dues-login.vhtml?groupId=182)

Or send us the following information with a check for annual membership ($25), contributing membership ($35), or life membership ($350)

Name: __________________________

MIT Degree Yr ___ Course (optional)_______

Address: __________________________

City/State/Zip _______________________

E-mail: ____________________________

Send to Marilynn Bever ‘62

c/o Alumni/ae Association of MIT

77 Mass Ave, Room W59-200,

Cambridge, MA, 02139