MAKING PROGRESS FOR WOMEN AT (AND FROM) MIT

The AMITA Board and members have been reaching out to the graduate women and faculty with programs and activities this year. While NSF reports that the number of women receiving degrees in science and engineering continues to increase (http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/wmpd/start.htm), it is still only the undergraduate women at MIT who represent nearly 50 percent of the student population. In November, AMITA helped to sponsor the Graduate Women Students luncheons with Dean Staton and will also be there at their April lunch. Our April Meeting is a FACULTY RECEPTION on Tuesday, April 10, 5:30 pm at the MIT Faculty Club - a celebration of women faculty (currently 28 are alumnae) and those who have achieved tenure. We are looking for ways to strengthen the progress women have made on the faculty level.

Beyond the MIT campus, AMITA member Joyce Chung, ’85, chair of the NorCal AMITA Chapter, will be presenting opening remarks at the MIT Alumni/ae Association West Coast Women’s Leadership Conference: Changes, Challenges, Choices on March 31, 2007. This will be the West Coast opportunity to come together and renew alumnae connections 3,000 miles from the campus center. http://alum.mit.edu/lt/learning/wlc/index.html

NORCAL - With over 1700 MIT women in the area, there is a great deal of interest in connecting and developing programs to enrich personal and professional lives. For more information, please check the website. www.mitcnc.org/amitanorcal-default.html. If anyone would like to get involved, please contact Joyce Chung ’85, jachung@alum.mit.edu.

NYC - AMITA NY provides networking, socializing, and educational events for women graduates of MIT. The topics are not exclusively women’s topics, but NYC gears the programs toward our female audience. See the AMITA website.

President's Message:
Sarah Simon ’72
It’s so much fun to watch the energy level of AMITA rising. Alumnae’s professional and networking needs are bringing more of us to AMITA meetings on important and interesting topics like “Jump-Starting Re-entry to the Job Market”, global warming, Ellen Swallow Richards birthday (and professors), and perspectives on women and starting new technology businesses. Fabulous job by Radha Nyack ’93, Kim Vermeer ’82, Anusha Prasad ’03, Sandy Yulke ’74, and many others.

Nominations are now open for officers to be elected in June. Your input is needed to set our future direction.

How can our community of women (who weren’t afraid of math and science) be drawn together? How can AMITA be a better voice for alumnae – all the issues we share and our aspirations for tomorrow and the next generation?
I am also delighted to report that the website is beginning to reflect activities and news on a current basis. It has become a homepage where I like to start my web browsing. Thank you, Linda VanDuyne ’86 (MA) and Carol Hooker ’67 (IN).

Working on programs give you the chance to look for and meet great presenters; helping with membership or newsletter can bring you closer to our vibrant community of alumnae; and joining with our archivist’s committee bring amazing stories to light.

Are you connected?

**UPCOMINGAMITA EVENTS**

**Reception for MIT Women Faculty**
Tuesday, April 10, 2007,  5:30 – 7:00 pm.
MIT Faculty Club, Cambridge, MA

The AMITA reception to honor MIT's women faculty will celebrate their wonderful achievements. Over the past three years, 14 women faculty have received tenure and others have been promoted to full professor. Associate Provost Lorna Gibson will provide some special acknowledgement and Professor Barbara Liskov will update us on the MIT Committee on Diversity.

Meet with peers and faculty to celebrate the changes at MIT that are making it a better place for women.

RSVP by April 5 through SmarTrans https://alum.mit.edu/smarTrans/user/Register.dyn?eventID=11880&groupID=182 or email Kim Vermeer, AMITA Programs Chair.

**ALS2007: Second Seminar:**

**Negotiating for What You Want**
Thursday, May 24, 2007,  7:00 AM -9:30 am.
MIT Sloan School of Management, Wong Auditorium, Bldg E51, Wadsworth Street, Cambridge, MA

Come join experts and successful practitioners over breakfast to hone the art and science of negotiating for better outcomes for yourself. This program will help you understand the impact of good negotiating skills on your career growth and wealth potential.

Our moderator will be Professor Deborah Kolb, MIT PhD ’81, an authority on gender issues in negotiation and leadership. Her presentation will show how women can negotiate the conditions for their own success and contribute to the effectiveness of their organization.

The panel will feature, Madge Meyer, Executive VP at State Street Bank in charge of Global Infrastructure Services, who negotiates enterprise-wide contracts and Evelyn Murphy, President, The Wage Project Inc, former Lt Governor of Massachusetts and author, Getting Even: Why Women Don’t Get Paid Like Men—and What to Do About It. Hear the hard data, practical steps, and proven strategies for making a difference!

**AMITA Annual Meeting**
Saturday, June 9, 3:30 – 5:00 p.m
Bush Room, MIT Campus, Cambridge

The Annual AMITA Meeting will feature Ellen Swallow Richards Professor Nancy Kanwisher, and is being held Saturday afternoon during Reunion Weekend. Elections will be held.

**From the AMITA NORCAL Newsletter:**

**NORCAL Special Interest Group Activities:**

- a platform for to network in your chosen area and organize other activities with people with similar interests. If you'd like to put one together, please send your request to jachung@alum.mit.edu.

Laurie Friedman ’87, a Marin County architect, organized a “Green” House Special Interest Group evening in early March. She is working on a prototype of a completely sustainable, prefabricated, building system that consists of components that are easy to both fabricate off-site and assemble on-site and sponsored a “round-table” discussion with alumnae interested in sharing ideas that can shape the design of environmentally-responsible dwellings. lefarchitect@alum.mit.edu.

Monthly Networking Lunches are being organized in the Bay Area - speak to any successful businesswoman and they'll tell you networking is one of the most important things you can do for your career. The plan is to have a set place and time for these lunches so they can be marked on your calendar and alumnae would join in as often as they can. No set topics, no work requirements, although job opportunities and tough work problems are welcome. The Peninsula area date is currently the first Tuesday of the month and the South Bay the third Tuesday. If you would be willing to organize one in another area (East Bay, San Francisco, Marin), please contact Anh Thu Vo ’89, avo@alum.mit.edu.

**President’s Note:** – please contact Tara Bishop taraf@alum.mit.edu if you’d like to do something like this in the NYC area, or Sarah.Simon@alum.mit.edu if you’re interested in the Boston area or any other part of the country.
AMITA NY Winetasting
April 19, 2007, 6:30 PM -8:30 PM

Join other alumnae for an evening of learning and socializing. Stefani Jackenthal of the Neighborhood Tasting Society will teach us the basics of tasting wine and will compare old world and new world wines. The program includes wine, appetizers, wine tasting lesson, and tasting notes.

Registration at: https://alum.mit.edu/smarTrans/user/Register.dyn?eventID=11879&groupId=182 or contact Tara Bishop taraf@alum.mit.edu

For information on upcoming AMITA events check the AMITA Web site http://alumweb.mit.edu/groups/amita/events.html

AMITA Nominations Notice

It’s time once again to elect part of the AMITA Board. The bylaws state:

“the Vice President, Archivist, Public Relations/Newsletter Chairwoman and Program Chairwoman shall be elected in odd years”

In addition due to a resignation, we are looking for a new Recording Secretary.

The Board is particularly interested in having members from outside the Boston area. The current Recording Secretary lives in the DC area. The position of PR/Newsletter can also easily be done from anywhere, as the production and distribution of the newsletter is done online now. All AMITA Board meetings are now teleconferences to accommodate our remote participants.

If you are interested in any of these positions or know of an AMITA member who would like to be more involved, please contact the Nomination Committee Chair, Sandy Yulke ’74 at yulke@alum.mit.edu by May 1.

Past Events:
Alumnae are connecting at events such as:

Photographer Annie Liebowitz’s exhibit at the Brooklyn NY Museum (December 2006).


Ellen Swallow Richard’s Birthday celebration at McCormick Hall (December 2006) gathered four of the five professors who have held the ESR Professorship, established by AMITA more than 25 years ago. The professors regaled 80 students and alumnae and friends with snippets of their research. For example, Nancy Kanwisher and her team have found that spot in the brain (pointing to a spot in the rear, right lower hemisphere of her head) that thinks about what other people think of us. (Perhaps we really are social animals). And Professor Margery Resnick, honorary AMITA member, came with two students who spoke about the new alumnae oral histories they have been collecting as part of the UROP program funded by AMITA.

Women and Technology Transfer:

Lita Nelsen, ’66, Director of Licensing at MIT (and a former AMITA President) spoke at the February 13 AMITA meeting in Cambridge, MA, about how her office helps MIT’s inventors develop businesses from their ideas. The Licensing Office patents nearly 500 inventions a year, which is only the -2 stage of a business. Then, about 25-30 committed idea advocates use the resources and connections of the Licensing Office to add to the two other pieces that can make a “zero stage” start-up - a business plan and a management team. Women professors have not been a well represented part of this group, and Lita suggested that more than 24 hours/day would be needed to get both tenure and a start-up to happen at the same time. She and the group were concerned that there were still social/cultural barriers and women may still be uncomfortable taking the risk that’s needed to commercialize their ideas. MIT Charm School for women in technology might have to be revitalized to provide support – the ALS seminar on negotiating for women is certainly the kind of presentation that can help.

Staying the Course, Choosing the Technical Track vs. the Management Track: Are there Options?

The first of the 2007 Alumnae Leadership Series (ALS) in Cambridge, MA (3/8/07), was introduced by organizer Marissa Martinez ’86, vice president of AMITA. Cathy Welsh, HR at Akamai Technologies, went over the technical track career paths at the leading edge companies. These larger firms understand the strong business case that technical talent must maintain the skills to find the next level of innovation, consult and teach, and reach out to customers. A technical expert must be skilled in advocating for the new ideas,
leading technical teams, and understanding market drivers, competition and other management concerns.

Ellen Siegel ’83 Chemistry and EECS, System architect at Sun, has developed both leadership and technical expertise to lead her teams and pull the many parts of projects together. She felt that large companies have a lot of opportunity for technical growth and may offer leadership training. Promotions can be good but only if they move you toward your own goals. Early in a technical career there can be a lot of personal flexibility, but as your experience and responsibility builds, flexibility tends to decrease because there are more external commitments.

Julie Schwedock ’85 Life Sciences, Principal Investigator at MicroBiosystems, wears several hats at her small startup. Since engineers and scientists are notoriously hard to manage, people with leadership skills at a mature stage of a technical career are needed to manage technical research teams. They can remain in teaching/research at a university or be a research associate. Experts are also needed to manage core science facilities, e.g. an electron microscope center. And since everyone will be best at things they love, professionals should follow their instincts into the management or technical track knowing that change is always possible down the path. Graduate students and alumnae were then treated to a lively discussion of some of the details of additional skills and support systems for the technical professional.

AMITA IAP
Speed Networking 2007
Sandy Yulke ’74

“Speed networking,” the AMITA IAP event (1/23/07), was a success again this year. Attendees included a
dozen alumnae and a good mix of undergrad, graduate students and post-docs, in total about 50. Following on the format used last year, alumnae sat at tables designated by topic and the students rotated (or not) at 20-min intervals, when Kim Vermeer ’82, the AMITA Program chair and event organizer rang her sonorous bell.

Fueled, as usual, by Bertucci’s pizza and salad, the conversations were very lively. Many of the questions I heard were quite basic and pragmatic, but there were also a number of students looking to change direction after their degree. The “If you’re not sure” or “Life is What Happens When You’re Making Other Plans” groups were busy throughout the evening.

AMITA was the first alumni group to sponsor an IAP event, and after 30 years, there is still a strong interest from the women students in having a career evening when they can talk with alumnae. It’s also a very enjoyable evening for the alumnae, who get to meet students and catch up with each other, e.g. I got to see Nancy Timmerman ’74, OE, with whom I was on the swimming team when I was a student.

Consider coming to next year’s event!

NYC joins in Executive Moms Spring Luncheon —

AMITA NY participated in the Executive Moms Spring Luncheon, at the Harmonie Club, on Thursday, March 29, 2007. The program featured Rene Syler, former anchor of CBS’s The Early Show and author of "The Good Enough Mother." Executive Moms is an organization of women who are both mothers and professionals. It provides peer support, networking opportunities, and unique resources to thrive in both roles.

Renew your Membership or Join AMITA now!

Why should you 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. On campus, AMITA is active in supporting current women students at MIT by sponsoring various activities. Off campus, AMITA events held in Boston, New York, San Francisco, 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 membership is available to any woman who has attended at least one semester at MIT as either an undergraduate or graduate student.

For more information on AMITA, visit the website at 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.vhml?groupID=182

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

Name: ________________________________________

MIT Degree Yr ___ Course (optional)___________

Address: ________________________________________

City/State/Zip _________________________________

e-mail: _______________________________________

Send to Sarah Simon
9 Farley Av
Ipswich, MA 01938

In Northern California – send to Joyce Chung

AMITA Jobs listserv
amita_jobs@mitvma.mit.edu