

The Future of the Arts at MIT Charge

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In 1986, MIT Provost John Deutch charged a committee led by Prof. Paul Joskow to "review and assess all of the creative arts activities at MIT and to make recommendations on their role, organization, and support." A year later, the ensuing report—now known as the Joskow Report—articulated a bold vision for the arts at MIT and led to several significant changes.

MIT has achieved many of the goals of the Joskow Report. MIT has a new landscape for the arts, including significant new facilities, and has expanded its curricular and programmatic offerings in the arts. Information technology's rapid development allows many more people to act as creators and allows rapid dissemination of artistic works inside and outside MIT. Artistic tools that use artificial intelligence and large language models have accelerated the already rapid changes in art at MIT, causing art to blend into all five schools and the college in exciting ways. Mixed reality digital technologies (AR/VR/XR) are expanding traditional artistic media and environments. MIT faces new challenges to its core values—free expression, the pursuit of truth, and quirkiness—that art plays a role in expressing. MIT's commitment to belonging, achievement, and composition will find expression in the arts.

The growing importance of the arts at MIT behooves the Institute to form a new committee to conceive of the next chapter in the arts at MIT.

Charge: The new committee will

1. Conduct a broad review of the creative arts at MIT, focusing on curricular and program elements. The broad review should capture the standing of the arts at MIT relative to their disciplines and professions and express how the arts at MIT intersect with science and technology.
2. Assess the changes to the arts at MIT introduced following the Joskow Report and subsequent reports.
3. Develop guiding principles for the arts at MIT that the Administration and Faculty can use for future decision-making. The guiding principles should capture:
 - a. The ways the arts community at MIT can involve the rest of the campus in the arts;
 - b. the ways in which the arts currently contribute to the curriculum and student well-being, and the question of how these contributions should evolve in the following decades;
 - c. whether the arts at MIT might serve to build community within MIT and in the broader Boston and Cambridge community.

4. Outline a vision (or visions) for the future development of the arts at MIT, supported by top-level recommendations. The guiding principles should include:
- a. What administrative and structural changes would help MIT's new arts-related facilities live up to their full potential?
 - b. What additional resources (essential and aspirational) will sustain and advance the arts at MIT?
 - c. What areas in the arts at MIT are most in need of additional faculty and/or staff?
 - d. What principles should guide fundraising, alumni outreach, and advisory groups for the arts at MIT?