The MIT Awards Convocation honors MIT students, faculty, staff, and community members who have made outstanding contributions to the shared life of the Institute. The Women's League proudly gives two awards each year, and we are seeking nominations.

The Laya W. Wiesner Award recognizes an undergraduate woman who has helped make MIT a better, happier, friendlier environment. This award recognizes her contributions, made in any area of Institute life, while at the same time maintaining a good academic record. To nominate your colleague or student for an award, please go to awards.mit.edu.

The Laya Wiesner Community Award is given to a member or friend of the MIT community for conspicuously effective service that reflects Laya’s concerns for enhancing life at the Institute and in the world at large.” Please email your nomination to wleague@mit.edu.

Winners for the 2024 Institute Awards will be announced in later this Spring. Visit awards.mit.edu for more information on the ceremony. Both Awardees will be honored at the Women’s League Annual Meeting.

The 2023 Laya W. Wiesner Award was presented to Pam Stark. Pam is an ideal combination of strong student, researcher, organizer, and activist. As a first-year undergraduate, Pam joined Undergraduate Womxn in Physics, UWIP. Under her leadership, UWIP has become an organization that focuses on advocacy for female and female-identified scientists in the early stages of their careers, through community-building, student-run initiatives. Pam believes that the doors to becoming a physicist should be swung open ever wider, and we look forward to seeing her continue to open them.

The 2023 Laya Wiesner Community Award was presented to Julie Uva. Julie is credited with revolutionaryizing the PKG Center’s Social Impact Internships program for undergraduates. Julie’s outreach resulted in 700 students applying to the Social Impact Internships program and she developed collaborations with 200 non-profits and government agencies. Despite the speed with which Julie built-up this program student and community partner satisfaction is very high. Julie tackled this challenge with her characteristic quiet determination to find good outcomes for our students and our community partners.

Nominate for the Wiesner Awards!

Fall Fashion Exchange 2023 Recap

The Fall Fashion Exchange took place virtually this year providing winter coats, hats, and gloves for MIT students. Students let us know what they needed, and donors signed up via a spreadsheet to send items to the students directly. We also conducted a campus-wide winter clothing drive in collaboration with the ARM Coalition, helping to create a year-round closet in the Office of the First Year, where students can go whenever they need winter clothing items. Thank you to everyone who donated!
There is so much incredible research happening at MIT, and the Women’s League is proud to be continuing our partnership with WISDM, the Women in Innovation and STEM Database at MIT. WISDM is in an initiative aimed at promoting the visibility of women within the MIT community. This program is designed to give our community the chance to hear from young researchers - no technical expertise required!

Our February speaker is Dr. Duhan Zhang. She is a scientist and engineer, aiming to tackle the urgent challenges at the energy-climate-sustainability nexus. Her talk will cover ways to decarbonize the materials industry.

The growth of modern society is reliant on the materials industry – but construction materials, machinery, vehicles, and metal products have a huge carbon footprint and a powerful negative impact on our environment. Renewable energy technology and developments in energy storage are leading the transition to a cleaner energy future, and inventions in the materials industry show great potential for reducing emissions. Dr Zhang will review these challenges in decarbonization in the materials industry, introduce promising research areas and technologies, and outline opportunities for the materials community.

Dr Zhang is a Postdoctoral Associate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Department of Materials Science and Engineering, honored with MIT Energy Initiative (MITEI) Fellowship. She received a Ph.D. degree in Mechanical Engineering from Cornell University with years of support from the Telluride Association Fellowship. During her academic journey, she received numerous awards and honors, including the Mars Fellowship from Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings, the Best Paper Award from the Joint Center for Energy Storage Research, the First Prize of “Science as Art” from Materials Research Society, etc. Her current research focuses on energy materials, electrochemical energy storage and conversion systems, and electrification of materials reuse and recycle. She with the MIT team and collaborators established an innovative aqueous electrochemical and chemical approach that can recover materials from incinerated municipal solid waste ash. Outside academia, she enjoys playing violin, painting, skiing, and scuba diving.

Nuclear Reactor Tour: Save the Date

Tuesday March 12
12:00-1:00pm
138 Albany Street
Reservations accepted from February 14, 2024

We’re delighted to offer a tour of MIT’s Nuclear Reactor! A rare opportunity to explore this space, this tour is limited to 20 guests. You’ll have the chance to explore the lab space, and hear from engineers who work there.

As a secure location on MIT’s campus, all attendees must register and provide clearance information one week ahead of the tour. Look out for our email invite on February 14th, which will include all the information on how to register.

U.S. citizens must bring a valid physical U.S. government-issued photo ID that lists their date of birth (e.g. driver’s license, state ID), MIT employee or student participants must bring their MIT ID (physical or in the Atlas app), and non-U.S. citizens must bring their physical passport to present upon arrival.

Participants are required to wear closed-toed shoes (no high-heels or sandals) and ankle-length pants/leggings/skirts. Please keep in mind the lab is a light-industrial facility and safety is a priority.

Cameras, cell phones, bags, backpacks, coats, food, drink, lip balm, and chewing gum are not allowed in the restricted area of the building. There are hooks for hanging coats and bags and a caddy for storing cell phones in the reception area.

The use of cameras and recording devices is strictly prohibited (including Meta glasses, even if they have prescription lenses).
Twice-yearly women in the MIT community are invited to our informal Breakfast Series, where women faculty and administrators explore the role of women in the academy, sharing the pathways their professional lives have taken — the people and events that have influenced their direction.

Sally Haslanger is Ford Professor of Philosophy and Women’s and Gender Studies at MIT. She has published in metaphysics, epistemology, feminist theory, and critical race theory. Broadly speaking, her work links issues of social justice with contemporary work in epistemology, metaphysics, philosophy of language, and philosophy of mind. A collection of her papers that represent this effort over twenty years was collected in Resisting Reality: Social Construction and Social Critique (Oxford 2012), and it received the Joseph B. Gittler award for outstanding work in philosophy of the social sciences. Recently Haslanger has been working on social practices, social structure, structural explanation with an emphasis on the materiality of social practices and the role of ideology. In 2015, she was the Spinoza Professor at the University of Amsterdam and her lectures have appeared as a booklet: Critical Theory and Practice (Koninklijke Van Gorcum, 2017).

In addition to her research on social justice, Haslanger is deeply committed to promoting diversity in philosophy and beyond. She was the founder and convener of the Women in Philosophy Task Force, and co-founded PIKSI-Boston, a summer philosophy institute for undergraduates from under-represented groups. She was awarded the Martin Luther King, Jr. Leadership Award at MIT in 2014, and the YWCA Cambridge Tribute to Outstanding Women in 2011. In 2013-4, she was the President of the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association, and in 2015, she was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Tickets cost $10 and include a full plated breakfast will be served. Space is limited. To reserve your spot, please email kbennett@mit.edu.

Join us for a Coffee Social

Spring Dates:
Wed 2/14
Thur 3/21
Wed 4/24
8:30am - 9:30am
Emma Rogers Room (10-340)

Our regular Coffee Social returns! Stop by before you start your day to grab a warm drink and a breakfast treat. Connect with old friends, meet new ones, and as always, come with your ideas and suggestions to make the League more vibrant.
The Stratton Lecture

How will AI impact women?

03.06.2024
11:30am - 1:00pm
Wong Auditorium, E15-115

Keynote: Professor Marzyeh Ghassemi
Remarks by: Puja Balaji (24) & Others
Moderator: Amy Brand, Director & Publisher of MIT Press

Co-Sponsors: MIT Association of MIT Retirees, The MIT Press
League Interest Groups

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Save the Date

Thursday April 25
Honorary League Luncheon, featuring speaker Professor Andrea Campbell

Thursday May 22
Women’s League Annual Meeting

The MIT Women’s League Newsletter is published four times during the academic year. Please email the office for a hard copy of the newsletter or for any questions you may have.

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