



## MIT Chancellor Melissa Nobles' Current Responsibilities Following Recent Reorganizations

Chancellor Melissa Nobles continues to hold one of MIT's two most senior academic positions, reporting directly to President Sally Kornbluth. However, the scope and nature of her role has been significantly reshaped following the closure of the Institute Community and Equity Office (ICEO), elimination of the Vice President for Equity and Inclusion position, and discontinuation of the top-down Strategic Action Plan for Belonging, Achievement, and Composition.<sup>[1][2]</sup>

### Core Responsibilities Remain Intact

Nobles retains oversight of more than 60 interconnected offices supporting undergraduate and graduate students across three fundamental areas: academic success, community and wellbeing, and personal and intellectual growth. Her portfolio continues to encompass the full range of student life and learning at MIT.<sup>[3][2][1]</sup>

The Chancellor's Office organizational structure now consists of two major divisions reporting to her:<sup>[4]</sup>

**Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate and Graduate Education** (David Darmofal, appointed February 2025), overseeing admissions, career advising, international students, experiential learning programs (including the Edgerton Center and Public Service Center), the Office of Graduate Education, registrar services, student financial services, the Teaching and Learning Laboratory, and the Undergraduate Advising Center. Notably, the Office of Academic Community, Empowerment, and Success (OACES)—which merged the former Office of Minority Education with the Undergraduate Advising Center's Advising and Student Belonging unit—now reports through this structure.<sup>[5][6][4]</sup>

**Vice Chancellor for Student Life** (Suzy Nelson), managing the Division of Student Life including housing and residential services, athletics and recreation, campus dining, student conduct, dean of student life functions, student wellbeing programs, disability services, violence prevention, LGBTQ+ and gender services, student engagement, religious and spiritual life, and residential community life.<sup>[4]</sup>

### Significant Changes from ICEO Closure and Strategic Plan Discontinuation

In May 2025, following an 18-month comprehensive assessment initiated in January 2024, President Kornbluth announced the closure of the ICEO and elimination of the Vice President for Equity and Inclusion role. This decision fundamentally altered the Chancellor's Office approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion work.<sup>[7][8][9]</sup>

The assessment, led by a working group of senior faculty and staff, found broad community desire to shift from centralized, top-down coordination to "community building at the local level". Core ICEO programs were redistributed to other MIT units rather than eliminated:<sup>[9]</sup>

- The Department Support Program and MLK Visiting Professors and Scholars Program transferred to the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty
- Community-building student initiatives like Random Acts of Kindness Week and the Chancellor's Innovation Fund moved to the Division of Student Life
- The Community Learning Initiative and Employee Resource Groups shifted to Human Resources
- The MLK Celebration Committee moved to the President's Office

The Institute-wide Strategic Action Plan for Belonging, Achievement, and Composition—announced in September 2022 as a comprehensive framework for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion—was discontinued as a centralized initiative. The plan had made 13 specific commitments and listed more than 50 proposed actions across MIT. While the top-down plan ended, individual academic, research, and administrative units were encouraged to continue developing and refreshing their own local plans.<sup>[10] [11] [9]</sup>

A new Standing Institute Committee, staff-led but including faculty and students with a direct channel to senior leadership, replaced the Council on Belonging, Achievement, and Composition to promote connectivity, collaborative problem-solving, and sharing of best practices.

Additionally, the Institute Discrimination and Harassment Response Office continues to report to the Chancellor's Office.<sup>[9] [4]</sup>

## **Ongoing Strategic Priorities**

Despite these structural changes, Chancellor Nobles' fundamental mission—what she calls "educating the whole student"—remains central to her work. This encompasses three key elements: supporting academic success, fostering community and wellbeing, and cultivating personal and intellectual growth.<sup>[12] [13]</sup>

Nobles has emphasized significant investments in holistic student support, including the Wellbeing Lab (launched in its second year of operation in 2024) and the Division of Student Life's DoingWell program focused on self-care and belonging. She continues working closely with senior leadership to develop and implement Institute strategic priorities.<sup>[1] [3] [12]</sup>

In her May 2025 commencement address to the undergraduate Class of 2025, Nobles articulated her vision for graduates to be "bold and imaginative in tackling big problems" while doing so "with compassion and generosity". She has also been tasked with finding new ways to bring leadership closer to students in affinity groups.<sup>[14] [9]</sup>

## Operational Context

The reorganization occurred within a challenging budgetary environment. President Kornbluth implemented 5-10% budget cuts for academic and administrative units in March 2025, saving approximately \$100 million, as part of addressing an estimated \$300 million in new annual costs from increased endowment taxes and research grant losses. Despite these cuts, MIT maintained its commitment to financial aid and the student experience.<sup>[15]</sup> <sup>[16]</sup>

Nobles continues to collaborate extensively with Provost Anantha Chandrakasan and other senior leaders on Institute-wide priorities. Her role remains centered on ensuring MIT attracts exceptionally talented individuals from every background and that everyone at MIT feels welcome and supported to do their best work.<sup>[7]</sup> <sup>[9]</sup>

The shift from centralized DEI coordination to decentralized, local-level community building represents a fundamental philosophical change in how the Chancellor's Office approaches diversity and inclusion work, moving away from top-down planning toward unit-level autonomy with cross-Institute collaboration mechanisms.<sup>[10]</sup> <sup>[9]</sup>

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