Massachusetts Institute of Technology

77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139-4307

November 20, 2026

Dear colleagues,

We appreciate your sharing your concerns regarding Dr. David Sabatini.

You and another group of faculty members have written to propose that, in light of the recent jury verdict in favor of Dr. Sabatini, MIT should reexamine the 2022 recommendation to revoke his tenure.

We have taken considerable care to review the record. What we see now is what the review panel that addressed the case saw then: An admitted violation by Dr. Sabatini of a clear and important MIT policy.

As President Reif wrote to the faculty in April 2022,

> "The reviewers found that Prof. Sabatini behaved in ways incompatible with the responsibilities of faculty membership and that Prof. Sabatini violated MIT's Consensual Sexual or Romantic Relationships in the Workplace or Academic Environment Policy. Specifically, the reviewers found Prof. Sabatini engaged in a sexual relationship with a person over whom he held a career-influencing role, he did not disclose the relationship at any time to his supervisors, and he failed to take any steps to relinquish his mentoring and career-influencing roles, as the policy requires."

Based on these core facts, the biology department head, the dean of science, and the provost reviewed the matter over several months and unanimously recommended that President Reif revoke Dr. Sabatini's tenure. During this time, Dr. Sabatini had the opportunity to consult with his counsel, speak with the reviewers, and provide written submissions and documentation – all of which he did.

Faculty members facing a recommendation that tenure be revoked have a right to request that a committee of faculty peers review it and provide their recommendation to the president. In accordance with the Institute's tenure policy, Dr. Sabatini was expressly offered the opportunity to request such a review and was given extensive time to consider his options.

Ten weeks after receiving written notice of the panel's recommendation and of his right to a faculty review, Dr. Sabatini, represented by legal counsel, submitted his resignation. As President Reif wrote at the time: "Professor Sabatini notified me of his decision to step down before and without exercising his policy right to request that a faculty committee be formed to review the recommendation to revoke tenure."

These facts from 2022 are not altered by the recent civil trial verdict. The focus of the civil trial was whether Dr. Sabatini was defamed by an individual, not whether MIT's consensual relationship policy was violated. That policy, developed in consultation with the faculty and approved by Academic Council, exists for good reason. The recommendation to revoke Dr. Sabatini's tenure centered on his knowing violation of that policy – conduct that the reviewers understood was sufficient grounds for recommending revocation, as the policy makes clear.

The value and impact of Dr. Sabatini's scientific contributions are not in question. But as MIT's Values Statement makes clear, we must "take special care not to overlook bad behavior or disrespect on the grounds of great accomplishment, talent, or power."

We hope you will understand that, given the unchanged nature of the core facts, the Institute will not revisit the recommendation made in 2022.

Sincerely,

Sally Kornbluth, President

Mark Gorenberg, Chair

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the MIT Corporation