

[Note: unless otherwise noted, information listed is drawn from Williams, Clarence. *Technology and The Dream: Reflections on the Black Experience at MIT 1941-1999*. Cambridge: MIT Press (2003)]

- 1892 – Robert R. Taylor becomes the first black student to graduate from MIT. (Source: Institute Archives and Special Collections, MIT Libraries, Cambridge Massachusetts)
- 1894 – William Arthur Johnson may be the first black student to participate on a varsity athletic team (football). (Source: Institute Archives and Special Collections, MIT Libraries, Cambridge Massachusetts)
- 1905 – Marie Celeste Turner becomes the first black female to attend MIT. (Source: Institute Archives and Special Collections, MIT Libraries, Cambridge Massachusetts)
- 1930 – Victor Claude Smith SB '24, SM '26, ScD '30 becomes the first black known to have earned a doctorate at MIT)
- 1933 – Marron William Fort SB '26, SM '27, PhD '33 becomes the second black known to have earned a doctorate at MIT
- 1952 – Institute Committee (Undergraduate Association) resolution: “... The Institute Committee of MIT stands opposed to racial and religious discrimination and deems it advisable to abolish all discriminatory clauses in the charters and constitutions of activities, organizations, and living groups on the MIT campus...”
- 1952 – Establishment of fund for “award to worthy and well-qualified students who have demonstrated a democratic and tolerant spirit and who are well disposed toward people of all creeds and races.”
- Mar 1955 – “National Conference on Selectivity and Discrimination in American Universities” organized by 2 MIT students, white and black, to discuss “issues of discrimination in higher education”
- 1956 – Joseph R. Applegate becomes the first black Assistant Professor at MIT.
- 1960s – Establishment of Committee on Community Service and Committee on Education in the Face of Poverty and Segregation
- 1964 – Establishment of Committee on Educational Opportunity by President Stratton (mission is “to explore how the Institute might become more involved in tackling problems relating to race, segregation, integration, and related issues”)
- 1964 – MIT hosts Conference on Programs to Assist Predominantly Negro Colleges (part of efforts to diversify campus community)
- 1968 – MIT Task Force on Educational Opportunity established.

1968 – Black Student Union started. Founding members: Charles Kidwell, Shirley Jackson, Ronald Mickens, Sekazi Mtingwa, Jennifer Rudd, Nathan Seely, Linda Sharpe, James Turner.

1968/69 – Frank Jones becomes the first black tenured Professor at MIT (Urban Affairs).

1969 – Project Interphase started.

Early 1970s – Various studies conducted on academic performance of black students (e.g. by Kenneth Schoman SM'70, at request of Paul Gray and in consultation with administrators John Mims, William Hecht, and James Bishop).

1972 – Report published: *Academic performance and admissions indices of black students at MIT*. Analyzes “academic performance of 157 blacks who had entered as freshmen in 1969, 70, 71.”

1972 – MIT Gospel Choir started

1973 – Creation of “Special Assistant to the President for Women and Work” post, held by Mary Rowe.

1974 – Creation of Special Assistant to the President post for Minority Affairs – Clarence Williams: functions relate “not just to minority graduate students but all matters relating to minorities at MIT, including advising senior officers on recruitment and retention of minority faculty, students, and staff; advocacy of the interests of minority members of the community; and addressing formal and informal complaints or concerns relating to the treatment of minorities at the Institute.”

1974 – MITES (Minority Introduction to Engineering and Science) started.

1974 – Lincoln Lab Summer Program started.

1974 – National Society of Black Engineers-MIT established.

Mid-1970s – Exhibits on blacks organized at MIT in collaboration with MIT Museum during Black History Week.

1975 – Office for Minority Education established “following difficult negotiations between black students and the administration over competing needs and goals.”

Jan 1975 – First annual MLK, Jr. celebration at MIT. (Text of addresses during first 20 years compiled in Williams, Clarence (Ed.). *Reflections of the Dream, 1975-1994: Twenty Years Celebrating the Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology*. Cambridge: MIT Press (2005). Addresses from 2003-2009 available at <http://web.mit.edu/mlking/www/address.html>.)

1975 – Chocolate City established at the initiative of Glenn Graham, Kevin Campbell, Albert Frazier “to maintain our African-American community, promote our ethnic identity, encourage social and intellectual improvement, and provide support for our brotherhood throughout and after our years at the MIT.”

1975 – Community Fellows Program started by Profs. Frank Jones & Lloyd Rodwin, continued by Prof. Melvin King – exposed minorities to “issues relating to the urban environment” (See The Tech 11/21/95) <http://tech.mit.edu/V115/N58/conf.58n.html>

1976 – Black Graduate Students Association (BGSA) founded with support of John Turner (assistant dean, later promoted to associate dean); goal is to “encourage minority entrants and help shape a community of black graduate students at MIT.”

1978 – Formation of “Group of Six”: Wesley Harris, Willard Johnson, John Turner, Wade Kornegay, James Young & CW: aims are to “step-up efforts to place blacks on key MIT policy committees, and to prepare position papers on issues such as recruitment, academic performance, and financial aid.”

Mid-late 1970s – Initiatives by Jerome Weisner (Pres) & Paul Gray (Chancellor) to encourage departments to hire minorities

Sep 1978 – Submission of report, *Blacks at MIT: The Challenge for Full Participation in the 1980s* to administration.

1980 – Posts of Special Assistant to the President for Women and Work & for Minorities renamed to “Special Assistant to the President.”

Early 1980s – Formation of Greater Boston Inter-University Council (GBIUC): “group of local black administrators and faculty outside MIT [working] to develop retention strategies for students of color.” Among original group: Ken Haskins, James Cash, Dexter Eure, Kenneth Guscott, Bernard Fulp, & Clarence Williams.

Early 1980s – Formation of Association of Black Administrators at MIT; group fizzles in 90s.

Early-mid 1980s – Jim Gates and Jim Hubbard tenure controversy. Both were undergraduate students, graduate students, and then faculty at MIT; denied tenure.

1982, 1984 – ABAMIT organizes 2 national conferences: First and Second National Conferences on Issues Facing Black Administrators at Predominantly White Colleges and Universities (1982, 1984). Attracted black administrators, major black (and a few white) figures. Goal was to “explore the anxieties, stresses, and aspirations of black administrators within often hostile academic environments.”

- 1982-1989 – Association of MIT Alumnae (AMITA) and Society of Women Engineers (SWE) Boston cosponsor annual professional development conferences for women in “non traditional fields.” (Source: AMITA) <http://www.mit-amita.org/esr/critical.html>
- 1984 – Ronald E. McNair, Ph.D. '76, becomes the first African American scientist-astronaut to go into space. McNair is killed in the 1986 Challenger disaster. In 2005, a professorship in Astronautics is named in his honor.
- 1985-1986 – Survey of black alumni by John Wilson (assistant provost for outreach and director of foundation relations and school development services in mid-1990s); co-author with David Wiley of report on black students at MIT 1969-1985
- 1986 – Publication of *The Racial Climate on the MIT Campus: A report of the Minority Student Issues Group*, spearheaded by Shirley McBay (former dean for student affairs, first black person to sit on MIT Academic Council). Report receives national attention.
- 1989 – Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity apologizes for party poster depicting one of their African-American brothers in a degrading pose.
- 1991 – First MLK Visiting Scholar (Prof. Henry McBay) appointed.
- 1992 – Prof. Phillip Clay becomes head of the Department of Urban Studies and Planning, the first black academic department head at MIT. (Source: Institute Archives and Special Collections, MIT Libraries, Cambridge Massachusetts)
- 1993 – Phi Beta Epsilon fraternity denies racial epithets were shouted from a window to four black students walking past the house. About 20 students demonstrate in protest outside PBE and in Lobby 7.
- 1994 – Phillip Clay becomes Associate Provost, the first black Associate Provost at MIT. (Source: Institute Archives and Special Collections, MIT Libraries, Cambridge Massachusetts)
- 1994 – Committee on Campus Race Relations appointed by President Charles Vest “to catalyze activities, develop and distribute information on programs and resources, and administer a modest grants program to support projects proposed by members of the MIT community – with the goal of enhancing multicultural understanding and collegial race relations on campus.”
- 1995 – MLK Visiting Scholar program expanded into MLK Visiting Professors program. Inaugural professors are Profs. Wesley Harris, Richard Joseph, Steven Lee, and Oliver McGee.
- 1995 – PBE and BSU (Black Student Union) reach a resolution to their long-running controversy. The Committee on Discipline eventually concludes that racial epithets were

shouted but that there was not sufficient evidence to implicate the students charged. (See The Tech 02/07/95, <http://tech.mit.edu/V114/N68/conflicts.00n.html>)

Fall 1995 – Beginning of Blacks at MIT History Project by Clarence Williams to “[explore] the black experience, assess our role, and leave a legacy so that future generations may relate to our hopes and disappointments here, to our struggles and achievements.”

1997 – Black Women’s Alliance established (Source: The Tech 02/11/03) <http://tech.mit.edu/V123/N3/timeline.3f.html>

Jan 1999 –MLK Design Seminar (Course 17.920) begins, led by Tobie Weiner. Participants design installations and engage in community projects to celebrate and honor the legacy of Dr. King. See <http://web.mit.edu/spotlight/mlk-design-seminar/>

Fall 2000 – Appointment of Institute-wide Council on Faculty Diversity, “charged with formulating plans for the recruitment and advancement of women and minority faculty throughout the Institute.” Co-chairs: Prof. Nancy Hopkins, Provost Robert Brown & Chancellor Phillip Clay.

2000 – Human Resources Diversity Initiative Process instituted (Source: Reports to President 2000-2001) <http://web.mit.edu/annualreports/pres01/21.00.html>

2001 – Racially charged language sparks a physical altercation between members of the band The Roots and brothers at the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity. (Source The Tech 05/01/01) <http://tech.mit.edu/V121/N22/22ATO.22n.html>

Jul 2001 – Phillip Clay appointed Chancellor (first black Chancellor of MIT). Responsible for continuing the enhancement and integration of education, student life, and campus community. (See <http://web.mit.edu/newsoffice/2001/clay-0606.html>)

Fall 2001 – Report of the Task Force on Staff Diversity (mentioned in Reports to the President 2000-2001)

Feb 2003 – MIT to open admissions to Interphase and MITES to non-minority applicants following lawsuit filed against MIT with US Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (Source: The Tech 02/11/03) http://tech.mit.edu/V123/N3/3mites_inter.3n.html

Feb 2007 – Prof. James Sherley, of the Biological Engineering, initiates twelve-day hunger strike on campus to protest the department’s decision not to promote him to tenure. Leaves MIT June 30, 2007. (Source, The Tech 02/06/07) <http://tech.mit.edu/V127/N1/1sherley.html>

Feb 2007 – Initiative on Faculty Race and Diversity established to conduct “research designed to provide key information needed for developing recommendations and implementation plans to address recruitment and retention of Under-Represented Minority faculty” (Report to the Corporation, 2008)