

*An executive summary can be found on page 2. The following transcript of the Student Forum on MIT & Epstein addresses sensitive topics including rape, violence, and child abuse. These topics are specifically addressed on pages 17, 24, 27, 32, and 49. The following are support resources:*

- **MIT Violence Prevention and Response (VPR)**  
Building E23-499, 24-hour hotline: 617-253-2300  
[vpradvocate@mit.edu](mailto:vpradvocate@mit.edu) or <http://mit.edu/wecanhelpr>
- **MIT Student Mental Health and Counseling**  
Building E23, 3rd floor, 617-253-2916 (nights/weekends: 617-253-4481)  
<https://medical.mit.edu/services/mental-health-counseling>
- **MyLife Services**  
Provides free, confidential 24/7 assistance to faculty, staff, post-docs. 844-405-LIFE (844-405-5433); [info@mitmylifeservices.com](mailto:info@mitmylifeservices.com) or <http://hr.mit.edu/worklife/mylifeservices>
- **Boston Area Rape Crisis Center (BARCC)**  
24-hour hotline: 800-841-8371; [Web chat hotline](#) (open 9 am–11 pm)  
<http://barcc.org>

### **Reporting Resources**

- **MIT Title IX and Bias Response Office (T9BR)**  
Building W31, 617-324-7526  
[titleix@mit.edu](mailto:titleix@mit.edu) or <http://titleix.mit.edu>  
Reporting form is available [here](#).
- **MIT Police**  
Building W89, 617-253-1212 or 100 from a campus phone  
[mitpd@mit.edu](mailto:mitpd@mit.edu) or <http://police.mit.edu>
- **Anonymous MIT Hotline**  
MIT has established an anonymous reporting hotline for whistleblower or other complaints about wrongdoing and violations of Institute policy. The reporting system is hosted and maintained by a third-party vendor called Ethicspoint.  
<http://hotline.mit.edu>
- **MIT Human Resources**  
NE49-5000, 617-253-4251  
<http://hr.mit.edu/complaint>

## Executive Summary

The main themes that emerged from the student speakers at the forum were:

- The revelations surrounding Jeffery Epstein's relationship with MIT and subsequent communication from the President's Office have been triggering for survivors of sexual violence. Students feel that the MIT administration has not done enough to support survivors.
- Students feel that this incident is symptomatic of wider cultural issues concerning the treatment of marginalized groups. In particular, many students raised concerns about academic institutions' exclusion of women.
- These issues are connected to wider concerns about the sources of funding for research at MIT, with specific instances mentioned including engagements with Charles and David Koch, Stephen A. Schwarzman, and Saudi Arabia.
- These issues are not only about the sources of funding, but also about the way MIT research affects global issues and institutions, such as climate change and the military-industrial complex. Students feel that MIT has not sufficiently valued moral character in decisions about fundraising, collaborations, hiring and faculty tenure.
- Students feel that MIT needs to agree upon Institute-wide values, especially concerning fundraising engagements. Guidelines for the implementation and enforcement of those values in the fundraising process should be determined.
- The ramifications of this issue should be discussed transparently with all community stakeholders, especially in terms of the College of Computing.

**MAHI ELANGO:** Welcome. My name is Mahi Elango and I am the President of the Undergraduate Association.

**PETER SU:** And my name is Peter Su. I am the President of the Graduate Student Council.

**MAHI ELANGO:** I want to thank all of you, President Reif, Chancellor Barnhart, Provost Schmidt, Vice-Chancellor Waitz, Dean Nelson, and the many Deans, Department Heads, faculty members, administrators, and staff joining us here today. In the conversations we have had with other students all across campus we recognize the range of responses we are feeling. Shame, sadness, helplessness, anger, confusion, apathy, and hope. Today's event on its own is not intended to provide immediate resolution. It is the first of a series of student organized conversations. Our discussion today is not only about Epstein but also about the many axes about which we can feel and think our way through these difficult questions. It's important for us to consider all of them.

Embedded in this complexity are questions surrounding the message or actions sent to victims of human trafficking and sexual abuse, our cultural treatment of women at MIT, including female representation amongst faculty and students and resources being provided to students, especially those who are survivors of sexual assault. We could also think about our organizational structure and shared governance system, including the role of individual judgment and decision making, the ongoing development of the College of Computing, and integrating accountability. And finally we could think about our process for vetting and accepting funds, including the effects of anonymity and ongoing engagements with other contentious sources of funding, as well as institutional power dynamics, protections for whistleblowers, and our fundamental values around technology and knowledge production.

We hope that tonight we will leave heard. We hope that the typical response of working groups and incremental change will not be a substitute for much needed structural and cultural transformations.

[Applause]

**PETER SU:** Now we want to give as many students as possible the opportunity to express their views tonight, so to ensure that happens we need to lay out a few ground rules that are designed to maintain respectful dialogue and to make this conversation productive. We have asked Bianca, Becca, Gabby, and Kat to be our moderators this evening and to ensure that the rules are followed.

So, because this meeting is for students and because there have been or will be separate but similar opportunities for faculty, staff, and alumni voices to be heard speaking privileges this evening are reserved for students. The additional people on the screen behind me will be allowed to speak if necessary if they need to respond to something that has been said. The time limit for speaking is two minutes so we can get to as many students as possible. We have the clock down there right at the front to help keep time, so it will start counting down visibly and then at 30 seconds the yellow light will flash to help you know to start wrapping up. The moderators will ask anyone who goes over their allotted time to stop and return to the back of the line if they want to continue their remarks.

Now we'll try to be generous and we'll let you complete your thought once your two minutes is up, but please remember that your fellow students also have something to share and be sure to respect that.

When speaking you must use the microphones located there at the front of the aisles, and start with your name, your year at MIT, department, and whether you want to be on or off the record.

So what does that on or off the record mean? This forum is being audio recorded so that we have a record of concerns, questions, and ideas shared here tonight. We will use the audio transcript to put together a summary of the forum that will then be distributed to all students. However, only speakers who specify that they want to be on the record will be included in the summary. We want to remind you that the summary will be public, so that is something to keep in mind. In addition to considering the summary you should also consider whether you want your comments to be potentially reported on in *The Tech*.

A reporter is here this evening covering the forum. We have already talked to *The Tech* and they have agreed that they will only report on remarks that are on the record, so only from students who indicate that they want to be on the record.

For audience members we ask that you be respectful of all speakers, thoughts, and feelings expressed today. Beyond our official audio recording for the purposes of making the summary we ask that you also refrain from recording or broadcasting this conversation. It's really important for people to be able to speak freely and to feel secure that their comments are not being disseminated to an outside audience. Another reason it's important not to record or videotape tonight is that it's possible that individuals may want to share their own stories of sexual harassment, violence, or exploitation. These topics are deeply personal, sensitive, and upsetting for individuals sharing those stories and in some cases for those listening. For those of you who do choose to share your personal stories tonight we applaud your courage. Please know that because the nature and purpose of this forum we will not treating the sharing of your story as an official report that will trigger an institutional response, even though there are plenty of mandatory reporters in this room.

If you want more information about your reporting options the Title IX and Bias Response Office is ready to help and you can contact them directly. We encourage anyone who needs support either tonight or in the coming days to contact either Violence Prevention and Response,

VPR, the Student Mental Health and Counseling Service, or Title IX and Bias Response. You can see their contact information on the screen up here. We also have a lot, several support staff here with us tonight. If you are a support staff member can you please stand and raise your hands and wave so that people know where you are? So, mostly around the room.

Finally, if we run out of time to accommodate anyone who wishes to speak here you are welcome to submit your comments or questions in writing to the email that is shown on the screen. Please again indicate your name, year at MIT, department, and whether you want to be on or off the record. If necessary, if it's like a comment or a question that we need to respond to we will follow up with you or direct your inquiry to the appropriate office.

And with that we would not like to welcome President Reif to the podium to give a few words.

**PRESIDENT REIF:** Thank you, Peter and Mahi, for the introduction, and my thanks to the UA and GSC for organizing this event. I know it took a great deal of time and energy to make this forum happen, so I deeply appreciate your leadership, Peter and Mahi and the UA and the GSC, and everything you do for our students. To allow as much time as possible for conversation I will be brief, but I want to offer a few remarks as we begin.

The past few weeks have been a time of great distress for our community. I expect that the Epstein situation has left you feeling sad, disappointed, hurt, and angry, including angry at me, so I want to begin by saying with my whole heart that I am deeply sorry that actions I took and failed to take have been part of bringing this trouble to all of you, to the students of MIT. As you know, we are taking practical steps to understand what went wrong and make sure it never happens again, but those steps focus mainly on process, and as many in our community have told me clearly we do have a process problem, but what we really have is a culture problem, because as I'm learning our processes and practices reflect some entrenched and destructive attitudes and cultural assumptions at MIT.

They fall into two categories. The first is around money. From conversations across our community I know that many people have deep concerns about sources we have relied on to raise funds for the work of the institute. In this time of growing fortunes and shrinking federal funds we need to look at everything from the changing nature of the donor population to how we should weigh the political, cultural, and economic impacts of donors' behavior.

Second, female faculty, postdoc students and staff across MIT are telling me that this is a last straw moment, that allowing Jeffrey Epstein to stain our reputation was only the latest example of how many in our community devalue the lives, experiences, and contributions of women and girls. We must examine and together figure out how to dismantle those aspects of our culture that make possible the mistakes around Jeffrey Epstein. I am committed to making this moment of crisis a moment of reckoning and a turn to a real accountability, and I believe that in the process there will be a very important role for students, because the future of MIT belongs to you.

Over the last few weeks I have been doing a great deal of listening, and that is what I intend to do this evening. I have learned a lot in conversations with students and I look forward to hearing your perspectives and insights. Drawing on the wisdom of our community, including all of you, I believe that together we can find a way to transform so much pain for so many people into some enduring good for MIT. Thank you.

[Applause]

**PETER SU:** Thank you, President Reif. And with that we would like to turn it over to you, our fellow students. So, if you can please form two lines behind the two microphones in the aisles, and the speaking rules are again displayed on the screen. You guys can start moving. And yeah, the moderators are now officially in charge.

**ELLIE SIMONSON:** Hello. My name is Ellie Simonson and I am a graduate student in the EECS Department, a Masters student, and I would like to be on the record. So, my research at MIT focuses on using technology to fight human trafficking, the same kinds of atrocities that Jeffrey Epstein committed. Technology has the power to revolutionize this space, but unfortunately this area is extremely underfunded, especially in academia. So, MIT pledged to give \$800,000 dollars to organizations that, to a charity that benefits Epstein's victims as well or other victims of sexual abuse. However, MIT could have an additional and profound impact by contributing a pool of funding equal in size to MIT students and researchers who want to fight human trafficking.

I have seen firsthand that MIT students truly want to fight human trafficking. I went to, I attended the Hacking for Freedom Hackathon last fall in October and I saw students from across the departments working together to fight this issue, and students reach out to me and to my advisor to work on our projects. However, many graduate students, they become, they shy away from our work when they realize that there is no funding. I fund myself through a TA-ship, but I'm limited in what I can do, because I have to spend 20 hours a week every semester as a TA rather than spending that time fighting human trafficking.

And so I want to finish by saying that MIT students and researchers have the ability, the problem solving skills to combat traffickers, we have the desire to support survivors, and so I'm asking our academic leadership to fill in that gap of financial support so that MIT can combat this issue together with our global community. Thank you.

[Applause]

**LILLY CHIN:** Hello, my name is Lilly Chin. I did my undergrad here, graduated 2017. I got my Masters in 2019. And I am currently working towards my PhD student, PhD degree. I am part of the EECS Department in CSAIL and I would like to be on the record. As I have stated, by



the time I graduate I will have spent over 35% of my life at MIT. Why is this the case? It's because I love this place. I loved representing MIT when I won the Jeopardy College Championship. And President Reif, when I won you personally congratulated me, saying, "Nerd Pride". It is hard to feel any nerd pride now.

Over the last months we have heard a series of damning allegations from whistleblower emails. Collectively MIT has taken money, thanked, and personally invited a convicted pedophile to campus. Prominent MIT faculty members were invited to Epstein's private island, debated the definition of sexual assault on a 6,000 person mailing list, and used class time to defend their involvement with Epstein. We have seen nothing but a fundamental betrayal of the trust invested in you, the senior administration. But we the students have told you about these concerns repeatedly and consistently. Fossil Free MIT warned you about the dangers of taking the Koch Brothers money. You whitewashed David Koch's obituary. MIT Students Against War protested against your involvement with MBS, Kissinger, and Chinese surveillance companies. You ignored them. It is even the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the November Actions where several brave students fought against MIT's increasing involvement in the military industrial complex in Vietnam. Their words still ring true today.

All of these things have been ignored because donor money has been shown to trump student demands. But this isn't just limited to funding sources. You have consistently valued donor preferences over student culture. The gentrification of New House to Tier One housing. The removal of Bexley and Senior House and the intentional fragmentation of the Burton Connor community, undoing my own personal advocacy as a UA student representative. You are so committed to valuing donors over student demands that you're willing to intentionally bias data collection to support your foregone conclusions, to the point where you violated IRB protocol in the Healthy Minds Survey.

Obviously these undergraduate student life concerns are not remotely on the same scale as willfully anonymizing donations from a convicted pedophile. However, the small things add up. I am angry and frustrated that my value to the institute is only measured in how many questions I can answer on national television. Please do not sweep this scandal under the rug but take it as a learning opportunity to stop ignoring students over donors. Thank you.

[Applause]

**ALONSO ESPINOSA-DOMINGUEZ:** Hello, my name is Alonso. I am a 2020 Math Department, and yes I can be on the record. If we as students are going to contend with this issue we have to be very square about the facts, and so I want to address the way that the administration and that President Reif have framed some of this scandal. President Reif has told us that the scandal was a result of errors of judgment made based on limited available facts about Epstein and that had they known then what we know now they would never have taken his money. Unfortunately for the President basic facts cast doubt on this framing.

By the time Reif's senior team met with Joi Ito in early 2013 regarding Epstein's first gifts to the lab, a meeting in which they agreed with Ito that cultivating a lucrative relationship with Epstein made sense, Epstein had been charged for multiple counts of sex acts with a minor and then convicted on the lesser charge of procurement of a minor for prostitution, the media had widely reported on the perversion of justice that was this slap on the wrist conviction and 13 month prison sentence, more than a dozen additional civil lawsuits had been filed by women who alleged they were molested by Epstein when they were underage, and he had been registered as a level three sex offender with high risk of repeat offense in 2011. This is before Ito cultivated this relationship. This is publicly available information. The facts were not limited. They knew, but they did not care.

By the summer of 2015 when Epstein was invited to campus to network with professors and give input on projects, bringing with him two young women assistants, new allegations had surfaced and extensive media coverage had described them in detail. They knew, but they did not care. They even mailed him an award in 2017 for being such a great donor.

If this has shown us anything it's that there is no dirty money, no money dirty enough that MIT would reject. It is up to us the student body, effectively organized, to force this sad reality to begin changing. Thank you.

[Applause]

**KIMBERLY JUNG:** Hi, my name is Kimberly Jung. I'm a second year grad student with the Mechanical Engineering Department. I'm okay with being on record. So the one word that I have for all of us here is accountability, and I can hear that there is a lot of outrage, and I am also outraged myself, because when I first read those words from President Reif about "I apparently signed this. I didn't really know all the facts" I mean all of us know that as engineers, as leaders, people who sign contracts, if you sign something that's it, and so it's not a great example for all of us, right? But all of us are going to be the future leaders of the world, so if we're going to pin it on one thing it shouldn't be just the administration.

I think we have a real lack of accountability here at MIT, and we can have this at this forum, but you guys have to remember that we got to take this back with us, we have to have these conversations with our PIs, with the professors, with each one of us, because it's we're all like, "Oh yeah we know what right and wrong is" but nobody ever has these sorts of conversations.

And I am coming at this from I have been a combat platoon leader in Afghanistan, I have been a startup CEO, I have been dealing with leadership my whole life, and one thing that I see lacking at MIT is yeah we say we know what is right and wrong, but we never have professional

development sessions where people come together and they speak. And, professors, I really urge you guys to, it should be on you, you guys are the first level leaders, and we have a cultural program, as President Reif said. So, best leaders, when they go away their organizations will run like butter, right? So, President Reif said, “Am I supposed to be like looking through all the letters?” No, because if he was really clear to everybody what right and wrong is and we talk about these things, because it’s not black and white, like just in combat we say, “Okay, should I sacrifice my platoon or should I get the mission done? Should I save this Afghan woman?” Things are not black and white, and I think all of us need to realize that.

So, it’s great to have outrage, but we have to realize that we have competing priorities here, and it’s this is us. So, the thing that most people don’t do for some reason here is after everything that happens we should be asking ourselves what happened in a neutral way, what we did well, what we can do better, and what each of us can do individually. So, this is not just an Epstein problem or a Joi problem or a media lab problem. This is our problem and it’s our culture and it belongs to all of us. We better start exercising our leadership muscles, because all of us are future leaders of this world, and you could be President Reif, you could be Joi somebody. So just don’t blame it on them.

So, I support President Reif staying in and I think you should support all of your professors as well.

**GABBY BALLARD:** Thank you for your comment. We’re going to let other people speak.  
Thank you.

**KIMBERLY JUNG:** Okay. Thank you.

[Applause]

**GABBY BALLARD:** If you have additional comments you can get to the back of the queue.  
Thanks.

**HUSAYN KARIMI:** Can y'all hear me? Okay. My name is Husayn Karimi. I am a Masters student in Electrical Engineering Computer Science and [00:22:47] and I would like to be on the record. And I am with Students Against War. So, yeah, as I mentioned my name is Husayn. I'm an organizer with MIT Students Against War. First I want to thank the UA and the GSC for helping convene this assembly so we as students can decide how we want to move forward during this time of crisis. I won't speak too much about the timeline with Epstein, because I think Alonzo covered that pretty accurately and there is definitely a dearth of facts coming out from the administration, so I think it's central that we actually put out what is true and combat what has been sent out by top leadership.

But my main point is that this process and behavior is not an isolated incident at MIT or by President Reif. Reif says this incident is antithetical to MIT's values, and so the most logical question is what are MIT's values, right? Rafael Reif is a clever guy. MIT's administration is very clever. They use social justice language, we know all the buzzwords and phrases around ethics that have become meaningless, to cover their actual political agenda.

Let's take the College of Computing, which they tout as one that will be at the forefront of ethics. The main funder, Stephen A. Schwarzman, is the CEO of Blackstone, the largest private equity firm in the entire world. This man was a private sector policy advisor to Donald Trump and held a fundraising dinner for him in 2017 that was priced at \$100,000 dollars a plate. This is the man who donated 350 million to MIT for this new college. He and his company spent millions of dollars against a ballot measure in California called Prop 10 which would preserve affordable housing and rent control. The UN actually singled out the Blackstone Group for contributing to the global housing crisis and for pursuing a policy of "aggressive evictions", straight from the UN, in order to protect its rental income streams. Blackstone also has a massive

20 billion dollar financial contract with the genocidal monarchy of Saudi Arabia, which you know very well. Lastly, Blackstone has majority ownership in Hidrovias do Brasil, the company that runs the Amazon terminal, and when Bolsonaro, the fascist President of Brazil, took power he partnered with the company to privatize and develop, or burn down and deforest, hundreds of miles of the Amazon. And that is not the only Amazon. The new Dean of the COC, Dean Huttenlocher, is one of the 10 Board of Directors of Amazon in the United States. So, that's not a conflict of interest at all, right?

So, a question I would pose to the MIT community, what would such a nice man like Stephen A. Schwarzman want with the new College of Computing and what does MIT have to gain? One thing we can learn from the Epstein scandal is that there is no such thing as money without strings attached. How can MIT talk about a new college being at the forefront of ethics when its main funder was a Trump advisor, is pushing poor people out of their homes, partnering with some of the most repressive governments in the world, and burning down our planet? How can MIT possibly reconcile these values? How can they talk about fighting climate change when our very own President Rafael Reif is on the board of Schlumberger, the largest oil field service company in the world?

**GABBY BALLARD:** Okay, we're going to ask you to wrap it up now, and if you want to finish your thought return to the end of the queue.

**HUSAYN KARIMI:** Okay, I have one more, because Students Against War has three minutes, right?

**GABBY BALLARD:** Yeah, it's been three minutes.

**HUSAYN KARIMI:** Okay. When we're funded in some of the largest climate change deniers, when our President meets with Mohammad Bin Salman, the Crowned Prince of Saudi Arabia,

who is engineering a genocide in Yemen that has claimed tens of thousands of lives and has put millions on the brink of starvation. Rafael Reif has refused to cut ties with them and he says he believes in a marketplace of ideas, which happens to include genocide, sex trafficking, environmental degradation, and is essentially exclusive to rightwing billionaires. My last point, and this is a question directly to you, Rafael Reif, after all of this, after being in bed with people destroying the environment, after meeting with and partnering with a genocidal war criminal that is killing tens of thousands of children in Yemen and leading up the most repressive government in the world, and most recently after accepting millions from a serial sex trafficker why should we believe you and why should you still be our President?

[Applause]

**PRESIDENT REIF:** Let me try to answer that question. I think it's an important question to answer. I don't want to argue about the points being made, and I see that a group is making different points here, which I respect. I respect the views of those who have spoken so far and I don't want to argue details over what is accurate and what is not accurate, but I want to tell you just one thing. I spent decades at MIT. I have spent most of my professional career here. Husayn, I'm trying to answer your question. Is that okay? Okay. I am an open book, Husyan. You know how I think. You know what I think. I have written extensively about all sorts of views. People here know me very well for decades. You may have seen some aspects of me in that respect, from the little you have seen, you have a question. I respect your point of view and I respect the point of view of the others who have said the same thing. But I am an open book. People know how I think and people know what I think. I strongly believe that when we make a mistake, as I did in this case, I think we need to learn from those mistakes and we need to try to do the best we can to repair the damage. And I would like us to end in a much better place. And that is, I want the opportunity to be able to do exactly that, to end in a much better place.

**LUIS BECERRA SOLIS:** Good evening, everyone. My name is Luis Becerra Solis and I am a sophomore here at MIT. The department I am in is complicated, so I can't answer that right now. And I would like to be on the record. So, to begin, positive change is created from a community's ability to recognize its shortcomings and negative behaviors, and as Mahi pointed out I believe the forum today is an important step towards joining the institute towards its constituents. Accountability and transparency are a two-way street.

Though I am deeply disappointed and disheartened by the institute's ethics in its interaction with Epstein, I believe our discussion today must be about action and humanity. I implore the administration to candidly recognize its fault in obfuscating and conserving its relationship with a notorious sex offender. However, I believe apologies are only formalities. To create positive change and redress negative behaviors we must act as fervently as we speak.

As an institution dedicated to innovation for humanity we are to hold ourselves to the highest moral standard in everything we do. In order to fully ensure our ethics are just we must be transparent and communicative. We must be equally transparent about our interactions as our contributions to humanity. Undergraduates to graduate students to faculty to staff and to admin, we all deserve a seat at a roundtable. A community is defined by its constituents and if we are to cultivate an ethical MIT we must be open and honest with one another. And I begin with a list of demands, and one, I implore the administration to no further obfuscate any of its interactions with any contributors of any time. Information regarding programs and facilities funding must be made open to the MIT community. Candid and honest discussion must be continuous and will not stop with this forum. Undergraduates and all MIT members must feel capable and confident in expressing their disagreement with institutional ethics and practices when such harm perpetuate, or perpetuate the harm of demographics and individuals. I ask the administration to analyze all of its connections and to candidly inform the MIT community of which it chooses to preserve and why. I ask the administration to match the sum of funds which is received from Epstein to donate to organizations dedicated towards survivors of sexual assault and sex



trafficking. And I additionally ask the administration to continue raising and donating those funds indefinitely.

Any interaction is a reflection of what we are comfortable with and upholding an interaction with Epstein represented complacency with sexual assault and human trafficking. Members of the Media Lab and the institution as a whole were forced to be complicit in turning a blind eye to the serious evil which Epstein committed. All those years we were telling the world what we valued. The provision of monetary donations over the wellbeing of human beings and of children. Poise is not demonstrated in permanent perfection. Our resilience will be defined by the actions we take. By admitting we have failed our communities, by admitting we have hurt our female identifying members, and by admitting we must choose to empower those within and without MIT, to dismantle the systemic obstacles which inhibit the development of an equitable and sustainable humanity. Innovation for humanity does not mean making the future more appealing. It means making the present better.

[Applause]

**AMANUELLA MENGISTE:** Hi, my name is Amanuella Mengiste. I am a second year graduate student in the Chemistry Department and I would also like to be on the record. Two things. The first one is I have been sitting outside, I have been one of the students sitting outside your office, President Reif, every Monday, and the reason for that, one of the primary reasons for that, and a point that I want to bring up is why has the senior administration forgotten to even mention survivors of sexual violence at MIT and women identifying folks at MIT who have been triggered, like myself, by this Epstein incident? This is a nightmare that will not go away. I have not been able to sleep for many, many days, many, many weeks, and it's seriously affected us, and we have not received one email stating resources at MIT. There has been no additional funding given to VPR and similar resources to support us. Why?

Second, I would like to read the list of demands in full or partly endorsed by a coalition of faculty, students, and staff at MIT, as well as MIT alumni and senior women faculty at MIT. Here are the demands. The names of all MIT faculty and administrators who have received funding from Epstein, attended his events, or visited his properties must be released. MIT must cease accepting anonymous donations since these clearly serve the purpose of hiding to the public where and from whom the funds are coming. All documents that have been turned over to Goodwin Proctor must be made publicly available since the administration cannot be trusted with an investigation in which the final reports go to the President and the corporation alone. Reif must issue a community wide apology for not once mentioning the resources available to those who are triggered by the Epstein scandal and his emails on the matter and not once acknowledging the deep traumatic pain felt by survivors on campus. Seth Lloyd, the professor who visited Epstein in prison and then took money from him afterwards and then started to speak and apologize to his undergraduate students in his lectures, must resign. And finally, for accepting the money, despite the available facts, for being dishonest in the emails about this incident, and for much more President Reif and all senior administrators who sanctioned taking Epstein's money must resign.

[Applause]

**LAUREEN MEROUEH:** So first I would like to-- Oh okay. I'm Laureen Meroueh. I'm in Mech E, my fifth year, a graduate student, so I've been here a while. And I'm fine to go on the record. First I would like to say I don't think it's just President Reif that should be up there but also department heads, deans, professors, because you are the ones that are making these decisions. And I want to know why is it that it's the students of MIT that have higher ethical standards than the professors. Why do we have a stronger moral compass than you who are in charge of us when we're the bread and butter of this place, it's just really angering, because I love this place so much, due to the students, and I love science, because I'm a nerd, but then also some of the things I see are just flabbergasting. Like I have been turned away from department

heads when I express concern, I have heard like horror stories from other students, and yet I know so many amazing professors as well and amazing people in charge, so it's like why are you allowing a few bad apples to stay and why is it that some of us feel like you have to be unethical to get to the top, which is MIT? I don't think that should be the case. That's all.

[Applause]

**CHRISTOS SAMOLIS:** My name is Christos Samolis. I'm an EECS graduate student. I'm happy to be on the record. So, Reif, first thing tomorrow morning you resign. If for whatever incomprehensible to me reason you don't plan to resign and you're looking for redemption, I hear Course 22 is looking for funds, and I was thinking maybe Kim Jong Un could be another great option for you to exchange some beautiful letters. It would be very presidential.

This circus is a page pulled out of Trump's playbook. I implore everybody here to think about transparency, because the party being investigated should not get to select the investigative authority. You have a criminal liability whether you like it or not. If you don't see this as a criminal liability you're a charlatan and fuck you. I will apologize tomorrow morning, but in my unhinged fashion tonight many times over fuck you for the mental damage in every single one of these girls' brains during their formative years that you can't undo. This is a standard thank you letter, standard. The word standard means that you sold the emblem of MIT intact with all its prestige to the devil to show off at will to use, to target the epitome of disempowerment. Fuck you. This, the words you used to characterize this. Anyways, to wrap it up, I am not the poster boy for feminism by any means, that is not my record, but I feel very strongly that you should resign, the next President of MIT should be a woman, the next Media Lab Director should be a woman. If Susan Hockfield were President I know this would not have played out like this. Would she not have remembered? Is that the characterization that she would have used?

Seth Lloyd visits this person in prison, reads the Bible to him. I don't know what they did in prison, okay? You would think that maybe for every penny he took to do his research he would at least add a condition that X times that amount would be donated to victims of rape and child abuse. Saw no reason to do this. It was a warm, friendly atmosphere of changed men.

I think that to Joi, Reif, and Lloyd, again three women should emerge as the victors out of this, to the world watching how this plays out it might mean a little something more than how quickly we got back to the very important work taking place at the institute. Nazi Germany had great technology.

[Applause]

**CORMAC O'NEILL:** My name is Cormac O'Neill. I'm a first year Mechanical Engineering Masters student, so a fairly new member of the MIT community, so I'll be sort of commenting in that avenue of perspective. I am totally fine being on the record, but I don't know if it will make much sense in the garbled way that I'm going to be saying things. First off, I think despite how angry I am and upset at these revelations, I do want to personally thank you, President Reif, for coming up and organizing these events. I am really impressed to see MIT dealing with this issue that has affected sort of tertiary education institutions throughout the country in a huge way, and I really do appreciate MIT coming forward and treating the student body as adults, getting our feedback on this comment, and treating it like the large issue that it is. Given that, I also do hope that we as students can rise to the occasion and respond in kind and tackle our own culpability in issues like this and have culpability in creating this culture like adults ourselves.

I myself, for instance, I sometimes wonder if I were to find out that the funding that allows me to live, work, and study at an amazing place like MIT with amazing people all around me, if I were to find out that that funding came from a source such as Epstein what would I do. Would I give up my opportunity to study here, to live here, to work here? I would hope so, but ultimately I

don't know, and I think that's a question that all of us as students should ask ourselves about how willing are we to stand up for our morals when it starts to affect us.

I am also curious to hear from sort of the administration of MIT what are the standards in general throughout universities in the country in figuring out what money to accept, how do they accept money, because looking at MIT's reaction to this, and hopefully as it goes forward into the future I wonder if there could be some way that MIT as the greatest university in this country, and in my opinion the world, to set an example to the industry as a whole and really cause a sea change and effect for culture throughout tertiary institutions. Thank you.

[Applause]

**PATRICK MORAN:** So, my name is Patrick Moran. I'm a fourth year PhD student in Physics and yeah I want this on the record. So, President Reif, on August 22<sup>nd</sup> in an email to the MIT community you informed us that you felt shame and distress in allowing MIT to contribute to the elevation of Jeffrey Epstein's reputation, which in turn served to distract from his horrifying acts. I too feel shame and distress over this scandal and I think that your principle is sound. MIT should not be helping the wealthy and powerful bolster their reputations and distract from their horrifying acts by accepting their philanthropy and allowing themselves to be associated with the prestige of MIT, and I hope that this principle will be embedded in any structural and cultural changes in the coming months and years.

However, my confidence in this administration to consistently adhere to this principle is very low. By comparison we can look at an article that was published in the *MIT News* just one day after your previously mentioned email which eulogized alumnus donor and corporation member David H. Koch. In this article you described Koch as a brilliant philanthropist, expressed gratitude for his longstanding devotion to the institute and for the broad and indelible mark he left on MIT. Nowhere in the article was mentioned the broad and indelible mark that David Koch

will leave on our planet, nor his role in almost singlehandedly stymying climate action for decades through his efforts to spread climate denialism, as climatologist Michael Mann recently stated. Nor was there mention of his and his brother's roles in gutting social programs like Social Security and Medicare, crushing labor unions, stoking the rise of rightwing extremism, or undermining academic freedom through their university donations.

While Koch was praised for his contribution in the fight against cancer, no mention was made of Koch Industries and its subsidiary Georgia Pacific's poor environmental record and contribution to spreading cancer not just in the diffuse global sense but in the very communities where their plants are located. This other legacy of David Koch that went unspoken by Chairman Millard, former President Hockfield, and you, President Reif, I think undeniably falls under the category of horrifying.

We could run the same analysis for many of MIT's other partners, like the fossil fuel companies, the Saudi crowned prince, the weapons manufacturers, and others, and come away with the same conclusions. Clearly the MIT administration cannot be trusted to adhere to basic moral principles which they themselves profess. The model of absolute rule by senior administration in the corporation is broken and needs to give way to true community democracy and shared governance. That does not mean another advisory committee. We have enough of those. That means actual power in the hands of students, faculty, staff, and the local community over decisions that affect their work and their lives. So I just want to end with a question to you, President Reif. Do you feel shame and distress that we are distracting from David Koch's horrifying acts by naming buildings and professorships after him and by offering a lifetime seat on the corporation, and if so what are you going to do about it? Thank you.

[Applause]

**CHELSEA HODGKINS:** My name is Chelsea Hodgkins. I am a first year Master's student in the Department of Urban Studies. I would like to be on the record. In addition to being a first year, within the first week of coming on campus, Patrick who just talked, myself, and our colleague Nathan started an initiative called Un-Koch MIT. I am not here to talk about that today. I am here because of what that signifies.

In MIT's mission statement it says "We're here for the betterment of mankind." Sir, you yourself have used this in the many emails that you have sent out. But I'm here to ask us all today what does that mean? Is it for the betterment of mankind for us to accept money from the single person who funded climate denialism and our generation is here to figure out? Is it for the betterment of mankind that we shake hands with people who are fueling genocides? Is it for the betterment of mankind that we are building partnerships with people who are actively destroying the things that we are here to try to uphold and protect? Is that what the betterment of mankind is for?

I would also like to say something about respect. It is not respectful to sit here and tell us that you're sorry but there is no transparency. That is a double standard. It's not respectful that the MIT corporation is not here. I applaud you that you're here. I appreciate that you're here. And the fact that it took this long, honestly, for me that's water under the bridge from where I'm coming from, but the bigger picture we need to start questioning about is where is the corporation? The corporation is a group of 11 executives and then some other people on a board that are dictating all of this. And to be honest, sir, if you want to help us in a cultural change serve as the door. Help us open that door to get on the board. Release the documents. Stand behind the things that you're claiming to uphold as a President.

This can be about morality and ethics and we can go around in a circle, but until we understand that it is a basic disrespect to lie to somebody's face, whether it's through email or in person, we're going nowhere. So, thank you, and thank you everybody for being here. And I would also

just like to encourage people, as you're expressing yourself please be respectful. There is ways to do it. Thanks.

[Applause]

**CAL GUNNARSSON:** My name is Cal Gunnarsson. I am a second year graduate student in MIT's Biological Engineering program, and yes I would like to be on the record. I'm speaking today as a survivor of sexual abuse and a graduate student who cares about my biological engineering community. I am tasked with amplifying their voices, but I know that I don't speak for everyone. This month I have heard from graduate students who are left questioning how much was concealed and whether our department was involved, students who felt unsure where to get support when the institution appears to prioritize money and the status quo over their wellbeing, who wonder why people in power are silent on this topic. Other conversations revolve around a question, how can we possibly focus on our work when we are spending so much energy just trying to take care of ourselves and each other?

The impact of MIT's actions continue long after any individual event, and MIT's relationship with Epstein is a symptom of a much larger cultural problem that all departments have a responsibility to address. Not all departments took money from Epstein. I am also thankful for the courage of female faculty, faculty of color, and all who spoke up. However, in the past year MIT and its departments have chosen to be silent about things that affect its community members. According to the enrolled student survey, around a third of our grad students do not agree that their department would support them if they experienced discrimination or harassment. It is time to think critically about the messages we sent and continue to send to survivors, to women, to marginalized people with our silence, with our actions and our inaction.

It is not enough to give money back if we do not also spend money transforming our policies and supporting impacted community members. It is not enough to find facts if you do not agree to be



accountable and to act. It is time to be transparent. I am asking you to do all this when the world is watching, when the world stops watching, because it is the right thing to do. Thank you.

[Applause]

**JOSUE LOPEZ:** So, good evening. Josue Lopez, sixth year graduate student Electrical Engineering/Computer Science, and yes I'll be on the record. So, first off, President Reif, I have great respect for you and for the administrators that I work with day in and day out in improving MIT, and that's why it's deeply saddening and disappointing to be where we are right now, because I want to believe in you and everybody in this room who will continue to push MIT forward.

What I really want to focus on is the issue of ethics and truth seeking and our moral standards, and I think people have touched upon the Epstein scandal a good amount, so I won't touch on that, but I will touch on something that you had direct control about, and that was actually the statement you released about David Koch after his passing. And the reason that bothered me so much is not so much because I understand that his donations may have done some good and will continue to do some good, but it's the complete whitewashing of his other legacy that it left behind. And the irony of his money and impact does not go lost on me, because that same very week I lost an uncle from cancer from complications. That very same uncle lived in Houston. So we know that two years ago I actually had to be worried about he himself, my aunt, my cousins that had to go through Hurricane Harvey. Also while at Rice I started about communities of color that had to be kicked out of Katrina, went to Houston after Hurricane Harvey, were impacted the most about that.

So that's why it bothered me so much that you called him a son of MIT. You set him at the highest bar possible in praising the money that he donated to us. You could have called Shirley Anne Jackson a daughter of MIT. David Koch was not at that level. So, going back to truth

seeking, that's why it also really bothers me that it took an external entity, for example the explosive *New Yorker* article, to really understand what had transpired at MIT. It wasn't MIT that released those facts, even though they were at our disposal and we could have found that out. With all of the resources and intelligent people at this place, it took *The New Yorker* for the community to really find out and to get a second email from you.

So, as we move forward I really want to believe in your leadership and the leadership of senior administrations, but for the first time that faith is zero right now. So, I really want to get over, move from apologies and respectful disagreements, and to action and sustained action, and also being acknowledging that once you step down, whenever that is, that someone in this room may be the President of MIT, and how we're going to build infrastructure that will actually allow us to make sure that we don't make the same mistakes again. So thank you.

[Applause]

**ELEANOR GRAHAM:** My name is Eleanor Graham. I'm a senior studying Physics at MIT and I would like to be on the record. I was one of the students in the room when Professor Seth Lloyd delivered his apology to his undergraduate Quantum Computing class. We received no communication from Seth Lloyd prior to this class. When I saw his name on the schedule I assumed it was a mistake, so I walked into that room. Once we were in the room he immediately sat down and proceeded to monologue at us for half an hour. If someone in that room was triggered by that event they would have had no way to leave. The simple act of giving that apology with no prior warning was a disrespect and a disservice to our community, even no matter what else he had said in that room.

Moreover, by giving, by letting Professor Lloyd teach you are outsourcing your moral decisions to us, the students. Each of us simply by choosing what to put in our schedule is being asked to make a moral decision about what we support and what we can condone. That is not our job as

students. It is divisive, it is stressful, and you should be making those decisions. I chose to drop the class, but many people have to struggle with this decision, because you did not put your foot down and say, “Someone who has taken money, who was given money to a criminal and visited in prison and defended that to a class of students is allowed to teach undergrads.” You should not be letting students decide for themselves, be forced to make that decision of putting their own professional development and learning above that, above being moral about that.

And moreover, when you make that kind of decision think about who is continuing that class, think about who is continuing in the field of quantum computation. It’s the people who don’t care. You want to talk about systematic barriers to women in science? There it is. If you want to work in quantum computation you have to sit through a class where a man who visited a pedophile in prison is teaching the class, is monologue-ing about his experience, is making jokes about women. This is why science is difficult for women to get involved in. Seth Lloyd should not be teaching at MIT.

[Applause]

**STEVE GONZALEZ:** I’m Steve Gonzalez. I am a third year in the History, Anthropology, and Science Technology, and Society program. I can be on the record. When I was a child I was tortured, raped, and sexually assaulted by somebody who was more powerful than me. I had no one to turn to, no one believed me, no one was there to protect me. Today I am being treated for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder through MIT Medical, and I know that I am not the only person in this community or the only person in this room for that whose story is that. And what I-- I am sorry, but saying that I am sorry for having selective amnesia about something that you did is insufficient and that every day that you hold this office, every day that you continue to presume to be the leader of this institution is another day of violence against us, against people who are suffering from trauma, people who relive that trauma every day that they’re reminded of the kind of person that you welcomed into this campus, that you took money from.

[Applause]

**MARIEL GARCIA-MONTES:** My name is Mariel Garcia Montes. I am also at the HASTS Department. It's my fourth year at MIT and I'm speaking on the record. I want to start by thanking Steve for this powerful moment of vulnerability and also for the courage of everybody in this room who has shown up with shaky hands to speak. It should not take this courage. And what I am going to ask about today is something that I myself, even though I'm an older student, have struggled to put together, because I do not know if this will have consequences for other people.

We are pointing to the liberation, ethics, and accountability as a way out of this profoundly painful process, and I have a question in the spirit of addressing the problems in the existing paths to this liberation, especially as they fail to recognize the gender based oppression happening within MIT's toxically masculine culture. How can we trust that MIT will form a committee to make ethical decisions on donors when the Ethics Committee of the New College of Computing includes an MIT scholar whose writings in social media accounts deny the existence of gender identity, of non-binary people and arguing for positions that violate MIT's anti-discrimination policies that protect trans and gender non-conforming people?

I have zero interest in changing this person's research agenda. All I want is for MIT to name not just monetary but other types of academic conflicts of interest and create safe spaces for the women, trans women, and non-binary people who are marginalized by them.

[Applause]

**KEVIN WANG:** Good evening, President Reif. My name is Kevin Wang. I'm a second year graduate student in [00:58:28] and I can be on the record. It appears that one of the changes you would like to get out of this entire review process is some institutional change that enables us to

uphold our high moral standards. Speaking about that, I would just like to remind everyone of some of the high moral standards of at least part of MIT and that is the undergraduate admissions process.

I am very proud of MIT's undergraduate admissions policy that goes above and beyond our peer institutions, not just extending needs blind and full financial aid to U.S. citizens but also to international students and not considering giving preference to admissions for donors to MIT and not giving preference for athletic scholarships or legacy applicants. These are some policies that make MIT unique, I believe, in the U.S. where there is only five or six other institutions that uphold the same level of standards. And the high standards that we hold our undergraduate admissions process to, the way we capsule it off from the financial aspects, I would like you to find a way to extend those policies to our research funding and other graduate financial sources.

If we are able to uphold these high standards for the undergraduate process why is it a tradeoff that we need to raise more money on the other side with less standards, or basically I would like to have more clear policies about financial sources that are similar to those that we uphold for the undergraduate process. Thank you.

[Applause]

**ALONSO ESPINOSA-DOMINGUEZ:** Hello again. Alonso [01:00:16] 2020, Math, yes on the record. So you know when I first got here my freshman year I was pretty excited, and this place is an exciting place, lots of interesting classes, lots of interesting research. And while fundamentally it's exciting because the pursuit of knowledge is exciting, but I feel like in this excitement we sometimes forget to critically examine what it is we actually do here and what interests it protects. It seems to me unfortunately that by and large throughout MIT's history the institute has been at the forefront of exemplifying the unholy alliance between the pursuit of knowledge and the pursuit of profit, power, and plunder.

I mean we saw this at its founding in 1862. It was founded as a land grant college, which means it effectively served as an institution to turn out officers for the military and technical people for the military at a time when the U.S. military was carrying out a genocide of its indigenous population with its Manifest Destiny nonsense. We see it with Vietnam and the participation of this institute in the Vietnam War. We see it with the partnerships with companies like Lockheed Martin which design technologies that Wal-Mart uses to spy on its workers and that designs the bombs that Saudi Arabia uses to bomb children in Yemen.

And so we really have to as students pause and let go of this excitement for a little bit and really critically examine what the, whose interest the institute protects, and then we have to understand that if we want to change the nature of that it's not really with talking with the administration. The power to change that lies with us as a student body as long as we have clarity and organization. Thank you very much.

[Applause]

**NICK SELBY:** Hi, my name is Nick. I'm a fourth year in EECS, graduate student, and yes I am fine to be on the record. I just wanted to make sure you got a chance to answer Pat's question from earlier. It seemed to get kind of run over. It does seem really ironic that we as an institute and you in particular give credibility and influence to someone who among a lot of other things is one of the most famous climate deniers. So, do you feel some shame and distress that we are distracting from David Koch's horrifying acts by naming buildings and professorships after him and by offering him a lifetime seat on the corporation, and if so what are you going to do about it?

**PRESIDENT REIF:** As I tried to describe in other forums, we need to revise all the principles that we have been practicing to accept donors and to engage with fundraising and so forth.

Somebody asked earlier what are our principles and how are they different from that of other universities. Right now our principles are not really applicable to what is important today, and your question is an example of that. Right now our principles are very simple, academic integrity. If somebody is going to give us a gift, gives a gift to professor X or the institution the institution does what it does want to do with the gift for research, for education, but it's not controlled by the donor, it's just what we call academic freedom. That's the level of principle we have right now. That may have worked very well in the past. As you just admitted it doesn't work anymore today.

So those principles have to be revisited and that is something we're going to be doing exactly now and we're going to be involving the community what are those principles. The Chair of the faculty is working with the Provost and different faculty groups to discuss this and to engage students. So we need really better principles more in tune with the times, and that's the answer how to do this better for the future.

**NICK SELBY:** Is there a timeline on those revisions?

**PRESIDENT REIF:** Well, I don't know that I can tell you that right now, but I expect that we-- One problem we have right now, as you would imagine, is that a lot of MIT is in standstill. I mean we are all shocked at what happened, we are shocked at the situation we are in. We are extremely careful with people who want to give us money and we don't even know how to, how much information do we need to gather in order to make very comfortable we can accept money. So, to us it's kind of urgent to figure out how to sort out these principles and these practices. So, I would like this to be out in a matter of months, but it's about faculty deliberations. We're going to be appointing faculty to do this and I expect answers to come from them relatively soon.

But I don't have, we haven't gotten to the point of identifying the group of faculty completely right now and after we do that we'll try to just put some speed on those deliberations. We need that kind of clarity.

[Applause]

**LINDSEY BACKMAN:** Hi, I'm Lindsey. I'm a fifth year Chemistry PhD student. And it's fine if I'm on the record. So, I'm a fifth year student. I am a scientist. I am also a survivor of sexual assault and attempted sex trafficking. It took me a long time to openly say that, because I don't want to be known just as a survivor or a woman who is just causing trouble. I want to be known for my work. But it's really hard to do your work when you don't feel safe in your space.

I have noticed this for a long time. I have noticed it since the Me Too Movement where a group of students and I waited for a response for months. We started a petition for a response and we did eventually get one, but that silence, long silence was deafening. I'm really tired of the sympathy towards gender based discrimination but lack of action. I want more resources for VPR and MIT Mental Health. There should be enough counselors for all students here. And it's also still crazy to me that to this day we still don't have a support group for survivors of sexual trauma. I was in one for one semester. It was discontinued after that.

I want to go into academia so badly, because I love science, I love education, I love mentoring, but it's the treatment of women and marginalized groups at this institution is incredibly disheartening, and it's really making me question whether this is a place that I belong. And I just want to make that known.

[Applause]



**[UNKNOWN]:** Hi, my name is Chen. I use they/them or she/her pronouns. I am a first year grad student, PhD student in the Electrical Engineering and Computer Science Department with advisors in the Brain and Cognitive Science Department. And I'm fine with being on the record. I want to make first one point about moral compromise and who has a prerogative to make those sorts of compromises.

So, I think we all make moral compromises, right? I made a moral compromise when I decided to come to MIT. And that's not just a reference to what might now be the questionable moral character of this institution but because on top of that I come, I'm an international student, I come from a Southeast Asian country which shall remain unnamed that I have sharp moral and political disagreements with, but yet I am funded by them right now for my graduate education. And I chose to take their money because despite their, my country's policies towards LGBT people and in particular its continued legal discrimination against gay men and complete systemic neglect and oppression of transgender people like myself, that was the way for me to get out of the country at least for a while and be here.

And so I am very aware of the need, like much of life, you can't avoid making those-- There is no way in which you can completely be free from, be a morally pure person entirely. But I think the issue here is that I am pretty sure that you yourself, President Reif, and Joichi Ito, knew they were making moral compromises when they decided to take money from these donors, but they made these, when these moral compromises had effects affecting far more than just themselves then it's not clear to me at all that they had the right to decide in a closed room that they were the ones that these compromises were okay to make.

When I made my compromise it was a decision that affected myself and my welfare and I decided after weighing all the costs that it was something that I was willing to do, but when these decisions get made in these rooms no one gets consulted or very few people get consulted. In particular the people who are most marginalized and affected by these decisions don't get

consulted, right? So there is a question here of why a few people in a few rooms are allowed the prerogative to make these moral decisions on the behalf of so many when they don't have all the relevant expertise or facts to consider what the morally relevant dimensions of these decisions are. So that is one point I wanted to make. Is there still time to-- Okay, I'll come around.

[Applause]

**GABBY BALLARD:** Hello, I'm going to give one quick comment. We are going to be wrapping up at 8:30, so we really only have, we're going to finish questions at 8:20, which is four minutes left. If people who have spoken want to cede your time you don't have to, you can talk, but if you want to feel free. And yeah, so this will be our last two comments. You can submit--

**PRESIDENT REIF:** May I suggest that those who are standing can speak and then we're done? I can hear everybody. Everybody who is standing let me hear them and then we'll stop.

**GABBY BALLARD:** Wonderful, great. So, we'll have the people who are standing now finish and then that will be it, and we'll, two minutes on the timer, please try to keep your comments to as close to two minutes as possible, or less. Thank you.

**MADDIE PELZ:** Hi, my name is Maddie Pelz. I am a fourth year graduate student in the Brain and Cognitive Sciences Department and I'm fine to be on the record. I'll keep this very short. I just have a short comment in response to your opening statement, and it's that if you need female faculty, postdocs, and graduate students to tell you that sexism is a real problem at MIT you're part of the problem. And it's going to take--[Applause] Thank you. It's going to take a lot of really hard work to address that, and if you're unable or unwilling to do that work we need to find someone who is. Thank you.

[Applause]

**KIMBERLY JUNG:** Hi, I'm Kimberly again, and I can be on the record. So, I retract my former statement about unwaveringly supporting President Reif. I think we have heard some great stuff here in this room and I'm so proud of the students. I think I went to the other, the faculty one, and I'm actually more impressed with the students. And I'm not worried about us. I'm worried about our administration. And at the end of the day the leadership is a contract between the leaders and the people, and the people are speaking right now and it's obvious that there is a lot of stuff to be done. So, I believe that you can stay our President if you do all these things that people are telling you to do, and it's obviously from a very, it's a good place. We're thinking about values. And if you can't then you shouldn't be President, but I think you can, and I support you for doing that, but I also say this to the department heads, and I see sometimes a just do day to day business, but no, this is way more than day to day business.

And for the people who are not in this room who are the ones who should be here, but they never come, right, they're the ones that we need to be taking accountability of. So, all of us here obviously are the people who come to these things because we think about these things. We need to be able to bring these conversations to the students who are not here who don't care who are going to propagate the same old shit that we have always propagated, and same thing with the professors who should be here who treat their students like shit, because there are a lot of them like that. So, let's do this together. Let's keep everybody accountable and let's move forward, and if it's not happening we need new people.

[Applause]

**STEPHEN FILIPPONE:** Hello, my name is Stephen Filippone. I'm a fifth year student in Material Science Department PhD program, and I would like to be on the record. So, I actually came up here to follow the comments of the previous speaker, and I was inspired the first time

too, because I thought we're hearing from a lot of people, there is a lot of pain, there is a lot of anger, but I just want to say that I think we're having a problem in this area because there are questions and moral gray area where there aren't just good guys and bad guys. And we haven't answered those questions in any meaningful ways. And we can't do that now, but I think also again to follow up on one of the things that you had just said was that there is a room here full of people who care, especially people who are really angry, but there is the whole rest of the community who is not taking part in these decisions and is not involved. And for me personally I am one of these people who I don't see it this way, I don't want you to resign, I could see the trouble in making a lot of these decisions, especially when we're talking here about the Epstein case, but what has really happened is we have opened the door to a number of past events that have happened in my time here about who we take money from. And that's a very tricky question. I would just urge everyone that these, although you may think that you know the answer to this question, I think it's perhaps a time to have a lot more discussion on it, and if we're not willing to do that, if what we want is an immediate change now to make us happy then frankly I don't think we're going to get anywhere. Thank you.

[Applause]

**ANNA IVANOVA:** Hi, my name is Anna Ivanova. I'm a third year PhD student at Brain and Cognitive Sciences and I am fine with being on the record. I am going to follow up on the line of reason that Steven just brought up. I am here to acknowledge that the issues we're discussing here are not black and white, they are complex, we would not be having this forum today if donor donations were a black and white solution with clear ethical guidelines.

Clearly a lot of people thought that it was okay to take money from Epstein. Clearly a lot of people think that it's okay to do the same thing today if they're not speaking up here right now. And in order to move forward we need to be very clear on what the ethical standards are, and

they differ across different people in this community, so we need to have established guidelines that at least most people agree with.

You said in your opening statement that you made a mistake and it will never happen again hopefully, and so I think it's really important for you and other administrators to address what exactly was the nature of that mistake and what are the guidelines that make sure that this mistake won't happen again. Without this words don't really mean very much. Specifically I would love to see an email outlining current donor donation guidelines and how they would change to make sure that they comply with clear ethical standards. And I would also encourage department heads to issue similar statements. I really appreciate my department head being here today. Thank you.

[Applause]

**AMANUELLA MENGISTE:** Hi, I'm Amanuella back again. Yeah I'm fine being on the record. A lot of great points have been raised today, but if anything I want to emphasize this one even more. People have made arguments about personally I might think some things are black and white and other people may disagree, but there is one thing that is black and white, right, and so many courageous people spoke up about it. It's that MIT's and the administration's treatment of women and survivors of sexual violence, which has been silence, right? I just want to bring this up again. Silence. We have not received a single email addressing this. We have not received a single email about resources. We, like Lindsey just said, there used to be a group, a support group. That is no longer here.

So, this is a black and white issue. Nobody is making the argument today that like we shouldn't support people who have gone through such traumas, and the people that you heard from today are the very, very few who are brave enough and who have healed just a little bit to like relive their trauma to convince you, but there are many, many more at MIT who are not saying

anything, because it's so traumatic to them. And they have not-- They have been erased. Like you haven't-- Nobody has addressed this. How has nobody addressed this? What does that say about people in leadership positions if the first thing that comes to mind isn't, "Oh my god, this man is a terrible man. We are now known associates of this man. We have allowed this man on our campus. People who hear about this will be triggered by it. We have to do something to support them and to help them." What does that say about us? What does that say about our culture? That's a question to you, President Reif. That's a question to the senior administration, but that is also a question to the students. What does that say about our leaders and what does that say about the culture of MIT? And that is a black and white issue that I think we all can agree on, and if we don't then maybe we need to go back a few centuries and come together on that, because that's black and white.

So, I just want to reiterate that. Please, please don't forget those people, because you have.

[Applause]

**EMILY SULLIVAN:** Hi. This is a little short. My name is Emily Sullivan. Oh my god, thank you. I am a class of 2022 and I am in a Course 20 right now. I will be on the record. To start off I want to say that I came to MIT because I wanted to learn. That was the reason I came here. I thought it was the best college in the world that I could go to for what I want to do. And so I came here. I didn't come here for this. I didn't come here to stand in this room and have to talk to a room full of people about this issue that I think is really, really, really important.

Secondly, I would like to address something you said earlier. It was the thing that made me stand up in my seat and walk down. And you said something about academic integrity. And I think maybe this is just me, so correct me if I'm wrong, but I came to this school wanting to study biology, I came to this school along with that love of science and that love of STEM wanting to do it ethically and wanting to do it in a way that was helpful, in a way that was positive, in a way

that I thought was right. And I think it matters in that sense then where funding comes from for that. I think it matters that we took money from Jeffrey Epstein to fund research projects, no matter how beneficial and amazing those projects are.

The fact is that this supports Epstein. This provides credibility to him. And I think that is the fundamental cultural issue that we have at this school and that exists on this planet and is something that needs to change. MIT is an institution with power and MIT should use that power in a way that I, I mean honestly it should use this power in a way that is, has integrity. And thus far it's really, really hard to see that.

And finally in terms of checking donors, I think that a Google search might have worked for Jeffrey Epstein, but anyways.

[Applause]

**EDGARDO LETONA:** Hello. I'm Edgardo Letona. I am a sophomore studying Economics and Political Science here. I would like to be on the record. I come from an underdeveloped country in Latin America. I want to talk a little bit about the technologies that we have, MIT is doing, that what is the purpose of them at the end, because I know it's important to understand where the money comes from, but after that with the knowledge produced here where does that go?

So, in the context of the Cold War my country wasn't good, that it was going with a wave of Socialism coming in Latin America, and thus the United States' foreign policy decided to intervene, and the technology that was used to intervene in my country and was used to intervene in most of Latin America and that is used to intervene now in current conflicts, current levels of conflict is used, because of the industry and military complex, it's being used to intervene in those conflicts as well. And I do understand that it's because of the interest of the United States,

it's because of the interest of different nations and of different powers, because that is what I study. But as MIT I came here because I wanted to do better for the humankind. I wanted to contribute somehow to help humankind and to help people, to help the people in my country, to help the people to the poor people in my country, to the poor people around the globe, because I know how hard it is to grow up where there are no resources around, how hard it is to grow up when there is no education, when there is-- Well, thank god I did not, I wasn't in the generation of the war, but I know how my parents grew up.

And MIT is contributing with technologies like that. MIT is producing engineers that go to the military industrial complex to produce technologies like that. And I believe that we have to change, this is a big structural problem that we have to change in general to actually focus our thirst of knowledge, our thirst of knowing more about how the world works, focus it to do better and to actually what I came here to do, to do the betterment of humankind. Thank you.

[Applause]

[01:24:21]

**NEIL GAIKWAD:** [Neil sent a revised version of his comments, which have been included in the appendix.]

**[UNKNOWN]:** Thank you so much for your comments.

[Applause]

**[UNKNOWN]:** A lot of the pressure being the last speaker, so I'll try to keep this short. But again I'm Chen. I'm a first year in the EECS Department. I just I guess want to make a brief note on why is it that institutions like MIT often find it so tempting to, despite the dubious moral character or highly dubious moral character of its donors to still take that money, right? And as



someone cursed with, often cursed with a consequentialist moral outlook, I think I can sort of understand why the frame of mind which leads to this sort of thinking, right, the sort of acceptance of that money, which is that you think this shady person comes to you and offers to give you money, right, and you can either take it or leave it, right? And if you take it you can use it to do perhaps really good work, do really good research, perhaps even improve the world, and if you reject the money then who knows what the person will do, right? He will just use it, and it's often a he, to improve his own, increase his own wealth or perhaps donate it to someone else with less noble, novel goals in mind, right?

But I think that is often premised on the idea that institutions like MIT are small actors in the world, that somehow by refusing these donations cannot change the moral landscape and moral norms by which institutions operate by. Thankfully our society has come to a point where there is more or less immediate moral outrage at the crimes of someone like Jeffrey Epstein. Everyone knows that being a rapist is just morally horrific and that's why there was more or less immediate moral outrage towards him when the news broke. That same sort of moral outrage unfortunately doesn't exist in our society towards people like David H. Koch or Steven A. Schwartzman, despite the many things that some of the students here have listed what they have done, right?

But, and it's easy to think, "Okay, I'll just take this money, because if not he'll give it to someone else," right? But I would push the institution to think what if instead of that MIT had taken a leading institutional role in saying, "No, we are not taking this person's money" and that had been all over the news, instead of what is all over the news now that had been all over the news, and *The New York Times* had said, "MIT refuses Jeffrey Epstein's money, because he was previously a convicted sex offender." It's in the news because MIT rejects Steven A. Schwartzman's money, because his money is being used to burn the Amazon down. MIT rejects David H. Koch's money, because he is using it to fund climate denialism. And that had spread to

other institutions and become the new norm that had changed the way our society runs and what it accepts in this world, right?

I think that's a future that we can imagine and that I would like to see us living in, and that's a real possibility that must not be forgotten when we're thinking about making these decisions.

[Applause]

**PETER SU:** Thank you all for sharing all that you did tonight. Before we close we're going to turn it over to President Reif for a few closing remarks.

**PRESIDENT REIF:** First off all, let me just say that, making clear that I respect the views you expressed, quite a few of them were of course harsh, but I respect them. You have other reason to think many of the things you do. I would have enjoyed much more to have actually a conversation, because quite a few of the things you said, they make sense when you connect the dots, but there are other ways to connect the dots, and perhaps in a conversation we can learn from each other. We don't have a chance to do that tonight. I would love to figure out a way to do that, to have a conversation so that we can actually hear each other, truly hear each other and learn from each other, truly learn from each other. I learn from you. I learned from you tonight. I understand how you feel and I really, really respect the views you expressed. But for us to move forward it would be great if we can just listen to each other, and I have to figure out a way to do that. That's point number one.

Point number two is that it was extremely painful to see how the survivors are reliving their pain because of all this situation. It is really extremely painful to see and I am extremely sorry to see you reliving all of that, all the horrible experience because of what has happened. On the silence I'm going to check my statements, I thought that I commented on that. Perhaps I didn't. If I didn't I apologize for that. I thought I did, but perhaps I didn't, and if I didn't that was a

tremendous oversight. It is extremely painful what you went through and I am just horrified to see that all of this is reliving everything you are going through.

My last point to make is that I really thank you all for attending and for expressing your views, and I would like, as Peter and Mahi said earlier when we started, that this is just the beginning of a conversation that I really would like to have with as many of you as I can. Thank you.

[Applause]

[01:33:17]

**MAHI ELANGO:** Quickly, thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much for coming. As a last remark, if you would like to add further remarks to this forum's summary please email [student-forum-record@mit.edu](mailto:student-forum-record@mit.edu) Your words will not be forgotten. Thank you.

[Applause]

END OF AUDIO

***APPENDIX***

***Comments Received by Email***

**ROBERT KAO**

The issues of the type exposed through the Epstein scandal extend in scope far beyond the confines of the MIT community. They have relevance to the relationship between knowledge itself and society and the people in it.

Although MIT is an institution of higher education, the education of any individual begins far before they start higher education. Among the world's population, education is extremely unequal, with a substantial proportion of the people lacking even basic education. And education in this society is not based on personal merit, but rather is profoundly influenced by the social conditions in which the people grew up. More attention needs to be devoted to provision of education to people who lack it and would benefit the most from it. Figuring out better ways to educate the students of MIT, who are already relatively privileged among the world's people, is a comparatively less worthy goal. That is especially true if when the quality of education at an institute is so high that it is difficult to improve it any further, that institute has to draw on morally bankrupt holders of power to squeeze ever more quality onto its educational and academic activities.

Competition is destructive to any activity that requires the combined efforts of many people. The academic system must discourage competition of any degree and empower everyone to join it, learn from it, and contribute to it. That means the low acceptance rates of some of the finest educational institutions of the world is a problem; both (1) people who applied and narrowly failed to meet the standards for acceptance, or who were rejected solely because there are not enough spaces, and (2) people who were forced to live through social conditions so unaccommodating that they, despite their potentials as humans to succeed academically were, were never given a reasonable chance to develop and apply it, should not be barred from an excellent educational experience. In addition, the process of entering a career as a professor is becoming more and more grueling with the number of tenured positions being extremely small and more and more people having to work as lowly postdocs and adjunct faculty instead. That

kind of arrangement silences many people who could otherwise have provided valuable contributions to academic knowledge. Also bad is the fact that knowledge is being privatized and made inaccessible to ordinary people, both through access restrictions and through use of esoteric, impenetrable language characteristic of academic writing. Deep structural changes involving the entire society are necessary to create a world in which knowledge can be freely acquired, shared, improved upon, critiqued, and used for the benefit of mankind.

Does all of that affect me? Yes. What I want to do is to become a physicist so that we know more about the laws of nature. My hope about the products of my career is that future generations will be able to use new knowledge to which I will have contributed in order to make more informed decisions for the benefit of society. However, an academic system in which competition exists at all levels leaves my future very uncertain. It seems like the number of academic positions that will be available in the future will be influenced by the most powerful members of society. Which means that if I do not satisfy the interests of those powerful people, then I will not be treated well by academia, no matter how hard I try. And the only way to satisfy their interests is to forsake ethics, which I refuse to do.

Academic freedom ought to be a fundamental right to everyone who wishes to pursue serious academic work rather than be limited to the few who manage to survive the protracted, opaque, and uncertain track to tenure. That is the only way in which the full potential of humans' capacity to do complex work can be realized in an actual society. Moreover, it may not be abused, as has been done by Seth Lloyd.

MIT's track record is completely incompatible with any interpretation of the goal of making the world better. There is more than enough knowledge to solve many of the pressing problems humanity is facing, but not enough of it is actually applied.

I want MIT to contribute to the creation of a world in which the producers of academic work are given more respect, power over academic activities rests with the common people, there are no barriers for anyone to living a decent life, including entrance into academia, science and technology are applied for the benefit of the people, and ethical people are given assurance while morally unacceptable people who are sufficiently wealthy are pay their deserved penalty.

President Reif needs to do more than apologizing. He needs to make amends to everyone who suffered as direct or indirect results of his actions as president of MIT, including Yemeni children whose lives were shattered by war, tenants who are struggling with affording housing, villages threatened by climate change and pollution, and Epstein's victims. He needs to honestly commit to steering MIT in a righteous direction that serves the needs of the common people. He must also play a role in reshaping the entire society so that a world that is more conducive to progress can be realized. If President Reif is unable to bear those burdens, then it is right for him to resign and live in poverty from now on.

Thank you.

**STEPHEN FILIPPONE**

Hello,

Reif acknowledged the need for an actual conversation on this issue. I would like to second that motion. One possible way to do that is to organize a deliberative poll. A day in which a large group of the MIT community meet to discuss the issues. The goal is to gauge people's opinions before and after a long conversation to see how opinions change. This is a widely tested and studied democratic tool employed by many countries and institutions.

Anything less than a day-long conversation would fall short of time we need to invest in this topic. Really we would need something like a conference. I offer the deliberative poll as one way to structure a day or weekend-long conversation.

This can go on the record.



**NEIL GAIKWAD**

Dear President Reif and MIT community members,

I'm Neil Gaikwad, a PhD Student at the MIT Media Lab.

I am a survivor; I was sexually abused as a child when I was chasing my dreams to represent my country in the game of Cricket.

The recent events at MIT and elsewhere in the academy are stressful and hurtful for everyone, especially for the survivors and people at MIT and the MIT Media Lab. I have a sincere request for everyone, to staff, deans, professors, students, and every MIT community member: **please be kind and empathetic** to survivors and please be kind to the MIT Media Lab students and community, regardless of their color, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, or religious beliefs.

The MIT Media Lab students are experiencing bullying, despite having no role to play in this at all. These students come to MIT from all over the world to make an impact through their research. They are brave and their accomplishments are as good as other researchers in the world. They are winning the same prestigious awards and publishing articles in top journals as well as conferences, etc., as others do. If these students reach out to you for advice or guidance, please listen and support them. For many students, it is their first month of the school, here at MIT, it is their first month here in the United States. ***Please be kind!***

I condemn the leaderships' decisions and processes that have led to accepting money from a sex offender who is also known for prostituting minors. I think somewhere deep down as scientists and researchers we need to reflect on the academic culture as well as fundraising processes here at MIT and elsewhere in our research communities. People in power must reflect about how their actions can potentially put others at risk, marginalize people in our community, discourage many from joining scientific forces, and elevate the reputation of the criminal. When it comes to hiring

or partnering, I always hear about whether or not candidates are stars in their field. Why not investigating their moral character and values? We need to cultivate a caring community and culture that protects human values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. And **\*REJECTS\*** the sex traffickers, sexual predators, or people who hurt our planet. There is a need to raise the bar of accountability in such situations.

President Reif, I come from a small town, and MIT is like a Temple of education and research for me. I am looking forward to the future where I and many others in this community, and elsewhere in the world will feel safe to send their daughters, sons, and sisters to MIT for their studies. Today, I don't have that confidence. However, I have faith in our community. If we can't make cultural and procedural change happen here at MIT, then where else it can be? We will have to come together to create a safe future where institutional processes will not let anyone compromise human values at any cost. I do recognize that there is a lot more complexity involved and answers to many questions are not binary. However, we need to decode this complexity, address it, and set up an example for others to follow. We need to put human values at the center of every action and support our community members who are at risk or marginalized. This is a litmus test for defining us. ***Let me know how I and others can engage, partner, and help to achieve that better future for everyone.***

I conclude with Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore's Vision for independent and democratic India. Maybe this vision will guide many of us towards a better future for our beloved institution.

### **"Where The Mind is Without Fear"**

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high  
Where knowledge is free  
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments  
By narrow domestic walls  
Where words come out from the depth of truth  
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection  
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way  
Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit

Where the mind is led forward by thee  
Into ever-widening thought and action  
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

I appreciate your time and consideration. Thank you for your listening!

**GEORGE LORDOS**

The individuals who decided it was OK to take money from Epstein likely aren't the cause of the problem but a symptom. The problem was greed eclipsing values.

It is essential that MIT should choose a set of values - societal and academic - and then live by these values with zero compromises. It will make MIT stronger in the long term. In fact MIT already has these values in principle, we now need to apply them in practice and to do so throughout the Institute.

Addressing the causes means that the academic / research side of the Media Lab should immediately align with the rest of MIT, regardless of the impact this may or may not have on the Media Lab's fundraising ability. For example,

- "Demo or die" needs to go. It should be "publish peer reviewed research or die".
- The excessive publicity and PR machine which ended up becoming an alternative to real, painstaking research needs to go. The Media Lab should be publishing in journals, not on clickbaiting websites.
- The whole notion of letting in people with no GRE's (but who have slick fundraising skills) needs to go, because many of these people will then turn around and tell the world that they're MIT researchers when they don't have enough facility with words or numbers to actually produce real research work that MIT would be proud of.