



Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) –Overall RPI Best Practice Award Winner 2016

MIT understands the value of recognition as a positive way to reinforce attitudes and behaviors that support a successful, dynamic organization. The MIT mission includes: We seek to develop in each member of the MIT community the ability and passion to work wisely, creatively, and effectively for the betterment of humankind.

MIT understands that it is important for recognition to be given often and regularly, both in public and in private, and with clear information about the benefit to the Institution. At the 2016 RPI Conference, MIT was awarded the Best Overall Best Practice Award.

Below is a summary of each of the RPI Seven Best Practice Standards for their Recognition Program.

Standard 1: Recognition Strategy

MIT's Rewards and Recognition (RR) program was designed to recognize exceptional work specifically from MIT staff. The program includes all levels of employment and all Departments, Labs, and Centers (DLCs). MIT uses a three-tier model to deliver recognition: the MIT Excellence Awards, departmental Infinite Mile Awards, and local Spot Appreciation awards. The program is managed by a central Program Administrator, and by 24 RR Key Contacts across the Institute. This structure allows for continuous improvement, cross-program communication, and a close alignment with the multiple work cultures found across the decentralized MIT community.

- **Appreciation Awards** ("Spot" awards)
 - Delivered at the time of achievement
 - Thank you notes, cards, gift certificates, movie tickets, etc
 - Tied to recognition for a measurable goal, achievement or contribution
 - Administered by local RR Key Contact

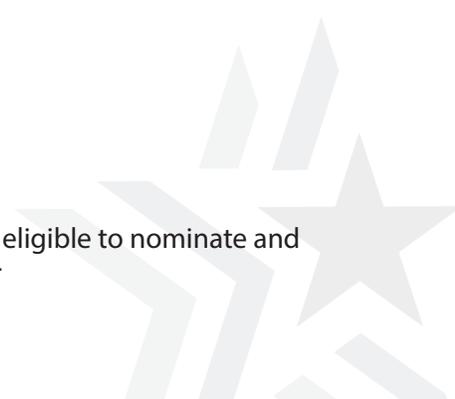
Spot Appreciation awards are the first tier of the recognition program.

- **Infinite Mile Awards:**
 - Annual, department-centric awards that support strategic goals of each organizational area
 - Cash awards for teams/individuals
 - Recognition part of lunch/dinner/reception
 - Administered by RR Key Contacts and criteria determined locally

Infinite Mile awards are the second tier of MIT's recognition program, and provide an opportunity for staff to connect closely with department culture and values. Events are tailored to the specific audience in each DLC and made unique by the inclusion of poignant themes, speakers, or entertainment. The MIT Libraries' Infinite Mile included a performance by the in-house band, The Dewey Decimals; MIT Medical's theme "An End to Construction" had senior staff wearing safety vests and hard-hats.

- **MIT Excellence Awards + Collier Medal:**
 - Formal, annual, Institute-wide awards
 - Cash awards for teams/individuals
 - Presented by MIT President and senior leaders
 - Attendance 600+
 - Administered by RR Program Administrator

The third tier represents the highest honors that MIT staff can receive. All MIT staff are eligible to nominate and receive awards, and the ceremony is a prominent event on the MIT calendar each year





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Standard 2: Management Responsibility

To ensure that the recognition program would be adopted throughout all areas of MIT, the originating Committee worked collaboratively to build a program and consensus. With buy-in from senior leaders, the R+R Committee established a network of 24 RR Key Contacts across MIT. These structures and designated administrators have meant that senior leaders are involved where they are most needed: communicating and encouraging the use of the program by staff.

Standard 3: Recognition Program Measurement

MIT measures the success of the R+R program in multiple ways. One is by assessing outreach during key nomination periods to be sure that the programs are accessible to all staff. MIT's dedicated web pages on the recognition program contain critical information on nominating for the Excellence Awards + Collier Medal, and also for the other tiers of the recognition program. Nominations for the 24 annual Infinite Mile awards can be reviewed annually to note areas for improvement and participation.

The MIT Excellence Awards + Collier Medal ceremony have enjoyed increasing attendance every year; a promising indication that more and more staff are not only aware of the event, but enjoy participating in it.

Standard 4: Communication Plan

Communication and outreach for the MIT Excellence Awards + Collier Medal are handled by the RR Program Administrator. Calls for nominations, information about the process and award criteria are branded with the award-specific logo and linked to the RR website for ease of use. In addition to email and print communications, the RR Program Administrator presents information at a series of staff and team meetings across MIT throughout the nomination period. These face-to-face meetings identify a point-person for questions and keeps the messaging fresh and specific to the group attending.

Outreach for the 24 DLC Infinite Mile awards and the local Spot Awards are handled by the RR Key Contacts for that area. These are scheduled and developed by staff in the department, and are similar to what is used for the MIT Excellence awards + Collier Medal.

To reach the widest possible audience of MIT staff, the recognition program uses a variety of tools for outreach:

- a dedicated website
- department intranet sites
- campus digital displays
- online videos
- campus bulletin board flyers
- outreach emails
- nomination information packets
- presentations and events around campus
- News items on the MIT News page
- branding on thank you notes
- signature lines on emails
- word of mouth





Recognition Professionals International

Standard 5: Recognition Training

From the start of their time at MIT, staff are acquainted with the recognition program. Staff at every level attend New Employee Orientation where the recognition program is explained. New staff are invited to attend department recognition events and/or participate in planning and implementation of those events.

Recognition training has resulted in better and more efficient use of the program. Staff are better acquainted with the structure of the program and what are acceptable uses of the program budgets. Most importantly, with the program in place more than 16 years, the participation continues to grow and evolve as recognition becomes a mainstay in MIT's culture.

Standard 6: Recognition Events and Celebrations

MIT believes that a critical component of recognition is a celebratory event where recipients are acknowledged formally with family, friends, and colleagues attending. The recognition program is structured to include the annual all-MIT Excellence awards ceremony, and the 24 department-centric Infinite Mile events. The RR Program Administrator plans and implements the MIT Excellence Awards + Collier Medal and the 24 RR Key Contacts plan and implement their annual Infinite Mile events, among others. RR Key Contacts develop events that connect to different departmental cultures and keep these events fresh, engaging, and focused on recipients. The wide variety of the Infinite Mile events demonstrate the creativity possible when a flexible model is used.

Standard 7: Program Change and Flexibility

The RR Program Administrator is the point person for initiating changes, with input from senior leaders and RR Key Contacts. Award categories, the nomination, and selection process are under continuous review for the MIT Excellence Awards and the 24 Infinite Mile and Spot awards. As the administrators, RR Key Contacts act as change agents for their units, and an advisory board for the R&R program overall. Beyond regular correspondence, the RR Program Administrator and RR Key Contacts meet twice yearly to review and advise on upcoming changes to the recognition program.

MIT is proud of the global diversity of its staff, and the recognition program is proud to honor that diversity. In 2012, with support from the Manager of Staff Diversity, a significant change was made to the Fostering Diversity Award to change to the Advancing Inclusion + Global Perspectives Excellence Award, better reflecting MIT's distinct culture.

