2018 SoE IMA Awards: Suggested Remarks

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Intro: ANANTHA

Good afternoon. I am Anantha Chandrakasan, dean of engineering. I would like to welcome you to the 18th annual Infinite Mile Awards.

I am delighted to join you in celebrating members of the School of Engineering community who have made major contributions to MIT’s mission to advance knowledge, educate the best and brightest, and help make a better world.

Since its inception in 2001, the School of Engineering’s Infinite Mile Awards have been given to more than 250 members of the school’s administrative, support, service and sponsored research staff. Nominations are made by department heads and laboratory directors with input and comments from fellow staff.

The winners this year have led by example and have demonstrated true initiative. They are the colleagues who take on the extra work assignment without formal recognition, and who keep enthusiasm and office morale high.
You will hear more about the individual award recipients in a moment. For now, I will tell you they share three excellent traits: a habit of going the extra mile, a commitment to serving the greater good, and a deep belief in the value of MIT.

I believe recognizing and rewarding people for such valuable service is deeply important. The IMA awards support our objectives for excellence, and our goal of attracting, retaining, and celebrating the world’s best talent.

With that in mind, I want to thank the people who helped organize this event: Yuvie Cjapi (chaapi), Lesley Rock, Carolyn Blais (blaze), Chad Galts, Meg Murphy, Lillie Paquette, Greg Soloviev, Donna Savicki, and Sue Liang. Now I will hand things over to four individuals who have also been instrumental in this effort and will read citations about the winners: Eileen Ng, Assistant Dean for Finance and Administration; Catherine Kim, Assistant Dean for Human Resources and Administration; Tia Giurleo (Gir-Lae-O), Manager of Development Services & Special Projects; and Mary Ellen Sinkus, Administrative Officer. Eileen will get us started.
EILEEN: Since their inception in 2001, the School of Engineering’s Infinite Mile Awards have been presented to over 250 staff members. The awards are presented to individuals and teams whose work is of the highest caliber. The recipients stand out because of their level of commitment, energy, and enthusiasm.

Please join me in acknowledging our first IMA awardee, Sherene Aram of the Microsystems Technology Laboratory (MTL).

Sherene joined MIT in 2003. In 2011, she moved with HST into the School of Engineering, and in 2015, she became the Administrative Officer in MTL.

As one faculty nominator tells us, Sherene joined MTL at a time when the launch of MIT.nano loomed large as a challenge for the lab. She quickly learned the unique culture, history and organization of MTL, and developed an appreciation for the
opportunity that the launch of MIT.nano represented. She immediately set out to chart an administrative path forward for both the transition and for the future of MTL. Sherene was extraordinarily creative and effective in charting a path for MTL and also in supporting the MIT.nano team. Thanks to Sherene, the transition has been more collegial, and far easier and smoother than expected.

Yet another supporter writes, Sherene brings enormous knowledge, energy and enthusiasm to her work. She does an outstanding job, well above and beyond what is expected. She constantly demonstrates her respect for MTL’s and MIT’s culture. Her work is highly appreciated by the broader MTL community.

And from another faculty supporter, Sherene has been an outstanding Administrative Officer for MTL. She is smart, diligent, and exhibits an impeccable work ethic. She is eager to take charge and at the same time, is pleasant, widely respected, and
respectful. She is a fantastic team player.

Sherene’s intelligence and wit combined with her caring and helpful attitude make her a pleasure to talk to. She is adept in all areas of her work and is able to accomplish all tasks well even when shorthanded. She is an efficient manager and considerate of others. She knows the strength and limits of each staff member and always put herself in their situation when assigning responsibilities.

Sherene will be retiring from MIT this summer, and while her tenure at the MTL has been relatively short, her legacy will be long-lived. Thank you Sherene, for all you have done for the MTL and for MIT. 346
TIA: PAUL BARONE

In 2010 Paul Barone started as a research scientist in the MIT Center for Biomedical Innovation, a team tasked with growing and sustaining a newly formed academic-industry consortium. Quickly Paul started to make an impact and was promoted to Associate Director and was recently promoted again to Director of CBI’s biomanufacturing initiative, BioMAN and CAACB. During his tenure he has taken the initiative to move forward many aspects of the project, including management of industry participants around data collection, analysis of the data collected, and drafting of a detailed report and subsequent manuscript for publication.

One nominator writes: “Paul navigates the process of working with 15 to 20 stakeholders and pushing toward conclusion with skill and ease. Paul has not only proven himself to be a highly competent engineer who can hold his own with industry practitioners, but a masterful leader, capable of moving groups of individuals forward on complex topics.”
In 2014, CBI was awarded funding to develop an innovative online course on biomanufacturing for the edX platform. Paul not only expertly co-taught the course with Professor Chris Love, but went above and beyond to manage most aspects of development of the course including working with MITx and ODL, managing several staff working on developing illustration assets, animations, and video edits. To quote a nominator “Time and time again, Paul has proven himself to be an adept manager of people and projects, a self-starter and an action-oriented team member able to move complex projects forward.”

Recently, Paul was instrumental in writing a winning project proposal for a multi-million dollar grant with the Singapore-MIT Alliance for Research and Technology (SMART). He convened professors and scientists on different continents, and lead them to crafting an innovative research project.
Paul also takes time to help advise students. He guides them as they draft their theses, encouraging their inquisitiveness as they frame their research questions. He acts as an advisor to both undergraduates and graduate students from the different schools across campus.

In closing I think this quote from a faculty member really sums up Paul: "I have never seen Paul become stressed even with the craziest of deadlines looming large. He is entirely professional at all times, and just a great guy to work with. I wish there where more Paul Barone’s around campus!" Congratulations Paul! 386

**EILEEN:** Our next award winner is **Tricia Campbell**.

Tricia joined the School of Engineering in 2015 as a financial coordinator in the former ASO and moved into Chemical Engineering in the summer of 2017 when the ASO was disbanded. She enthusiastically worked through the transition and
took on her new faculty portfolio with the devotion and hard work that everyone had come to expect from her.

Tricia coordinates the submission and management of research proposals and is in great demand because of her dedication and responsiveness as well as her willingness to take extra steps to help her faculty PIs. Tricia dives into the proposal submission process, reading full agency announcements and proposal guidelines to ensure no details are missing. She carefully monitors even details that generally fall to the faculty PIs and their co-investigators to manage.

One faculty member writes, Tricia has always gone above and beyond to make sure all my proposals are perfect. In addition to being detail oriented, rigorous, and efficient, Tricia has shown an uncanny dedication to her job. She works alongside the faculty to meet strict deadlines and specific requirements at all costs, even if this means working late nights, early mornings, or weekends. As
one supporter tells us, Tricia works to do her very best for her faculty PIs because it is so very important to her to see each of them succeed.

Praise for the effort that Tricia gives to the Chemical Engineering department is not limited to faculty. Tricia is caring and loyal to her staff colleagues as well, extending the same selflessness beyond her Financial Coordinator duties. We are told that perhaps the only things that exceed Tricia’s amazing work ethic are her kindness and sense of humor. She is able to make people smile even in stressful situations and nothing can stop Tricia if she thinks she can makes others’ lives easier or more comfortable.

One nominator tells us that Tricia so loves her work and the opportunity to help others that the inevitable frustrations are never evident when interacting with her. Her tireless effort, excellent work and genuine compassion deserve to be acknowledged with
an SoE Infinite Mile Award. And we agree! Congratulations Tricia, and thank you. 370

MARY ELLEN: KILEY CLAPPER

The next IMA award winner, Kiley Clapper, is the Academic Administrator in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering.

Kiley is described by CEE leaders as a “thoughtful working partner.” She elevates everyone around her to a higher level of thinking and performance. She often challenges colleagues to think outside the box and in doing so achieves more substantial results for department, school and institute objectives.

Nominators describe Kiley as an enormously positive force and provided the following details of her work in the department: “In many ways, Kiley is the one who keeps the CEE educational programs running, as she is always stays on top of everything on
her immense to-do lists of both the graduate and undergraduate programs. She excels in all aspects of this – from standard everyday tasks to longer-term departmental needs.” At the undergraduate level Kiley’s work has included shepherding the department through the ABET engineering accreditation process, coordinating various departmental submissions to the NEET program, and working with the Undergraduate Education Committee to evaluate and optimize the CEE educational program. At the graduate level, she has been involved in re-imagining the CEE MEng program to better support a range of students interested in infrastructure and environment, and in particular, making this a more visible and viable option for CEE students.

Perhaps even more exceptional are Kiley’s incredible interactions with CEE students, for whom she serves as a major resource, source of support, and advocate. She has been central to creating a sense of community, by organizing and supporting community-
building and social events that help ensure that CEE students feel part of the larger fabric of the CEE department. A student nominator described Kiley as a safe and supportive shoulder to lean on especially when having felt lost. Another student stated that she is one of the friendliest and most efficient people they know. An undergraduate student supporter told us: “I wanted to participate in a UROP, but was having difficulty finding one. Kiley sat down with me and really wanted to get to know who I was and what I was interested in. She then guided me in the right direction on how to find a UROP and provided me with a list of professors whose research fit my interests. She offered substantial help and I was not even a student within Course 1. She continued to check in with me later on, asking how my UROP went and how things were in general. I greatly appreciated this and it was encouraging having an administrative member take interest in me and show they truly cared.”
I can’t give this IMA speech without mention of Gunner, Kiley’s Jack Russell Terrier that has become a mascot for CEE HQ. CEE students mentioned Gunner’s presence as a source of stress relief when visiting the Academic Administration Office, he is yet another example of how Kiley found a way to connect and provide support for the students.

Congratulations Kiley on this well-deserved IMA Award! 494

CATHERINE : I am pleased and honored to recognize our next Infinite Mile Award winner, Kyle Keane.

Kyle has been a Lecturer at MIT for a little under 3 years, but he has already deeply ingrained himself into the fabric of the DMSE community.
As one faculty nominator tells us, “Every year he has been here, Kyle has taught several IAP courses each January. He volunteered his time to co-teach a subject in course 6 on assistive technologies. He is an active participant in the Dean's Education Group that is being run by the TLL. He has given several DUET talks in the TLL series on innovative teaching… [and] he is working with the ODL to incorporate new computational tools into MITx… [E]ven more, he is now volunteering his time to develop computational modules for 8.02 and is creating Lightboard videos demonstrating how to compute and visualize problems in electricity and magnetism.”

Another supported noted, “[Kyle] is working to improve student education both within and outside of the department in the realm of computational thinking” and is helping bring an MIT education to a wider stage. “In one of his many roles, [Kyle] recently initiated a project to partner with Mathematica to integrate their technical computing package into the MITx platform. Furthermore,
his work will allow [easier alignment between MITx online courses] and [MIT’s] residential subjects, increasing their utility to MIT students.”

Every letter of recommendation for Kyle mentioned how thoroughly committed he is to student education. There are numerous examples of Kyle going above and beyond to help students. Kyle has worked with students until past midnight to debug code (only leaving when janitors threatened to paint them all into a classroom), answers emails at all hours of the day and night (even when on international flights), and advocated for student in countless ways.

The care and commitment Kyle has shown students has been nothing short of remarkable. As one student wrote, “The fact that he is an amazing instructor and is really good at coding is only a small part of why Dr. Keane is one of my favorite people alive. Rather, I am compelled to write this letter for Dr. Keane primarily
because of his unflagging goodness of heart. It moves him to unheard-of lengths to assist his students in their projects and in understanding deeper theory. It shows us that figures of authority can be turned to and trusted to help us find our way, in projects and problem sets as well as frustration and despair. It makes Dr. Keane shine in ways we Course 3s have all learned to love and aspire toward, and that makes all the difference.” 428

Kyle, we are pleased to be able to present you today with this School of Engineering Infinite Mile Award.

EILEEN: Our next award winner is Adam Shervanian of the Department of Materials Science and Engineering. Adam handles what is for many departments one of the most complicated and vexing problems they face, that of facilities and space. That he is able to successfully weave his way through the requests and needs of faculty, staff, facilities, students, and contractors is
testament to the outstanding performance he delivers on a daily basis.

Adam is a doer. In managing the department's renovations, he takes the initiative to suggest improvements to plans and designs, he is extremely organized, efficient and reliable. He pays attention to the details, which is essential in managing renovations. Adam is always looking for ways to improve the department's use of space which is greatly appreciated. His colleagues especially appreciate Adam's calm and thoughtful demeanor that helps smooth over difficult situations that sometimes arise during renovations.

Once faculty member, in supporting Adam's nomination for the Infinite Mile Award wrote about the difficulty of renovating a lab for the first time in over 30 years. They said: “how does one manage to keep one’s research going while the labs are being demolished and rebuilt? Adam carefully
discussed our group’s needs and found satisfactory temporary alternate space that allowed my students to continue operating over the period of about 9 months during which the new space was being prepared. He was available to me and my students nearly 24/7 as problems arose with respect to moving heavy equipment, discarding materials and helping to hook-up equipment.”

DMSE students appreciate when Adam follows up on their request, be it adding extra outlets to the DMSE Commons to power laptops or assisting with the various aspects of Commencement. As one of the HQ staff comments: “Adam is always willing to pitch in and goes above and beyond in his work. He makes great connections with staff from the Facilities department and outside vendors and no problem is too big or too small for him to lend his time and expertise.”

Congratulations, Adam, on this well-deserved School of Engineering Infinite Mile Award for Excellence. 348
MARY ELLEN: LINDA STOCKDALE

Our next Infinite Mile Award recipient is an expert in the Biological Engineering Hydrogel system. Linda Stockdale has been a Technical Associate in BE for nearly ten years. This nomination came with glowing input from many staff, postdocs, and students. Unfortunately, Linda is unable to join us today but I will read her citation.

A colleague wrote “Linda is exceptionally kind and is dedicated to fostering a welcoming and supportive environment. Not only is she a wealth of expertise on the hydrogel system that many projects used, she is always happy to take time out of her busy day to help others. She provides support for our lab members; she also supervises and helps many high school students, UROPs and researchers. Her persistent support of collaboration within and outside of MIT is one of her greatest accomplishments. Her absolutely outstanding work ethic, knowledge, and skills that
span several generations of lab members make her a remarkable role model.”

There were several lab members that wrote about Linda’s dedication and their gratefulness for all she provides to the group. One postdoc fellow wrote about how Linda taught her the ins and outs of aspects of her research project when she joined the lab. It was mentioned that Linda is always happy to answer any and all questions on the hydrogel system. It was also noted that not only does Linda provide support on the hydrogel system, but she also helps with interpersonal issues. She is described as friendly, easy to talk to, and welcoming to everyone coming into the lab.

Students in the lab wrote high praise of Linda as well. One student stated “Linda Stockdale has been an indispensable member of our lab and the broader MIT community for many years. Her experience, organization, and attention to detail make her an invaluable source of advice and reliable technical support.”
As experiments often succeed or fail over the minor details in biology, Linda’s keen observations and experimental insights has benefited every person in the lab who has had her help. Beyond experiments, Linda provides mentorship of younger students, gives excellent life advice, and often goes out of her way to help. Linda embodies the spirit of intellectual rigor and altruistic outreach that makes MIT an outstanding community. She enriches all of our lives on a daily basis and is an inspirational role model.”

It is with gratitude and admiration that we recognize Linda today with a School of Engineering Infinite Mile award. (413)
CATHERINE: Our final IMA award winner is Caitlin Vinci, who joined IMES as an Administrative Assistant II in 2014.

Staff at MIT wear many hats. They can be called upon to organize a conference, balance financial records, feed hungry grad students, and assist in the classroom -- often all in the same day. Caitlin is able to juggle all of these tasks, all the while maintaining a can do attitude.

As noted in one of her nomination letters, Caitlin was a huge factor behind the success of a major conference organized through IMES. Through her efforts in spreading the word and organizational efficiency, the conference rose from an average of 150 attendees to 300 when it was held at MIT. Caitlin performed all tasks with a smile and the utmost attention to detail.

As one faculty nominator wrote, “Often, I found myself asking 'Caitlin, do you think it is possible to do ...,' to which she always
responded 'Hmm, let me look into it.' Likewise, to every one of my (often frantic) questions 'What happened to ..., did this fall through the cracks?' she answered 'No. We are all set.' It is hard to imagine that the conference would have been as big a success, had it not been for Caitlin to take personal pride in the efficiency and effectiveness of its organization and execution.”

Her supporters shared numerous examples of Caitlin going the extra mile. She partnered with a colleague to establish the IMES Administrative Think Thank, a venue for sharing research group administrative experience and improving internal communication. She attended evening courses on effective social media outreach so that she could learn about and effectively oversee conference advertising efforts through Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. She even took time out of her personal schedule to learn LaTex and Adobe figure generation and manipulation products to help support class development projects.
Despite the fact that Caitlin supports several groups and also supports IMES central functions when needed, her many supporters noted Caitlin is a dedicated team member with a wonderfully cheerful demeanor. As one nominator wrote, “Caitlin has not only been very efficient and professional during the years, but her positive attitude has been beneficial to our team. I have always seen her happy and excited to support the group and perform her tasks, even during very stressful times. She is a radiant and cheerful person, and it is a real pleasure to work and interact with her.”

Caitlin, we are delighted to be able to present you with this School of Engineering Infinite Mile Award.

**ELLEN MANDIGO AWARD**

I’m now going to switch gears to honoring this year’s three recipients of the Ellen J. Mandigo Award for Outstanding Service.
The Mandigo Award recognizes staff who have demonstrated, over an extended period of time, the qualities Ms. Mandigo possessed in great abundance during her own long career at MIT: intelligence, skill, hard work, and dedication to the Institute. This award, started in 2009, is made possible by a bequest from Ms. Mandigo who was a member of the School of Engineering for nearly five decades.

Our first honoree for the Mandigo award is Dan Darling.

Dan joined the School of Engineering in 1998 and is currently a Senior Administrative Assistant. Through his dedication and outstanding service, Dan has become an integral part of the Biological Engineering department. As one supporter noted, “His work impacts everyone from the Head of the Department to the BE Twitter follower on the other side of the world. He knows everything about BE and knows everyone in BE.”
As another nominator wrote, “Dan has dedicated himself for over 20 years now to making the Biological Engineering department a phenomenal environment for staff and students. He has been an amazing internal and external representative for MIT and BE, representing the department at countless conferences and events aimed at education and outreach, with a particular emphasis on welcoming underrepresented minorities each summer.”

As yet another nominator tells us, “Dan is often observed advising students on finding a summer internship or helping them navigate through the multitude of career resources available to them. In this capacity, he has helped hundreds of students over the years reach their professional goals. He is widely respected for his knowledge and expertise in his field. Many people would not be where they are today without his influence.”

Dan also received wide praise for his warm and friendly personality. According to one of his colleagues, “Dan always
make people feel welcome: his door is always open, his attitude is inclusive and thoughtful, and his interactions always start with a smile.”

The broad impact Dan has had on the department and the Institute is reflected in the breadth of support he received for this award, which came not only from staff, faculty and students, but also extended to those now in industry.

As another supporter described, “From alumni networking events, to special occasion ceremonies, to major department functions – anything the department has put in Dan’s hands has been accomplished to impressive success, with cheerfulness and enthusiasm. Moreover, Dan has taken exceptional initiative in proposing new ideas himself for things the department can do to enhance a positive atmosphere in the community, and has then rallied appropriate groups to work with him to bring them to
fruition. All together, Dan is the epitome of what MIT is aiming to emphasize in its ‘mind, hand, heart’ focus.”

Dan, on behalf of the School of Engineering, we are honored to present you today with an Ellen J. Mandigo Award for Outstanding Service. 393

**TIA: Rachel Kemper**

Problem solver, goes above and beyond, exceeds expectations, passionate for the department and MIT, a pillar of support for all in the department; these are just a few of the terms used to describe this Ellen J. Mandigo Award for Outstanding Service recipient, Rachel Kemper.

Rachel joined the Department of Material Science and Engineering over twenty years ago and has consistently been an interregnal part of the department. Starting out she was hired to support Professor Sam Allen and she was instrumental in
Professor Allen’s success in many tasks including getting two textbook manuscripts ready for publication. She supported Professor Allen through his tenure as Secretary of the Faculty and as the DMSE Executive Officer, Rachel’s excellent judgment and competence on all levels while working behind the scenes during this time was invaluable.

Rachel has now been in charge of communications for DMSE for many years and has always gone above and beyond to support her department. The sheer volume of work Rachel performs at the highest-level of professionalism is amazing. She organizes many events through the year, produces the department newsletters, event posters, manages the DMSE website, manages social media outreach, drafts thank you letters to donors, writes departmental reports and maintains and updates all of the beautiful DMSE research displays throughout the departments hallways. And, on top of all of those duties in 2012 she started to organize annual activities for the board members of
the Lord Foundation of Massachusetts. These activities include organizing relevant lab and facility tours and presentations by the Lord Fellows. A nominator from the president’s office notes” Rachel’s highly commendable efforts in creating and managing these activities have gone far to strengthen the relationship between the board members and both DMSE and the Institute as a whole.”

Personally I too have had the pleasure of working with Rachel during my time at MIT and whole heartily agreed with all of her nominators. She is knowledgeable, passionate, hardworking and always willing to help out. I will leave you with this quote from her nomination: “Rachel Kemper is the adhesive that keeps the members of the DMSE community together, on task, and able to do their jobs.”

Rachel, on behalf of DMSE and MIT we thank you for all of your hard work. Congratulations! 383
MARY ELLEN: Our final honoree for the Mandigo award is Angela Mickunas.

It is a great honor to present this award today, Angela is an incredible resource, an outstanding mentor, she often brings her team to the next level, and is always available to offer her colleagues friendly and genuine support.

Angela started at MIT in 1984, she held the role of Senior Secretary in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. She supported several faculty during her time in EECS, one of which had the following to say “Angela is a real people person, and she encouraged the students to interact and socialize, she celebrated their accomplishments both inside and outside of MIT.” Another EECS faculty member wrote “Angela has worked hard to make MIT a place that helps students, cares for students and she routinely shows her love for students. For
years, Angela has kept the faculty at the forefront of all her efforts. She recognizes the many ways the faculty contribute to the mission of MIT, and views her role as an enabler and supporter of the faculty.”

From EECS Angela went on to the role of Budget Officer in the MIT Budget office. In 2002, Angela moved back to an academic department and oversaw finances for the Department of Mechanical Engineering. It was during this time I that I first had the pleasure of working with Angela. Right from the start her dedication and passion to support the faculty and students was clear. I am very lucky to have had Angela as a mentor. Her strong work ethic and drive to provide the utmost support to the faculty and students is what everyone should experience when working with administration at MIT.

While in Mechanical Engineering, Angela helped establish the Center for Clean Water and Clean Energy at MIT and King Fahd
University of Petroleum and Minerals, a collaboration between the US and Saudi Arabia. Angela provided the Saudi Arabian faculty and students with a warm and hospitable experience while visiting MIT. Angela is described as having “infectious enthusiasm for research administration, pride in being part of MIT, and consistent commitment to MIT’s global leadership.”

In recent years Angela has served as the Administrative Officer in the department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. A faculty nominator writes: “Each day Angela will undertake and complete many jobs seamlessly without losing sight of MIT’s and CEE’s goals and objectives, and she always puts students first. In spite of her busy schedule, she is always willing to stop what she is doing in order to help a person in need.”

“Angela is the living history of MIT. If anyone needs information about how to do things at MIT, Angela is the one to know. Angela has developed incremental knowledge and understanding of the
people at MIT and School of Engineering that cannot be matched. To many long-term employees, she has become a true friend with whom they share not only work, but life.”

Angela, on behalf of the School of Engineering, we are honored to present you today with an Ellen J. Mandigo Award for Outstanding Service. 486
ANANTHA: I’d like to congratulate all of winners and everyone who took the time to nominate these exceptional members of our community. We will be posting the citations and pictures of the ceremony to the SoE website in the next few days. Please join us in the reception to share your congratulations with each winner personally. Thank you.