



**Name:** Melody Cao

**Applying for:** Sports Chair

**Please describe any leadership or service experience you might have:**

Leader of running club in high school, President of Physics and Astronomy at Undergrad institution, 4 years of varsity rowing and 3 years of ice hockey (currently member of MIT Women's hockey team).

**Please provide a statement of purpose for the selected position (500 words).**

I am a first year graduate student in electrical engineering currently living in Tang. Sports have always been my go to in terms of physical and mental maintenance, there is really nothing like it. Aside from the stress reliving component and staying healthy, I find that the most precious connections I have made with people have been via sports. As the sports chair, I will look forwards to using physical activity as an interface for Tang residences to meet and find lifelong friendship. I am good friends with the current sports chairs and we often talk about ideas and improvements, I just can't wait to get involved myself. An idea I have currently for the next year is to increase the number of social sports actives via involvement with the boat house on campus and set up kayaking/rowing socials on the Charles over the summer and also to organize events to see sports games including Bruins, Redsoxs, Boston Warriors (cricket), Boston Pride (women's ice hockey) etc.

**Name:** Rohini Shivamoggi

**Applying for:** Social Chair

**Please describe any leadership or service experience you might have:**

I'm a second-year in EAPS, and I've found the department to be really welcoming and friendly! That's been a huge motivating factor for me to get involved with department activities myself. This year, I'm on the board for the newly-formed Women in Course XII group (you can view our website here:

<http://wixii.scripts.mit.edu/wixii/>). My main contribution has been maintaining the website for WiXII, but I've also helped out with planning WiXII events, which include informal free-food discussions about implicit biases and being an active bystander, both broadly and in the department specifically, as well as more formal events, which have included active bystander training, conversations with visiting professors and alumnae, and a networking event held jointly with Women in Chemistry. As a woman of color, I tend to take issues of prejudice pretty seriously, and I've been really pleased that WiXII has provided a space for people in our department to talk and learn more about these issues. I've made an effort to keep our website updated with resources and relevant events around campus, and I'd be happy to keep that up as a Tang social chair.

I was also involved with planning open house activities for our prospective grad students last year, which entailed booking a Taza tour and helping plan some other social events. This year, I helped plan the yearly retreat for my sector of the department, which is the Program in Atmospheres, Oceans, and Climate (PAOC). We had to choose a theme for the retreat (ours was "Sustainable Development in Light of Climate Change") and invite speakers for a panel discussion, as well as organizing a talent show and an event in which all members of the department could briefly present their research. We also organized food, housing, and a carpool for the weekend.

In a less official capacity, I was one of four grad students who advocated successfully for some of the single-stall restrooms in our building (54) to be switched from single-gender to all-gender.

When I was in undergrad, I was a member of the Social and Public Relations board of The Harvard Undergraduate Research Journal (THURJ), and our job was mainly to plan events in which we'd serve desserts and invite professors or students to talk about their research. I was also a member of the Cambridge Afterschool Program (CASP) for a few years, and each of us used to spend one afternoon per week giving academic assistance to low-income students. I was a Day Coordinator for one semester, which meant that I didn't tutor, but I planned activities and arranged logistics for one day each week.

**Please provide a statement of purpose for the selected position (500 words).**

I hope that my experience with planning events will help me contribute to social events in Tang. I've never had the role of treasurer in any of the organizations I've

been involved in, but I have had to organize logistics in several arenas, including transportation, catering, booking classrooms or venues, etc., so I hope that this would come in handy while planning events per funding cycle.

I think that planning social events or building community can be tricky because we're all very busy, and it's natural for people to make their own plans with their free time, as opposed to attending dorm (or department, or GSC, etc) social events. However, I also think that maintaining a friendly, inclusive community is very important to people's mental health and therefore their careers, and I think that this is especially urgent in the current climate. One of WiXII's goals has been to promote open discourse, so we've been trying to get everyone (not just women) to come to our events. I've been trying to think about what problems everyone seems to be dealing with, because holding events for those kinds of issues seems like a way to a) be worth their valuable time and b) provide a space for lots of people to meet and socialize. Here are some ideas:

1) Conflict Management Training. I think that almost all of us are going to come up against conflict at some point in our careers, and it's especially tricky since, as grad students, we're kind of at the bottom of the power ladder. Conflict Management@MIT can offer tailored workshops (see here <https://studentlife.mit.edu/conflictmanagement/trainings-and-workshops>), and I think that a lot of us could really benefit from having some advice on how to respond constructively in these kinds of situations.

2) VPR also offers workshops and trainings (<https://studentlife.mit.edu/vpr/campus-education>) on a wide variety of topics that might be useful to a lot of residents. (Sorry if Tang does this already.)

3) Informal, weekly/biweekly/monthly bring your own dinner meetings. Maybe easier on a floor-by-floor basis.

4) Periodic stress relief events. I have no idea on the logistics for something like this, but I would like to suggest events with cute animals or therapy dogs.

5) Research Bingo. This has been described to me as an event in which each person has a nametag on which they give a brief description of what they study, and you have to talk to at least one person in physics, anthropology, etc etc, about what they do.

4) Research Switchup. Everyone could submit a brief (~2 sentences) summary of what they do and put everything in a hat, and then you draw randomly and extemporize about whatever topic you chose. The person who told me about this said it helps with public speaking stress, since it's supposed to be funny but it's also the ultimate don't-know-what-you're-talking-about scenario.

5) Lunch/Dinner/Coffee Prior to Applications Deadlines. For whatever scholarships, funding, or jobs that people are applying to (eg NSF, NASA). It might be helpful to compare notes?

6) LinkedIn Lunch/Dinner/Coffee. If some people who are already good at using it want to volunteer to go, it might be helpful to everyone else to learn how to get the most out of LinkedIn. Personally, I would find something like this useful just for general strategies for applying to jobs.



**Name:** Zhenshu Wang (Stan)

**Applying for:** Purchasing and Maintenance Chair

**Please describe any leadership or service experience you might have:**

I am currently a second year PhD in chemical engineering. I was an officer in the Sidney Pacific for last year. Also I was a resident assistant for my undergrad university for three years. During all my RA experiences, I think I am very good at making purchasing and helping students to fix stuff. I enjoy taking care of the equipment and when I lived in Tang my first year, I enjoyed the gym very much. When I worked in Sidney Pacific, I also hold monthly events to unite people on my floor, usually it's house dinner.

**Please provide a statement of purpose for the selected position (500 words).**

I think I will be a good fit for this role because of the following reasons. Firstly, I had experiences in purchasing and reimbursement within the MIT system. I worked as a Sidney Pacific officer last year during which I organized events and also made purchases for the floor community. Secondly, I used to be a Tang residents for my first year in MIT. I enjoyed the gym in the basement very much and I really want to take a good care of it so that more and more people will have a chance to work out there. In addition, I will go to Tang's gym a lot so if there is anything out of shape, it will be really fast for me to figure out.

If I am lucky enough to be the purchasing and maintenance chair, I would like to update the gym equipment. When I was in Tang, there was no squat rack in the gym. I would like to implement that and move some of the ancillary equipment into the cardio room. In addition, I am planning to buy some new released movies so that people can check out for entertainment.



**Name:** Venkata Shiva Mandala

**Applying for:** Social Chair

**Please describe any leadership or service experience you might have:**

During college at Oberlin College, I played an active role in several student organizations. I was co-chair of the South Asian Student's Association (SASA) for two years, treasurer of the Muslim Student's Association (MSA) for two years, and a member of the Interfaith Student Council during my senior year. At SASA and MSA, I helped organize a variety of cultural events on campus. These included Rang (a celebration of colors), Diwali Night, the Culture Fest and Asian Night market. I also contributed to planning other events, including comedy nights, debates and a South Asian film festival at the Apollo theater in Oberlin. As a member of the Interfaith Student Council, I helped organize and run Interfaith Service Days, and also facilitated interfaith dialogue and programming on campus.

At MIT, I am involved with AID-MIT and Asha for Education Boston/MIT. I recently helped organize a paint night as part of the former, and have volunteered at outreach events for the latter. I am the captain of the Plasma Science and Fusion Center's (PSFC) IM soccer team this Spring semester. I am also involved with science outreach as part of the PSFC, including at the AAAS convention held recently in Boston.

**Please provide a statement of purpose for the selected position (500 words).**

I have had significant experience as a treasurer as well as being involved with various student groups, both at Oberlin College and at MIT. I am passionate about organizing social, cultural and academic events on campus. My attention to detail and organizational skills, coupled with my social skills and interest in sports, make me a good fit for the job of treasurer at Tang.

I have also attended social events at several MIT graduate residences on campus. As a result, I have several ideas for new social events to organize at Tang, including a plant night and a cookie baking contest, both of which were hugely successful at the Warehouse. I would also look to expand events at Tang beyond the campus, with weekend group trips to various locations in Cambridge and Boston, including the Harvard Art Museums and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Finally, in the interest of the safety and welfare of the residents, it would be helpful to bring representatives from MIT police and the mental health center to Tang to talk about resources on campus.

I am excited to be a part of the Tang community to help bring together people from various departments and programs on campus. As a graduate student, I believe that having a strong community at my residence is important to make friends in what can otherwise be an isolating school. I hope to leverage my experience and creativity to make the Tang community even more welcoming, and to organize innovative events to bring people together.



**Name:** Flora Su

**Applying for:** Social Chair

**Please describe any leadership or service experience you might have:**

Since coming to MIT, I became very involved in the MIT figure skating club. I helped organize and choreograph a group number for the spring ice show, and I am the incoming exhibition group numbers captain (and the historian/archivist) for next season.

In college, I held several officer positions. Most of them were as "secretary," and I was responsible for organizing events (reserving space on campus; contacting students, professors, and other event organizers and participants), as well as maintaining a record of meetings and events and sharing documents with other club officers.

**Please provide a statement of purpose for the selected position (500 words).**

I believe it's important for students to balance their academic life with other activities in order to promote physical and mental wellness. I am interested in becoming a social chair to help organize activities to offer students creative and interesting outlets for stress relief. I myself am a painter and a figure skater, and would love to help organize events that involve these activities. I am also open to other activities/ideas and working with other groups/organizations on campus.



**Name:** Vrushank Phadnis

**Applying for:** Purchasing and Maintenance Chair

**Please describe any leadership or service experience you might have:**

I have attended events in the past but haven't been as regular. However, I was at the coffee hour to discuss THRA responsibilities.

**Please describe your current involvement with Tang.**

**Please provide a statement of purpose for the selected position (500 words).**

I would like to describe myself as a Tang veteran who spent one year in 2012-13 as a MEng student and now as a PhD grad (Fall 2016). I have worked in industry and as student organizer in various roles that train me well at interpersonal skills and people management. I am looking forward to putting those skills to use and engaging with the Tang community. As a mechanical engineer, I enjoy being hands on with my projects and find the purchasing/social/vice president roles in line with my interests and background. I have participated in organizing events in my undergraduate program which involved mentoring junior students on building props for a department level event. A more detailed list of my career progression can be found on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/vrushankphadnis/>

I have had a wonderful experience in Tang so far, but have a few ideas to take it further. For eg. I think the rationing of stationary for the printers could be automated so that residents don't have to wait for someone at the front desk to hand it over. I also like to idea of having a bike storage within Tang and would love to work on

building such a station inside the building. And lastly, I believe the Gym audio system could use some TLC and maybe a Bluetooth enabled headset will be useful.

I am happy answering any questions you may have and email is the best way to get a hold of me: [vphadnis@mit.edu](mailto:vphadnis@mit.edu). Alternatively you can call me on +1 (732) 599-4155



**Name:** Jiarui Li (Jerry)

**Applying for:** Social Chair

**Please describe any leadership or service experience you might have:**

I used to be the treasurer back in my high school, and I was also one of the social chair in Loving Heart Society (the biggest association in my undergrad with 900 new members each year). I organized several events in for ~2 years, ice breaking social, midterm retreats, new years even gathering... I also organized a weekly volunteering English teaching for elementary students.

**Please provide a statement of purpose for the selected position (500 words).**

When I first heard of Tang, senior grad students didn't give me high remark of it. But when I moved in, I like the feeling to live in Tang, so I tried to make more friends here. I attended many social events here, I love the movie/poker/board games played in 24th floor, so I know better how they work. Through these socials in Tang, I got to know many good friends here. Through chatting with them, I know many people living in Tang are quite similar but busy. So if the social can't meet the majority, the attendance will be low.

As I said above, I had some experience on organizing social events, ranging from 10 people to as many as ~100, which is perfectly suitable for events in Tang. More important, I used to be responsible for those events, I know how to take the responsibility on organizing them, how to make a plan and estimate the cost and attendance, prepare backup plans for the events. These are all factors that contribute to running an event.

Right now, I happened to have some events in my mind. In the beginning of the academic year, GSC has organized they trip to supermarket, like Costco, wholefood

or Jack and Joes, taking MIT shuttles. And I knew several people in Tang goes there weekly. If we can organize the supermarket trip as a social on a weekly/biweekly basis, people will make friends to others and get better food and price than star market. And since most people live in Tang cook themselves, I guess this evens will be popular.



**Name:** Hari Bandi

**Applying for:** IT Chair

**Please describe any leadership or service experience you might have:**

I am very passionate about designing clean and minimalistic user interfaces. During my undergrad years at IIT Kharagpur, I have had a few opportunities working on developing websites for my College fest Kshitij, online dining portal for my undergrad housing and my department website(along with a basic easy-to-use template for faculty webpages) at IIT Kharagpur. Although most of my work was related to back end development using technologies like PHP, Python, MySQL and wordpress, due to collaborations with front end developers, I have some knowledge on front end technologies like HTML, CSS and JavaScript as well. Below are the links to some of my work:

Kshitij: I worked on previous versions(Kshitij 2012 and 2013) of this website, but this is a close match to what I had worked on. <http://ktj.in/>

Mathematics department website: The department website is currently being revamped. Here is the link to a basic template that I have created for the faculty webpages: <http://www.facweb.iitkgp.ernet.in/~bibhas/index.html>

Azad Hall of residence dining portal: This portal has been taken down. The basic functionality of the website was to allow residents of the hall to login and select their food preferences from the menu and also provide some feedback to the dining committee of the hall.

**Please provide a statement of purpose for the selected position (500 words).**

Over the last five years during my undergrad at IIT Kharagpur, I have had a few opportunities to learn and strengthen my skills in web development. I was introduced to the world of web design and development during my freshman year of college when I volunteered to work on the website of my College fest Kshitij. During this

time, I learnt using various back-end frameworks and technologies and made significant contribution to the website. During my sophomore year I continued working with Kshitij as a web core team member.

Towards the end of my junior year, I was part of a Hall council web team working on developing online dining portal. We developed a basic online dining application that allows residents to create an account and submit their food preferences. We also developed an interface for dining committee to upload weekly menus and to get an aggregated view of residents food preferences to plan what quantities of food to prepare. During the same year, I was also involved in revamping my department website and created a basic easy-to-use template for the faculty webpages.

I have a few ideas that I think would greatly help current and future tang residents. First, creating a Tang wiki page on wikis.mit.edu. Vast content about tang, information on facilities and basic how-tos can be hosted on this portal. Second, I think tang website should have a resident's testimonial page that would help prospective residents make an informed choice while choosing on-campus housing. Third, a major concern for social chairs that I have observed is that they can't get enough volunteers for social events. To solve this issue, I propose creating a volunteer signup page where residents can sign up for volunteering and also provide preference for what type of events they would like to get notified possibly through special mailing lists.

With the experience that I have designing and developing web pages, I believe that I can truly contribute a lot to the Tang website. I also believe that implementing some of my ideas proposed earlier and ideas from the tang community will greatly enhance the user experience and the utility of the tang website.

**Name:** Ivan Sysoev

**Applying for:** Gardening and Recycling Chair

**Please describe any leadership or service experience you might have:**

I currently serve as a volunteer at the afterschool writing program called 826 Boston (<http://826boston.org/>), helping children ages 7-15 with their homework and writing.

In winter of 2016, being concerned with Media Lab culture feeling overly competitive, I organized a discussion among the department's students to gather their opinions. Expecting that many would prefer to tell their thoughts privately, I also talked to about 20 of my peers one-on-one about this topic. This helped me to get a sense of issues affecting students' wellbeing at the lab, which was in some respects new both for me and for the faculty.

I felt that the best resolution for some of these issues could only be achieved by students ourselves. But in order for that to happen, it could help if we would have more training in some 'soft skills', such as conflict resolution or even better self-awareness. I was happy to learn that another student in the lab planned to invite a professor from Gordon-MIT Engineering Leadership Program to give us workshops on some of these issues. I joined her in planning and preparing this workshops. This IAP, I also took one of the professor's workshops myself (called Developing Leadership in Yourself and Others).

**Please provide a statement of purpose for the selected position (500 words).**

My motivation to apply for the position of Gardening and Recycling chair is trifold:

First, I would love to be more involved in the life of the student community that surrounds us and get to know some wonderful people through my service.

Second, I hope to get more organizational experience - since I aspire to go to academia, I think that such experience will be instrumental in my life after MIT.

Finally but most importantly, I care deeply about reducing the amount of waste we produce. I have been raised in a family that is very respectful towards nature. My parents always dedicated a significant portion of their time to appreciate the beauty of wild places, sometimes quite remote, and I inherited this passion from them. The beauty of such places partly comes from being undisturbed by people, and so we took a lot of effort to ensure that they remain like that after our visit. In

addition, at least the older generation in my culture (Russian) is generally known for its frugality and striving to reuse and repair things - an attitude which comes from the times of scarcity, but which I think is very fitting in the era of massive overusing of the planet's resources. Because of this background, I'm terrified to see the proliferation of the mass consumption culture, where the paradigm is to use, throw away and buy new stuff - and I hope that I can do at least something to revert its consequences.

So far I only tried to do things at the personal level (recycling and composting, avoiding plastic bags, packaging and single-use utensils, and avoiding using cars whenever possible) and at the level of my nearest surrounding. In my lab, we have group meetings on different occasions, and in the past I saw a lot of unfinished food, plates and utensils going into waste after each of them. For me, that was a very painful view. I figured that rather than suffering silently, I could just ask my colleagues to leave all the waste to me at the end so that I can sort it out. I've been doing this for a few years now. I also bought a set of metal utensils and ceramic plates for us to use them instead of throw-away ones. I simply wanted to reduce the amount of waste, but later a few of my friends told me that I achieved more - I inspired them to care more about recycling. Recently, I also brought a composting bin into the lab and started to buy compostable bags for it from my personal funds. As I'm passing Infinite Corridor on my way back home every night, I drop the collected compost into one of the composting bins there. All these efforts, however, were at a small scale. If I become a Gardening & Recycling chair at Tang, I hope I would learn how I can have more impact for environment protection. I believe that my care for this cause will help me to be a good chair.

Thank you for considering my application! Please let me know if you have any questions - you can reach me by email ([isysoev@mit.edu](mailto:isysoev@mit.edu)) or phone.



**Name:** Jonathan Hasoloan

**Applying for:** Publicity Chair

**Please describe any leadership or service experience you might have:**

Organization experience:

- Head of Architecture basketball team, College Architecture Student Association
- Member of Architecture Profession Division, College Architecture Student Association
- Exhibition coordinator, Gaung Bandung Event, College
- Head of Creative Team, LPDP Scholarship Orientation

**Please provide a statement of purpose for the selected position (500 words).**

I am particularly interested in the two positions: Publicity or Sports Chair.

For Publicity chair (though I notice that there is no current opening), I am especially interested in designing the media like the posters -- while I also realize that publicity chair is responsible in communicating events other than poster, through mailing list, Facebook, and etc. I have a background in architecture design which may provide

the necessary skill. Previously I have helped to design several posters for some small events so in this case I'm certain that I can contribute well.

For Sports chair, I am interested in joining because I simply like playing sports. I joined the badminton team last Fall and it was fun indeed as well as an opportunity to meet new friends. Though I also notice that it is not always easy to form teams for intramural with all the intense schedule at MIT. I imagine that the sports chair can initially spread some kind of survey to map the residents interest in sport thus we may be able to play some social sports even outside intramural. We have facilities like the tennis court, Ping-Pong and the pool table which presumably can be used for some sport gathering among the residents.

Lastly and honestly, I want all the perks of being THRA. Aside from all the great things of learning leadership and organization and contributing to residents' life and meeting new friends, especially is to have the privilege to choose the (same) room. I will be leaving for internship in Indonesia from June to August and the termination and move out date is cumbersome. But I hope this fact does not undermine my motivation to also contribute in the THRA.

**Name:** Rohit Supekar

**Applying for:** Vice-President

**Please describe any leadership or service experience you might have:**

I hold the following responsibilities at MIT in the current academic year:

1. Social Chair at Tang Hall
2. President of MIT Sangam (the Association of Indian Students)

With both these roles, I have led and worked as a part of a team in organizing several social events ranging from 30 to 500 attendees.

**Please provide a statement of purpose for the selected position (500 words).**

Having been a part of the THRA for a year, I have had the opportunity to work with not only the social chairs but a few other chairs. This has given me a good idea about the functioning of THRA. As the Vice-President, I would like to streamline communication between fellow board members by a better use of Trello, the online tool THRA has been using. Moreover, I would like to initiate training workshops by the previous chairs for the new chairs during the annual retreat. This will ensure that all the necessary information is passed on to the new board.