

January 25, 2021

Dear MIT Physics Faculty:

The Physics Graduate Student Council are the elected representatives of the 250+ graduate students at MIT Physics, and our role is to look out for the welfare and interests of the physics graduate student body. We were greatly disturbed by the actions recounted in [Piazza](#) posts from December and the systemic issues upon which they cast light. We are writing to strongly endorse the recommendations from the concerned group of womxn physics graduate students to:

1. Institute a professional development requirement for graduate students
2. Perform regular evaluations of each of the nine physics research areas
3. Ensure student voices are heard in hiring and promotion cases

These three recommendations build off of our earlier [Recommendations to the Community about Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) by presenting concrete, reasonable, and efficacious measures we as a physics community should implement to improve our workplace climate.

We acknowledge that the initial implementation of Recommendation 1 will require moderate start-up costs in terms of faculty and staff time, Recommendation 2 is within scope but will require modifications to the ever-evolving position of the Graduate Student Advocate, and Recommendation 3 will shift the balance of workload in collecting trainee evaluations of their mentors from the Division faculty to Department faculty during promotion cases.

However, the benefits to our community far outweigh the initial start-up cost and shifting of responsibilities. They will serve to decrease overall student, staff, and faculty burdens in dealing with interpersonal conflict. They will increase well-being, satisfaction, and productivity in our department. Moreover, they will help us knock down the inequitable barriers that marginalized members of our community face when trying to pursue their love of physics.

These recommendations touch on all five of our [Physics Community Values](#): well-being, inclusion, respect, collaboration, and mentorship. We urge the Department to take immediate action.

Thank you,

Physics Graduate Student Council Executive Board 2020-21

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