



**Massachusetts
Institute of
Technology**

Senior Director, Campus Dining
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, MA

THE SEARCH

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) seeks an innovative, community-minded, and savvy Senior Director of Campus Dining. The Senior Director oversees the operational and strategic activities of the dining portfolio across the MIT campus. MIT is an institution focused on scientific and technological research, emphasizing the integration of rigorous thought and practical action. Additionally, the MIT community is tight-knit and the dining spaces on campus provide a catalyst for communing and relationship building.

Reporting to the Executive Director of Administration in the Division of Student Life, the Senior Director oversees the Assistant Director of Dining Operations and the Director of Communications and Marketing. This Senior Director will provide leadership and vision for Campus Dining and manage all operational and strategic activities, including contracts and vendor agreements for a campus of over 11,920 students. This role is collaborative and charged with being an active presence across campus to build relationships with vendors, faculty Heads of House, and staff in each of the dining areas. The Senior Director should be innovative and up to date on dining trends as well as the needs of the MIT community as it pertains to dietary requirements and cultural and affinity dining. The new Senior Director will set a student-centered vision for dining, collaborate with stakeholders across campus, manage vendor relationships, lead Campus Dining in a way that supports a diverse and engaged community, and demonstrate their financial acuity by ensuring that expectations are met across the portfolio.

The current dining portfolio includes:

- 6 residential dining facilities and 2 retail spaces managed by Bon Appetit.
- A large retail café and a catering/conference center space managed by Restaurant Associates.
- 2 self-standing cafés managed by a local vendor.
- In the student center: separate contracts for TeaDo, Dunkin, Bibimbox, Carolicious, and Tawakal.
- Additionally, there are 4-5 vending companies providing services across campus
- The Senior Director also has indirect responsibility for a new local grocer, Concord Market (coming in 2025), in the student center that is overseen by MIT's investment management company via a commercial lease.

MIT has retained the national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller to conduct this critical search. Please direct all confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

MIT's first students enrolled in 1865, marking the culmination of an extended effort to establish a new kind of educational institution relevant to an increasingly industrialized nation. The MIT motto, "Mens et Manus," Latin for "Mind and Hand," expresses the Institute's ideal of a productive continuum between rigorous thought and action. In the land-grant tradition, MIT promoted teaching coupled with research, focusing attention on real-world problems, and forging the notion of the teaching laboratory.

MIT is independent and co-educational, with a private endowment of over \$23.5 billion, a total annual operating budget of approximately \$5.10 billion, and a workforce of approximately 17,000 on campus and at the Lincoln Laboratory. MIT focuses on scientific and technological research and is divided into five schools – comprising more than 30 academic departments as well as interdepartmental programs, laboratories, and centers – and one college. The schools include Architecture and Planning; Engineering; Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences; Science; and the MIT Sloan School of Management. Fall of 2019 marked the opening of the MIT Steven A. Schwarzman College of Computing. Schwarzman College is a bold initiative to accelerate pioneering research and innovation in computing, build a profound awareness of the ethical implications and societal impact of computing, and, above all, educate leaders for the algorithmic future.

Ranked #1 by Forbes as America's best large employer, MIT is located on the north shore of the Charles River Basin in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on 168 acres that extend more than a mile along the Charles River. The central group of interconnecting buildings, dedicated in 1916, was designed by architect W. Welles Bosworth (Class of 1889) to permit easy communication among schools and departments.

Leadership

Dr. Suzy Nelson is the Vice Chancellor at MIT, where she oversees many areas related to graduate and undergraduate student life at MIT: wellness and student support; residential life programs; fraternities, sororities, and independent living groups; housing and dining; student activities and associated services and facilities; diversity and inclusion initiatives; violence prevention and response; student disability services; religious life; and athletics, physical education and recreation.

Students

MIT was founded with a democratic spirit from its early days, open to students of racial, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds who were less welcome elsewhere. MIT believes that all students benefit when its community reflects a broad range of intellectual, cultural, and demographic perspectives. Today, the Institute is nationally and internationally recognized as having one of the most diverse undergraduate populations among its peer institutions.

During the 2023-2024 academic year, MIT enrolled 11,920 students, including 4,576 undergraduates and 7,344 graduate students. The undergraduate population was 49% female, and 58% self-reported as being from underrepresented US minority groups. The graduate population was 40% female, and 22% reported as being from underrepresented US minority groups. MIT practices need-blind admissions for all applicants and meets 100% of demonstrated financial need for admitted students through several types of aid. Approximately 77% of undergraduate students graduate debt-free.

Almost all MIT students, both graduate and undergraduate, engage in research. Under the auspices of the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP), about 85% percent of undergraduate students complete research with a faculty member prior to graduation. As a cornerstone of MIT is pushing the boundaries of knowledge and possibility, MIT values research as a potent form of learning by doing. Through co-curricular opportunities and experiences, including student organizations, events, cross-cultural education, civic engagement, and leadership development, students gain invaluable skills and experiential knowledge that they will continue to develop during their time on campus and beyond as future leaders.

Campus Dining

Campus Dining supports the campus by working with students, faculty, staff, and vendors to provide access to healthy and affordable food options in spaces that help bolster the community at MIT.

The residential facilities, in particular, are spaces that build community with rotating menus as well as events throughout the academic year in collaboration with the faculty Heads of House. The majority of the dining locations are on the residential side of campus.

MIT is looking for campus dining to be as well regarded as its renowned academic programs. To accomplish this MIT is undertaking a multi-year plan to improve its dining program. With a focus on increasing student satisfaction and meal plan affordability while being mindful of capital and operating costs the key areas for exploration are: expanded student participation in the meal plan, improved meal plan portability across campus, possible centralization toward a neighborhood dining concept, and finding operational efficiencies in existing locations. The Senior Director will act as a change agent for a dining program undergoing a significant review.

ROLE OF THE SENIOR DIRECTOR

The Senior Director of Campus Dining at MIT reports to the Vice Chancellor and Dean of Students. They supervise the Assistant Director of Dining Operations and a Director of Communications and Marketing. The Senior Director provides leadership and vision for Campus Dining and holds primary responsibility for all operations and activities. They provide long-range strategic planning for financial, operational, marketing, and facilities development and oversee the day-to-day management of these functions. The ED researches and initiates new business opportunities and strategies, develops business and marketing plans, and leverages technology and modern culinary techniques to provide optimal services and offerings to the MIT community.

MIT seeks a Senior Director to build the dining portfolio and Campus Dining offerings in alignment with the university's goals and the expectations of a student-centered customer base. The Senior Director must be a creative and collaborative leader who is comfortable developing long-term strategies while also addressing emergent issues that require the school's immediate attention.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE SENIOR DIRECTOR

The Senior Director will enter a dynamic and exciting environment where they will be expected to engage in the following key opportunities and challenges.

Set a comprehensive and student-centered vision for campus dining at MIT

Dining at MIT is varied and multi-faceted. The new Senior Director will need to create clear goals and vision around what Campus Dining is and will become. They will keep abreast of food service trends, particularly in higher education. They will do this using transparent communication and feedback mechanisms, to ensure that all MIT voices can be part of the vision. They will develop a strategic framework developed as a product of a deliberate stakeholder engagement process. The Senior Director will engage in proactive planning that supports short- and long-term business needs while reacting to trends and its unique customer base's changing tastes and dietary needs. Ultimately, they must be committed to providing an outstanding dining program that students, faculty, and staff feel meets their needs and provides healthy, accessible options in spaces that facilitate community.

Collaborate closely with stakeholders across the MIT campus

To succeed, the Senior Director must collaborate closely with university leadership, including the faculty Heads of House and vendors across the community, developing trusting relationships that benefit the entire campus from a financial, customer service, and engagement perspective. They will identify appropriate opportunities to partner with local, regional, and national vendors to raise the standards of excellence in the offerings of Campus Dining. With their Director of Communications and Marketing, they will tell a compelling story of dining at MIT which will help them to identify potential growth areas and improvements in all areas of operation that provide exceptional service to the campus community.

Manage relationships with vendors to meet the dining needs of the campus community

MIT's Campus Dining contracts with multiple vendors to provide a comprehensive dining portfolio that includes Bon Appetit, Restaurant Associates, as well as local and national brands throughout the various dining locations. The Senior Director will need to build relationships across the various vendors' leadership and staff to oversee the terms of each contract. This includes holding vendors accountable for fulfilling contractual obligations, and advocating for the needs and wants of the campus community.

Lead an auxiliary function supporting the needs of a passionate, diverse community

The Senior Director is an essential leader within the MIT community. They will leverage strong communication skills and an adept ability to navigate a complex, multi-vendor environment and a customer base whose tastes are varied in dietary scope. Adept financial skills will be needed to strategically position Campus Dining to address market fluctuations while providing a quality customer experience that is responsive to trends and the unique needs of the institute and its community members.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Ideal candidates will demonstrate many of the following personal qualifications, skills, and experience:

- Progressively more senior experience leading dining and food service in a multifaceted environment, including experience in dining management, finance, and operations.
- Experience in higher education or a similar complex institutional setting or environment is preferred.
- Significant expertise in contract negotiation.
- Strong communication skills: seasoned, mature professional adept at navigating politics
- Adept financial skills: marked experience preparing/assessing organizational budgets, including increasing revenue and minimizing expenses without sacrificing quality.
- Experience collaborating with community partners.
- Intuitive and creative nature to create and implement successful programming for the campus community.
- Experience with a unionized workforce.

- Exceptional interpersonal skills: approachable (team members and contract partners are comfortable coming to the Senior Director with concerns, questions, or positive comments; a good listener with empathy) and humble.
- An undergraduate degree in a relevant field, such as hospitality management or business administration.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/massachusetts-institute-technology/senior-director-campus-dining>.

Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Dan Rodas (he/him), Partner,
Melissa DePretto Behan (she/her), Senior Associate
Isaacson, Miller

MIT is an equal employment opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment and will not be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, ancestry, or national or ethnic origin.