

**eeCSREFS**

# EECS REFS Recruitment

**R**esources

for

**E**asing

**F**riktion

and

**S**tress

# Who We Are

- 10 EECS graduate students **trained** and **certified** as peer mediators by Conflict Resolution @ MIT.
- Serve as a **resource** for the graduate community in dealing with **stress** and **conflict** in a safe and **confidential** environment.

# Why You Are Here

We are seeking several  
new

EECS REFS to start in the  
2016-2017 academic year

training in Spring 2016 and August 2016

# What We Do

- **Listen** to individual student concerns (academic, personal, interpersonal)
- **Suggest** departmental or Institute resources for further assistance
- **Mediate** disputes between two or more parties impartially and confidentially
- Act as **first point of contact** for EECS students when they are in difficult situations

# What We Do NOT Do

- Act as attorneys or judges
- Arbitrate or determine right or wrong
- Resolve conflicts on student's behalf
- Guarantee resolution
- Inform others about student's situation without his/her consent.

# Confidentiality

Everything between a REFS member  
and a fellow EECS graduate student is  
**CONFIDENTIAL**

(except when we become aware of **felony-level offenses**,  
believe there is **imminent risk of harm** to oneself or others, or  
are ordered to share information by a lawfully issued **subpoena**)

# Examples (1)

- Just come by to chat
- Academic:
  - “What classes should I take?”
  - “I get stressed out studying for TQEs.”
  - “Help! My research isn’t going well.”
  - “I’m having trouble finding a thesis topic.”
  - “I’m thinking about switching research groups.”
  - “I’m not sure whether I want to continue in the doctoral program.”



# Examples (2)

- **Personal:**
  - “I feel unhappy or stressed or depressed.”
  - “I’m gay and I’m afraid that my friends or advisor might find out.”
  - “I’m having trouble maintaining my long-distance romantic relationship.”

# Examples (3)

- **Interpersonal:**
  - Need help in planning upcoming conversation with someone:
    - Asking advisor for time off or for feedback
    - Confronting research collaborators about responsibilities
    - Dealing with academic/professional dishonesty
    - Annoyed at office mate's behavior
    - Concerned about friend's drug use
  - Feel that advisor is too busy
  - Suspect that advisor practices favoritism
  - Sexual harassment

# How Students Use the REFS Program

- Students come to us
- Most common avenue is through personal contacts
- Publicizing REFS is an ongoing activity
- E-mail us individually to make an appointment to meet up and chat

OR

- Contact all of us at

[eecs-refs@mit.edu](mailto:eecs-refs@mit.edu)

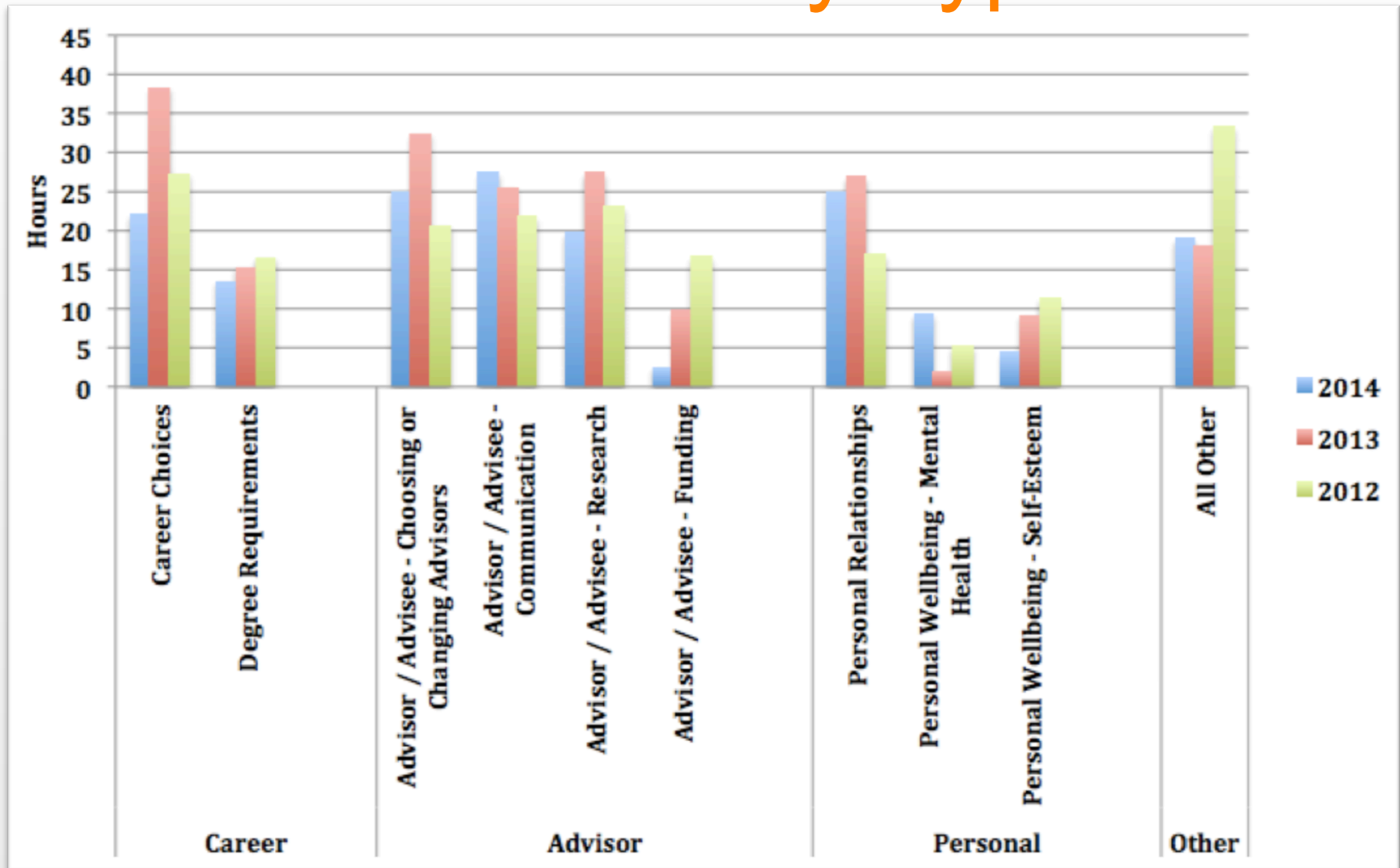
[eecsrefs.mit.edu](http://eecsrefs.mit.edu)

# Statistics

- 10 EECS REFS, 2 faculty advisors
- 65 distinct cases
- 1.4 meetings per case
  - Meetings include in-person, phone and e-mail conversations
- 2.6 hours per case
- Total of 167.5 hours

(Jan 2014 – Dec 2014)

# Caseload By Type



# Other Responsibilities and Compensation

- **Training**
  - One-time 40-hour mediation training by ConflictManagement@MIT
  - Ongoing training from ConflictManagement@MIT
- **Meetings**
  - EECS REFS group meetings once a month
  - All-REFS meetings once a month
- **Internal duties**
  - Rotating chair position, webmaster, treasurer, etc.
- **Reports to the department and faculty**
- **Publicity events and activities**
- **~10 hours per month**
- **\$200 per month compensation (paid during the summer)**
- **Expectation of multi-year appointment**

# Publicity We've Done

- EECS orientation and visit weekend
- Seminars
- Stress ~~balls~~ brains
- Small socials with donuts
- Winter care kits
- “REFS Spotlight” and other posters

*Do **you** have any ideas?*

# Why Be a REFS?

- Improve the graduate experience for your peers
- Develop your communication and interpersonal skills
- Deepen your understanding of issues that exist in the department and academia in general
- Broaden your personal network around MIT and the department
- Work with fellow community-minded students long-term

*Recommend your friends to apply!*



# What We Look for in a Prospective REFS

1. Approachable and well-networked
2. Willing to commit time, interested in leadership, takes initiative
3. Understands graduate student issues
4. Aware of and appreciates diversity
5. 2<sup>nd</sup> year or beyond in an MEng/PhD or SM/PhD program
6. Able to stay on for multiple years

# Application Process

1. Submit an Application (Due **12/8 at 4pm**)
  - Biographical information and essay
  - Ten signatures from fellow students (three as references)
  - Approval from research advisor
2. Interviews (**Thurs 12/10 – Fri 12/11**)
3. Appointment Notification (By 12/18)
4. Mediation Training (Spring 2016 or August 2016)
  - Spring: Tues & Thurs 5-7pm
  - August: 5-8 hours per day for ~3 weeks
  - **Required** for all new REFS
5. Start in May 2016 or September 2016

Our role is to neutrally and confidentially support EECS graduate students in dealing with issues involving stress and/or conflict, however big or small.

Ross Finman	CSAIL
Becky Mieloszyk	RLE, LEES, HST
Samantha Gunter	RLE, LEES
Lawson Wong	CSAIL
Wenjing Fang	RLE, MTL
Rachael Harding	CSAIL
Shreya Saxena	LIDS
Gauri Joshi	RLE
Jen Gong	CSAIL
Arman Rezaee	RLE

Roster as of December 2015

[eecsrefs.mit.edu](http://eecsrefs.mit.edu)