MIT Guaranteed Transitional Support Program: Overview

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EECS TRANSITION SUPPORT COORDINATOR
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ORIGIN & PURPOSE

- Phase I launched Spring Term 2021- support for unhealthy advising situations
- Phase II, to launch Spring Term 2022- develop process to support transitions from group-to-group (both through mentoring, implemented processes, and funding support)
- Phase II Student Transition Program Committee, chaired by Paula Hammond, Sarah Rankin
  - Leslie Kolodziejski is a member
- Fall Term 2021 complete data gathering, finalize recommendations and issue plans

Guaranteed Transitional Support | Office of Graduate Education (mit.edu)
PHASE I

- address unhealthy advising situations (due to bias, harassment, discrimination)
- SM, SM/PhD grad students are eligible
- one semester of funding provided: fellowship, RA, TA or other financial support
- funding beyond one semester: case-by-case approval by DH
- research ‘wrap-up’ may be needed: 15 hours/week for 4 weeks max
- prompt outcome determined so no pay periods are missed
EECS Approach for Transitional Support

- typically engage with Graduate Officer, or Graduate Administrator(s)

- two ‘pots’ available for monetary support:
  - guaranteed support for first-year SM/PhD graduate students
  - bridge funding for beyond first-year grad students

- Purpose of Guaranteed Support: assist new students to find appropriate project/group, and to switch when necessary due to mismatch or lack of funding
  - 79 students have benefitted (past 5 yrs)

- Purpose of Bridge Support: switch from one group to another (for multitude of reasons), unexpected loss of funding due to sponsor etc, emergency situation requires leave and sometimes funding, in the final stages of completing thesis and funding is expended, etc
  - 54 students have benefitted (past 5 yrs)
EECS Recommended Process

- engage in conversation with Transition Support Coordinator
  - Leslie for EECS or Suraiya Baluch for OGE

- Discussion will be confidential, if desired

- Plan will be devised to meet the goals of student, include action plan and timeline

- Funding provided for one semester (fellowship, RA, TA, other support- like bridge support)

- Types of personal support offered:
  - lots of listening and assessing the situation
  - wording for communiques, emails, conversations
  - plan of execution- may require a number of meetings and discussions
  - introductions to potential new advisors
  - follow up for checking in

This is a stressful process- it takes time, it involves uncertainty, but switching is successful and occurs regularly.
QUESTIONS?

Please reach out to Leslie Kolodziejski at leskolo@mit.edu

http://www.eecs.mit.edu/academics-admissions/graduate-program/graduate-support-and-resources