FY06 was a time of evaluation and action for the MIT Libraries’ Development Office. The Libraries raised a record amount during the 2005-2006 year—over $3.4 million—distinguishing fundraising from previous years and setting a new precedent for future goals. Major steps were taken to improve the Libraries’ fundraising and donor communications efforts: a fundraising strategy with an emphasis on major gifts was developed and implementation of it was begun; the organization’s annual giving efforts were evaluated and will continue to be strengthened and refined; and the Libraries’ “case statement” was developed and reflected in a brochure that set a new tone for the organization.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

In FY06 a new development plan was created for the Libraries, which outlined three main goals. Activities of the last twelve months have focused on these goals and significant progress has been made in all areas. The first goal, “to seek and secure major funding for the Libraries’ priorities from individuals, foundations and corporations,” was at the heart of the development plan. Much effort was put into relationship-building activities, such as greater interactions with colleagues in Resource Development and the Alumni Association, which led to an increase in donor visits and events, active participation in the grants process and an increase in the number of annual giving prospects. Throughout these efforts, communications has played a key role. The development plan’s second goal of “using communications as a means to reposition the Libraries,” began with the creation the Libraries’ first case statement. The Libraries’ new case gave shape to its ambitions of service and innovation and will serve to heighten awareness of the organization’s full scope of activities in the future. This new concentration on donor recognition and stewardship through external communications has proven to be an invaluable part of donor cultivation and ongoing relationship-building, especially in the area of major gifts. Communications has been a vital part of the plan’s third goal, as well, “to heighten the Libraries’ visibility with internal and external constituencies; and to establish a more fully defined and tightly organized fundraising program.”

MAJOR GIFTS

FY06 was the Libraries most successful year for fundraising to date, culminating in a total of over $3.4 million in outright gifts and pledges, greatly exceeding FY05 total of $378,916, as well as the Libraries’ previous highest total of $731,158 from FY03. Many factors contributed to this growth, not the least of which were two major gifts, one for $1.5 million from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for support of the SIMILE project (Co-PIs, MacKenzie Smith, Associate Director for Technology, Libraries and Eric Miller, Research Scientist, CSAIL) and a $1.5 million pledge for the establishment of the Thomas F. Peterson, Jr. (1957) Conservator position, the largest gift ever given to the Libraries by an individual. A final payment of $20,000 toward a gift of $50,000 from James B. (1970) and Marianne H. Rothnie also contributed to this total. A number of significant planned gifts are not reflected in the total above, including the reallocation of a $300,000 unitrust to the Libraries and a bequest to benefit both the Lewis Music Library and the Music Section from Lionel (1953) and Vilma Kinney. Central to these efforts has been a large increase in the amount of donor contact in all categories, as well as greater interaction with members of the Institute’s central resource development division, especially the Office of Leadership Giving. Also, the Libraries’ department of Systems and Technology Services, under the leadership of its Associate Director for Technology, continues to make great strides in the area of principal giving from government funding sources.
Regardless of these achievements, the Libraries are still in the nascent stages of establishing a truly flourishing major gifts program. A concerted and sustained effort, coupled with a continued increase in prospects, is needed to build the kind of long-lasting, multi-generational relationships that would be of greatest benefit to the MIT Libraries. The Libraries are, however, carrying forth its message to an increasingly larger audience, including major and principal gift prospects, the development team at MIT, and the MIT community in general. Major gifts events in celebration of milestones, such as the endowment of the conservator position, are important to the continued growth and visibility of development efforts, as are supporting print and web publications and giving opportunities.

COMMUNICATIONS

FY06 saw the creation of a new messaging strategy for the MIT Libraries fundraising efforts. With the input of library staff, MIT faculty and administration, as well as top level donors and peers, the Libraries’ Development and Communications team created a “case statement” to lead the fundraising charge. A stunning brochure was designed as the primary vehicle to carry the new message. Creation of a corresponding Web site, PowerPoint presentation and other collateral is currently underway. Rollout of the new case will begin in Fall of FY07. Plans for an official launch will include presentations to internal and external constituencies, including a special event for top tier donors, and presentations to MIT giving officers.

During FY06 the Communications Officer continued to produce publications and marketing collateral for a wide range of projects across the Libraries. She served as project lead on several large efforts, including the writing and design of the case brochure, the redesign of BiblioTech and a design update of the Libraries’ map and guide. She consulted with and managed communications projects for several libraries and service units—including specific promotions for Metadata Services and DSpace. The Communications Officer also worked with communications colleagues and media contacts to garner positive publicity and media coverage for the Libraries. Her efforts resulted in articles in the following publications: Tech Talk, Spectrum, the MIT Home Page, IS&T Newsletter, Faculty Newsletter, Ed Tech Times, Technology Review, CNET News.com and Campus Technology.

FOUNDATION AND GOVERNMENT GRANTS

In FY06 the Libraries’ Development Office began a concerted effort to engage with the foundation and government relations grants process at MIT. This is a new area of participation for the Development Office, but much progress has been made in laying the groundwork for future grants work. In fall 2005, the Director of Development traveled to Washington, D.C. with the Libraries’ Associate Director for Collection Services, and the Libraries’ Development Officer, to visit government agencies and explore funding opportunities. It was a productive visit that allowed us to discuss the Libraries’ projects and priorities with representatives from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the National Science Foundation (NSF). Following this visit, the development office met with the campus Office of Foundation Relations and Academic Development (FRAD) to find out more about how they can assist the Libraries in identifying prospects and with other aspects of the grants process. This has led to regular communications between our FRAD representative and the Development Office, particularly our Development Officer. Over the past year, the Development Office has participated in the grants process in a number of ways, from prospect identification and foundation agency research to editing and communications with program officers. The Director of Development continues to work with staff, faculty and department heads in an advisory and participatory role to increase activity with foundation and government agencies.
ANNUAL GIVING AND EVENTS

For many years, the MIT Libraries have participated in annual giving efforts in the forms of targeted mail solicitations and events, such as Honor with Books and the campus’ Tech Reunion Tour. These activities provide the Libraries with a way of raising unrestricted funds to support its resources and services, while forging meaningful relationships with alumni and their families. The Libraries’ annual giving program, while accomplishing a good deal, lacks an action plan based on a thorough evaluation of its outreach efforts and its fundraising abilities. The first step toward the creation of such a plan is the completion of an annual giving report, compiled the Development Officer for the Libraries, who is responsible for annual giving initiatives. This report was begun in FY06 and will be finalized in FY07, providing the necessary groundwork for a more complete analysis of the annual giving program. This analysis should identify ways in which to more effectively interact with the Alumni Association, provide a more systematic approach to raising annual funds and lead to the possible establishment of an upper-level giving society. Since the majority of annual gifts continue to be generated through the efforts of the Alumni Association, from department phone-a-thons to web giving, their participation in the crafting of the plan is essential. Overall, it was a productive year for annual giving, resulting in gifts totaling $133,140.

In a distinct departure from annual giving activities of the past, in FY06 the Libraries raised funds for the Library and Information Services in Astronomy (LISA) conference, co-hosted by the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics and the MIT Libraries. This effort resulted in the largest amount ever raised for a LISA conference, $25,100. The majority of this amount, $15,000 was raised by the Libraries’ Development Office, which also provided assistance to the group in tracking and fulfillment of sponsorship benefits and on-going communications with the various sponsors. The Development Officer was a key player in this project and successfully coordinated sponsor interactions and liaised with the LISA committee consisting of representatives from both hosting institutions. He also served as host-representative for the evening’s opening reception and dinner.

Steps were taken in FY06 to further refine the Libraries’ two annual events: Honor with Books, a program that is conducted with the Alumni Association, and the Libraries’ Tech Reunion Tours, also co-hosted with the Alumni Association. Honor with Books (HWB) continues to be a much beloved and anticipated event, offering parents the opportunity to donate a bookplate in honor of their graduating student. A reception for the HWB program was held, as customary, on Commencement day for parents and graduates. Although the program failed to exceed its FY05 total, its FY06 incarnation was still a resounding success. It was generally well-attended and received very positive feedback from the MIT community. HWB raised a total of $8,450 a decline in the previous year’s total, which was most likely a result of the lack of a leadership gift to the fund.

The Libraries’ Tech Reunion Tours underwent a notable transformation that vastly improved its effectiveness as an outreach vehicle for the Libraries. In FY06, the Libraries met with the Alumni Association to decide how to restructure the Libraries’ Tech Reunion Tours. These tours had declined in attendance in the past few years to the point of being ill-attended and heavily staffed. The Alumni Association, the Institute Archives and Special Collections and the Libraries’ Development Office revised the event to ensure greater attendance, resulting in an opportunity for the Reference Archivist, to make a well-received presentation to nearly 90 alumni of the Class of 1951. As in years past, a student organized and performed concert took place in the Libraries in April, highlighting several important pieces of music from the Stephen Prokopoff collection. The concert was held in the Lewis Music Library and drew a large crowd of students, faculty and others.
FINANCES/FUNDING

Giving to the MIT Libraries made a large leap forward in FY06, growing from the previous FY05 figure of $378,915 to over $3.4 million, the bulk of which was from two principal gifts, one from an individual and the other from a private foundation.

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FUTURE PLANS

In the upcoming fiscal year, the MIT Libraries’ Development Office will sharpen its focus on the acquisition of major and principal gifts in order to most effectively and positively support the organization’s priorities. This means an increase in activity with individual prospects and donors, including more time spent on face-to-face visits, cultivation and stewardship. In the realm of foundation and government grants, the need to encourage and support the preparation of more major grants is clear. The Office will also work to make annual giving efforts more fruitful and, whenever possible, interactive with major gift initiatives. Central to all of the Office’s goals is to continue to make communications a key part of all development efforts.

Sharon J. Stanczak
Director of Development & Communications