



MIT DEN:

**Dynamic
Education
Node**

Space for the entire MIT community
to share and adapt as we learn and
work together

Why?

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic

- few campus spaces existed that were open to staff, students, and faculty to drop in and use with equal comfort and ease
- few campus spaces existed that could be reserved in the evenings for any MIT purpose, even including the Libraries that are compatible with quieter group activities
- several MIT groups* recognized the Infinite Corridor as a “main street” of daily life. We don’t all walk it every single day, but we imagine it as an iconic part of campus that benefits all staff, students, and faculty when we walk through it.
- we could not have imagined the fresh joy of stepping off the hallway to share a conversation with a colleague who works across campus, or gathering to discuss a challenging project.

*Committee for Renovations & Space Planning (CRSP) P-CRSP Working Groups on Main Group and Campus Living Rooms; 2019-2020; Committee for Campus Planning

What?

- The DEN, a campuswide shared drop-in and meeting space:
 - A reconfigurable room, open to all MIT staff, students, and faculty to use and adapt during the day, without reservation and with respect for the shared space.
 - A room available for reservation in the evenings by any MIT individual or group, under a pilot basis as we practice sharing space this way.
- The DEN, a Dynamic Education Node. A point along an often busy corridor to connect, share, and learn more from our colleagues across all roles and perspectives at MIT.
- The DEN, a space to celebrate tiny triumphs, prototype medium-sized robots, discuss big ideas that will change the world, and reflect on the multi-size challenges of nature and society that MIT can help illuminate and solve.

What?

The DEN, with a nod to our mascot who reconfigures his/her/their space as needed:



“Of all the animals of the world, the beaver is noted for his engineering and mechanical skill and habits of industry. His habits are nocturnal, he does his best work in the dark.”

– Lester Gardner, Class of 1898, quoting in 1914 from Hornaday's American Natural History to make the case for the beaver as MIT's natural mascot.

(For the record, beavers are matriarchal, aquatic herbivores in the family *Castoridae* with unconfirmed but assumedly broad interests in any MIT Course. They live in dens or lodges that they reconfigure over time. They build dams, but don't hang out in them.)

Where?

- Room 3-108, a room that has seen many uses along MIT's Infinite Corridor of over the years since this building opened in 1916*.



* <https://mit2016.mit.edu/campus-cambridge/evolving-frontier/vision>

When?

- **Now** (May 9, 2022): Soft launch, open to all valid MIT ID card holders, with limited evening scheduling by email request.
- **Summer 2022 (June 1):**
 - Drop-in use during the day for all MIT ID card holders and their guests
 - Reserved use by any group during evenings (on MIT shared meeting space scheduling app under development and anticipated live by June 1. Stay tuned.)
- **Fall 2022 (Sept 6):** Thematic programming starting September 2022, catalyzed by MIT Libraries for this “collaboratory” DEN space. The intent is to build a sustainable framework of opportunistic, shared evening use that inspires us to exchange ideas with other MIT community members. More to come...

How?

6am-5pm (Eastern Time):

- Drop in any time and share the space with others, in conversation with your colleagues, your visitors, or on your own break to think or work individually.
- **This is an experiment for all of us, with minimum initial boundary conditions. We'll adapt as needed.**
 - Your MIT ID card opens the doors.
 - Furniture is reconfigurable on purpose. Move it around in the room where you need it, and leave it in a state you think is respectful of the next MIT users sharing the same space for varied uses.
 - Carry in / carry out on your food and supplies. Single trash bin and recycling bin available. Low waste encouraged.
 - Whiteboards and markers for shared use. Low tech on purpose.
 - Additional furniture and “zoom room pilot” capabilities on the way. Thanks, supply chain disruption.

5pm-12am (Eastern Time):

- Until June 1, 2022: By reservation via email to Greg Raposa (graposa@mit.edu) in the Office of the Provost.
- After June 1, 2022: We look forward to the MIT-wide app shared space scheduling tool. This tool is an outgrowth of Task Force 2021 and Beyond and P-CRSP working groups, enabled by IS&T. Stay tuned.

12:01-5:59am (Eastern Time): Rest or stretch your legs elsewhere, please.

But, really, can I use the DEN for...?

my robotics club to meet up during the day?

my robot enthusiast students, staff, and faculty to prototype a new robot at night?

my poetry slam or sci fi reading on a Saturday?

my staff colleagues in different offices to meet up and chat during our on-campus days?

grading papers at the intersection of computation and ethics?

work between meetings in different buildings or between classes?

eat my lunch in there while my 3D-printed architecture design is printing down the hall?

a departmental faculty award event on a Tuesday evening?

community discussion of MIT problems that are NP hard or QED?

reading that *Alone Together* book I saw, or listening to that TED Talk?

staring out the window at Killian Court and meditating?

a training session for our night shift team?

an evening talk on my new book about economics and management practices?

meeting up with potential research collaborators to discuss a new idea?

celebrating a retiring staff colleague?

thinking about what else the DEN can be useful for as shared space?

YES*

**This shared space is an experiment for all of us, with minimum initial boundary conditions. We'll adapt as needed.*

If you like the DEN, please thank the family* of MIT colleagues that made this space happen during the pandemic:

- **Concept and Coordination:** Greg Raposa @ Office of the Provost, Associate Provost Space Team
- **Renovation project management:** Meredieth Fydenkevez, Varin Ang, Gianna Salvaggio, Mike Lieberman, Sue Wolfson , Joe Higgins
- **Campus Planning and Furnishings integrated with Sustainability approaches:** Morgan Pinney, Vasso Matthes, Becca Leanos, Stephen Newman, Julie Newman
- **Access and zoom pilot:** Andrew Bonvie, Marco Gomes, Olu Brown @ IS&T
- **Community input (subset):** Tom Kochan (CCP chair), Brent Ryan (CCP former chair), Amy Kaiser (CCP lead staff), and Committee on Campus Planning including faculty, students and staff, CCP**; Multiple P-CRSP Working Groups of staff and faculty, 2019-2022, coordinated by Office of Campus Planning and including those working groups formed as outgrowth of MIT's Task Force 2021 and Beyond report.
- **Scheduled vacuuming and binned-waste removal:** Keith Diggans and Campus Custodial Services
- **Programming and communication communication concepts and frameworks, including Fall 2022 launch:** Nina Davis-Millis, Lisa Horowitz, Karrie Peterson, Alexia Hudson-Ward, and Chris Bourg@ Libraries

* A group of beavers is called a family. The term "colony" is an alternative word.

** CCP full roster of faculty, staff, and students here: <https://facultygovernance.mit.edu/committee/committee-campus-planning>

If you have an issue or problem in using this space, please contact shared-den@mit.edu.