

Industry Advisory Board Meeting – March 12, 2026

Executive Summary

Present: Ed Trautman, Peter Zeeb, Jim Cuseo, Tang Tan, Dan Riccio, Simon Pitts, Padraig Moloney, Soron Marovici, Linda Ducharme, Art Reidel, Bill Warner

Not Present: Bernie Gordon, Mindy Gallo, Doug Hart, Ken Languedoc, Terence Calloway

GEL

Leo McGonagle reported on recruiting and admissions status for the 2026-2027 academic year. He said that the program received 198 early applications by the March 8 deadline (143 from MIT, 55 from Wellesley).

Active recruiting is underway for the April 5 GEL 2 deadline and April 12 regular application deadline. Leo noted that the online application had been modified to better screen applicants for commitment level and to address attrition issues.

Current enrollment is 102 GEL 1 students and 33 GEL 2 students.

Leo highlighted academic enhancements to the program. The MIT Committee on Curricula approved expansion of the Engineering Project Management course from 4 to 6 units and renamed it Fundamentals of Engineering Project Management. He said the updated course strengthens content in risk mitigation, stakeholder communication, and managing complex enterprise systems.

He also described how the annual IAP Engineering Design and Rapid Prototyping course introduced a new team-based project challenge centered on a thermally-controlled, shock-isolating device for transporting organs, prompting student teams to integrate hardware and software design elements and submit their working devices to testing.

Leo shared the Engineering Leadership Lab's spring guest roster and slate of guests/engineering leaders participating in the Senior Engineering Leaders Roundtable event.

He mentioned that GEL's collaboration with the Edgerton Center was highlighted in an MIT News [article](#).

He also previewed upcoming events, including a visit in late April from the University of Birmingham's Engineering Science and Leadership Academy, the Annual Program

Completion Ceremony in May, and attendance at the ASEE Annual Conference in June, where GEL staff will present a paper on human-centered leadership in an AI-driven world.

Leo concluded by noting that three GEL students have been selected for the Northrop Grumman Impactship for summer 2026, and that Apple is actively reviewing resumes and conducting interviews for additional Impactship opportunities.

GradEL

Monica Pheifer shared projections for students taking GradEL courses/workshops and Certificate Projections and shared updates on spring 2026 course offerings:

- "Unpacking Impact: Transforming Research into Real-World Solutions" became a new permanent course based on successful piloting.
- "Leadership – People, Products, Projects" was opened to GEL 2 students for their Design & Innovation requirement, creating mixed graduate and undergraduate teams.
- "Multi-Stakeholder Negotiation for Technical Leaders" incorporated AI simulations and has received collaboration requests from DUSP, HSGD, and others.
- "Leading Creative Teams" is now incorporating new sessions bridging AI and teamwork, while
- "Critical Conversations for Technical Leaders" is being piloted this spring.

Looking ahead, the program is focusing on increasing enrollment through word-of-mouth recommendations, leveraging the GradEL Student Advisory Board, and enlisting current students to share the program with their networks. Also, they're exploring a new Engineering Leadership + AI course for AY 26-27.

Monica described the GradEL workshop offerings for spring 2026, which are expanding variety, ensuring broad coverage of engineering leadership capabilities, and piloting future course content.

On the Engineering Residency program, Monica reported that members from Cohort 2 had strong outcomes, with several already accepting full-time offers. She shared the Cohort 3 confirmed Residents and the kickoff of OpenAI as a host company. The program is exploring expansion to additional host companies, including Corning, Formlabs, and GE Vernova.

The group discussed the ongoing challenges of sourcing generalist MechE product design candidates, noting the greater prevalence of MechE candidates with particular specializations (e.g. vibration isolation). They also discussed ongoing challenges with PhD students who may require funding.

Heather Kispert Hagerty presented a fundraising update for GradEL. She reported that the program has raised \$3.7 million to date toward the \$10 million goal by the end of FY29, Heather said the program has secured a commitment from Resource Development for a

fundraiser who can commit a portion of their time to work with GradEL. She outlined an action plan for the next 12 months.

Art Reidel mentioned planned giving as a possible fundraising source. Reza added that up to 20% can come from the Net Present Value (NPV) of a Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT).

Longitudinal Alumni Assessment – AY2025-26 Data Collection

Jim Magarian provided an overview of the Fall 2025 alumni outcomes survey effort for GEL and GradEL.

He shared that findings were gathered in the areas of: program retrospective evaluation and feedback, career and industry pathways of alums, alums' career advancement statistics, alums' managerial responsibilities, and qualitative assessments on career preparedness and challenges

Results and insights will be provided at the Fall 2026 IAB Meeting, including, where possible, comparisons across participant groups, such as those who have more vs. less time in our programs, and with respect to institute-level benchmarks.

Simon Pitts suggested surveying non-participants as well. Art Reidel added that it took him five years after graduating to learn some leadership skills.

Subcommittee: Strengthening Our Enhanced Internship Programs

Monica Pheifer reported on the subcommittee's progress, saying they piloted ten "low-hanging fruit" ideas in the current enhanced internship cycle and shared valuable insights with Enhanced Internship Program Leadership on guiding concepts for improving, sustaining, and establishing new partnerships.

The subcommittee has identified a need for the value of these enhanced internship programs to be clear and compelling to current and future host companies. The subcommittee's focus is effectively communicating the value of the programs.

The group discussed ongoing challenges including how NSF fellows must remain full-time students, IP issues, and whether fees are paid by a company's recruiting budget vs R&D.

Monica said the subcommittee outlined next steps including finalizing the incorporation of feedback/anecdotes and handing off revised statements of program value.

Jim Cuseo and Ken Languedoc shared their experiences being part of a subcommittee and their feedback was overall a positive experience, well organized, relatively light time commitment, and felt like it was impactful. They encouraged others on the IAB to consider being a part of a subcommittee.

Subcommittee: Understanding Workforce and Workplace Change

Eileen Milligan reported that the subcommittee identified four key themes related to the challenges with hiring, onboarding, and training new graduates: persuasive technical communication, habits of an effective colleague, resilient project leadership, and interdisciplinary participation and facilitation.

She said the committee proposed educational activities, identified gaps and opportunities to strengthen offerings, refined priorities to bring key content forward, validated alignment of proposed elements with industry pain points, and gathered input on refined plans and near-term proposals.

Eileen said that the subcommittee paused its work to allow instructors time to integrate feedback into their curriculum. The subcommittee will reconvene after implementing recommended enhancements to assess how they have strengthened the programs.

Subcommittee: Defining the Brand of an MIT Engineering Leader

Rachel Best presented an overview of a new IAB subcommittee charged with clarifying what qualities should make graduates of MIT Engineering Leadership programs uniquely valuable to technical organizations. Rachel described the subcommittee's work as organized around three main initiatives:

1. Identifying what qualities or behaviors should consistently distinguish MIT engineering leadership graduates.
2. Examining how industry partners currently describe MIT engineers and MIT engineering leaders.
3. Determining what program changes would most strengthen the desired qualities and how the program can ensure these qualities are clearly visible to employers.

Rachel explained that this work matters because it clarifies the value of MIT Engineering Leadership programs, guides program design, strengthens how the program communicates its value, and ensures graduates are recognized for a distinctive set of leadership qualities.

The group discussed how problem solving and deep technical rigor are attributes commonly associated with MIT grads. They agreed this subcommittee's work will show how our programs help students overcome any perceived weaknesses. They also thought the output will be useful for fundraising.