Dear Friend of UPOP:

UPOP is a yearlong program for sophomores, as most of our readers know, but our dynamic workshops over IAP are the visible heart and soul of the program. Our students have the extraordinary privilege of working closely with many mentor-instructors, most of whom are MIT alums. Between training and then coaching for the weeklong workshops, our IAP mentors give up seven days of their time.

We're happy to say that the students don't take this for granted, and often express their appreciation. One such letter to a mentor-instructor this January found its way into the speech President Rafael Reif gave when the MIT community gathered to observe the 2015 Martin Luther King Celebration Luncheon on February 4, 2015. President Reif ended his remarks with this:

> So let me close by sharing one more MIT voice - from a student who is enrolled in our Undergraduate Practice Opportunities Program, or 'UPOP.' As she wrote to her [mentor] instructor:

> "MIT is such an easy place to forget how valuable you are...to forget about the positives and keep focusing on what to improve, how to study harder, research more, socialize more, get higher grades, be better.

> "But then to have others say, 'I appreciate your compassion, or your energy, or your voice,' reminds us that there is so much more than grades and school and success. There is humanity

> "And I think that's very easy to forget about, especially here. What I liked about UPOP [is]... the ability to connect with people....and see things from their side first."

Mentors matter. We thank them all!

With best wishes,

The UPOP Team
Joel Schindall Director | Leo McGonagle Executive Director | Kate Moynihan UPOP Mentor Liaison/Event Planning | Bethany Walsh & Sharon Leary UPOP Student Relations | Amy Bass UPOP Employer Relations | Jessica Jones UPOP Communications & Operations
UPOP students enjoyed an evening of dinner and advice from UPOP alums during a recent Industry Rotation event. From left: Kristen Railey '13 of MIT Lincoln Laboratory; Zach Rose '10 of Bose Corporation; Christina Qi '13 of Domeyard LP.

UPOP alums return as industry advisors

Our students relish information and coaching from employers who were in their shoes not too long ago, and they have lots of opportunities to do so with our popular spring series, "Industry Rotations: Advice From Early-Career Professionals."

These events feature recently graduated volunteers from industry--nearly half of them UPOP alums-who offer our sophomores advice and insights about the transition from school to the workplace.

In March, we delivered two of these events and hosted professionals from Barrett Technology, Terrafugia, edX, Bose, Domeyard, and MIT Lincoln Labs. Coming in April: Shoobx, High Start Group, Evolv Technologies, AOBiome, Sonos, MediaMath, Formlabs, and Schlumberger.

UPOP sponsors hire record numbers

This was UPOP’s first year offering a comprehensive sponsorship program, and our corporate sponsors are snatching up UPOP interns, including two so far to Pioneer Natural Resources, three each going to Ab Initio Software and Akamai Technologies, and a record eight heading to Northrop Grumman.

We've had dozens of meetings with employers both familiar and brand new to UPOP following our IAP workshops. In one recruiter's words: "I kept hearing amazing things about UPOP from other companies. I had to make sure we got involved with your program this year!"

UPOP has posted over 100 jobs this year and invited dozens of employers to participate as volunteers for our spring on-campus events. Students are also beginning to report their confirmed plans for summer internships with companies ranging from local UPOP alum-founded startups such as Shoobx, to large organizations such as Ford, Bank of America, Apple, Google, and many more.

In spite of the extraordinary weather conditions that disrupted a number of sponsored events and local company field trips, our students have been able to enjoy a full roster of company events this semester. UPOP sponsor Accenture presented "Consulting 101" on campus this February; Mimosa Networks and Levitronix conducted dozens of on-campus interviews exclusively with UPOP; and we're looking forward to a field trip this April to McKinsey's Boston offices. Onward to summer site visits!

Mentor Cathy Olkin '88 featured on a Reddit AMA with NASA's New Horizons Mission to Pluto team

UPOP mentor-instructor Cathy Olkin '88 was part of the NASA New Horizons Mission to Pluto team taking part in an "Ask Me Anything" event that made it to the front page of Reddit in February.

You can read the Reddit AMA here.
Dr. Cathy Olkin: Director of Office of the PI, Deputy Project Scientist, Co-PI on Ralph Instrument, Mission Science Team Member

From the March 10 update on NASA's New Horizons mission site:

"After more than nine years in space, on a voyage taking it farther to its primary destination than any mission before it, NASA's New Horizons spacecraft is within one astronomical unit of Pluto - meaning it's closer to Pluto than the Earth is to the Sun."

Cathy and her husband, Terry Olkin ’88, are both mentor-instructors for our IAP workshops, and Cathy also presented the "Shaker Alaska" module at our recent Presidents' Day Weekend workshop.

UPOP is the Undergraduate Practice Opportunities Program, a yearlong co-curricular program open to MIT sophomores from across the Institute. The program's mission is to prepare MIT sophomores to successfully integrate into and thrive in the professional world and to be strong contributors to their organizations, supported by a dynamic community of students, program staff, employers and MIT alums. UPOP offers numerous opportunities for MIT alums and companies to get involved— as speakers, coaches, employers, and sponsors.