Extramural Education and Research Activity (EERA):
Risks and Opportunities for a Safety Program

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Outline

- What Do We Mean by “EERA”?  
- How “EERA” Differs from “Fieldwork”  
- What Triggers the Need for an EERA Program – Risks and Opportunities  
- What is the Scope of MIT’s EERA Program?  
- MIT Off-Campus Research/Volunteering : Safety Resources  
- Your Questions, Suggestions and Comments
What Do We Mean by “EERA”?

**EERA:** “Extramural Education and Research Activity”

**Extramural:** outside the ‘walls and halls’ of MIT

- MIT Public Service Center (PSC):
  - Affiliated through the Division of Student Life (DSL)
  - Domestically and internationally public service assignments
  - Partnership with Department of Urban Studies and Planning (DUSP)
  - “Learning through Service” model – the community is your classroom

**Education and Research Activity:**

- Experimental setups in the open environment, UASs-drones/robots
- Study abroad, e.g., MIT International Science and Technology Initiative (MISTI)
- “Practicums”, e.g., Terrascope, Sloan Action Lab, Chemical Engineering Practice School
- Work abroad, e.g., Undergraduate Practice Opportunities Program (UPOP)
- Public service and humanitarian aid projects
- Entrepreneurship and Technology Transfer Exchanges, e.g., Global Startup Lab (GSL)
How “EERA” Differs from “Fieldwork”

- Fieldwork (as defined in the Merriam-Webster dictionary):
  
  “work done in the field (as by students) to gain practical experience and knowledge through firsthand observation”

  “the gathering of anthropological or sociological data through the interviewing and observation of subjects in the field”

- Much narrower scope than EERA, potential for unaddressed risks via:
  - Humanitarian/faith-based efforts, domestic or international
  - Student club activities, e.g., MIT Solar Electric Vehicle Team and GlobeMED MIT
  - Study abroad, e.g., MISTI (19 countries, 750+ students/year, >450 partners)
  - Work abroad programs, e.g., UPOP
  - Sabbaticals
What Triggers the Need for an EERA Program?

**RISKS**

- **MIT errant hazardous materials shipment, August 2009**
  - Collaboration between 2 DLCs, PI groups not captured in EHS-MS Space Registration
  - ‘Trash tracking’ sensor demo, prototypes shipped to West Coast
  - Improperly packaged lithium batteries short circuited at MA FedEx facility
  - Treated as “suspicious package”, MIT issued $125,000 penalty for ER costs

- **Duke University wrongful death lawsuit, 2012**
  - Duke-sponsored program, student carrying out a project in Costa Rica drowned
  - Initiating event: program finale party located at a beach known for strong riptides
  - Claim: Safer beach options well known, Duke showed negligence in event planning

- **Lifelong disability lawsuit, $41.3 million settlement**
  - Student bitten by bug during school-sponsored overseas trip, permanently disabled
  - Claim: insufficient biohazard warning and protective measures to be taken
Scope of MIT’s EERA Program

Multi-DLC EERA: Singapore-MIT Alliance for Research and Technology (SMART) via VP Research

Pl-based EERA: EAPS in 2012

Student Clubs: Solar Electric Vehicle Team
World Race in Australia, 2015
MIT Off-Campus Research/Volunteering: Safety Resources

- **Office of Major Agreements (OMA), International Coordinating Committee**
  - [http://icc.mit.edu](http://icc.mit.edu)
  - International Safety and Security Manager
    - Vets international destinations for safety and personal security risks, i.e. “Travel Risk”
    - Coordinates response for emergencies affecting MIT students and personnel overseas
    - Access to International SOS (ISOS)

- **Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP)**
  - Export Control Officer – ensures materials can be accepted into countries outside US

- **Environment, Health and Safety (EHS) Office**
  - Safety reviews for off-campus projects, both domestic and international
    - [http://ehs.mit.edu/site/content/field-safety](http://ehs.mit.edu/site/content/field-safety)
  - Hazardous materials shipping (e.g., lithium batteries)
  - Incident investigation and illness/injury reporting

- **MIT Medical Department**
  - Vaccinations and medical care for travel abroad
Thank You!

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