Mary Boyce, the Gail E. Kendall Professor of Mechanical Engineering, has been named the next head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering effective July 1, School of Engineering Dean Subra Suresh announced last week.

Boyce, who received her bachelor’s degree from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and her master’s and doctoral degrees from MIT, is renowned for her research in the mechanisms of polymers, networks and soft tissues and for her dedication to engineering education. The impact of her research has been recognized through the many awards she has received, which include election as a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) and the American Academy of Mechanics.

For her innovation in education she was named a MacVicar fellow and received the Joseph K. Keenan Award for Innovation in Undergraduate Education. She has served MIT and her professional field in numerous capacities, including chair of the Executive Committee for Applied Mechanics at ASME, membership on the U.S. National Committee on Theoretical and Applied Mechanics and the editorial board of the Journal of the Mechanics and Physics of Solids.

Although a woman has served as associate department head in the Department of Computer Science and Electrical Engineering, Boyce will be the first woman department head in MIT’s School of Engineering.

“I am confident we will all benefit from her energy, her insight and her dedication to engineering education and the engineering profession,” Suresh said.

The dean thanked the faculty advisory committee, chaired by Roger Kamm, Gershonation Professor of Mechanical and Biological Engineering. Other members of the panel included professors Gang Chen, Martin Catepp, Carol Livermore, Tony Patera, Nick Parusakalis, Ian Warz and Kamal Youcef-Toumi.

Suresh also thanked Rohan Aberyagana, Quentin Berg (1937) Professor in Mechanical Engineering, for his “extraordinary and dedicated service” as head of mechanical engineering since 2001, and as associate head, a position he held for four years before becoming department head.

“I hope and expect to have an opportunity in the near future to thank Rohan more formally and to elaborate on his contributions,” Suresh said. “I look forward to a continued and close collaboration with him.”

Boyce to head Department of Mechanical Engineering

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Two named associate directors at MIT Media Lab

Two long-term, prominent researchers at the MIT Media Lab, Hiroshi Ishii and Andrew Lippman, have been named associate directors at the lab. Director Frank Moss announced this week.

In announcing the appointments, Moss emphasized the key roles they will play in helping to realize new directions for the lab. “As the Media Lab explores creative ways for technology to have a lasting impact on people and society, we will also be looking for deeper collaboration with industry, to bring important innovations to the real world,” Moss said.

Ishii is best known for creating the field of Tangible User Interfaces to realize seamless connections between humans, digital information and the physical world. A faculty member at the Media Lab since 1995, Ishii holds the Muriel R. Cooper Professorship of Media Arts and Sciences, heads the Tangible Media research group and co-directs the Things That Think (TTT) consortium. His work focuses on inventing the future of digitally augmented objects and environments.

Before coming to the Media Lab, Ishii spent the majority of his career at NTT (Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation), where his research team pioneered video-mediated remote collaboration technologies that created shared workspaces across distances.

A founding member of the Media Lab, Lippman has a more than 30-year history at MIT. He established and has directed the Digital Life consortium, which focuses on the confluence of technical invention and human understanding to create a networked world where communication becomes fully embedded in our daily lives. Lippman heads the Lab’s Vital Communications research group, which focuses on constructing infrastructure-free, scalable, collaborative systems that permit uncontrolled growth and use minimal power systems that move intelligence “from the trunk to the leaves.” He also co-directs MIT’s interdisciplinary Communications Minicourses program.

While on sabbatical for the 2007-2008 academic year, Lippman is a visiting fellow at Nortel, one of the lab’s corporate sponsors. He will assume his new duties upon his return to the lab in September.

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