

MIT 150 | President Barack Obama visits MIT

BARACK OBAMA: Thank you, MIT. I am hugely honored to be here. It's always been a dream of mine to visit the most prestigious school in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[APPLAUSE]

Hold on a second. Certainly, the most prestigious school in this part of Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[LAUGHTER]

And I'll probably be here for a while. I understand a bunch of engineering students put my motorcade on top of building 10.

This tells you something about MIT. Everybody hands out periodic tables. What's up with that? Dr. Moniz is also the director of MIT's energy initiative, called MITEI, and he and president Hockfield just showed me some of the extraordinary energy research being conducted at this institute. Windows that generate electricity by directing light to solar cells. Lightweight, high-powered batteries that aren't built, but are grown.

All right, the same way an abalone would produce a shell, you are able to reprogram so that they're producing a battery?

PROFESSOR 1: That's exactly correct.

PROFESSOR 2: He's a fast learner.

BARACK OBAMA: Goodness.

PROFESSOR 1: Would you like to teach my class?

BARACK OBAMA: That was neat stuff. Engineering viruses to create batteries. More efficient lighting systems that rely on nanotechnology. Innovative engineering that'll make it possible for offshore wind power plants to deliver electricity, even when the air is still.

You just get excited being here, and seeing these extraordinary young people and the extraordinary leadership of professor Hockfield, because it taps into something essential about America. It's the legacy of daring men and women who put their talents and their efforts into the pursuit of discovery. And it's the legacy of a nation that supported those intrepid few, willing to take risks on an idea that might fail, but might also change the world.