

# TechNews

STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF  
TECHNOLOGY SINCE 1928

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Our mission is to promote student discussion and bolster the IIT community by providing a newspaper that is highly accessible, a stalwart of journalistic integrity, and a student forum. TechNews is a dedicated to the belief that a strong campus newspaper is essential to a strong campus community.

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### SUBMISSIONS

TechNews is published on the Tuesday of each week of the academic year. Deadline for all submissions and announcements is 11:59 p.m. on the Friday prior to publication. Articles, photos, and illustrations must be submitted electronically to the TechNews website at technewsiit.com.

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### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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# The Game of Job Hunting: The First Investigation

Zaira Ortiz

TECHNEWS WRITER

At some point, we ask ourselves that inevitable question, "What will I do with my life after graduation?" Although we are college students, and although the answer to this question may seem rather obvious, this question remains unanswered by the majority of students attending a college or university today. It is a universal misconception amongst all college students that once he/she crosses the podium with a fresh diploma in his/her hand, there will be an employer waiting on the other side. According to an article posted on the New York Post website, this is true for only 17% of the graduates in 2014, and was true for 20% of the college graduates in 2013 (notice the downward trend.)

It's not a mystery what employers are looking for. Actually, quite often, employers blatantly express what they are looking for in potential candidates. According to the article, the top 10 skills employers look for in candidates revolve around communication skills, technology skills, team skills, and ethics skills.

It's not always about your Grade Point Average (GPA). Students typically think that their ability to obtain a job after graduation is dependent on one sole factor: GPA. According to employers, GPA helps when applying for a job, but what truly distinguishes interviewees to interviewers is experience. Employers are interested in seeing that a candidate is experienced in his/her field with internships and work experience throughout college. Regardless of your industry, employers across the board regard internships as an essential trait a candidate must hold.

John Ramirez, third year business administration major, is an average IIT student, gives us insight into a real IIT student's mindset. On Wednesday, September 17, 2014, I conducted an interview with John discussing his current view of IIT and his goals for the future.

I began our interview by asking him the most popular question college students use in order to introduce themselves to one another, "What is your major and why are you pursuing it?" He easily replied saying, "Business Administration/Finance because I tried computer engineering and hated it, but I love numbers and handling money." By his response, I could tell John knew quite a bit more about himself than most students who are still discovering their callings. I continued our conversation and asked, "Have you thought about what you want to do after graduation?" His confident stare dwindled away, and he responded with, "Not really. Not too sure what job I want to pursue in my field yet." I found his response interesting, but not surprising.

This is the same response that most college students would give for this question. We continued our interview, and I asked him a lengthier set of questions in an attempt to collect more insight from him, "How long do you think it will take you to find a job after graduation? What do you think employers are looking for?" Returning to his confident state he answered saying, "It

won't take me very long, if at all, to find a job after college because of all the opportunities IIT gives us to get one. Employers are looking employees that know their stuff, and need little training or reprimanding. They want those who are self-sufficient." I suppose my lengthy question sparked a lengthy answer.

Intrigued by John's response, I followed up with a question that every student wants to know the answer for, but is too scared to ask. In the spirit of unveiling the truth, I asked, "If you were an employer, what percentage of your peers would you hire?" Not at all intimidated by my question, he responded with, "If I had to hire my peers, I would likely only hire about 50% or less. While they may be proficient in what they do, they may lack in other areas." In hopes of gathering more feedback, I followed up with, "Where do you think your peers are lacking?" Again, John politely and honestly replied with, "Depends, some of them lack the knowledge of material and others in being able to work and communicate their ideas to everyone." Ready to ask the grand finale question, I digested John's response and reflected on the facts. The facts, along with John's commentary, led me to the conclusion that students often believe that graduation is a one way ticket to comfortable employment. Although students who graduate from a university are much more likely to receive a higher paying job after graduation, compared to individuals who don't pursue a degree, the ability to live comfortably depends on one prime factor, the individual. The individual is a reoccurring theme in the game of job hunting. Willingness to work hard, thrive in all aspects, and own your education and employment is essential to finding that dream job that makes you happy after graduation. After all, at the end of the day, employers are giving us the answers of what they want. It's up to us to show them that we are what they need. On that reflection, I finally asked John, "What number do you think the IIT undergraduate business school is ranked?" He replied to his final question with a sincere breath, "out of 100 I would say around 30." With that, I thanked him and concluded our interview.

It's no secret that IIT students think highly of the academic curriculum they're in. In addition, it is also no secret that IIT professors think highly of the students and curriculum IIT offers. On September 18, 2014, I interviewed Professor Twombly, a professor at the Stuart School of Business.

We began our interview at 10 West café at the IIT Tower. Once we settled down, I asked him the first question of a series to which college students want the answer. This question was, "What would you say the top 5 complaints employers have about recent college graduates are?" He responded with, "I know that what employers are looking for is for people who are punctual and reasonably dressed, presentably dressed." He continued with, "I hear complaints that students don't write that well, and I see that myself when everyone is sending text messages and form a few coherent paragraphs." Finally, he added, "Those are the complaints, they're not punctual, they don't write well, they're not serious, not prepared for interviews, and don't ask 'how much am I going to get

paid' as a question during an interview." After hearing Professor Twombly's response to my first question, I thought for a moment about the ways IIT students can differentiate themselves to employers by making these top 5 complaints their top 5 strengths. The answers for getting a job after graduation are in his response. IIT students can be the exception by being punctual, by sharpening their writing skills at the Writing Center on campus, by dressing up for interviews, and by taking employers and the professional world seriously. I continued our interview asking, "Do you think IIT students are ready for the workplace after graduation?" Professor Twombly replied with, "IIT students are some of the best students I've ever seen, and IIT isn't the only school I've taught at. The top students here are as good as the top students anywhere; very well prepared. Someone once said, 'IIT attracts good students, our job is not to mess them up.'" Immediately after his response, I reflected on the atmosphere of IIT, the commitment to academics, and how students have built that atmosphere. I continued our interview with this question, "What percentage of the students you've encountered at IIT would you hire if you were an employer?" He responded with, "I'd hire most of them, the ones who come to class, and the ones who distinguish themselves. I don't expect people to get As and Bs necessarily. I've had students who come to class and do the work, and get Cs because what I teach can be more left brain than right brain, but they were good at everything else and were serious about it." Finally, I asked him, "What is IIT Stuart School of business undergraduate ranking?" He responded with, "I don't know our ranking, but I know we're too well to be kept a secret. I ran into a High School boy when crossing the street to work and he said, 'I didn't know IIT had a business school.' I told him we do. I later looked him up on Google and he was president of the senior class and won countless awards. These are the kinds of students who need to be able to find us."

So, to all you IIT students reading this, whether you're in the Stuart School of Business or not, remember that employers want college graduates who differentiate themselves. Go get an internship, be involved in school (there are so many opportunities!), take your education seriously, take interviews serious, and most importantly, suit up!

On that note, it is clear that professors think highly of IIT and it is also clear that students think highly of IIT. Professor Twombly and John Martinez, a professor and a student in IIT's Stuart School of Business, both consider the education, quality of students, and employer demand for IIT students to be high up there. But, why don't people know about us? I personally looked up the IIT Stuart School of Business undergraduate ranking and there isn't one. The thing about rankings is that in order to be ranked, you need to participate in rankings. So why aren't we participating? We're a great school with a great business program that isn't ranked! Find the answer next week under, "The Game of Job Hunting: The Second Investigation."

Imagine your name

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