

# TechNews

Student newspaper of the Illinois Institute of Technology since 1928

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## President, Provost Forum addresses student concerns

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The semesterly President and Provost Forum is a tradition at IIT that provides students the opportunity to ask any questions they have regarding university policy to the top two university administrators, President John Anderson and Provost Alan Cramb. Organized by the Illinois Tech Student Government Association (SGA), this semester's President and Provost Forum was hosted over the lunch hour on Thursday, October 30 in the Hermann Hall Expo. Tables with varieties of free sandwiches and sides lined the edges of the expo, and 200 chairs were lined up in front of a stage for the event, of which about three quarters were filled through the duration of the event.

The event began with a few opening remarks from Akinade Adelele, SGA President. He thanked those in attendance and explained the purpose of the event. "This event gives the students of IIT some face-to-face time with the top leaders at the university. It's an excellent opportunity for you to ask questions about the university's future and any of the things that you think about as a student at this university," Adelele also introduced the moderator for the event, Gabriel Connors, an SGA Senator from the Lewis College of Human Sciences.

The president and provost began to hear questions that had been collected by SGA through an online form prior to the event. The first question was regarding the ever-popular topic of tuition increases at the university. It asked whether the university would consider a locked-in tuition rate instead of having tuition increase each year for every student.

"Tuition increases annually because expenses increase annually, and because of this, we need to increase tuition," said Anderson. In regard to locking in a tuition rate that never goes up and stays the same for all of a student's years at the university, President Anderson offered some insight. "This has been tried at several universities and it's usually been a very negative experiment. One reason is that, when parents compare the cost of education between schools, they forget that the tuition is locked in; we initially have to have a raised tuition cost for a locked-in rate, and they compare it to another school's tuition that will increase annually." Provost Cramb also added that IIT's sticker price is not usually a true reflection of the price to students, as many students receive a lot of aid. He also explained that the tuition increases are tiered; continuing students face lower increases than incoming students.

The next question, also submitted prior to the event, asked what the outlook was for the graduate student programs at IIT. Provost Cramb responded to the question, explaining that the university looks to stabilize the number of graduate students to around 5,000 students, keeping the enrollment very close to where it is now. "Our goal is to grow the undergraduate population by another thousand students over the next five years. We'd like to see this campus become 50 percent undergraduate and 50 percent graduate students."

The next question expressed that the university needs to put more funding into athletics at IIT in order to attract more students to the university and asked what the university's plans were for increasing funding for athletics. President Anderson stated the importance of varsity, intermural, and recreational athletics.

He said, "We're not talking about very large increases in funding for athletics currently. All of the student fees paid for athletics from the past five years have gone to infrastructure improvements for athletics." He also added that the university is looking to hire a new full-time director of intermurals. Anderson then passed the question to Provost Cramb, who will be succeeding Anderson as president of the university in August 2015. Cramb added that the university will continue to support the idea of the scholar-athlete, where we have exceptional students who also participate in athletics as opposed to having specific athletic scholarships for athletes. He also shifted the focus of the conversation to the overall extracurricular experience at IIT and said, "The university will spend more on student life, and athletics are a part of student life. I wouldn't separate the two. There are many parts of student life, the experience outside of the classroom, that are very important to the development of our students."

Provost Cramb's transition into the presidential role at IIT was the subject of the next question. President Anderson said, "Provost Cramb and I have worked together for almost seven years at IIT. Like any two individuals, we don't agree on everything, but we do agree on most things, and we form partnerships and strategies together. The provost was in charge of the strategic plan that we just finished last year. The transition, I think, will be very smooth. I applaud the board of trustees for selecting the provost to be the next president because I know that he has a vision and commitment to the university, which is very important."

Cramb added, "I'm fully behind our vision for the future. We're going to become a much better-known university. We're going to

focus on the accomplishments of our graduates and our faculty. I think, from the student's perspective, they will see no hiccups."

After all of the previously-submitted questions had been asked, the floor was open for attendees at the event to ask any questions. After no response, Connors suggested that the president and provost take some time to talk about the Kaplan Innovation Center, the new building to be built on campus in the near future.

President Anderson says that the Kaplan Center will be located in Morton Park north of Hermann hall three years from now, and it will be the first new academic building on campus since Stuart Building was built in 1968. "Undergraduate students will take two semesters of courses there because all of the IPROs will be taught in this building. The Idea Shop will be moved there, The Institute of Design will be moved there from downtown, we will have Leadership Academy and Entrepreneurship Academy here, and we will have adjunct faculty come in from businesses that will do residencies here. This building will be a place where you will be inspired to apply what you've learned," said Anderson. He adds that construction on the building intends to break ground in 2016 and finish the building by 2017.

A follow-up question came from an audience member asking what will happen to the old building where the Idea Shop is currently located. Cramb says that the plan is to completely move classes out of the Tech Business Center on campus, adding that the Kaplan Innovation Center will be a 24-hour building where students will be able to work on projects related to their courses as well as personal projects.

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Photo by Kevin Zheng