

# IIT celebrates graduating students at Commencement



Photos by Bonnie Robinson and Michael Goss

# IIT Interns perform science demonstrations at Museum of Science and Industry

**Kori Bowns**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The Museum of Science and Industry (MSI) is one of Chicago’s most-popular museums and tourist destinations. MSI holds over 35 thousand artifacts in its nearly 14 acres of interactive exhibit space located in Chicago’s Hyde Park neighborhood, making it the largest science museum in the western hemisphere.

For IIT students, though, it is more than just an attraction to visit on the weekend. Each year, the museum works toward achieving its mission to “inspire the inventive genius in everyone” with the help of several Illinois Tech students. For eight years, IIT students have worked as interns at MSI through a unique partnership shared between the university and the museum. Each semester, students apply for a volunteer opportunity at the museum. During both the fall and spring semesters, 12 student volunteers spend a few days volunteering at the museum where they learn science demonstrations and then present

them to the museum’s general audience. These volunteers receive close training and feedback from museum staff to help them grow their presentation skills. The topics that student volunteers present about during their volunteer time at the museum include sound, Newton’s Laws, and electricity and magnetism.

After completing a required minimum number of volunteer hours at the museum in either semester, students become eligible to also apply for a paid internship at MSI during the following summer. Last year’s eight summer interns reached over 30 thousand museum guests through their science demonstrations. Though that amount of human interaction might seem daunting to some, staff at the museum set interns up to succeed, providing extensive training in guest readiness, public speaking, and science literacy, as well as closely observing their presentations and providing constructive feedback.

This year’s summer internship group is well on their way to delivering programs to tens of thousands of guests once again at

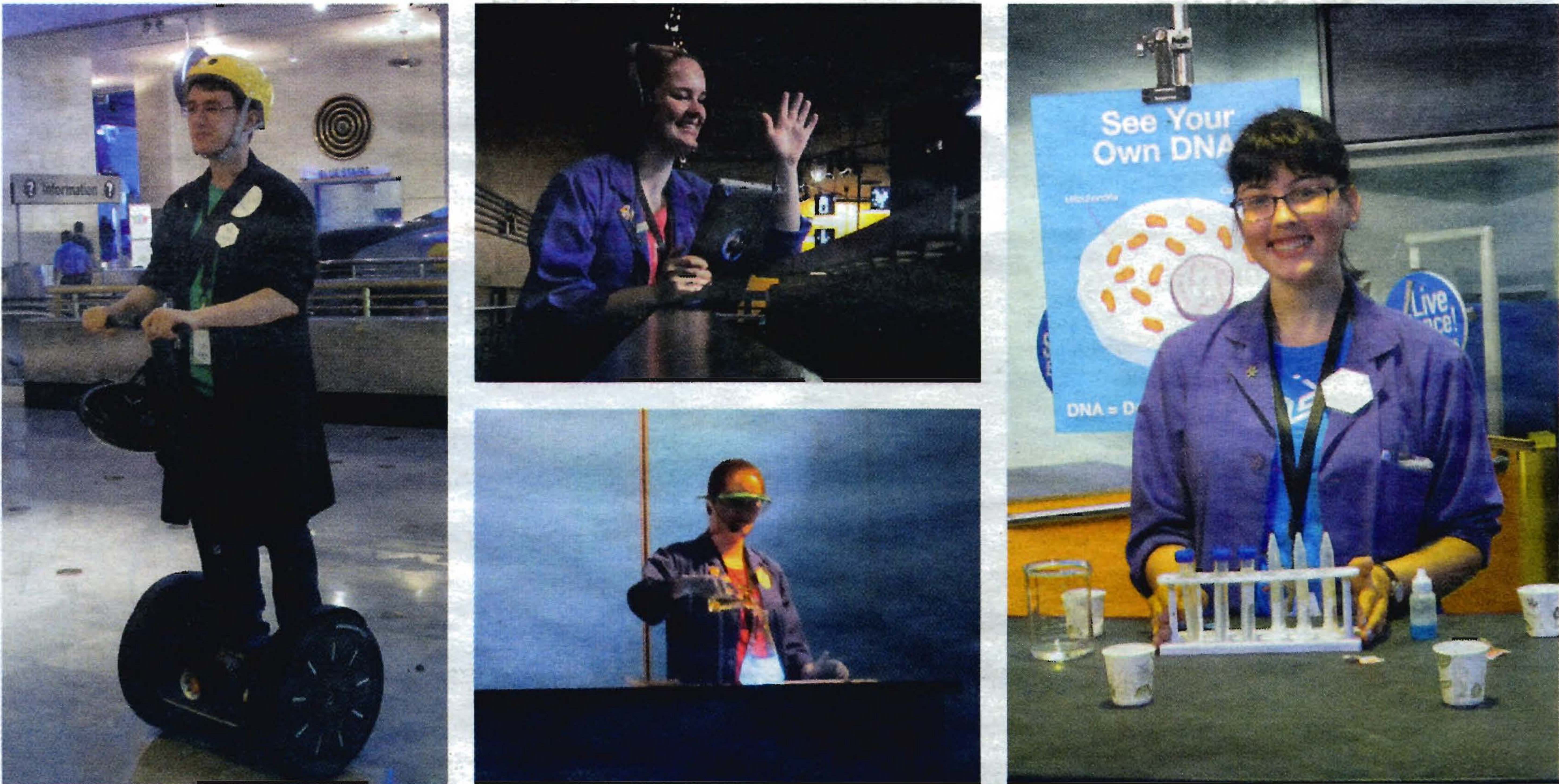
MSI. Seven interns were selected from the last academic year’s group of volunteers to continue as paid full-time interns at the museum throughout the summer. This summer, IIT interns are learning a variety of programs and demonstrations to deliver to guests during the museum’s busiest season of the year.

Demonstrations learned by summer interns include varieties of fast and small physical science experiments dubbed “pocket science,” a show where interns show guests how they can use household items to see their own DNA, a demonstration of how a Segway personal transporter works, a demonstration using a telepresence robot, and a chemistry show where guests learn about chemical reactions. Less than a month after the internship has begun, this year’s group of interns have already reached over 5,000 guests with their demonstrations.

Rubab Fatima and Kathleen Mullin, two current interns at the museum, say they’ve learned a lot so far. Fatima says that the communication skills she has gained are

valuable. “A lot of us are in STEM fields; it helps a lot to have a job where we’re not holed up in a lab somewhere; we have to communicate science with others,” she said. Mullin added, “We get to talk to people who don’t have the same background as use, which will be useful training for any future job.” Both interns also agree that they find their work enjoyable and fun, specifically noting that they enjoy seeing the look on guests’ faces when they discover new things.

The MSI-IIT volunteership and internship program is open to undergraduates of all majors at IIT. In order to apply for the program, students must attend one of several information sessions to be held during the first few weeks of each academic semester. Dates and times for information sessions will be announced on campus as well as in future issues of TechNews. Questions about the program can be directed to Lynne Meyer, IIT’s Director of the Office of Spiritual Life, Diversity, and Service, at lmeyer2@iit.edu.



Photos by Kori Bowns and Austin Gonzalez