

Companies recruit a variety of students at Fall Career Fair

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Getting a job can be one of the hardest and most important things to do after studying hard for 4 or 5 years at IIT! However, every year IIT's Career Services department organizes a career fair where companies from both the public and private sectors come and interact with students. This year, the career fair was held on the September 24 in Herman Hall.

The hall was practically jam-packed with students dressed in formal professional attire along with some professors. It officially began at noon, but the action started earlier in

the morning when all the companies came and set up their stalls. Students started pouring in with resumes in their hands and hope beaming in their eyes! A lot of companies were present, including major companies like Google for computer science majors, Illinois Department of Transportation for civil engineers, and many other companies for other majors.

Most students were excited but at the same time nervous about their personal interviews. Although most interviews didn't last for more than five minutes, it was enough to make them uneasy until it was done. The companies there were looking for a variety of skills

from IIT students. The Hanley, Flight & Zimmermann Company was looking for computer science and mechanical engineers, resulting in a long queue of students standing in front of their stall. Chris' Awesome Guacamole was favoring food processing engineers and business majors. Michigan University had also set up a stall encouraging undergraduate students to join their graduate majors. Cleversafe was looking for computer science engineers with an experience in Java programming. AECOM was on the search for architecture and civil engineers who had played around with Autocad and Revvit before. Spraying Systems Company

was a popular company amongst chemical engineers. They were in search of engineers with a passion of trying to protect consumers but at the same time be commercially successful. The company was into making sprayer nozzles for paper, steel and food industries.

The organizer behind this event was Deborah Young in Career Services; she had help from Shirlean Williams as well as a few student organizations. In a nutshell, the career fair was a grand success catering to the needs of every major on campus helping undergraduate students obtain internships and graduate students get jobs.

From a Simple Dream to an Incredible Reality: the Story of UNICEF at IIT

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The student organization United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) at IIT is a relatively new group on campus. The group can often be seen at tables and events around campus, and can be recognized by their vivid blue UNICEF tee shirts. The group received approval in March of last semester and the two students who started it agreed to an interview to explain more about the purpose behind the organization. The story behind the founding of this group, as told by the two students who started it all, is truly inspirational.

UNICEF President Pratik Sampat and Vice President Mert Pekdemir met each other for the first time approximately a year ago at the Millennium Campus Conference (MCC). They attended the conference as part of Engineers Without Borders. That year UNICEF had decided to partner with MCC for the conference, so there were many UNICEF members from various colleges in attendance. There were also many other organizations there, but the blue UNICEF shirts stood out to Pekdemir and Sampat. They began talking to students from other schools who were part of UNICEF. The UNICEF clubs they talked to shared their personal stories about what they were doing to help and showed off their clubs' Facebook pages. They discovered that almost all of the major colleges around Chicago had UNICEF organizations on campus, except for IIT. Sampat said that this "inspired us to think about why we don't have this kind of chapter on our campus, why we don't have a UNICEF at IIT." They thought about IIT as a campus full of such diverse students with a unique set of skills and they wondered why there was not yet a UNICEF chapter on campus.

During the conference, the President and CEO of the US Fund for UNICEF,

Caryl M. Stern, gave a speech explaining what UNICEF was and talking about how she got involved. The speech was so touching, according to Sampat, that it seemed everyone in the room was crying by the end. The speech motivated them so much that they decided to come back to campus and find out why there was no chapter at IIT and see what they could do to fix that.

It took the two of them a while to get things going because neither of them knew anything about starting an organization from nothing. It took a lot of work because they had to work with both IIT and UNICEF in order to get the group started up properly. They decided to split the work between them and Pekdemir focused on IIT while Sampat focused on the UNICEF side of things. Eventually they put together an executive board for the organization and they took the idea to SGA for approval. When talking about trying to get approval, Sampat said, "I think that was one of our biggest challenges" because SGA was reluctant to approve another nonprofit organization on campus. At that time, it was still just the two of them in this organization and they had to put together a huge presentation and answer a lot of questions. Eventually, however, they did manage to distinguish themselves from the other nonprofit community service groups on campus enough to receive approval to start an official UNICEF chapter at IIT. The organization now boasts 45 active members, with the email list consisting of 212 members.

The main goal of UNICEF as a whole is to "bring the number of preventable deaths to zero." Sampat explained what this goal means by saying, "Every single day 17,000 children die from preventable causes like malnutrition, lack of water, not having proper vaccinations, etc. These are things that we take for granted, things that are easily accessible to us, but 17,000 children die every day from things like that and UNICEF strongly believes in re-

ducing that number to zero. If these are preventable, we can make this zero, this shouldn't be impossible. That is one of UNICEF's biggest missions".

In order to contribute to this goal, the IIT chapter of UNICEF divided up into three committees: education, fundraising, and public relations. The committees work together towards the common goal and come together for general body meetings, but they each focus on a different purpose within the organization.

The education committee, led by Pekdemir, has the goal of educating the members of UNICEF, as well as students all over campus, on the issues that are affecting children all over the world. Most of the students at this school were raised in a sheltered community where there was never a concern about food and water. Students at IIT do not know what it means to starve or experience thirst or famine. There are children that are experiencing things that we cannot imagine and we do not know how they are living and what they are fighting through. The job of the education committee is to teach these subjects around school in an effort to raise awareness about what is going on around the world. Pekdemir explains that, "If we don't know about this then we cannot help the cause, we cannot add anything, we cannot contribute. In order to contribute we need to talk about these facts and what UNICEF does and tell it to the school so that the school will know about what's going on around us and what's going on all around the world". This is the goal of the education committee, because "if you know, then you will be talking to people" and then hopefully more people will be inspired to help make a difference.

The fundraising committee, led by Madina Tahmas, is dedicated to raising money to send to UNICEF on behalf of the IIT chapter. On Friday, September 25, for example, this committee hosted an event called "You vs. UNICEF" that raised \$132. This money,

as well as any other money raised this month, will go towards supporting Syrian refugees to help children afford things such as water and medical needs. Each month the group focuses on a different cause and the money raised that month is dedicated to helping that cause.

The third committee is public relations and it is led by Deniz Demir. The purpose of this committee is to help the organization by spreading the word about what the other two committees are doing. The goal for this committee is to increase campus awareness about UNICEF and the various activities and events that the group is hosting around campus.

One great project that UNICEF wants everyone to be aware of is the tap project. Donating money is definitely not the only way to help, and this project is one great example of how anyone can easily contribute to UNICEF. The tap project is a project dedicated to raising money for clean water. In order to help with the cause, anyone can simply go to "http://tap.unicefusa.org/" or Google "the tap project by UNICEF" on their phone. This will open up a page where, for every 15 minutes the page is left open, one day of clean water will go to someone who needs it. This is a very simple way to help because the page could be open while your phone is in your pocket or while you are in class, for example. At UNICEF events, the members working the events typically have a tap project table set up where they all leave their phones during the event.

Anyone interested in learning more about UNICEF at IIT can go to their Facebook page. The best way to contact the organization is to send a Facebook message to the page, which will be answered within three hours. There is also a link on the page to sign up for the mailing list and to join one of the committees. This organization is only just beginning at IIT and they are always looking for new members and new ideas.



Photos by Genevieve Hummel