

# TechNews

Student newspaper of Illinois Institute of Technology since 1928

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## President, Provost Forum focuses on core IIT issues

**Soren Spicknall**  
TECHNEWS WRITER

Hosted by Student Government Association (SGA) just once per semester, the President and Provost Forum has long served as a barometer of student satisfaction at Illinois Institute of Technology and continues to inform major policy decisions made at the top level of university administration today. The forum brings together perhaps the most diverse group of students, faculty, and staff of any IIT event, engaging in open and frank discussion about topics ranging from the effectiveness of the school's marketing to the physical condition of its facilities. In addition to being a major source of direct student input without the hindrance of intermediate bureaucratic steps, the President and Provost Forum also serves a role in communications going the opposite direction, helping top officials at the school explain the rationale behind their decisions directly to those who care the most about the impacts of those decisions. Beyond all of that, the level of turnout at the Forum serves as an essential marker for student engagement in general, demonstrating whether the actions of SGA have effectively catalyzed student interest in improving their school over the preceding semester.

Last Thursday, during the shared campus-wide lunch hour, SGA President Rahul Wadhvani introduced University President Alan Cramb and Provost Frances Bronet to a crowd of about 60 in the MTCC Ballroom, which soon swelled to a room-filling two hundred or so, approximately half made up of students and half of various professional units of the university. Both Cramb and Bronet are newcomers to their current positions at IIT, though the former is no stranger to the President and Provost Forum, having served as Provost for the last seven years under former University President John Anderson. Bronet, on the other hand, is a new face at the school, but her engaging personality has already solidified her presence in student minds through appearances at events like the Sophomore Leadership Retreat sessions held throughout the fall semester. She carries a considerable reputation with her as a proponent for interdisciplinary programs and policy, having worked herself in architecture (including time as a Dean of Architecture at Rensselaer Polytechnic), dance (with a particular focus on mixed-abilities dance companies and incorporation of visual electronic arts into dance mediums), and in the academic realm as Provost of the University of Oregon up until her appointment here at IIT.

After a few joking introductions (a reassurance that nobody up on stage would bite, etc.), Wadhvani got down to business with a small set of questions submitted online prior to the event. First up was an issue that has been quite contentious recently among student life and academic leaders of IIT: the formulation of the President's Student Advisory Council (PSAC). While practically nobody has been critical of the general PSAC concept (not in public, at least), there have been a number of questions raised in recent weeks regarding the criteria used to determine representation and the lack of transparency in the application process for the group. In particular, many students and faculty alike have lamented the choice to focus the group on student life rather than academic factions of IIT, raising fears that the group would have too indirect a focus

when it came to improving the university. President Cramb, after initially passing off the question to Wadhvani himself for some explanation (SGA was the group responsible for PSAC delegate selection), discussed some of the steps that had been taken to ensure the Council's representativeness of the student body as a whole, clarifying that each delegate was selected based on their potential to lobby for the interests of different groups such as housing or media organizations, not on the strength of their own personal policy opinions. Additionally, Cramb discussed the inclusion of five at-large members who did not represent any particular facet of the student body, and mentioned that each college tends to have its own advisory group, attempting to dispel criticisms that PSAC's focus is too weak when it comes to academics.

Next up, another online submission posed the question of whether IIT's top-level administration had considered or would possibly consider establishing a "student venture fund" in a framework meant to foster startup-style creativity with the administrative protections of the university behind it. The direct answer to that question was no, but Provost Bronet was quick to expand upon

which seeks to establish a financial aid outlet for undocumented students attending IIT, stood at once, small flyers in hand reading "I Support the UMII Scholarship Initiative." An individual among them spoke at length about the lack of current scholarship opportunities for undocumented migrant students, and the group's overall goal of convincing the university to change that reality. She also touched upon hate speech directed toward the group recently on the semi-anonymous social media platform Yik Yak, drawing comparisons to threats made on the same application at the University of Missouri and elsewhere.

President Cramb's response to the group was initially strong, emphasizing that UMII had not presented any specific proposal for their aims, and stating that he could potentially support the initiative if he knew exactly how the group intended to implement the scholarship fund. However, Cramb stumbled somewhat following the first section of his comments on UMII, drawing ire from the assembled representatives of the initiative for using the word "alien" to describe his own status for a number of years in the United States. He quickly backtracked, clarifying that he used that word to demonstrate how others saw him

universal experience for those at IIT: student engagement and general campus energy. A participant in the Forum spoke to the fact that, after orientation, the level of direct student engagement from OCL and other professional offices drops off significantly, with student orgs expected mostly to take up the slack on their own. Acknowledging that this dropoff is a significant issue facing IIT, Provost Bronet called upon three individuals in the audience, including Dean of Students Katherine Stetz, to provide some insight. Their answers on the topic covered similar territory to each other, touching on the fact that SGA, professional staff, and non-SGA student orgs are often quite disconnected from each other when it comes to brainstorming and promoting events, as well as the fact that the school hasn't adequately connected Welcome Week activities to recurring events throughout the academic year. While there were few specific proposed actions put on the table (aside from focusing even more on what's currently working well, and increasing communication between SGA and administration), all individuals speaking seemed to agree that the University could be doing more on that front. Provost Bronet re-entered the conversation on a more philosophical note, talking of improving student happiness on campus by what she called "making the invisible visible". That is, finding ways to celebrate the daily triumphs of academic life at an institution whose students are mostly focused on being part of a school rather than a social center. Drawing from her history in architecture, she spoke of reorganizing spaces both physical and institutional to make the mere act of attending at IIT an exciting, novel experience for students.

Following that broad, perpetual question of student happiness was a much more specific query from the audience, regarding the university's current income shortfall, which was announced in the October 23 President's Update email sent to all IIT students. An individual in the crowd (full disclosure: this writer) asked President Cramb for some specific information about what actions had been taken in anticipation of and in response to the unexpected financial news. Cramb went into some detail about policies that the school had adopted over the last half decade, such as the practice of holding 2.5% of each academic unit's budget in reserve annually in case of emergency, and the consistent maintenance of a \$1 million cash fund to make up for shortfalls. In addition, he discussed an extra \$1 million that was marked as non-essential in the school's budget each year in case cutbacks needed to be made. Cramb said that no actual cutbacks had been made yet, but the school was forced to invoke all of the aforementioned contingencies to make up for this year's profit fall.

The next few questions of the President and Provost Forum, while unquestionably important, were better suited for department officials than for Cramb or Bronet. First, a student in the Architecture program asked about the potential for a number of changes to be made to their lab fee policy and printing practices, in the hopes of alleviating the constant cost of printing for students of that major. Ophir Trigalo and Robert Krawczyk, the department's CIO and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, respectively, both spoke to the possibility of making some changes if the question was



Photo by Soren Spicknall

the availability of venture funding and advising already through the Knapp Center, which coordinates work with students and with businesses active in the Tech Park just west of IIT Tower. She stressed that students interested in entrepreneurial endeavors could use the Knapp Center's services for business consulting and trademark advising, and that the Idea Shop and the upcoming Kaplan Center for Innovation would serve as the sort of free entrepreneurial space that the question's author was hoping for. While she did not indicate that there were any plans for those two institutions to establish any university-level venture fund, Bronet did indicate that the Knapp Center was looking into partnering with more external companies for funding of student-led projects and businesses.

Moving on from online submissions to live questions posed by audience members, the first group to speak was perhaps the most vocal of the event. Approximately six members of the UMII (United Minds Inspiring Innovation) Scholarship Initiative, a group

rather than how he classified himself, but his use of the word still increased tension between UMII and himself. Cramb also responded unsatisfactorily in the eyes of UMII's members when pressed about allegations that the school had axed an IIT Magazine story about the group back in 2012, saying he could have been part of the group that made that decision, but was unaware of it today. He gained back some ground by emphasizing that such a decision should have only been made in the case that it could have hurt somebody's privacy or reputation unnecessarily, saying that at times there were articles in TechNews, as well, that he wished would not have been published for such considerations.

When asked whether Cramb or Bronet would be present at a UMII-hosted forum this Wednesday on the topic of potentially codifying the scholarship more specifically, neither could immediately respond in the affirmative, citing their busy schedules.

The next question from a student involved something that's more of a

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## TechNews

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# Volunteering provides valuable opportunities, skills for all students

**Shachi Sayata**

TECHNEWS WRITER

On October 24, I volunteered for the American Cancer Society's "Making Strides against Breast Cancer" event organized at Soldier Field in Chicago. The event consisted of a 5k marathon where a lot of survivors and their families participated. The mantra of the marathon was, "walk with us and never walk alone." This grabbed my attention and I was extremely interested in participating. After a little bit of research, I realized that this could actually be an amazing opportunity to volunteer. I got in touch with the event organizers, who were thrilled to have me, and sooner than I realized, I was representing the American Cancer Society's Cancer Action Network.

As a volunteer, I helped sign 400 petitions for increasing funding for cancer research. It felt like a huge responsibility! I had hundreds of people come to my desk to sign the petition. My job was to provide them with as much information as possible for them to decide if they were in favor of the petition or not. Most people were in favor of making cancer a national priority and actively

participated in the events held by the American Cancer Society.

I am a finance student and negotiation and interpersonal skills don't come very naturally to me. Both these skills were required to be exhibited by the position I was given that day. I realized that by volunteering, I could put my skills to test, learn from my mistakes, network, and develop new skills. I am a firm believer that, by volunteering, we can step out of our comfort zone and explore different possibilities. As students, I believe it is very important that we volunteer since it makes us grounded in our values, opinionated in our beliefs, and rational in our thoughts. All three qualities are excessively important in order to be a good leader.

While volunteering however, it is important that you find a cause that you personally care about it. Fortunately today, many websites like Volunteer Match and Chicago Cares can help you easily filter from a wide array of initiatives. This ensures that you work in the area of your choice and for a cause that is important to you. It is a great way to make long-term career decisions. You can get a volunteering opportunity in a field that most

interests you. You can try and test different job profiles and decide what you want to do.

By volunteering, you develop a better perspective and start looking at the bigger picture. It makes you think about your values and beliefs and makes you more aware of various socioeconomic events. It compels you to be opinionated and take a stand for something you really care about. You are forced to conduct better research on the topic since, if you are taking lead and representing the idea, you would want to have a better understanding of the factors revolving around the event.

If you don't have time to go to an event, there are many opportunities that let you work from home. The only perspective you should have towards volunteering is that time is money; give your time and the money that exists will be channelized better. I had a feeling of gratitude and fulfillment after I volunteered and I would thus like to take this opportunity to encourage every reader to volunteer for a cause they really care about. Go sign up today! In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "Be the change you want to see."

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# President, Provost Forum focuses on core IIT issues (Continued from Page 1)

brought up in a more directed form. Next, a biology major made a plea for updated or improved lab equipment, but because nobody from that department was at the event, Provost Bronet directed him to contact officials from within his major before turning to university-level administration.

Moving on once again to more general concerns, the next question was perhaps brought to the forum on account of Provost Bronet's history in design fields. A male student of the computer science department lamented the lack of structured lounge-style spaces in outdoor areas of campus, especially in the vast park-like areas that split the distance between many of its academic buildings. In response to that concern, President Cramb stated that anybody wishing to offer input on transforming IIT's outdoor spaces was absolutely welcome to do so through SGA, and that if the school wasn't doing enough to engage students outdoors, then they wanted to know about it and act upon it. Bronet chimed in as well with news that Stetz and others were currently working on the development of a new master plan for the campus, examining how students currently socialize and work to inform their decisions about how to shape spaces both indoors and outdoors in the future. The new picnic table area on the western edge of Life Sciences was brought up to show how IIT is currently pushing for some such transformations, but Bronet, like Cramb, urged those in attendance to provide input so

that the school's newest projects are actually those most desired by students.

Before the end of the President and Provost Forum, there was still time for one more deep-reaching, morally important question. The same student who had earlier spearheaded the exchange over UMII once again took to the microphone, this time to lament the lack of belonging for many women at IIT. She pointed to verbal harassment from professors (though did not cite specific cases) and a perceived lack of accountability at the institutional level for such actions. In addition to generally poor recruitment of women, the student argued, the university had at times failed to take sexist speech and actions of its staff seriously, leading to a self-perpetuating cycle of uncomfortable unwillingness to report such occurrences on the part of students, followed by inaction on the part of the administration.

Provost Bronet was, perhaps for good reason, the first to speak on the subject. She pointed to her history as an advocate for women scholars in her former position at the University of Oregon, and stated that she was ready to be a passionate voice at IIT as well, as long as she could gather actionable information. Being more familiar with the workings of the university at this point, President Cramb stressed that reporting from affected individuals was key, and that speaking with Stetz, or in extreme cases, with the University Counsel, was essential to initiating a process to bring perpetrators to justice.

In perhaps his most solemnly passionate statement of the night, Cramb spoke directly to the student bringing sexism concerns forward (and perhaps indirectly to present faculty), saying "tenure does not allow one to behave badly and remain tenured."

However, despite those early triumphs, Cramb soon seemed to hit a rhetorical roadblock as he did before with the UMII group. Returning to the discussion about anonymous social media outlets used at times to spread hatred, Cramb suggested simply ignoring what he considered relatively "harmless" speech, quickly drawing a distinction between that and threats when prompted by an anecdote from the events at the University of Missouri. Though valid from a practical standpoint, his advice was not visibly popular, and the student who asked the question, in particular, argued further that simply ignoring hate speech was not acceptable as a way to reduce it and remove ideological barriers for women on campus. This issue, as well as the issue of undocumented students, brought up differences in administrative approach between President Cramb and Provost Bronet. While there was obviously no black and white answer to questions of hate speech, Cramb tended to take a more careful, fact-based path to discipline than Bronet, who was focused more on personal communication and advocacy. This was perhaps one of the more interesting places where their responses diverged during the event, and something to

pay close attention to in the future.

While the event itself was only an hour long, it was important to note different groups of individuals in the crowd that formed after one final question had been asked (a simple query about who managed the farm plot in the Quad) and Rahul Wadhvani had made a final joke to cap off the Forum. Provost Bronet made a beeline for the student who had discussed sexism issues, one of the two individuals from the College of Architecture who had spoken earlier made conversation with the student who was concerned about their printing situation, and members of OCL and other offices gathered to discuss much of what they had heard. In the end, the purpose of the President and Provost Forum extended beyond the immediate impetus for its existence. The reach of the event went beyond the MTCC Ballroom, beyond 1:45 on a Thursday afternoon, and back out through campus, up IIT Tower, into Crown Hall, over to the West Loop, and anywhere else touched by those in attendance. The major themes of the forum, like improving communications between SGA and administration and encouraging students to approach their department heads about long-standing issues, were exhibited immediately as the crowd dispersed, and with any luck, will continue to shape the future of the Illinois Institute of Technology.

## Quidditch team hosts first scrimmage of the season

**Abhinaya Iyer**  
TECHNEWS WRITER

Quidditch is a fictional game picked up from the world of Harry Potter and adopted into the 'Muggle world,' as Hagrid would say. The game is played amongst seven players, out of which there is one seeker, two beaters, one keeper and three chasers. As it is a fictional game, the rules applied in Harry Potter's world cease to exist, but new rules were written down to make playing the game easy.

Saturday evening proved to be a wonderful time to play Quidditch. The weather was sunny with a mild chillness in the air. Fall leaves of orange and red played well with

the uniforms of both teams, which was red for Scarlet Hawks and Blue for Columbia. These colors were playing across the field, in terms of the uniforms, leaves, and the equipment, which was red and white. The teams started coming in at 3 p.m. and the spirit of competition filled the air with the individual teams warming up. Before the starting of the match, both teams were running around warming up and shook hands. The match started at 3:30 p.m., when the referee blew the whistle.

Each player had a broomstick in his or her hands; this was a replica of the actual broomstick used in the Harry Potter world. If a player dropped a broomstick, they had to pick it up and run to tag their poles. There were

two different balls, one ball, called a quaffle, was meant to be thrown amongst the players and shot into the hoops, while the other, the bludger, is used to hit the other player down. Initially, the Scarlet Hawks were playing with an air of seriousness, which got them a head start of the other team. With more time into the match, the Columbia University seemed to pick up pace and were putting up a tough fight. The first match was played for 30 minutes in which our Scarlet Hawks had a score total of 150 compared to the 60 points scored by Columbia. It was a good win for the Scarlet Hawks.

The second half of the game was even more competitive than the first one. Each

player was more determined to win the game and didn't miss a goal. Kevin, a freshman at the college of Architecture stopped a few goals while keeping along with Alvah, who was determined not to let a slip. The beaters were more aggressive towards the end, not only from IIT but also Columbia. At the end of the game, Columbia beat IIT by ten point scoring 110 versus the 100 scored by IIT.

Although both teams had each won a game, the experience gained couldn't be compared. Every player went home satisfied with a new gained knowledge and zeal to win more games in the future.

## SGA meeting focuses on Board of Trustees, formation of new student organizations

**Abha Dalmia**  
TECHNEWS WRITER

The last biweekly SGA meeting took place on Wednesday, November 11. This meeting was unique, as IIT students got an opportunity to directly converse with Craig Duchossois, a member of the IIT Board of Trustees. Students in attendance got to learn the important role the Board of Trustees plays in running IIT, something that some of us were unaware of.

The Board of Trustees carry out the herculean task of financially and operationally supporting the smooth functioning of the school. They are prominent business, industrial, community and professional leaders who very kindly invest their time, talents and resources to benefit the university. According to Duchossois, the Board of Trustees at IIT has a fiduciary duty to maintain students' values and the mission of the institution. In particular, they are involved in the selection of senior academics and recruitment of quality faculty as well as management of IIT's finances and implementation of its policies. It was a delight to hear that the Board of Trustees at IIT make conscious efforts to listen to the voice of students in order to meet the needs of student body better.

At the meeting, students received ample answers to their inquisitive questions and concerns. Duchossois shared that the board has been working on building a stronger balance sheet and maximize reinvestment in order to provide better resources to attract

quality faculty as well as to provide competitive financial aid to draw the best scholars in the country. He also expressed that to prepare for the future the board was working on providing new housing and upgrading existing housing. They are also going to maintain the current balance between the number of students and faculty.

In addition, Mr. Duchossois clarified that a great business idea can always find funding in IIT. There are tools like the incubator space for people to use. Some students voiced out a need for a greater variety of companies visiting the career fair. In particular, a student felt aerospace companies like Boeing should be invited. The board of trustees explained that students can leverage on alumni network or get their desired companies to visit campus by informing them about it. Moreover, they are trying to solicit Board of Trustees members to come in and meet students more as they can employ students in their firms too. The SGA President added that the gap between students and the Board of Trustees is in reality pretty narrow as he meets them on a regular basis and can present to them formally once a year. He aptly called himself a resource and encouraged students to use him to connect with the Board of Trustees.

Two new organizations made presentations in this meeting, one of which was approved. The first organization to present was Engineers Inspired, an organization that aims to build a community that discusses interesting scientific artifacts including projects in progress, breakthrough inventions and dis-

coveries. It required a budget of \$500 per semester for recruitment of around 30 people. The unique selling point of this club would be that while most existing clubs on campus are specific towards a major, this one aimed to create interaction between students from all the different engineering majors. The question and answer session following the presentation developed the idea further as a member suggested that this organization could collaborate with other existing organizations to bring in inspiring speakers and such. On discussion and voting, the SGA panel felt that the idea had potential to be further developed and hence decided against approving it at this stage. A constructive piece of feedback discussed was that this organization requires a clearer vision and mission statement in order to ensure that this organization had potential and longevity.

The second proposal was presented by Anne Crotteau, who sought to revive an organization called Illinois Tech Students for Life that ceased operation about five years ago due to lack of leadership as well as men and non-Christians feeling excluded. The organization planned to address these concerns by providing leadership training to interested members and ensuring involvement of males and those of different beliefs. The fact that they already had two men in the organizing committee would encourage men to get involved and support the cause. Their ultimate vision is to create a "world where women do not have to choose between the life of their children and completing their education, where all people know and understand the importance and beauty of life,

and where those who have suffered the loss of an abortion experience healing through the IIT community."

Illinois Tech Students for Life basically aims to provide resources to heal women who struggle with issues such as suicide, depression and the dilemma of conceiving a child. They plan to do this by inviting in motivational speakers and hold workshops to address these issues. The organization had garnered a respectable number of attendees for the two events they organized this semester: Beach Day and a Students for Life of Illinois conference. They have an upcoming volunteering event slated to happen sometime this month open to everyone, but catered toward new and expecting moms. Up until now, they have gathered interest from 67 students toward this cause.

A very useful part of the meeting were the officer's reports where the senate members shares with us the projects they are working on. From now on, these will take place at the end of the meeting.

The officer's reports began with the SGA president, Rahul Wadhvani, informing the board of two events that interested Senate members could sign up for. In addition, he pointed out that Students Speak is a platform where students can anonymously voice their opinion about how to improve administrative services for IIT students through <http://web.iit.edu/students-speak>. Students taking this survey are entered in a lucky draw for \$150, \$100, \$50 or \$25 visa gift card, a \$20 Starbucks card or an IIT Nalgene water bottle.

# Undocumented Students and Allies campaign for scholarship initiative

**Genevieve Hummel**  
TECHNEWS WRITER

Undocumented Students and Allies (USA) is an organization that was co-founded by two IIT students in 2011 with the aim of providing a safe space for undocumented students on campus. The organization strives to support undocumented students academically, to help them with finding employment, and to allow them to feel welcomed on campus.

An interview was conducted with the president of Undocumented Students and Allies, Egle Malinauskaite, and two members of USA, Luis Gomez and Julio Reyes, to provide a better understanding of what it means to be an undocumented student and inform the readers about the scholarship funds that USA is petitioning for.

Undocumented students have no legal status in this country. Some of them do have "deferred" status that allows them to work legally and protect them from deportation. However, without this status, there is no easy path to gaining citizenship. This means that the undocumented students do not have the benefits of citizenship and most cannot even get a green card or residency.

Most of the students who are currently undocumented did not have a choice. Most were brought to this country by their parents at a young age. Malinauskaite, for example, was six years old when she came to America. He parents hid her and her brother in the back of the car and drove here through the Canadian border. She is originally from Lithuania, and the only member of her family with legal status is her youngest brother, who

was born in America in 2012. Reyes was also six years old when he was brought here from Mexico. He traveled with his brother and was separated from his mother, who came by a different route. They came through the Texas border. He has two siblings with legal status who were born in Chicago. Gomez was 12



Photo by Genevieve Hummel

years old when he came to Chicago on a plane with his parents. His parents were educated in Mexico, but due to a crisis, there were no more jobs for educated people, so they came to Chicago. These students, as well as the rest of the undocumented community at IIT, are simply trying to make the best of the situation they are in because most did not chose to be in

this situation, Malinauskaite explained during the interview.

Undocumented Students and Allies is petitioning students to support an optional \$4.50 increase in undergraduate tuition that will go towards a scholarship fund for undocumented students. Undocumented

to work and pay back the money they owe the school. The organization believes that this scholarship initiative aligns with who IIT is as an institution, because the school was founded on philanthropy and promotes diversity and inclusion.

The organization will be hosting a referendum on Wednesday, November 18, where students will be able to ask questions and voice concerns about this scholarship initiative. They will be promoting this petition and gathering signatures until the spring, when they will submit the petition to SGA. In the spring, when students go to vote in the SGA elections, there will be a question on the ballot that asks students if they wish to allow this opt-in tuition increase to happen. The question will read as follows: "Do you approve of an opt-in \$4.50 fee each semester to support undocumented Illinois Tech undergraduate students who demonstrate financial need but do not qualify for federal financial aid (FAFSA)?" If the majority of students voting approve the increase then the scholarship will be approved. USA's goal is to inform as many students about this as possible, to encourage the campus to unite and show that IIT is a progressive campus.

Any student who wishes to learn more about this organization or the scholarship initiative should look for the representative on the bridge or attend the referendum on Wednesday. Students can also contact Egle Malinauskaite, president of USA directly or follow the Facebook page for the scholarship initiative.

students cannot qualify for federal aid or federal loans like citizens can, therefore, many of them struggle to afford college. Even students like Reyes, who is a Presidential Scholar, still come up approximately seven thousand dollars short on tuition. Many students take longer than the regular four or five years to graduate from IIT because they need to take time off

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# An interview with Ilan Sabar of Metroboard

**Austin Gonzalez**  
OPINION EDITOR

Recently, I've had the chance to interview the owner of Metroboard, Ilan Sabar, about electric skateboards and the industry as a whole. Metroboard was one of the first companies to make and sell electric skateboards (eboards). Given this, I was interested to learn his perspective on the beginnings of eboarding.

When Sabar started Metroboard, there were only two other major competitors, E-glide and Exhate. Eboards were over-built and used simple and reliable components. It wasn't uncommon to find boards weighing over 50 pounds due in part to the use of sealed lead acid (SLA) batteries. This was a far cry from my 14-pound everyday ride which is nearly indistinguishable from a standard board at a glance.

Sabar immediately saw room for improvement, first moving from lead acids to nickel-metal hydride batteries and now to an exclusively lithium-ion product catalog. Today, Metroboard offers some of the most powerful, longest-lasting, and even shortest eboards on the market. Metroboard's premium offering boasts a reported 40-mile range and a

3,000-Watt outrunner motor. These improvements are those that come with advancements in battery and electric motor technology over the course of a decade. Metroboard has also added a bit of innovation of their own, adding to something beyond what a DIYer could by simply wiring their own board.

In his own words, "We haven't stopped there. Metroboard has modified these outrunner motors, which are typically used on R/C airplanes, to include external hall sensors to regulate power output for a smoother ride when starting from a resting position. Now, many companies that produce outrunner motors are responding to the burgeoning electric skateboard market and are finally beginning to include internal hall sensors into their motors."

Sabar and I share the view that electric skateboards can be more than just a hobby, but also excellent way to get through the city. Not having to wait for the bus and zipping through crowds is more fun than public transit will ever be. Sabar sees the future of eboarding in this light as well. Making the ride a smoother, more comfortable experience is a big leap forward to get more people into the hobby.

Sabar sees refining the style of eboards as the next big leap. Many current boards take after their DIY predecessors. The

individual components, the motor, the battery pack, the speed controller, are typically distinguishable and set eboards apart from their classic brethren. Sabar sees a future for eboards where hub motors and deck-integrated battery packs make eboards not only impressive but fashionable.

Throughout Sabar's responses a theme appeared. He sees eboards differently than those who scoff and think they're cheating. He said, "We don't see electric boards as replacements for regular skateboards, but rather very compact 'cars' that solve a basic transportation need in an environmentally friendly way." This vision for eboards is what drives Metroboard to make their premium boards. When asked for advice on how to start a technology hardware company, his only note was to look broadly at the market and see what elements can be borrowed to convince people to buy in and what elements cause them to stay away.

With regards to the number of startups that are quickly becoming fierce competition for him, Sabar says to respect DIY (it's how he got started after all), but be prepared to back your product up with years of customer service. Sabar recognizes something unique in every new competitor, but highlights

Metroboard's eight year track record of reliably quality and excellent service.

My final question for Sabar was regarding what we could look forward to from Metroboard. He teased that there is one request he's heard over and over again. He's going to make this request a reality and in his eyes it will change the electric skateboarding game. With so much room left for improvement and creativity, I'm excited to see what he comes up with.

At the end of the day, Metroboard sets a great example for the eboarding industry and respects its roots. Sabar sees eboards as a means of transportation to work that double downs for play. Their wide variety for offerings of deck sizes, range, and wheels lets the customer decide what's right for their eboarding needs. They even transform off-the-shelf decks into one-of-a-kind boards for anyone who requests it. Sabar seems like a guy who isn't interested in dominating the market, and instead appreciated the uniqueness and creativity each new board brings to the market. Metroboard is clearly interested in keeping up with the community and I'm sure will continue to add to the market with innovation.



Photo courtesy of metro-board.com



Reviews:

## Live music: Beirut at Riviera Theatre

**Soren Spicknall**  
WIIT MUSIC DIRECTOR

Emerging from the Santa Fe bedroom of then-19-year-old Zach Condon nearly a decade ago, Beirut was a musical project that found immediate acclaim by virtue of its seeming absurdity at the time. Coming right on the cusp of the explosion of the baroque pop genre, Condon's first album, "Gulag Orkestar," combined Balkan folk roots with contemporary indie sensibilities in a way nobody expected. In fact, it's highly unlikely that anybody expected any combination of those two music styles to launch somebody's career, let alone that of a teenager from the American southwest with no Eastern European ancestry to his name. And so, thrust into the spotlight by the sheer improbability of his project, Condon embarked on the life of a professional musician before turning twenty, filling bars and small concert halls with people who had read early reviews of his work in Pitchfork or The Guardian.

Condon's earliest shows included just a few friends brought along to fill out his sound, before Beirut morphed into a full band, and the results were actually rather disappointing for initial fans of the group. Condon's music was carefully, lovingly constructed with

layer upon layer on his studio recordings, and that complexity didn't translate very well to a live setting with only three or four musicians present. Critics at the time became dismissive of Condon's ability to match in concert what he could do on an album, culminating in the cancellation of a European tour in 2008 that Condon implied was due to frustration about the lack of power in his own performances. He took a break from touring while going even bigger on studio recordings (including an EP with a full Mexican brass band), and regrouped following his third full-length, "The Rip Tide," with a permanent lineup of five other musicians behind him. This modern lineup brought with it a renewed interest in Beirut's live performances, and last week, with their newest album out two months ago, the band visited a sold-out Riviera Theatre in Uptown to prove their chops on material spanning the length of their career so far.

After a short opening set from Chicago's own Icy Demons (whose lead singer, Blue Hawaii, runs the Shape Shoppe recording studio in the South Loop where two Beirut releases were mixed), Condon and the band took to the stage with an immediate crowd-pleaser, "Scenic World," which is perhaps the best-regarded track from "Gulag Orkestar." It also gave an early indication of some of the ele-

ments of the group's sound that still limit them in a live environment, with the intro synth line taking on a different tone than on the album. That was soon forgotten, though, as Condon and the two musicians flanking him took up their horns, and the crowd cheered in anticipation of the coming crescendo. Though only three in number, Beirut's horn section was revelatory, and each moment that their instruments were readied was worthy of celebration on the part of the crowd. A marked improvement from previous tours, the arrangements this time around were specifically meant for a smaller number of performers than appeared on album, lending energy to the show with three-part recreations of the group's vibrant compositions. The band even had the ambition to try out some tracks from "March of the Zapotec," the aforementioned EP recorded with a full Mexican brass band, and the results were quite impressive.

The mix of songs in the show was actually rather diverse, considering that this was a tour spurred by a new album. Only six of the night's twenty-one pieces came from 2015's "No No No," with at least three from each of the other releases from the group (aside from 2006's "Lon Gisland" EP, a little-remembered release that only earned a single live performance of one of its pieces). While

certain tracks would certainly have been improved by a larger on-stage cast (for example, none of the violin parts from "The Flying Club Cup" were present), the six-piece band brought each of their tracks to life in a way that many would have doubted possible as late as just a couple years ago. Though some more casual attendees may have eventually been bored by the relatively stable structure of many of Condon's compositions (which often rely on musical flourishes rather than unique melodies), the majority of the crowd wasn't ready for the group to leave when they bowed out after a powerful performance of "So Allowed," the closing track on "No No No."

After a standing ovation lasting for minutes on end undiminished, most likely because the band hadn't yet played their traditional concert closer "The Penalty," Beirut returned to stage for four more tracks, including the title tracks from "Gulag Orkestar" and "The Flying Club Cup." While "The Penalty" wasn't included in the setlist this time around, the final set of tracks showcased the best of Beirut's talent, and capped off a night of focused, impressive music. Beirut may still be physically limited by a live format as Zach Condon's on-album ambition continues to grow, but that doesn't keep them from putting on an enthralling show.

# Exposed: Privacy, Security and the Smart City

Shachi Sayata

TECHNEWS WRITER

Smart cities, by definition, are urban ecosystems that utilize digital networks and communication technologies to enhance the quality and performance of urban services and engage more effectively and actively with its citizens. Kent College of Law had a conference organized to understand the influence of privacy and security in a smart city. With Mayor Rahm Emanuel's launch of Chicago's first ever technology plan, it is imperative for us, as citizens, to understand the aspects that really go into making the city 'smart' today and how will we capitalize on the ubiquitous collection of data in the future while still maintaining sufficient aspects of privacy.

Are smart cities a necessity? What does it really mean to be under surveillance all the time? What is the cost associated with this surveillance? How secure is our data? Is there any scope for subjectivity in a smart city? These were a few questions that were analyzed during the conference. Though the concept of a smart city may only exist in our imagination today, such a hyperlinked network is soon to become a reality. Kent College of Law therefore decided to organize a conference and invite industry experts to answer these questions.

Adam Greenfield, who is a renowned writer, spoke about "networked urbanism" and influence of computer interactions in our everyday activities. He explained how network information technologies today utilize data for a wide array of activities from marketing initiatives to account for housing and mobility. The most interesting point he raised what that these technologies are not able to account for about one-third of the population, which largely consists of people who do not have access to the "smart infrastructure:" in essence, people who do not have a smartphone or computer and are thus not producing the data in order to be accounted for. Further, he explained how with increase in focus on data collection and data analytics energy utilization costs would increase drastically and therefore, there is a need to understand the long-term financial viability and sustainability of such an initiative. He cited an example of how by moving to a more "networked" environment women from a slum in India were able to map their

locality without any sophisticated GPS device. This mapping was aimed to ensure that the city officials understood the region well and took necessary initiatives for improving the standard of living of people in the region.

Woodrow Hartzog, distinguished law professor at Stanford University, spoke about privacy in the hyperlinked network of the smart cities. Hartzog highlighted three key aspects related to privacy: obscurity, anonymity and trust. He was able to develop an interesting relationship between what is really private in the Internet ecosystem. We believe something is private because we assume that not many people will understand it. He emphasized the importance of how we should start thinking of our activities in public since, all the data we produce is captured, stored and analyzed. The most interesting point he raised was the question "are our faces private?" With the increase of surveillance using CCTV cameras in smart cities, can we safely assume that our faces are private? He later explained how in today's data system, "harm" is a very difficult aspect to articulate. Governments should thus focus their efforts on gaining trust of citizens and providing them with an opt-out mechanism wherever possible. Trust, as he stated, is dependent on discretion, honesty, protection and also ensures that those that collect the data from the subjects should be loyal to their subjects and act in their best interest.

Kimerly Bailey, who is a law professor at Kent College of Law, focused her discussion on the importance of privacy and how deprivation of privacy leads to devastating effects on social control. She described how constant monitoring of people of color by the state leads to a chilling effect. This has an impact on their freedom of association and self-expression. She cited instances of where stop-and-frisks have an impact on the social capital of an individual. Since these stops question the individual regarding his activities, they express a lack of trust and suspicion in the person. On some occasions, the police officials not only ask for personal information, but may also go through their belongings. This is usually carried out in public, thus, there is a feeling of shame associated with it. It inflicts a person's freedom of association since nobody would want to associate with a person who is subjected to frequent

stop-and-frisks. In many regions, victims of these frisks have changed the way they dress in order to look less vulnerable. She advocated that before we promote more surveillance to improve security, we must be mindful of the chilling effects associated with this surveillance.

Kevin Willer, who is the co-founder of the Google Chicago office and is currently a partner at Chicago Ventures, explored the idea of urban planning and the smart city. He advocated the idea of how increase in surveillance threatens to upset the balance of power between city governments and city residents. "Clever cities may not necessarily be better ones," he says, since they are not only vulnerable to digital hacks, but are also subject to hacks on the privacy of a citizen. The systems should thus be developed without becoming systems of mass surveillance and promote privacy both by law and the underlying technology infrastructure. He promoted solutions like data factorization, de-identification and transparency.

Richard Warner, who is a professor of law at Kent College, advocated that there should be a clear tradeoff between privacy and security. That is, if citizens we are giving up our data and are continuously monitored by the state, we are doing this bearing in mind that by doing so we are increasing our security. That is to say that since the government is able to monitor our actions, we are more secure now. However, by increasing the amount of data that can be monitored, the problem we are trying to solve becomes that of finding a needle in a haystack. He draws a comparison between the physical ecosystem and a digital one. In a physical ecosystem, we know where the doors are and we can place guards on those doors in order to protect ourselves. This type of effort is futile in a digital ecosystem where we don't know where all the doors are and the guards in place are too easy to fool. He further promoted the idea that surveillance should try to reduce blame on law by increasing cultural surveillance first. He spoke about cyber insurance as an increasingly popular field of study and the sustainability of its commercial model. He concluded by stating that we should individually build up our security and focus on making our computer harder to get to than the

other person.

David Thaw, who is an assistant professor of law and information sciences at University of Pittsburgh, stated that security and privacy aren't the core competency of a smart city. However, we can thrive to achieve these goals. He advocated that governments should focus their cybersecurity efforts from a standpoint of prevention and not just protection. According to his research, quantitative data collected show that Chief Information Officers in organizations would greatly benefit if they map their risk mitigation techniques to match risk tolerance and risk analysis capabilities. This approach can be utilized to design a digital infrastructure of a smart city.

Ellen Mitchell, who is a professor of psychology at Illinois Institute of Technology, focused her discussion on human behaviors and psychological effects of smart cities. She explained the psychological impact of surveillance and distinguished it from the term monitoring. Monitoring involves an assumption that somebody somewhere is doing something wrong, this assumption is not valid during surveillance. Further, surveillance is not equal for all since employees at the lower level of an organization will be surveyed more than those at higher levels who exhibit legitimate positional power. Though smart cities focus on routine surveillance, we should be mindful of the cost associated with capturing the data and the psychological implication of such surveillance. She promoted the idea of using less technology when you can and promoting a more focused approach to surveillance rather than mass surveillance.

The conference overall was able to bring a plethora of ideas related to privacy and the smart city. These ideas covered domains like law, technology, psychology and sociocultural influences. As individuals we must not only be aware of how we are being monitored but we must ask important questions like, why are we being monitored? What data is being monitored? How secure is our data? There was open discussion of some of the key concepts with the audience. The event was followed by a warm reception where people continued to discuss the things they learnt from the conference. The conference had thus succeeded in leaving an everlasting impression on everyone.

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The word Sudoku, above, is actually the abbreviation of "Suuji wa dokushin ni kagiru," meaning "the digits must be single" or "the digits are limited to one occurrence."



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**Tuesday, November 17**  
Men's Basketball  
@ Wabash Crawfordsville  
6:30 p.m.

**Friday, November 20**  
Men's Basketball  
@ Illinois College  
7:30 p.m.

Women's Basketball  
@ Webster  
8 p.m.

**Saturday, November 21**  
Women's Basketball  
@ Spaulding  
1 p.m.

Men's Basketball  
@ MacMurray  
2 p.m.

**Tuesday, November 24**  
Men's Basketball  
vs. Anderson  
7 p.m.

**Friday, November 27**  
Women's Basketball  
@ Caltech  
3 p.m.

**Saturday, November 28**  
Women's Basketball  
vs. Occidental  
3 p.m.

Men's Basketball  
@ Lake Forest  
4 p.m.

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City and State—Rain,  
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# Obama Sweeps to Historic Victory

Nation Elects Its First African-American President Amid Record Turnout; Turmoil in Economy Dominates Voters' Concerns

By JONATHAN WEISMAN  
AND LAURA MECKLER

Obama

WASHINGTON—Sen. Barack