

# TechNews

Student newspaper of Illinois Institute of Technology since 1928

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## Students showcase projects at Fall Semester IPRO Day

**Abha Dalmia**  
 TECHNEWS WRITER

The Interprofessional Projects Program (IPRO) Day event took place on Friday November 20, 2015. IPRO Day is a day at the end of semester where IPRO teams comprising of students from all majors exhibit projects that they have been working on throughout the semester. The IPRO is an IIT general education requirement that most undergraduate student have to take twice in their academic career. An average IPRO team consists of 5-15 students from any academic discipline.

An IPRO project not only allows students to apply their knowledge towards tackling a real-world problem, but it also allows the sharing of knowledge across various academic disciplines to come up with more innovative solutions.

This year's IPRO day saw a huge number of projects, at least 45, only some of which will be covered in this article. One project suggested that cars use zinc batteries instead of petrol as they cause less pollution and are recyclable. In addition, zinc used to power cars can be stored in batteries, allowing people to avoid the problem of looking for petrol stations to re-fuel their car so often. Another project called Custom Meal attempted to make the process of weight loss easy by offering to deliver fresh and calorie-conscious meals to the doorstep of consumers at competitive prices.

Doorbusters was another interesting project that attempted to solve the problem of truck accidents due to bad weather by allowing

managers of truck companies to tell their drivers that it was okay to pull over and take a break. Research revealed that 70% of 20000 truck accidents caused by weather occurred because drivers felt pressured to make delivery on time despite the adverse weather conditions. The technology the team came up with would allow managers to not only inform

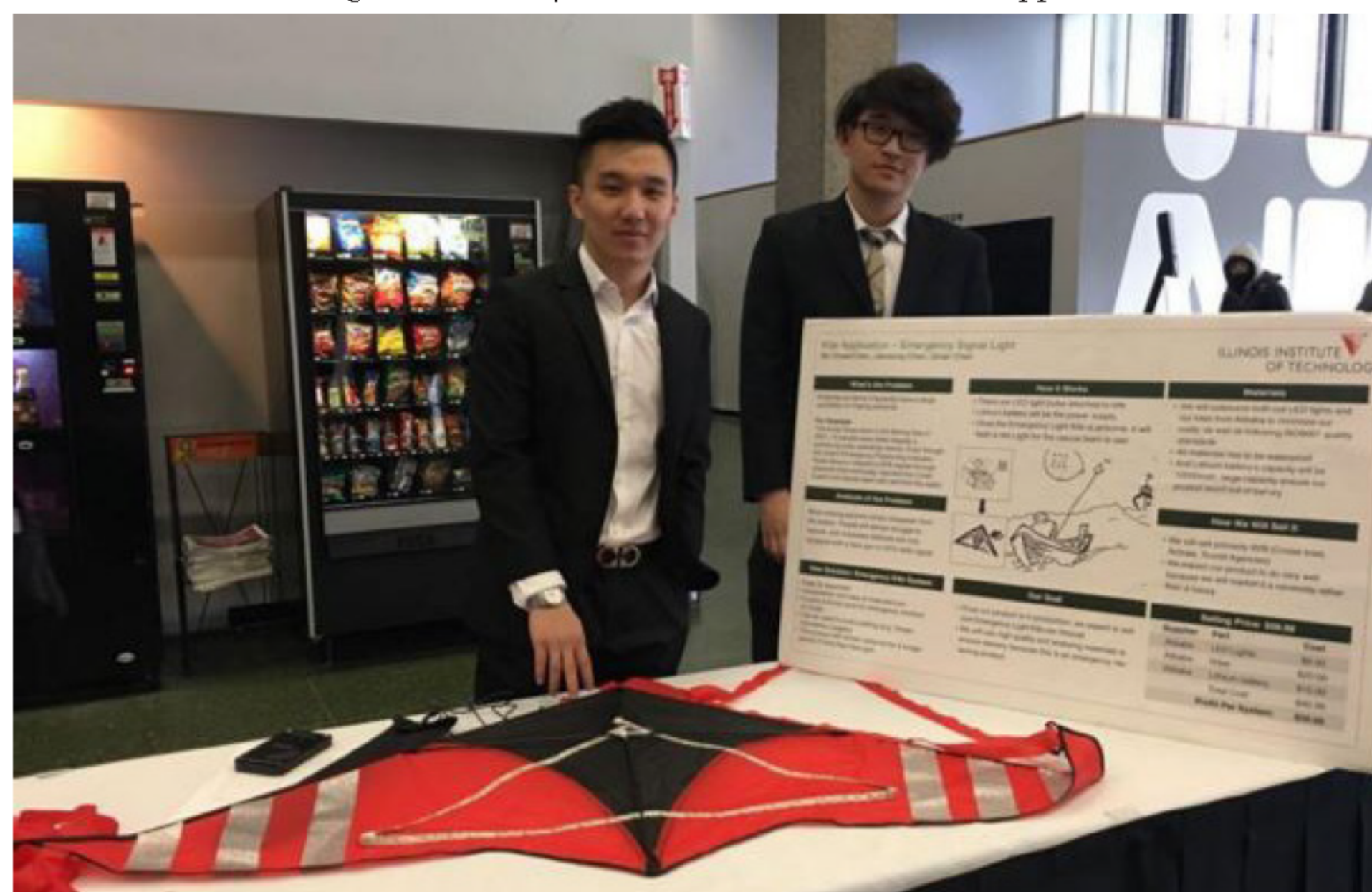


Photo by Abha Dalmia

truck drivers of unsuitable weather, but also reassure the drivers that it was okay to stop and deliver a little late.

Quite a few projects attempted to solve social projects too. One of them, titled Malaria Detection, attempted to reduce the number of deaths caused by malaria in Rwanda

by allowing people to detect it at an early stage. Since they figured that many people in Rwanda own a smartphone, they created a gadget that could be attached to a phone and consisted a microscope to test blood and reveal whether the person was infected by malaria. A group of students figured that citizens of Sumaoy (an island in Philippines) could use their

natural resources to become self-sufficient and drastically improve their quality of life. They held the noble dream of educating the locals on this island of the various products that could be created from coconut trees that they had abundance of.

Refugees Unite was another social

innovation project attempted to create a social networking platform for the Syrian refugees in Lebanon. The group came up with an idea for the Syrian refugees to help each other since are not welcomed in a lot of places. The solution they came up with is an app, through which refugees can inform each other about landlords willing to rent out property to them, new laws being passed, areas to stay away from, and other important information. In order give refugees a safe platform to communicate freely, the application would allow only people with a refugee ID to sign up.

On IPRO day, entrepreneurs and leaders from various corporations, small businesses, nonprofit organizations, and associations get to see projects students are working on. They enjoy attending the IPRO event as it gives them an insight into the quality of students at IIT. These industry professionals very often sponsor IPRO projects and encourage the next generation's creativity. In addition, they help moderate the IPRO teams and ask some very intelligent questions that help students further develop their ideas.

The IPRO project is definitely one of IIT's strengths. It fosters creativity and allows the merging and sharing of knowledge from different disciplines towards creating better solutions. It gives students an opportunity to work collaboratively towards addressing complex issues. In addition to team work skills, it also enhances their public speaking and organization skills. Most importantly, it provides students with a concrete learning experience worth talking about when in job interviews.

## Union Board attends NACA to book campus performers

**Reno Waswil**  
 TECHNEWS WRITER

Have you ever wondered where Union Board (UB) gets their ideas and how the organization is able to book so many Bog and Center Court performance artists? Every year, a number of regional and a national conferences are organized and attended by representatives of programming boards like Union Board under the umbrella name National Association for Campus Activities (NACA). These conferences bring together school programming boards, performing artists, professional event programmers, and various types of service providers to help widen the scope of events that take place on campuses around the country as well as make the booking process easier for everyone involved.

Union Board programmer Reno Waswil (Hawks Coffeehouse Programmer) was included in the IIT delegation to the conference as well as UB executive members Christopher Alexander (Off-Campus Chair and soon-to-be Hawk's Nest Chair), Amiarini Lopez (On-Campus Chair), Melanie Standish (President), and OCL staff members Alex Carlson and Elizabeth Thomas for three full days at NACA Mid America Regional Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan at the DeVos Place Convention Center from Thursday, October 29 to Sunday, November 1.

These conferences are split up into three sections: Educational (Ed) Sessions, Showcases, and Campus Activities Marketplaces (CAMP). Ed Sessions were presentations spanning about an hour focusing on pertinent information that

programming board members would benefit from knowing, such as publicity strategies, team-building tactics, and things to remember when planning and carrying out events. Illinois Tech's Carlson gave a talk at the first Ed session of the weekend entitled "NACA & You: From here to Eternity" about how to best utilize the NACA experience for first timers at the conference. A dozen or so sessions would be available concurrently during any given Ed period, offering some variety of topics for attendees choose from. There was a total of six Ed Session periods through the duration of the conference.

NACA's centerpiece though, was its showcases, which were typically two-hour, on-stage affairs where performing artists--comedians, magicians, poets, solo/duo acts, and larger bands--would get around 15 minutes each to perform and sell themselves to the audience in hopes of getting a few bookings. Attendees received booklets when they checked into the conference with information on each of the acts they would be seeing as well as the artist's single booking and block booking prices. A total of seven acts performed per Showcase, one of those being a host (usually either a spoken word poet or comedian) who would introduce each of the acts as well as be given some time between acts to show off their own talents. There was a total of six Showcases, not including one that exclusively held motivational speakers.

CAMP took place almost always but not exclusively after showcases, where an hour would be reserved for attendees to go into a large ballroom filled with rows of tables to meet some of the artists they had or would be watching perform and their agents, as

well as talk to a few providers of services and events that were not represented during the showcase. These included such things as the rental services for 3D crystal portrait making, arcade games, balloon animal making, paint dance parties, and bubble soccer equipment. One of the more memorable tables was one held by actor Kevin Brown, who is most famous for playing the character Dot Com in the hit NBC sitcom "30 Rock." He was selling his services to put on a show on college campuses called "One Joke Wonder." He and other professional standups would go to schools ready to perform an hour of comedy, but the show would more surround students going up to the mic and telling their jokes.

There was also a running contest where attendees could compete for the chance to win a smartwatch by achieving the highest number of steps recorded on a pedometer provided to them for the length of each CAMP session. With great determination, Alexander came very close a few times to winning but sadly never made it. There were a total of six CAMP sessions.

The Showcases were not the only mediums for attendees to become acquainted with acts during the conference. Each day, there was also a featured 'roving artist' who would perform in lobby of the conference center who would also be included in the booklet for booking.

Carlson and Standish took time out of the busy schedule to attend the block booking meetings during the conference. At these, they would meet with representatives of other schools to book the acts they were interested in bringing to their schools at reduced prices by booking them in tandem.

Some of the performers Illinois Tech booked during these sessions that readers can look forward to seeing next semester include comedians Omid Singh, Josh Johnson, and Ben the Magician; A Capella group The Filharmonics (who made an appearance in "Perfect Pitch 2"); spoken word poets Asia Project and Speak Like a Girl; and folk singer songwriter Emily Hearn.

This year's NACA Mid America slogan was "Welcome to the Future" for reasons most readers would have heard ad nauseum. The references to the movie at the conference were many and constant, extending even to the conference center's wifi password, which was "greatscott!" only to further stretch the already exhausted trope.

In addition to these events, the conference offered three meals. Expenses worked out, however, so that all of the additional meals were covered, so those that were not covered by preliminary conference cost could be bought in Grand Rapids restaurants in the hotel and conference center area.

During the final dinner provided by the conference, Illinois Tech was overjoyed to learn that they had one a programming award for their Spring 2015 MTCC Late Night event, which, for those that were not here or do not remember, was Willy Wonka themed.

Some notable performers included Kel Mitchell, who was the host of the final Showcase of the weekend, the folk duo Less is More, the indie band The Burgeoning. Thanks to conferences like these, it has never been easier to find and book great artist for great performances and events on college campuses like Illinois Tech's.