

## TechNews

STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY SINCE 1928

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#### MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to promote student discussion and bolster the IIT community by providing a newspaper that is highly accessible, a stalwart of journalistic integrity, and a student forum. TechNews is a dedicated to the belief that a strong campus newspaper is essential to a strong campus community.

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

TechNews is written, managed, and edited by the students of, and funded in part by, Illinois Institute of Technology. The material herein does not necessarily reflect the opinions of Illinois Institute of Technology or the editors, staff, and advisor of TechNews. There will be no censorship of TechNews publication by the faculty or staff of IIT. Sole authority and responsibility for publication and adherence to the values set forth in this policy rests with the TechNews staff. This paper seeks to bring together the various segments of the Illinois Tech community and strives through balance and content to achieve a position of respect and excellence. TechNews strives for professionalism with due respect to the intellectual values of the university and its community. All material submitted becomes the property of TechNews, and is subject to any editorial decisions deemed necessary.

#### SUBMISSIONS

TechNews is published on the Tuesday of each week of the academic year. Deadline for all submissions and announcements is 11:59 p.m. on the Friday prior to publication. Articles, photos, and illustrations must be submitted electronically to the TechNews website at [technewsiit.com](http://technewsiit.com).

#### EDITORIAL POLICY

The editors reserve the right to determine if submitted material meets TechNews' policy and standards. For more information about our editorial standards, please email [assteditor@technewsiit.com](mailto:assteditor@technewsiit.com).

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor may be submitted by anyone, but are subject to review by the Editor-in-Chief. All letters-to-the-editor become the property of TechNews upon submission. TechNews does not accept or publish anonymous letters or stories.

#### ADVERTISING

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## Stryker Awards Banquet recognizes outstanding student leaders

**Anoopa Sundararajan**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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In the short time that they have existed, they have increased their member retention by 40 percent and established a presence on the Illinois Tech campus. Stango also mentioned that during the UNICEF conference earlier in the semester, the Illinois Tech chapter was awarded "Most Knowledgeable Club" for their "insights and unique methods."

This year's awardee for Outstanding Commitment to Service was Gertrude Kasole. The award was presented by Lynne Meyer, Director of Spiritual Life and Diversity for the Office of Campus Life. Having worked with Kasole for a few years, Meyer said that Kasole's "involvement in service has spread far

and wide since her first semester." She added that Kasole continues to do impressive work, having launched a project in October in her hometown of Kinshasa, Congo. The project allowed her to fundraise and take several supplies home for those in need.

The Richard Babcock Leadership Award, according to Student Affairs, "honors one outstanding sophomore or junior undergraduate student who has evidenced significant leadership skills and academic achievement." Sophomore Soren Spicknall was this year's awardee and received his award from Provost Frances Bronet. Before receiving his award, Spicknall received significant praise from Bronet for his "array of knowledge" and "deep awareness of what it means to be in different cultures" among other things. She went on to say that he was "driven, dedicated, balanced," and most conversations with him

felt like "an intellectual massage."

The last section of awards were to the 16 recipients of the Clinton E. Stryker Distinguished Service Award. Each of these recipients has made significant contributions to campus and student life at Illinois Tech through their student organizations and other similar avenues. As each person received their award, Dean Stetz mentioned some of their contributions and a few of the organizations they are involved in. The awardees of the 2016 Clinton E. Stryker Distinguished Service Award are Christopher Alexander, Christina Castillo, Gabriel Connors, Adrian Duenas, Emma Ghariani, Aaron Grudowski, Leslie Lyons, Jermiron Morris, Khadijah Nesbitt, Sany Nguyen, Gina Qualter, Soren Spicknall, Melanie Standish, Merridith Tedtsen, Rahul Wadhvani and Maria Warren.

## Illinois Tech startup COPA presents at semifinals of RECESS Pitch competition

**Ivan Ortiz**  
TECHNEWS WRITER

After looking for a product that protects fragile bottles from breaking while traveling, and not finding any in the market, Ben Rifken and Meriem Sakrouhi decided to create one: COPA.

COPA is an elegant and durable protective armor for your bottles and fragile items, preventing them from breaking and spilling on your luggage.

This started at the beginning of the spring semester of this year, as a project of the 'Student New Venture Development and Entrepreneurship' IPRO. However, since its inception, the final goal of the team was not a grade but the beginning of something bigger.

At the same time that the business plan was getting developed with the help and advice of Nik Rokop, the team was working on the making of COPA with the help of John Welin and Salomon Rodriguez at the Idea Shop. After 12 drafts and six prototypes, COPA is planning to launch the final product in seven weeks.

COPA participated in the semifinals of the RECESS Pitch competition, which is a national college competition for new startup ideas. The semifinals took place at the Concord Music Hall, right after the CAPITAL Championship. Each team gave a four minute pitch on stage to a panel of elite judges, followed by four minutes of Q&A. COPA battled against Audiovert (Northwestern) and Clean Slate Messenger (UIC), which is the one

that moved on to the finals.

"It was a great experience. We got to meet a lot of people who are either going through the same process that we are, or who have already been through it" said Meriem Sakrouhi.

COPA also received the honorable mention in the Business Innovation Showcase track at IPRO Day. The team is going to be working on continuing COPA and launching their website the same day as their product this summer. The team says that it is a good way to finish school before graduating.

For any more information, please visit their social media page : [facebook.com/copasolution](https://facebook.com/copasolution)



Photos courtesy of Nik Rokop (left), Meriem Sakrouhi (right)

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