

TechNews

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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.

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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.

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.

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.

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LOCAL & NATIONAL ADVERTISERS

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Undocumented Students and Allies demand change

Continued from page 1

With these demands in hand (and copies available for handing to passing students and the attending media organizations,) the second phase of Coming Out of the Shadows was set to begin. Mobilized by their six goals, students within USA (chiefly Malinauskaite, Luis Gomez, and Gabrielle Henderson) led the entire group along a pre-determined route across State Street toward Hermann Hall, and then south on the Footlik pathway toward IIT Tower. Three separate high school tour groups were along the way, as well as classroom windows in Perlstein, Wishnick, Siegel, and Crown halls. Carried by chants of "Undocumented, unafraid!", "No human being is illegal", and a variety of others, the group eventually arrived at the tower with a few new observers behind them, including SGA President Rahul Wadhvani. Once there, Dean of Students Katie Stetz informed the demonstrators that a subset of their group would be able to meet directly with President Cramb. With a limit of 20 individuals, the Executive Board of USA chose to all attend, as well as a reporter from TechNews, who would be taking notes. They were accompanied up to the 19th floor of the Tower, and after some confusion over the right to record the meeting, all USA members were seated around a conference table in a room next to the President's office, with windows facing east toward The Gap and Lake Michigan.

At approximately 2:15 p.m., following a very brief wait, President Cramb entered the conference room. After allowing everybody at the table to introduce themselves, Malinauskaite explained that the group had come to his office to present him with a list of six demands, to which Cramb immediately replied "I think you mean six requests." The response: "Demands." Having already started butting heads, Malinauskaite turned to Gomez to have each demand read in full, and an assertion that if no response was given to those demands by 10:00 a.m. on the following Wednesday, the group would make themselves very visible during that day's President and Provost Forum. Following the reading of the demands, the first statement from Cramb was simply "Okay."

Following the readings of demands was about half an hour of discussion of the group's grievances. Cramb asked why they had not simply scheduled a meeting with him or approached the President's Student Advisory Council rather than demonstrating their way to his office, and the response was immediate: USA felt that any attempt they made in the past to create change through meetings had led to their efforts being dismissed and their initiatives being "silenced" by administration, especially under former university president John Anderson. In the words of Malinauskaite, "The people who have our back in this university have been kicked out." As if to compound that atmosphere, the group received an email that day that their staff advisor, Tanya Cabrera (Associate Director for Minority Outreach & Undocumented Student Initiatives at Illinois Tech and Chair of the Illinois Dream Fund, a semi-private scholarship group dedicated to undocumented students), would no longer be associated with the group. Though it was

never explicitly stated, USA believes that this move was due to internal pressure from the university's administration. However, in response to more general concerns about Cabrera's future with the school, Cramb stated "I have no knowledge of anyone asking Tanya to leave."

As tense as the room's atmosphere was, the conversation held within was entirely civil and was fairly nuanced as well, a marked contrast from the rhetoric of the rally outside. It seemed that the USA executive board understood that this meeting was a fairly unique opportunity, and that there was merit to tempering their tone. A few of the group's most immediate concerns were responded to directly, including some of the items on their list of demands. Most significantly, Cramb suggested that the group ask him publicly about his stance on the UMII Scholarship Initiative once again at the President and Provost Forum, something that they have done in the past. In his own words, "I have no problem with the scholarship; the discussion I've always had about the scholarship is so that it's done properly and it's not seen as any one student giving money to another." Now that USA had formulated specifics for the scholarship initiative, brought it to a referendum question, and prepared to present it to the Board of Trustees later this semester, Cramb stated "I don't have any issue with saying that I think that's a good idea." For a group that has struggled for years to gain any sentiment of approval from high-level administration at Illinois Tech, this could potentially mark a major milestone.

Turning to some of the other points covered in USA's demands, Cramb immediately indicated "I don't really like anyone demanding things of me without discussing them with me first." However, he was willing to provide context some of the work already being done at the school to address the issues that spurred those demands, and to correct some of what he saw as the group's misconceptions about university policy and practices. Chief among Cramb's points were that Illinois Tech was "one of the first Universities in the Chicago area to take the stance that we will look at you as just a student, not as an undocumented student," a hands-off approach not mirrored by some other area universities which automatically disqualify undocumented students from consideration for institutional scholarships (such as Illinois Tech's Leadership Academy Scholarship and Presidential Scholarship, both of which are held by some members of USA). He was quick to point out that tuition raises were not an issue unique to undocumented

students, and that the university made a loss last year even with rising tuition.

On the more general topic of student and faculty diversity, Cramb explained that "In every job search, it is required that there is a diverse pool." This was not expanded on with specifics, but the President acknowledged that "to be quite honest, this is a very tough issue" that the school faces. When prompted by personal stories, he also touched on issues of training for faculty and staff with regards to undocumented, LGBT, and other traditionally marginalized student groups, and did not himself use the terms "illegal" or "alien" during the meeting to describe undocumented students (something that gained him some ill will at the last President and Provost Forum).

With the meeting winding down, the conversation once again turned to the group's means of approach. Cramb stated that "I think it's your right as a person to demonstrate, and that's okay," and encouraged the group to voice their concerns at the President and Provost Forum if those concerns still remained. However, he strongly encouraged the group to use more traditional means of input rather than (or in addition to) rallies and protests, something to which Malinauskaite replied "I can appreciate your thoughts, but to us this is right." Shortly afterward, the USA Executive Board moved downstairs once again to join the assembled general group, which had been allowed into the building's lobby. Remaining individuals participating included members of Illinois Tech's student body, staff, and even a few students who are no longer able to attend due to rising tuition.

In sharp contrast to the civil, conversational atmosphere of the 19th-floor meeting, the rhetoric on the ground was sharper than ever. Gomez proclaimed again that the university was attempting to "silence" the group, a point punctuated shortly afterward by a request from a staff member for him to cease using obscenities in his speech. The assembled demonstrators were informed of the impending departure of their advisor, news that was used to further fuel the flames of anger they felt. No mention was immediately given of Cramb's indication that he may personally support the UMII Scholarship Initiative, and it's unclear at this time whether that news is intended to be revealed later or was simply not considered significant enough to state. USA has stated that they will continue to pursue "non-violent actions" if their demands are not met, and President Cramb has yet to release any official statement about the list or the day's rally as of the time of writing.



Photo by Soren Spicknall

Feminist spoken word duo to perform for Women's History Month

Reno Waswil
TECHNEWS WRITER

Speak like a Girl is a spoken word act made up of poets and writers Megan Falley and Olivia Gatwood that attempts to, "through humorous and passionate performances... shed light on issues such as street harassment, body image, rape culture and the perils of the patriarchy."

After giving one such impassioned and invigorating performances at the National Association of Campus Activities (NACA) Midwest last semester, Union Board representatives in attendance were eager to invite the pair to Illinois Tech for a show during Women's History Month (March). The show is scheduled for Tuesday, March 8, at 8:30 p.m. in the MTCC Center Court. It will be a collaboration between Union Board, Greek Council, Society of Women Engineers, GLAM, the WISE Book Club, and Gender &

Sexuality Services, making it Union Board's most collaborative event of the semester, even winning out over MTCC Late NIITe.

To give a brief background on the personnel, Falley's biography refers to her as a queer femme author who boasts two collections of poetry on Write Bloody Publishing and two books, "After the Witch Hunt" (2012) and "Redhead and the Slaughter King" (2014), with which she's toured nationally. Gatwood's cites her as a poet, fiction writer, and sex and relationship columnist for Bustle.com and HelloFlo and recent graduate of Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York. Both of them, as their group Speak Like a Girl as well as in their solo endeavor, have won and placed in acclaimed writing and poetry contests such as the 2015 Rustbelt Regional Poetry Slam, Woman of the World Poetry Slam, National Poetry Slam, and Tired Heart Press Contest (Falley). Falley is also the creator of the Poems That Don't Suck online writing course.

The show is open to everyone with an open-mind and is being pushed as a show "designed to engage the campus conversations about feminism, and to start meaningful discussions about what the movement really means." It is also being included in the Pancakes and Poetry series of spoken word performances, meaning a full pancakes bar will be available for attendees to the event. And for those interested in hearing more about the duo than could be provided in this article, WIIT 88.9 FM is planned to host a brief interview with the group conducted by Cara Karter and Emma Zachocki, the hosts of the feminist radio show Techette (airing Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.) from 6:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on the station on the day of the performance. However, it is recommended that those interested in tuning in stay updated on the WIIT Facebook page for new installments and changes to this plan.