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SGA executive board candidates share views

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The next section of the debates was for the executive VP position, for which Jeremy Becker, Sonia Kamdar, and Soren Spicknall are running.

Asked how the candidates would handle situations when they disagreed strongly with the decision made by the senate, which they oversee in their position as executive VP. Becker relayed that it was very important and better for the organization that the person in the position present the unified position of the board over their personal opinion.

Spicknall agreed, responding that the power in the role lies with its obligation to make sure the discussion is proactive and is taking into account all positions, making sure the senators understand who would be impacted by their decisions.

Kamdar argued that the role of the position was as a moderator, whose job was to step in to offer the voice of reason when necessary but never to push personal opinions against the senate's decisions.

Kamdar was asked how she intended to increase SGA's communication internally as she said she wanted to do in her campaign packet. She spoke to the disconnect between the senate branch and the other two branches of SGA, Finance Board and Judicial Board, and how more recently, changes were made in SGA to ensure that they actually were included on a lot of senate updates, and how she would work to further this goal.

Becker was asked why he thought his goal to increase SGA's communication with student organizations as indicated in his campaign packet could be best accomplished from the executive VP position rather than any other role within SGA. His response was that the position held a lot of power to encourage senators to volunteer and get engaged with student organizations, and find out their needs and requirements.

Spicknall was asked how he would handle conflicts of interest when an SGA decision impacts an organization he is a part of. He stated his belief that the position is different than every other position on the board in that its only core role is advocacy for the students in general. This was followed by audience questions and the end of the executive VP debate.

Next up was the Finance Board Chair debate for which, although there are two students on the ballot, Sung Minh Choi Hong was the only one who was present.

After introductions, he was asked what one thing he would change in Finance Board and what detailed plans he had to change it. Hong responded that one thing that would have to change was that a greater effort should be made to inform student organizations about Finance Board policy and changes to that policy. One way he saw this as being accomplished is by taking a more advanced interest in student organization events and funding responsibilities, even semesters ahead of time, and making sure they know everything they need to in their particular situations about how to propose.

With regards to SGA's initiative for more transparency, Hong was asked by a member of the audience how he felt about the idea of live streaming hearing meetings as was attempted during the last hearing, to which he responded that he was in general support of the idea, but would take into consideration whether or not finance board members were uncomfortable with it, and stated that they should not be forced to participate in those conditions if they felt too uncomfortable with the proposition.

The debate for VP of academic affairs was next, for which there is only one candidate, Akash Raina.

Following his introduction, he was asked how he would incorporate viewpoints of students from other colleges in light of coming from the limited scope of being a senator for the College of Architecture. He emphasised the importance of the senators to provide varied viewpoints to the committee, and that this was the best way of ensuring a balanced perspective.

When asked what experience he had beyond that of being a senator to take on the wide scoping position, he emphasized that his seasoned experience in the committee, having worked with three VP's of academic affairs in his time, and having learned a lot about the job from all of them made him well versed to take on the role. He touched on his commitment to being perceptive to all student ideas but added that it would not be his position to have all of the answers, with his main duty being to facilitate the platforms and provide the resources for students to solve their problems themselves, such as making sure their problems are heard by the Undergraduate Studies Council (USC) and University Faculty Council (UFC).

Addressing the problem of senators' hesitance to join the academic affairs committee due to projects in the committee tending towards long term rather than short-term impact, Raina was in support of enforcing more stringent deadlines and an openness for senators to ask for help when working on projects instead of keeping silent. If these are put into place, he argues, there would not be a slacking off of long term projects and the accomplishments would become more visible. This was followed by audience questions.

The next debate on the docket was for the VP of communications, for which there were three candidates running, Aditya Parakh, Aaron Carl Eckart-Frank, and Jelani Canty, though only the latter two were present.

Following introductions, and a question eliciting a discussion of the projects they had worked on as members of the SGA communications committee (ComCom), a question directed towards Eckart-Frank asked him about how he intended to encourage involvement in SGA and in the committee in specific and how he planned to bring in projects people were passionate about. He responded by highlighting the power that non-senators have in committee meetings, and stressed that, instead of trying to get students who want to make a difference to go to senate meetings, they should be encouraged to go to committee meetings where they can directly work to get things done.

Canty mentioned that the responsibility of SGA to communicate with the student body is a joint one shared by everyone in SGA, but the VP of communications would be present to make sure that it is happening efficiently. The inter-committee managing of ComCom, he stated, would be the main focus of the role. Eckart-Frank expressed his belief that the job of the VP of ComCom is to lead by example and definition. This was followed by audience question and the end of this section of the debate.

The final debate was for the VP of student life position, for which there were four candidates: Tung Nguyen, Qianran He, Alyssa DeLuca, and Adrian Jr. Duenas. He, however, was not present.

Responding to a question about how candidates would, if elected, interact with other offices on campus that have similar missions, such as RGL and RHA to accomplish their goals,Duenas spoke to his relationships gained with public safety supervisors, facilities, and dining services through his time involved in SGA and working for OCL, and added that he would use those, and use the power of further developing close relationships with offices on campus to assure that things get done. Nguyen questioned why SGA had to distinguish itself from other offices if they shared common goals of bettering the student experience, and promoted close collaboration between all of the organizations with these same goals. DeLuca encouraged RHA and other student advocacy boards to have people involved in SGA and in the student life committee meetings so that they can collaborate on similar problems and corroborate all their combined knowledge and experience. This, she argued, would ultimately make it easier for everyone involved to get projects done.

When asked about how each of the candidates expects to engage students not involved in student organizations but who still wish to make change, Duenas spoke about using open and freely available resources like the Illinois Tech Student Community Facebook page (ITSC), and taking problems posted there as seriously as any other problem, with the obligation to address it and encourage students there to use SGA an avenue for solutions.

DeLuca said that she would engage students who are passionate about affecting change in certain areas and help them do what they want to do, and agreed with Duenas that resources like the ITSC page were useful in finding those passionate students.

Nguyen answered with the belief that if they cannot pursue typical avenues for affecting change, SGA has an obligation to bring those opportunities to them and added that they have been doing so through projects like the SGA Town Hall Forums. He encouraged the senators to reach out to all their constituents and finished by saying that no matter how small of a connection they have, their voice should still be heard.

Following this were audience questions to the candidates, bringing the debates to an end. Debate links are posted on Facebook and the full debate can be viewed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_uAAEF4QIU.

Voting is open for three days, from midnight on Monday, April 4, until 7 p.m. on Wednesday, April 6. Students from IIT, Vandercook and Shimer can vote using the following links: IIT - tiny.cc/iitvotes, VanderCook - tiny.cc/vandercookvotes and Shimer - tiny.cc/shimervotes2016.

Second City performance celebrates Mies

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TECHNEWS WRITER

In 1938, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe came to Chicago with the intent of practicing architecture in the city as it was recovering from the great fire. During his stay, he was appointed the director at the College of Architecture and master to redesign the whole layout of the Armour Institute of Technology. His plan was to elevate all the buildings to the first floor and have students be able to walk across without any flow of traffic. However, after considerate deliberation he came up with the current plan of IIT and designed Wishnick, Perlstein, Crown and Alumni Halls. He is remembered at IIT for all his great works and his contribution to the current plan of IIT.

His 130th birthday was celebrated recently at the College of Architecture in Crown Hall hosted by the Mies Society. The event was open to all and free for students and faculty at IIT. The event took place on Thursday, March 31 at 7 p.m. but drinks were served from 6 p.m. to all external guests. It started with an opening speech by the President of the Mies Society who started by introducing the great works of Mies in Germany followed by his works in the United States. The speech mentioned all the struggles Mies went through as an architect that touched the hearts of all architects. It was followed by improv comedy by Second City where the actors portrayed the existence of a fictional society where architecture was a joke and of not much importance to modern society. It had a family who disapproved of their daughter joining architecture in parallel to her life at college. It also reflected the difficulties the architecture students faced in life and how architecture was not valued enough. The show was great and helped students relate it with their current life. All external guests relished in their old memories about college life and the difficulties they faced.

It ended with a recap into Mies' life at the fictional 'Second City,' where he is faced with family pressures and the different dilemmas. After the show, the president delivered a vote of thanks for all those who helped make the show a success. The ceremony ended with all guests talking about their time with Mies and a party afterwards. The ceremony marked the existence of a man who made a huge difference to IIT and the College of Architecture.