

# High hopes for the future of VanderCook involvement in IPRO

**Reno Waswil**  
STALINIST OF SATIRE

The Interprofessional Projects Program (IPRO) is one of Illinois Tech's most cherished academic programs, providing to the school, among other things, a theoretical appeal to prospective students who are intrigued by the opportunity to work in an interdisciplinary team setting, additional business and government attention and sponsorship, and of course, a method of forcing students to provide free and largely unskilled work for a multitude of sponsored and internal projects. With these core tenets in mind, university administration, in conjunction with the IPRO program and the VanderCook College of Music, decided late last semester to open up the opportunity to be in any IPRO to all current VanderCook students in exchange for any elective class they may require.

When asked about the considerations leading up to this decision, Linda Wrightwren, the Vice-Co-Director of Undergraduate Academic Affairs' Secretary commented, "There were ultimately two possible outcomes to implementation that we could see; it would either be an astounding success, or it would be a disastrous failure, so we thought, why not? We wouldn't be losing money on it."

When pressed on why there had been no efforts to do smaller scale tests to determine the viability and practicality of the initiative before, she replied, "To be honest, this whole thing stemmed from a proposal made to us by an IPRO in the first place, and they would not have had time to carry out that sort of thing in one semester. It's all about having deliverables, you know?"

After the pitch for the initiative, which came from a 2010 IPRO project titled "Developing New and Innovative Methods to Improve Collaboration between VanderCook College of Music and Illinois Institute of Technology with Innovations and Explorations," Wrightwren met with several other secretaries of major offices on campus, along with the major affiliates, deans, and directors of VanderCook, and, as Wrightwren explained, "several years later, here we are!

Now, the only problem we really came across is that we found out quite early that we couldn't exactly require them to take the IPROs, seeing that we don't own the school per se. Despite this, we do expect them to do what is in their best interests." She trailed off with a sly grin and glared off into the distance.

Of the several IPRO Directors and affiliates that were contacted, none were available for interviews about the change, and only one offered a statement, in the form of a recommendation to "contact the faculty sponsor of the project you are interested in directly."

With IPRO Day coming up in a few short weeks, Technews decided to contact a couple of Vandercook students currently enrolled in the program to get their thoughts. Sun Shui, a Vandercook student in an IPRO titled "Integrating Eco-Friendly Ideas into Assembly Languages to Develop Smarter Processing of Big Data," when asked about what led her to choose such a nuanced project, responded, "I choose it mostly because it fit in with my schedule. Plus, I like the environment and being eco-friendly, so I wanted to work on something that would do that. I also did a bit of coding before and thought it was pretty fun so, why not?"

When asked about her experience thus far in the program, she said, "Well, the thing is I don't really know what's going on, but neither does anybody else that I know of. So, considering that, I think that I am doing pretty well. I am in a sub-group with two Psychology majors. We are doing some research and learning a lot about assembly languages. It's kind of interesting, actually."

When asked if she had any complaints, she responded, "If I was to have any major complaints besides the obvious 'this is stupid' and, 'what am I even doing here,' I guess it would be how annoying it is that everybody keeps joking that, because I am a music major, I can only count up to four. And I mean everybody; even the Business majors! Like, get over yourselves."

Some however, such as Marcos Milliano, take the discipline-oriented aspect of the program more to heart. Milliano, in his IPRO titled "Concepts for Designing

Packaging for Perishable Foods" strives to apply his music playing and teaching skills to this project, whether his teammates like it or not. He explains, "I'm taking the elevator pitch idea to a new level. Think of it like this, you get someone in a room to talk to them about your product and get them to buy it, but it's not just your idea that will sell it to them; it's the entire experience of the pitch! So I thought, 'You know what will get us to win this thing? If we had some music in the background that they couldn't say no to.'"

When asked what his group thought about this, he explained, "They keep saying things like 'I think that's beyond the scope of the project' and 'just do what we need you to do,' but I just feel like that's stifling my creativity. I have sort of gone off on my own, done some tests on some people and some experimentation, and I have this piece that I want to teach to the rest of..." He stopped suddenly. All that was heard was silence, but the look on his face revealed that he heard so much more.

Then, a faint din was heard in the distance unlike any other din before: more melodic and meaningful. "Ha! That must be Chris, my rival of sorts from the 'Innovative Motor Design' project or whatever," Milliano tried to say nonchalantly. But he looked anxious, and hurried towards it. "Let's just see how they're doing really quickly," he muttered.

We wandered towards the front-most hallway in Stuart where there was a modestly sized group of people standing around idly. Still from a slight distance, the sound, which we, at that point, perceived to be the din of a motor in a tiny, awkward-looking motorized car, could be heard changing rapidly, varying in pitches and tones, and sometimes manufacturing multiple wildly different sounds at the same time. Just as we approached the group, it went silent as a tall, lean woman named Christina Quinn, seemingly in the center of the widely spread group, placed the cart in front of an elaborate obstacle course extending down the length of the hallway. A switch was flipped on the back and it sped into action, maneuvering brilliantly past every sharp obstacle in its path. What was most stunning however was

how, all the while as it glided in and out, up and down, the motor loudly sang an intricate soundscape of noise in tune with its motion on the track. The car produced a wonderfully full, complex, and beautiful sound like an electronic symphony of the highest caliber.

Milliano tried to maintain poise, but began to silently weep as the demonstration went on. By the time the little car putted to the end of the course with a set of staccato buzzes followed by silence, Milliano's face was covered in tears and he was gritting his teeth. He quickly wiped off his face the best he could and greeted Quinn, "Chris, that was really good! I do think it flourished a little bit there near the end, and at the beginning, and that the harmony in the middle wasn't quite on key; I would look at all of that. Still though, great job! I think you are almost making it hard for me to compete."

We came back to Milliano's work space a little later, when seemingly everyone else had left the building, hoping to get a follow-up interview. Instead, we found Milliano ripping up his notes in rage and yelling at the top of his lungs, not exactly in a state to be interviewed. We decide to leave him with his business.

When asked about the future of this program integration, Wrightwren responded, "Oh, I don't know. It depends on how well it does. Most people don't even know that it's going on right now, so how can we fairly judge it? Like, did you know that we had an IPRO with Shimer too (referring to the 'Creating and Demonstrating a New Shimer + Illinois Tech + Community Forum for Collaborative Social Innovation' project)? I just learned about that yesterday."

She finished, "When we'll really know is during IPRO Day when we finally see their deliverables. Let me give you some advice, deliverables are all that matter in this world, kid. No matter how you get there, as long as you come out with deliverables, you'll be fine. I don't think I have to tell you what they do out there in the real world to people that don't provide the deliverables, do I?"

We will just have to wait until IPRO Day to see how all of this pans out.

# RHA Executive Board splits, forms rival factions

**Soren Spicknall**  
CO-OPTEER OF MEETINGS

On the eve of choosing its next president, Illinois Tech's Residence Hall Association (RHA) was rocked by scandal and deceit, culminating in a full public split of its current executive board on the first of this month. Each member of RHA's leadership aligned themselves with the Hall Council they live in, establishing makeshift headquarters scattered across various campus residential complexes in an ongoing situation of great concern for Residence and Greek Life (RGL).

What began as a seemingly innocent comment from Arlene Hayes, former president of the unified group, has devolved into an all-out war between members of the executive board claiming to represent the conglomerated East-Fowler-Noth, Lewis-Grad-South, SSV, and Carman-Gunsaulus Hall Councils. Hayes, a Gunsaulus resident, initially complained that no RHA general body meetings had been held during the 2015-2016 academic year anywhere outside MSV, specifically mentioning that plans for such a meeting in Carman had been changed the previous month to take place in McCormick Lounge instead. Khaleela Zaman, an SSV resident and former Student Advisor to the original RHA, joined Hayes in expressing that sentiment, but relations between the two soured quickly when Zaman pointed out that RHA's water filtration project had prioritized Carman and Gunsaulus before SSV.

Various other members of the executive board eventually joined the fray, scrambling to demonstrate the great need of the Hall Councils they lived in. At the end of it all, the group collectively stormed off in various directions after fitting awkwardly through the tiny door to the MSV Fishbowl conference room, uniting in subsets around

each complex they felt deserved special attention. RHA staff advisor James Thomas was quoted as saying that the spat "felt exactly like what not having RHA in the first place would be like," a cacophony of voices each claiming that their own living places were in the most need of improvement from RGL.

Arlene Hayes and Khadijah Nesbitt,

former RHA Vice President, attempted to establish an initial headquarters in Gunsaulus, where both live, but were forced to relocate to the rear lounge of Carman Hall instead after being chased out of their first location by a swarm of cockroaches. Khaleela Zaman, quiet and resourceful, accessed a hidden stash of supplies hidden in SSV's bushes, and set up

shop under a large umbrella adorned with Christmas lights on the rooftop deck of SSV Middle.

Rafi Islam Zareef (former National Communications Chair), Madina Tahmas (former Publicity Chair), Krithika Subramani (former Treasurer), and Soren Spicknall (former Secretary) briefly seemed to be the strongest group, fiercely defending the original RHA office in MSV on behalf of the East-Fowler-North Hall Council, but collaboration between the four almost immediately broke down when Spicknall spelled Subramani's name wrong while drafting a new constitution, causing her and Zareef to break away in righteous rage and claim domain over the Lewis-Grad-South complex. With only two members per group, all were overwhelmed by a horde of RAs eager to annex the RHA office for themselves and begin stealing RHA's supplies, as if they didn't do that already.

At press time, Spicknall and Tahmas had set up a makeshift office underneath the McCormick Lounge piano, while Subramani and Zareef had found a strategic placement in the Grad Hall kitchen, giving them a strategic position to watch the comings and goings of their rivals. The former RHA office had been completely stripped of its board games, its food, and even its furnishings, and a team of RA Architecture majors was devising plans to knock down the dividing wall between that space and the Leadership Office once and for all. The elected members of next year's RHA Executive Board, not having been informed of this situation, had been waiting at the Grand Lux Café for three days now, waiting for the previous Executive Board to arrive and begin their annual transition dinner. They had racked up a 2,160 dollar bill for the university, one which would almost certainly be passed on to all residents as a collective fine despite the fault lying with a specific set of individuals.



Photo courtesy of Soren Spicknall