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# TUESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2016

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# TechNews

Student newspaper of Illinois Institute of Technology since 1928

## Illinois Tech breaks ground on Kaplan Institute, first academic building addition in 40 years

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

In the presence of several members of the Board of Trustees, the Mayor of Chicago, the President of the university, faculty, staff and students, Illinois Tech ceremoniously conducted the groundbreaking of the first academic building addition to the Main Campus in 40 years, the Ed Kaplan Family Institute for Innovation and Tech Entrepreneurship.

Ed Kaplan's \$11 million gift and challenge grant was announced to the Illinois Tech community in February 2014 and was followed closely by the announcement of the design and programming architects at a press conference with the Mayor in March 2014. On Thursday, August 25, 2016, the official groundbreaking ceremony was conducted at the Hermann Hall Expo. In his introductory speech, Bud Wendorf, Chairman of the Board of Trustees called it, "a wonderful and very special day," celebrating a "landmark endeavor" for the university. Alan Cramb, President of Illinois Tech, brought attention to the fact that Ed Kaplan, through his gift for the new building, had become the second largest alumni donor in Illinois Tech history.

The Kaplan Institute will house Illinois Tech's Interprofessional Projects (IPRO) Program, Idea Shop, M. A. and Lila Self Leadership Academy, Entrepreneurship Academy and Jules F. Knapp Entrepreneurship Center. The Institute of Design (ID) faculty and staff will play an important role in incorporating design principles into undergraduate programs, while the graduate school will remain at the university's downtown campus. According to the official website for the Kaplan Institute, the mission of this endeavor is to "nurture the advancement of creative ideas, foster interdisciplinary and external collaboration, and create a culture that enables innovation and tech entrepreneurship to flourish."

At the groundbreaking ceremony, Rahm Emanuel, Mayor of Chicago, congratulated Illinois Tech on their close collaboration with Von Steuben High School as part of the city's mission to bridge the gap between high schools and universities, and commended the relationships fostered therein. Of the Kaplan Institute he said, "this building represents the things that make Chicago great -- incredible architecture, philanthropy, innovation."

The building has been designed

by John Ronan Architects, a Chicago-based architecture firm. The lead architect, John Ronan said, "the world no longer cares what you know. It cares what you do with what you know" and went on to say that the Kaplan Institute would serve as an "idea factory" to encourage "creative collision," leading students to be able to "transition fluidly between thinking and making." Ronan also talked in detail about the design of the building, highlighting that the second floor of the building will be enclosed in Ethylene Tetrafluoroethylene (ETFE) foil cushions, varying the amount of solar energy entering the building, a sustainable method that will allow the building to respond to changes in weather in real time, a method that is being used for the first time in Chicago. Ronan ended his speech by pointing out that Mies van der Rohe had three distinct styles of spaces - classrooms, laboratories and communal spaces for all, adding that the Kaplan Institute will be a space that serves as all three.

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Frances Bronet recognized that Illinois Tech students "know how to think, and they know how to make," emphasizing that the Kaplan Institute would be a space to hone those skills, helping students and faculty

alike "spark each other's entrepreneurial spirit." The President of the Student Government Association, Hamze Sukkar said that the new building would be a catalyst to both attract the best and brightest students to the university, as well as ignite the minds of those already here to continue effective collaboration, ideation and creation.

Ed Kaplan, the primary donor for the building, talked about the building, expected to be completed by the end of 2018, as being a space that will foster "human collisions" and encourage "collaboration, cooperation, relationship building." He also highlighted that the building will have glass walls so that all members of the campus will be witness to "the next great invention coming to life."

Murewa Oguntade, a fifth year architecture student present at the event shared her thoughts with TechNews, saying, "As a student at Illinois Tech, you learn pretty quickly the significance of architecture in the school's history, and it just feels great to be able to witness the continuation of that legacy."

More information on the Ed Kaplan Family Institute for Innovation and Tech Entrepreneurship can be found on the university's main website at this link: <http://web.iit.edu/provost/kaplan-institute>



Photos courtesy of Institutional Advancement at Illinois Tech