

Student org feature: Society of Physics Students

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The group is known across campus for winning the accuracy award for a whopping seven foot launch at last year's 11th annual BMES Pumpkin Launch, but the Society of Physics Students (SPS) does much more than compute the paths of flying orange projectiles. SPS' primary goal is to prepare students for jobs after graduation through workshops and other events as well as foster a positive and driven community within the physics department. However, students of all disciplines are welcome to attend SPS' events. In fact, according to SPS President Adam Denchfield,

"It's not just physics students. Anyone is free to participate in SPS events free of charge. We are an inclusive community." This year there are about 20 active members in SPS, which is an increase from the previous year. It is no surprise that as the number of physics students at Illinois Tech increases, so does the SPS community.

Acquiring the skills necessary to get a job after graduation is the job of every college student, and it is also exactly the goal of SPS. In the past, SPS has organized a number of workshops and activities for Illinois Tech students to attend. In just this past year, the group has put together Python workshops headed by Melanie Cornelius, collaborated

with IBM's Quantum Computing group, trained members in telescope use as well as Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM) imaging, and built an electromagnetic levitator.

If there's one student organization that excels at giving students the connections and skills they need to succeed after graduation, it's SPS.

According to SPS Secretary Ian Gustafson, "Every active member of SPS who wanted research over the summer got it." Among others, Gustafson had the opportunity to conduct research this past summer, working with Dr. Bryce Littlejohn researching the Reactor Antineutrino Anomaly in only the summer of his freshman year.

This coming year, SPS will continue to be just as active as active. The group has plans to start microelectronics workshops co-hosted by Varrick Suezaki and Yonas Gebre, visit the Trinity Test Site in Los Alamos, bring in graduate students and professors to talk about their research, attend an American Physical Society conference, and build yet another pumpkin launcher.

Interested in becoming involved? General body meetings are in the Life Sciences Building Room 152 on Tuesdays during lunch (12:50-1:40 p.m.) or sign up through HawkLink for more information.

Armour College of Engineering showcases summer projects at R&D expo

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Over the summer, while many of us were kicking back and taking in the warm summer days, others were hard at work to create what they believed to be the next big step in innovation and design. These undergraduate students had done research over the summer and were now ready to show their work and results at the 2016 Summer Armour Research and Development Exposition, which took place on August 25 at the Rettaliata Engineering Center Atrium. Students, professors, and professionals alike

were in attendance and listened with extreme interest as each participating student explained their work and the implications their work could have in the field.

"I think [the expo] is really good," said expo participant Brigitte Temple. "It allows other students to see the work that their peers have done during the summer and it hopefully gets them interested in research here at Illinois Tech." Brigitte Temple—like other undergraduate students—had entered the expo as a requirement for the research grant she had received the previous spring semester. "I was working with my professor, Dr. Matthew Spenko, during the last school year and he suggested that I try to get the peer grant so I

could get funded research for the summer." Research opportunities for undergraduate students is somewhat unique to Illinois Tech, as many other universities in the country offer little to no research opportunities to their undergraduates. "I was really interested that Illinois Tech was funding undergraduates for research, normally not a lot of people do that and I applied and got it. [The Expo] was one of the requirements for the program." Roughly a dozen other undergraduates were awarded the grant last school semester.

Brigitte Temple's research built off of work done in Dr. Spenko's lab, which examined the characteristics and abilities of Electrostatic Dry Adhesive Pads. These pads

had the tendency to collect dust while in use over a period of time. The hope of the research was to discover a practical way of removing the dust from the pads without manual cleaning. So far, the results look promising and Brigitte Temple is planning to continue her research in the coming months. All research topics at the expo focused on one of the four Illinois Tech Engineering Themes: Health, Water, Energy, and Security. Other topics seen at the expo included research in both cancer and diabetes treatment. The hope for all of these students is to have their work bring meaningful change to their respectful fields.

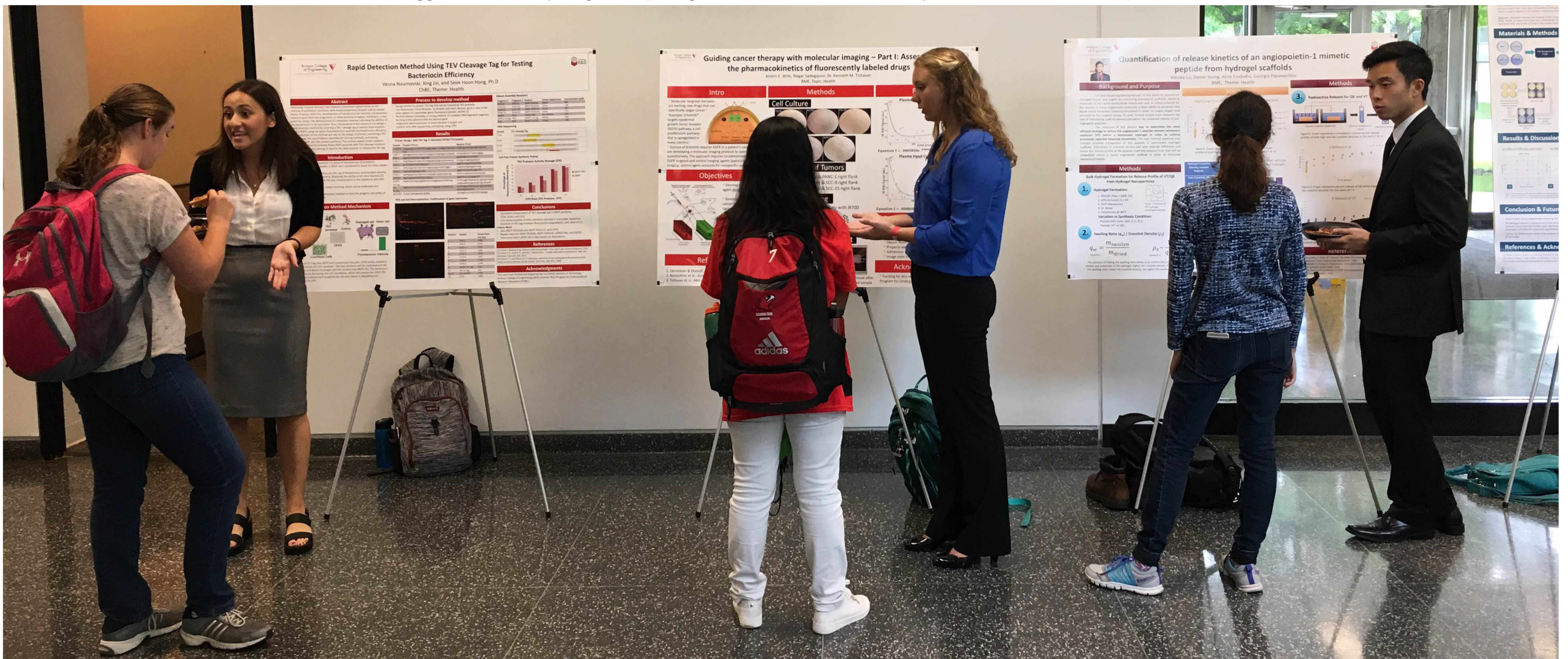


Photo by Steven Moreno

Undocumented Students and Allies launch United Minds Inspiring Innovation scholarship

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Undocumented Students and Allies (USA) welcome you to a new semester at Illinois Tech! USA is a student organization committed to raising awareness about undocumented students within our Illinois Tech community and beyond while providing these students with an environment where they can safely and openly express themselves. USA is also involved in community outreach to provide other undocumented students with support and encouragement to pursue higher education regardless of their status.

During the 2015-2016 school year, USA created the United Minds Inspiring Innovation (UMII) Scholars Fund to support undocumented Illinois Tech undergraduate students who demonstrate financial need but do not qualify for federal aid (FAFSA). After a five month campaign with about 800 signatures collected from the undergraduate student body, the scholarship initiative was passed with a referendum vote held in conjunction with the Student Government Association executive elections. On May 19th, USA presented UMII to Illinois Tech's Board of Trustees, highlighting its message

of philanthropic innovation. The presentation centered around a seven minute video featuring a number of powerful stories from within our approximately 150 undocumented student body. Thanks to 5 generous donors, the fund has over \$11,000 to be awarded in scholarships this semester. Also, starting this semester, Illinois Tech students have the opportunity to opt-in to the \$4.50 UMII Scholarship Fee on their student accounts and help fund Spring 2017 scholarships. Additional donations can also be made at alumni.iit.edu/umii-scholarship. All donations are tax-deductible.

On August 22nd, the fall 2016 scholarship application went live on the new portal for undocumented student resources located within the Illinois Tech OneStop website (web.iit.edu/onestop/undocumented-students). Fall semester applications are due September 9th and spring semester applications are due December 16th. Applicants must have completed at least one semester at Illinois Tech, but USA encourages new students to reach out to Leticia Moreno, Senior Financial Aid Counselor & Special Student Group Resource Liaison, in the Office of Financial Aid (lmoreno2@iit.edu or 312-567-3422) for consideration of special circumstances. Scholarship notifications

will occur in October. USA also encourages the Illinois Tech community to save the date for the 1st Annual UMII Gala on the night of December 16th! The event will showcase the success of this semester's scholarship recipients, as well as the diversity of Illinois Tech's undocumented student community with a number of performances and guest speakers.

Illinois Tech follows in the footsteps of Loyola University, Prescott College in Arizona, and Marquette University in Wisconsin in creating such a scholarship, and is the first tech school in the country to do so. Yusra Sarhan (4th Year co-terminal BME/CHE, USA Vice President) stresses that "the UMII Scholarship extends beyond technological innovation and serves as a catalyst to increase social awareness on Illinois Tech's campus." Daniel Maya Chavez (4th Year EECE, USA member) agrees that "UMII is not just another scholarship. It is a gift provided by the Illinois Tech community. It is an example to the student receiving it of what a community can do once united, and how a small contribution in said community can make a big difference."

USA is proud to continue building this right to education movement. On April 15th, 7 USA members were interviewed

about the scholarship initiative for a morning segment aired on Univision Chicago. On June 10th, Luis Gomez (4th Year BIOL, USA President) joined representatives from Loyola and Prescott to present the scholarship campaign to immigrant rights activists from across the U.S. in a "Mobilizing Student Power" breakout session at the United We Dream Congress 2016 in Houston, Texas. USA is now collaborating with other universities, including the University of Chicago, to create similar scholarships on their campuses.

This ground-breaking student-led scholarship would not be a reality without the collaboration between various departments, including the Office of Financial Aid, Student Accounting Office, Controller's Office, and Office of Institutional Aid. More importantly, USA would like to thank our fellow undergraduate community members, as well as generous private donors, for supporting Illinois Tech undocumented students as they pursue higher education. Questions can be directed to USA through email (usa@iit.edu), Facebook (@UndocumentedIIT and @UMIIFUND), or Twitter (@USA_IIT). We hope you enjoy your second week of classes, Scarlet Hawks!