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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2016

Volume 186 | Issue 10

technewsiit.com

TechNews

Student newspaper of Illinois Institute of Technology since 1928

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Campus inclusiveness, college affordability, more take center stage at President, Provost Forum

Soren Spicknall
COPY EDITOR

Once per semester, Illinois Tech's Student Government Association (SGA) hosts an open event in which students of the university are invited to bring issues of personal importance forward to the institution's president and provost in a public space, seeking answers. Moderated by the sitting SGA president, the semiannual President and Provost Forum involves staff and faculty members far beyond the top floors of IIT Tower, with dozens of individuals in attendance from offices across the university. The first such assembly of this academic year came on Wednesday, November 9, hosted in the Hermann Hall Ballroom during the 12:45 p.m. to 1:45 p.m. lunch hour shared by most Illinois Tech students. Though the official time frame for the event was brief, a broad array of topics was discussed by President Alan Cramb and Provost Frances Bronet in the time provided.

Beginning the President and Provost Forum, SGA president Hamze Leo Sukkar introduced three basic "ground rules," modifying the previously less structured nature

of the gathering. He would alternate between taking in-person questions and reading from those submitted online, rather than covering all online questions first before moving on to those who wished to speak in person. Each topic would be allowed only ten minutes of total discussion (regardless of the number of students wishing to ask about it), presumably an adjustment made to avoid domination by any single topic, something that occurred with printing credit policies in the Fall 2015 semester and with undocumented student grievances in the Spring 2016 semester. Additionally, any student asking a question would only be allowed one follow-up, and any online submission would only be able to spawn one additional discussion from a student in attendance. While that final rule was not strictly adhered to during some topics which generated a natural back-and-forth discussion, the first two were upheld faithfully throughout the Forum.

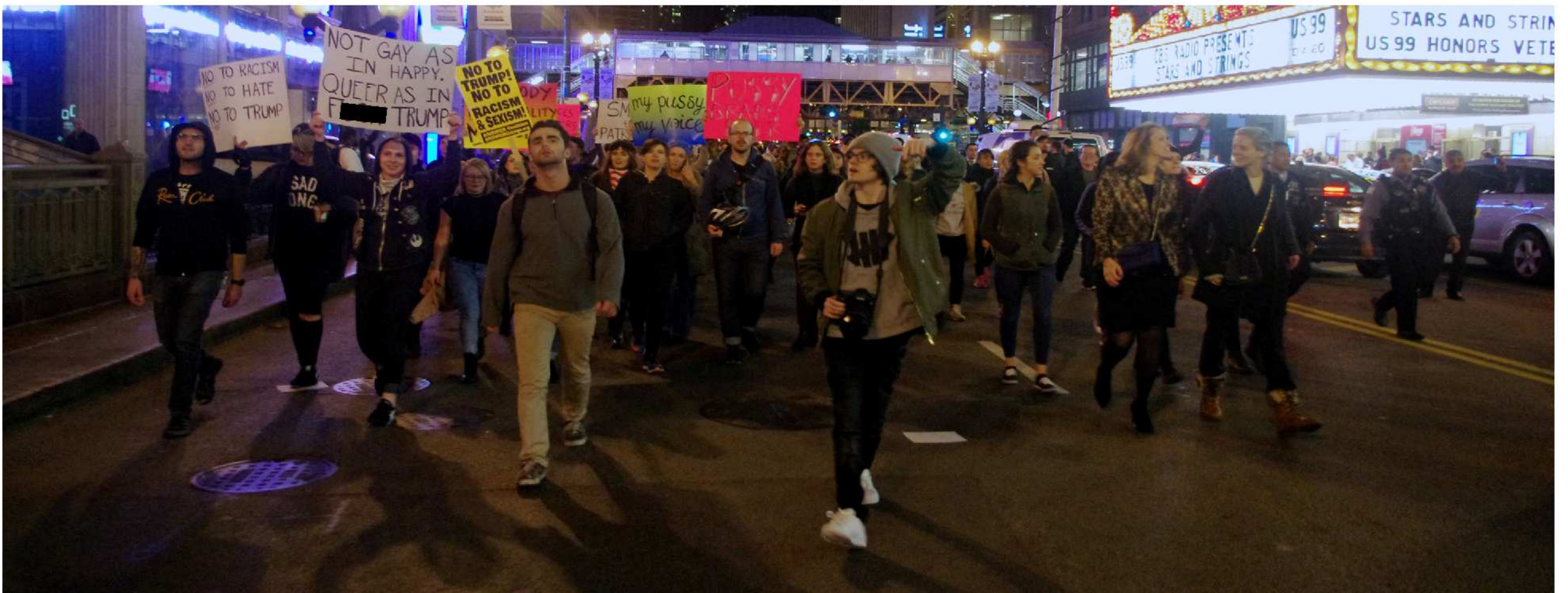
The first question of the afternoon, from an online submitter, asked what Illinois Tech was doing as a whole to promote the involvement and empowerment of women in STEM. Dr. Mike Gosz, the university's Vice President for Enrollment, was brought up

to the front of the room to discuss the issue, speaking about Illinois Tech's array of summer programs aimed at high school students as a method for recruiting more young women into popular majors offered here. Gosz specifically highlighted a coding camp for young women devised by the Department of Computer Science to encourage interaction with a discipline in which women are currently extremely underrepresented, even in comparison to other typically male-dominated fields. He pointed out that the university hit 33 percent female enrollment from its class of first-year students for the Fall 2016 semester, and explained that a target of 40 percent was set for the near future. Expanding on those topics, Bronet stated that part of the university's push for female recruitment (and general outreach) included a focus on the fact that many of its programs had potential for broad social impact, connected to issues beyond the pure technical knowledge of the degree. She also brought up that multiple department chairs, two academic deans, and the university's own provost (herself) were women, and that Illinois Tech had the capacity to stand as a leader among engineering-focused schools in that regard.

The first in-person question came from a student who began by remarking on the vitriol surrounding domestic politics in the past year (the U.S. presidential election had taken place the day before the President and Provost Forum). Connecting Illinois Tech to an ongoing debate between supporters of unmoderated free speech and campaigners against discriminatory expression, the student asked how the university planned to create an environment that was at once open to people of varying personal identities and discourse which may sometimes question the legitimacy of those identities. Cramb's response focused on the principle of respect, imploring all Illinois Tech students to keep in mind the frame of reference that each person had for their own views when discussing subject matter which they disagreed upon. Bronet said that beyond encouraging students to behave in a mutually respectful fashion, the university itself hoped to inform its own policy decisions on related issues with student input, allowing those enrolled at the institution to shape its approach to accommodating different identities and viewpoints.

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Protesters clog downtown streets in opposition to Trump's election win



Photos edited for obscenity

Photos by Andrew Adams

TechNews

STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY SINCE 1928

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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 technewsit.com.

EDITORIAL POLICY

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International Students Feature: Poland

Alexandra Detweiler
COPY EDITOR

This week, Weronika Halicka, a sophomore studying chemical engineering, was asked about the differences between her home country, Poland, and life at Illinois Tech. As has become a clear trend in this section of TechNews, Halicka expressed that she missed the food from her home country more than anything else. "It's just food, I miss food the most," Halicka explained. "It's so much different. My parents are always sending me packages with candies and stuff." Her favorite dish, Halicka said, was pierogi: a kind of dumpling stuffed with fillings such as potato. Also, Halicka mentioned, "I think the chocolate is different. I think in Europe we got used to chocolate from Switzerland, that's the most common, and it just tastes different. That's why my parents are sending me so much chocolate." Halicka also said that the portion sizing in America is much different than in Poland, and that a 'large' here is much larger than you would find in her home country. She recounted a memory from her first trip to the cinema in the United States, saying, "Usually [when people in Poland] come and order a large soda, it is maybe 0.75 liters. Here I got two liters of soda, and I'm like 'oh my god! When am I going to drink it? It's going to take me a whole week to drink it!'" Halicka also said that in Poland, people go out to eat

much less frequently, only going out on special occasions like birthdays. Because of this, in Poland, they don't have breakfast places at all, because breakfast is always eaten at home. A fun fact, she added, "We don't eat sandwiches with two breads, just one bread on the bottom. People laugh at me when I eat a sandwich here, because I open it." In addition, she mentioned that while coffee shops exist in Poland, people do not use them to the extent that they do here. "They think that 'I have a coffee machine at home, I'm just going to prepare it at home and take it to go.'"

The hardest part of the transition, according to Halicka, was the language barrier. Although she started learning English in kindergarten, Halicka said that it was mostly grammar and reading. "But when it comes to talking, I was so scared to say something, 'oh, they're going to laugh at me.' It was terrible. One sentence took me like five minutes. People were like 'oh, okay, nevermind, she doesn't speak English.' Like, no, I do, I just need time! I was so shy. I am not a shy person, but I was so scared to talk." Halicka spoke of two years that she spent in Missouri, which she said was a terrible experience because no one spoke Polish. "Here it's fine, I have friends who speak Polish. They were born here, but it's still nice to talk in your language to someone."

Academically, Halicka explained that Europe in general has a different education system than in America. "First of all, we start primary school when we're seven, and that's

why we finish high school when we're 19." Because of this, she remarked that people in America always thought she was old for grade. Also, Halicka said, there is a lot less flexibility when choosing your classes in Poland. In her words, "The school gives us a schedule and that's it. We have nothing to say." Additionally, Halicka explained, "In high school, we don't have finals, we just have exams, tests, quizzes, we don't have one cumulative at the end of the year. So that was new for me in university."

Holidays and celebrations also differ in Poland. On the first of November, people in Poland dedicate the day to visiting cemeteries and remembering those in the family who have died, and students typically get the day off of school to do so. Halicka also thought that Easter was a bigger deal in Poland, especially the day after Easter, which is called 'Wet Monday.' On this day, Polish people make a game out of chasing and pouring water on others. "It was always so much fun to run away from people," Halicka remembered.

On a positive note, Halicka mentioned that "I think people here are more open minded. Here, you can dye your hair pink ... you go on the streets, no one will care. In Poland, people will look at you like a stranger. Especially the older generation will ask why you look different than others. ... I like it a lot. You can look how you want, you can do what you want, and nobody's going to point at you."



Photo by Alexandra Detweiler

Sonya Harper elected to Illinois General Assembly

Steven Milan Moreno
TECHNEWS WRITER

Incumbent State Representative Sonya Harper was elected into her first full term in the lower house of the Illinois State Congress representing the 6th State Congressional District. Most of the Mies Campus of Illinois Tech is in the 6th District, making Harper the campus's representative in the state government. Harper was appointed to the seat in October 2015 after her predecessor, Representative Esther Golar, passed away while in office. Rep. Harper has a long history with the community of southern Chicago and lives in Englewood neighborhood to the southwest of campus. Prior to serving in office, Harper had previously been a news reporter and producer for a local television station and continues to be a member of her local school council despite her already busy schedule. When asked about her first year in office, Rep. Harper remarked that the experience had been "a very eye opening and challenging yet exciting and slightly overwhelming experience." Harper also had remarked that she had to "hit the ground running really fast" since she had entered the state legislature during a very important time in the state.

As many people know, the state of Illinois has had a budget crisis for some time now as the republican governor Bruce Rauner has clashed with the democrat controlled state legislature, which is led in the lower house by House Speaker Michael Madigan and majority

leader Barbara Flynn Currie. Although the two sides were finally able to agree to a short-term solution which created a budget for the



Photo courtesy of Illinois General Assembly

remainder of the year, there still is yet to be a long-term solution past next January. Despite this, Rep. Harper remains hopeful that an agreement will be worked out in the end and that the temporary fix was "just the beginning of something greater that we can hold on [to]." Representative Harper has remarked on her good relationship with both Speaker Madigan and Rep. Currie, whom she looks up to and

admires in politics.

In addition to representing the people of the 6th district, Harper also serves on multiple house committees including the very important and influential environmental and secondary education committees. She has worked diligently within these committees to create bills to support both the health and well-being of students in the state, including one bill recently submitted which requires lead testing for all public schools in the state. Another such bill Rep. Harper has been working to pass is one which will require manufacturers to mark bullets with serial numbers to help better track their movement. This method of bullet marking will serve as a great tool for investigators in law enforcement to better identify the culprits involved in violent crimes, which are all too common in the south side of Chicago.

With Harper's landslide victory in the election last week (she ran unopposed), she plans to continue her work in the state capitol and to continue the legacy of her predecessor, who was loved and respected both by her community and colleagues in the capitol. With regards to the students, faculty, and staff at Illinois Tech, Harper had this to say: "My office is open, I am open. If you're looking for opportunities to volunteer or learn more about state politics, just give me a call." More information on Harper can be found at this website: <http://www.ilga.gov/house/Rep.asp?MemberID=2281>

Campus inclusiveness, college affordability, more take center stage at President, Provost Forum

Continued from Page 1

The second online question, one that was a common refrain online at the beginning of the semester, asked why a brand new building (the Ed Kaplan Family Institute for Innovation and Tech Entrepreneurship) was being constructed on campus while tuition was increasing. Why, the submitter inquired, would the university dedicate resources to creating a multimillion-dollar construction project rather than renovating existing facilities and tamping down the economic burden placed on students? Cramb reiterated the fact that the Kaplan Institute was funded entirely by donations, not tuition money, and that its construction was only one part of a larger master plan to transform campus which included the already-complete renovations of E1 (now the John T. Rettaliata Engineering Center) and Life Sciences (now the Robert A. Pritzker Science Center), as well as the sale of Main Building to a private developer earlier this year on a 30-year land lease.

Prompted by a follow-up question from a student in attendance at the event, conversation was directed more toward the subject of tuition increases, putting the talk of campus facilities aside. Cramb asserted that annual tuition increases were largely inevitable due to the university's own constantly increasing expenses (such of which could be attributed to monetary inflation), but that Illinois Tech was attempting to grow the student body faster to bring down per-person tuition costs. Overall enrollment was lower than expected this academic year, but costs were reduced as well, and the university's brief deficit was remedied during the last fiscal year. Illinois Tech's Board of Trustees requires the president to present balanced budget annually, and Cramb expressed that the school couldn't simply generate money "from nowhere" to ensure that balance. Another student at the event asked whether the university had considered eliminating bonuses during unsatisfactory financial periods, to which Cramb explained that no bonuses were taken during the previous fiscal year and all staff salaries were frozen at the previous year's level (apart from promoted individuals) in response to budget issues plaguing Illinois Tech at the time.

Moving on after time had run out for that issue, a student approached the front of the room to ask whether plans were in the works at any level to increase the number of Teaching Assistants (TAs) aiding education at Illinois Tech. He pointed to examples of other technological universities which more thoroughly integrated TAs into their classes, and said that he had consistently advocated for the same to be done here but had never seen progress made. Dr. Chris White, the university's Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, and Dr. Joseph Orgel, Chair of the University Faculty Council (UFC), were both invited up to provide answers. White explained that TA numbers were largely up to each college, and offered an initial rebuttal to the premise of the question, stating that "what [Illinois

Tech] doesn't want to do is tip the balance more toward graduate students running the classroom." Orgel expanded on that idea, pointing out that one of the biggest selling points of this institution is direct interaction between well-regarded faculty and students, even at the undergraduate level. That said, he agreed that "the opportunity to assist instruction is a training and mentorship opportunity," especially for graduate students aiming for careers in academia, and expressed a personal view that "it could be folded into part of the education." He said he "would be willing to commit some [UFC] time to consideration of this and discussion of this," prompting a statement hope from the original asker that changes could be set in motion before his time at Illinois Tech ended later this year.

Next, another online submission suggested that moving the university's spring commencement ceremony indoors could avoid issues caused by inclement weather. Cramb stated that the university did have an inclement weather plan for each commencement, but that the scale of the main ceremony would not be possible within any on-campus facility. Both he and Bronet gave background to an analysis done in recent years to determine the costs of moving the ceremony to Chicago's McCormick Place conference center, expressing that college deans were asked to opine on the venue and the majority supported keeping it on campus for reasons of both cost and sentimentality.

The next question presented in the room came from a current member-at-large of the President's Student Advisory Council (PSAC), who asked Cramb's opinion of the current state of that group and the overall task of bridging the perceived gap between students and administrators at Illinois Tech. Cramb praised PSAC for re-forming quickly and efficiently with a slate of mostly new members this semester, but implied that some members of the group may have approached the beginning of the semester without the mentality that they were to represent the opinions of Illinois Tech students en masse (or the individual subsections thereof which certain members are delegates of), not themselves. Cramb said that the whole group had quickly learned that "none of the members of the President's Student Advisory Council are there to represent their own issue; they are there to represent the student body," and that conversation had been very productive since that point. He expressed hope that an effective PSAC could help address the latter half of the question asked, designing new input avenues and pursuing projects on behalf of the student body.

An online submission brought the focus of the event back to the dichotomy of campus improvements and tuition costs, seeking clarification about how students would be directly affected by the \$250,242,380 raised by the university during its Fueling Innovation donation campaign. Bronet spoke first about the utility of the aforementioned Kaplan Institute, which was funded as part of the campaign, and then turned to the broad topic of the distribution of the money overall.

"Fundamentally, when we're raising money, some of that is going into an endowment, some of it is being used to control the costs of the university...it is critical to bring in dollars that can be used for scholarships..." she asserted, alluding to the \$104,267,914 from the campaign which will go directly to the university's endowment and the \$48,677,561 which is earmarked for scholarships and fellowships. Cramb focused on faculty and facility improvements, citing 15 new endowed chairs and other hiring funded by the campaign, as well as the three major building projects which had been discussed earlier (all of which were part of the campaign). Addressing a follow-up question from an audience member who had viewed a recently published campus master plan (which includes major building renovations, demolitions, and construction through 2030 and beyond), Cramb explained that one of his priorities as president was to oversee transformation of most of Illinois Tech's on-campus housing, and that this work would be part of future funding campaigns. Though the master plan's constructions are largely unfunded at this point in time, Cramb stated that, "if we don't plan twenty or thirty years in advance, then it never happens."

An international student in the ballroom expressed concern about a recent uptick in robberies on both the eastern and western sides of campus, and asked Cramb what could be done to reduce risk to the university's students, especially international students (who are more commonly victims of crime than domestic students at Illinois Tech). Cramb spoke of a daily report he received from Illinois Tech's Public Safety Department, and of an increase in Public Safety staffing that had been enacted recently. He then brought Vice President of Facilities and Public Safety Bruce Watts forward to provide more detail. Watts explained that the Chicago Police Department (CPD) had increased their own patrols near the locations of recent robberies, and that Public Safety had modified the route of their shuttle service to allow drop-offs directly at the doors of buildings at Lake Meadows and Prairie Shores, two large apartment complexes east of King Drive that are very popular with international students. He also spoke about a meeting he had with the local CPD district commander to create sessions on campus for students to learn more about protecting themselves, with a particular focus on helping students know the process of pressing charges against those who commit crimes against them. For international students who are often unsure of their right to file a report with CPD and the mechanisms to do so, this program is meant to provide insight and confidence when interacting with police. Cramb also made an effort to mitigate fears that the spike in crime was connected in any way to an inherent aspect of the Illinois Tech campus, stating, "this is an issue of the city right now; this is not just here that this is happening."

The final question of the scheduled time for the President and Provost Forum, and the final online submission, expressed concern about significant administrative

layoffs announced during the spring, asking why that decision made and what was being done to get those offices functioning again. According to Cramb, "we could not actually get to a balanced budget without decreasing the number of people on our staff," an issue that first came to the forefront when the university reported an operating loss in the fall of 2015. In the end, he said, "It was a tough decision to make, but it was a decision we had to make." Cramb urged a more thorough examination, however, of certain vacancies which had been perceived by students as layoffs despite no cuts being made to certain departments, explaining that certain staff from the International Center, the One Stop, and more had chosen to leave following the layoff announcement and into this semester, and that many offices were currently in the process of filling voluntary vacancies and getting back to normal in that regard.

Prompted by a specific question about the Student Health and Wellness Center (SHWC), which is currently down on staff and has become the center of contentious discussion among many students, Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Katherine Stetz came to the microphone to explain that the SHWC had not been part of the elimination of positions at the beginning of 2016, but a training program of the office had been on hiatus due to a staffing vacancy, which removed six interns who would typically have seen students in appointments. As a result, wait time for appointments has been longer this year, but hiring is ongoing and the program is intended to be running once again after one more hire is made within the SHWC. Following up, Cramb said, "we are very serious about mental health, and we always have professional staff on hand for that." Students who have not been able to consistently receive a response from the SHWC when attempting to make an appointment were encouraged to contact Stetz to resolve their situation, and Stetz assured those in attendance that, "any emergencies we will be able to manage immediately."

Though the scheduled length of the President and Provost Forum was limited as always by the confines of the student lunch hour and the busy schedules of both Cramb and Bronet, students were encouraged to mingle after the event with many of the staff and faculty members present and to ask questions or brainstorm ideas with them for improving the areas of the university they oversee. Additionally, in this instance, Cramb and Bronet continued to take questions for an additional fifteen minutes beyond the President and Provost Forum's official 1:45 p.m. end time, conversing with students who did not have to leave for classes at the time. If the tradition of the forum itself is continued by SGA, the next President and Provost Forum will take place in the Spring semester.

American Express offers resources for business and consumers on Small Business Saturday

Teesta Jain, Donna Rockin
KNAPP ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTER

Small Business Saturday is a relatively recent American tradition that has been gaining momentum each and every year since it launched on November 27, 2010 in Massachusetts. This year, be part of celebration and shop at your neighborhood independently-owned and operated stores on Saturday, November 26th. Small Business Saturday is during the Thanksgiving holiday weekend between Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

American Express is the official champion of the "shop small" movement. American Express and the City of Chicago's Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection hosted the Small Business Saturday Bootcamp in Chicago, IL, on Tuesday, October 18 from 4 to 7 p.m. at the Chicago Cultural Center (78 E. Washington). The Boot

Camp featured small business strategist Ms. Rhonda Abrams. Abrams is president of The Planning Shop and a publisher of books for entrepreneurs. Her column appears Fridays at USATODAY.com.

The small businesses are major anchors of local economies, creating employment opportunities and serving as engines of economic growth to local, neighborhood economies. Small businesses preserve neighborhoods around the country and make these neighborhoods more livable and convenient. They bring growth and innovation to the community and help to create and implement new products and services the community needs.

American Express launched its new Shop Small Studio to make it easy for small businesses to participate and create a buzz in their communities. Check out about. americanexpress.com/news/pr/2016/amex-new-shop-small-studio-tools.aspx to take advantage of the free resources, customizable

materials, and education content to help small business owners to prepare for Small Business Saturday. Easy to use free resources are available at americanexpress.com/us/small-business/shop-small/. Available resources include event flyers and posters, website badges, Facebook and Twitter cover photos and other social media assets. Small Business 101 includes a multimedia hub (americanexpress.com/us/small-business/shop-small/promote#sbs101). American Express also offers big rewards for shopping small this particular year.

Finally, on Saturday, November 26, remember to help the small businesses in your neighborhood thrive and survive. Shop and invest your dollar power on Small Business Saturday at your local hardware store, bakery, beauty salon, florist or independent restaurant, pizza parlor or sub joint. In 2015, it is estimated that 95 million people went to their neighborhood streets to shop small. The statistic cited is an estimate based on consumer self-reported data from the

Small Business Saturday Consumer Insights Survey commissioned by American Express and the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB). The survey was conducted anonymously by independent marketing performance specialist Ebiquity, on November 29, 2015 among a nationally representative sample of 2,363 males and females 18 years of age or older. That sample was collected using an email invitation and an online survey, which has an overall margin of error of +/- 2.0 percent, at the 95 percent level of confidence. Mark your calendars and be part of the Small Business Saturday movement and put your money where your home is!

Reformulation of chemistry degree programs discussed at latest UGSC meeting

Soren Spicknall
COPY EDITOR

The most recent meeting of the Undergraduate Studies Committee (UGSC), the body composed largely of faculty and staff which makes major decisions about the future of undergraduate education at Illinois Tech, covered a range of proposals stemming from previous discussions and from new material presented by various departments. At the beginning of its biweekly meeting on Tuesday, November 8, the gathered representatives discussed the merits and drawbacks of three separate proposals meant to address a debate from the previous meeting, focusing on how pass/fail credits should be counted when calculating a student's GPA for graduating with honors.

The first proposed solution was not a proposal in the formal sense, as it suggested making no change to the existing policy, which requires at least 60 "graded" hours to be taken at Illinois Tech for a student to be considered for honors. Since "graded" has a specific definition at the university level, pass/fail courses would not be counted toward that 60-credit total or in the honors GPA calculation. The second proposal sought to remove the word "graded" from that statement, allowing pass/fail courses to count toward the required credit total for an honors designation, but leaving the issue of GPA calculation unresolved. The final proposal was formatted as follows:

"For purposes of Honors or High Honors designation, PASS/FAIL courses are considered graded courses. However, if the student has elected PASS/FAIL grading, a lower bound on GPA will be calculated utilizing the lowest letter grade qualifying as PASS for those courses, and this lower bound on GPA will be used to determine eligibility for honors designations.

If the course is only offered as PASS/FAIL (i.e. not student elected) it will not be included in this minimum bound calculation."

Because this full range of proposals was not available at the previous UGSC meeting, discussion on them was relatively limited compared to the extended debate two weeks before. Representatives were asked to take all three proposals back to their departments for feedback, and to reconvene for a decision at the next meeting.

Next, slight revisions to the Neural Engineering and Imaging Tracks of the Biomedical Engineering curriculum were presented as an information item, consisting of a change of a single course requirement and no change in the number of required hours to complete the degree.

Discussion quickly moved on to the next agenda item, a proposed B.S. in Molecular Biochemistry and Biophysics (MBB) Co-Terminal degree with the M.S. in Molecular Biochemistry and Biophysics. Because the degree was being presented for the first time that Tuesday, an approval vote will not be held until the next UGSC meeting. There was some opposition to a change made in the co-terminal degree which removed a required specific elective in the master's degree it is based upon, highlighting the principle held by some that co-terminal degrees should be as closely linked to their individual undergraduate and graduate degrees as possible. Some were concerned that significant changes in degree programs while creating co-terminal degrees could lead to a requirement that those degrees be accredited additionally as individual degree programs, which is not currently the case. Others in the group pointed to the existence of certain co-terminal degree programs which already slightly modify the requirements of their undergraduate or graduate portion,

saying that any precedent there might have been for requirements to remain untouched had been usurped by practical implementation of different co-terminal degrees over time. With those in the room agreeing to disagree for the time being, the proposed program was put aside for further discussion at the next meeting.

The most substantial topic of the afternoon came when two representatives of the Department of Chemistry gave a formal presentation previewing a complete overhaul of their degree programs, excluding the baseline B.S. in Chemistry with no specialization. The presenters explained that their department currently offered six specialized degree programs, created in 2005, each with four or five additional course requirements beyond the regular chemistry degree. Those programs had been plagued by extremely low enrollment numbers (three of them experiencing zero enrollment at one point or another), attributed to poor marketing and the programs' lack of relevance to modern chemistry careers. The chemistry department hoped to close its current programs and launch five new programs in the Fall semester of 2017 after assessing tracks that are currently in demand, wishing to create a diverse array of degrees that are more easily marketable than their previous specialized options. Those five degrees would be in bioanalytical, computational, environmental, forensic, and medicinal chemistry, each of which would be a "first" for Chicagoland universities, the state of Illinois, or even the U.S. as a whole.

The chemistry department's proposal included a plan to refresh discipline-specific expertise in its ranks, as well as expansion of research work. Only two new faculty members would be needed between all five programs, since the programs were largely

formulated in such a way that credits would be shared with other departments. That said, eight new plans were still planned to be created within the department to fit the needs of the new degrees. Solving the other half of the department's ongoing recruitment issues, its staff announced plans to aggressively market its new degrees in a way that had never been done for the programs formulated in 2005, attracting students from across the country and abroad.

Some UGSC members expressed worries about the burden that having low enrollment in the future might put on the department to maintain and staff courses with very few students, but the department's representatives highlighted the high degree of crossover between credits as a way of mitigating potential strain. A number of typos were found in the department's proposals for the credit breakdown of its five new degrees, as well, all of which must be corrected before the degrees are approved by the UGSC.

After the Department of Chemistry's presentation, the UGSC briefly reviewed and voted upon reports generated by the Communication Across the Curriculum program, a subcommittee of the group, which had evaluated coursework in the Department of Humanities and the Department of Math & Science Education. The reports were voted through without much discussion, aside from a clarification from UGSC chair Ray Trygstad about why the materials required a vote in the first place.

UGSC meetings take place biweekly in various rooms within Wishnick Hall, and documentation of its members, decisions, and discussions can be found at iit.edu/~ugsc.



Stuart School of Business
ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

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Illinois Tech Downtown Campus

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SGA Communications Committee looks to update organization website

Ethan Castro
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEMBER

Perhaps the unsung heroes of Student Government Association (SGA), the Communications Committee, under the leadership of Vice-President Jelani Canty, take it upon themselves to ensure that knowledge of the organization is disseminated to the student body through any and all means possible. From both within and outside the organization, one of the most cited complaints regarding the Illinois Tech SGA is a lack of transparency in both its actions and members. Thus, an overarching theme of projects within the Communications Committee is to bridge the perceived gap between the general student body and SGA. Ongoing projects such as facilitating an SGA liaison for every student organization to a possible weekly radio show for SGA updates, the Communications Committee works behind the scenes of the

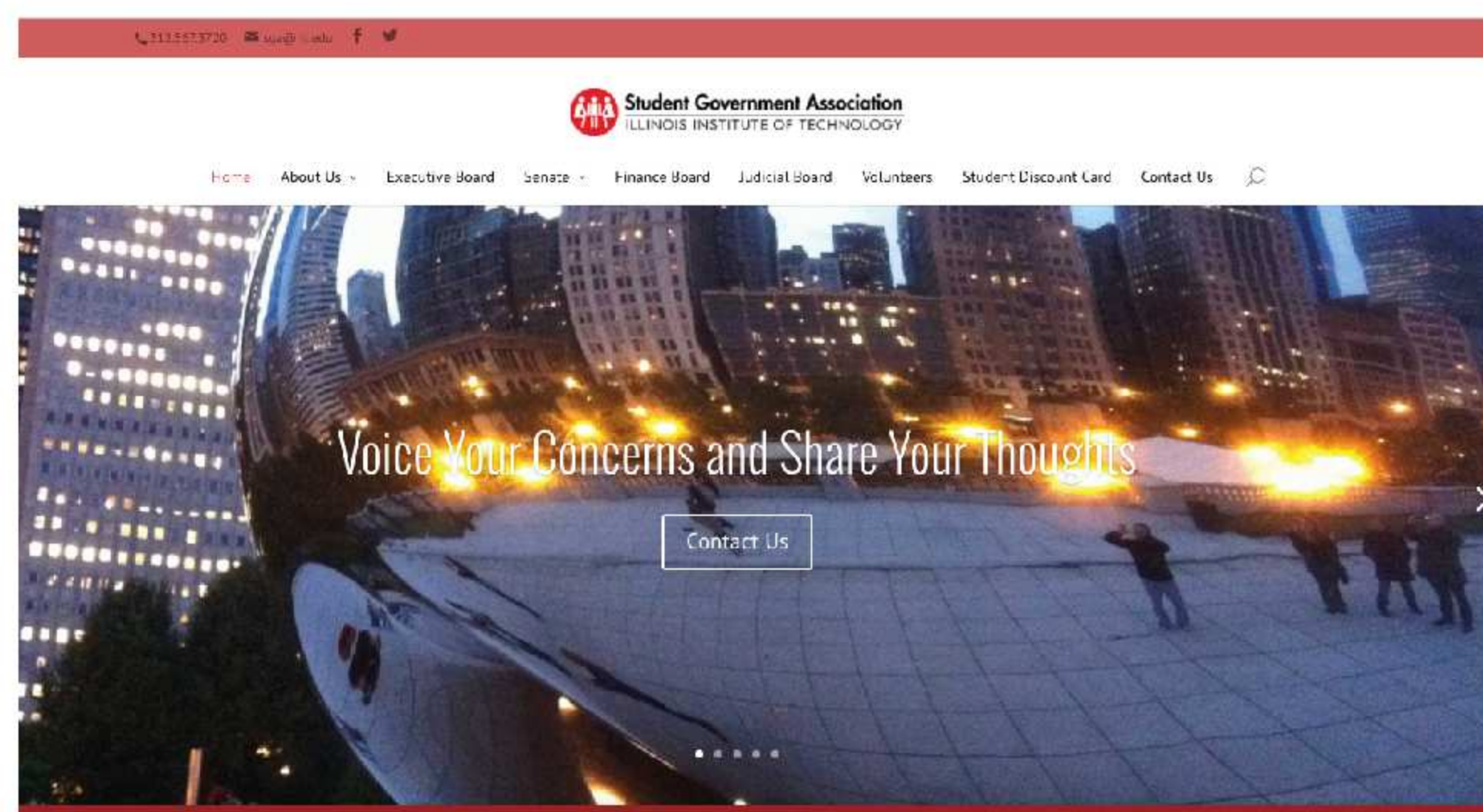
organization's operations to promote visibility and accessibility. These potential projects are just a few among many ideas floating around the committee to achieve its overarching goals. However, one item of recent focus is the outdated status of the SGA website. Working with Canty, Communications Committee Senators Nathan Jones, David Sobel, and Kislav Bhagat are all working towards extending the reach of SGA to the digital forefront.

Accusations of SGA failing to remain topical and connected to the student body are, at times, completely justified. As it currently stands, the SGA website fails to provide a correct list of each college's senators or even the organization's executive board. This fundamental lack of information will not stand for much longer. Vice President of Communications Jelani Canty has personally sought the necessary training in updating the organization website, and Senators David Sobel, Nathan Jones, and Kislav Bhagat are all in the midst of gathering the necessary

biographical data from the current senators and executive board and inputting this data onto the website. Although perhaps at a less than optimal time, SGA's Communications Committee is actively attempting to correct the outdated status of the website in order to both establish validity for the organization and push it into the forefront of student life. Perhaps the overall goal is best summed up Senator Sobel, who expresses his desire to create "a utility for obtaining information about school functions and updates on SGA happenings in an accessible manner."

However, presenting information about each SGA member is just one piece of the SGA website's full potential. Being an immediately accessible source of governing documents, a growing compendium of meeting minutes, and a real-time feed for updates on ongoing projects across every committee are all items on the agenda for this project. Of particular note is the creation of what has been referred to as a "Student Organization Wiki"

where student leaders across our campus may have access to a digital one-stop shop for any and all questions on how to run and advertise their respective organizations. From reserving a meeting space to submitting a purchase request, the SGA website of the future will hopefully serve as a centralized hub to answer any student organization concern. Both this facet of the website and the project as a whole are most eloquently summarized by Senator Nathan Jones, in his desire to create "a hub where both students and student organizations can come to a single site to get their questions answered. The website is more than just design updates: it's about functionality, practicality, and personality. We want students to know who and what SGA is, and I think this is a perfect way to show students we're serious about making a positive impact on campus."



Photos courtesy of Illinois Tech SGA

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Chromebooks become a valid cheap computing alternative for productivity

David Sobel
COPY EDITOR

Typically you would consider a device around \$400-600 to be a budget purchase when it comes to laptops, but have you ever considered going cheaper? A recent solution to the cheap-but-functional laptop need that I've personally experienced actually involves Chromebooks. I know what you'll tell me next: Chromebooks are very limited and require the internet to be useful. This is mostly true, if you choose to run Chrome OS as it is. There are essentially two options here, and it can vary depending on your Chromebook model. The first option is to install Linux in a self-contained environment within Chrome OS, referred to as crouton, the "Chromium OS Universal Chroot Environment." This is in some ways the simpler method, and is as easy as following a list of instructions, which is explained in a wonderful guide on the project's GitHub page. The other option is to install a custom BIOS such as SeaBIOS and then install a Linux distribution from a flash drive. Yes, this is a little more of a time commitment and often will require you to open up the underside of your Chromebook briefly, but it can be worth it depending on your use case.

I figure at this point in time it would be good to point out a few potential use cases for a full Linux installation. One of the downsides to using ChromeOS is being sandboxed in essentially a giant version of the Chrome browser, and while it makes for a generally smooth experience, it's also a rather limited experience. For example, ChromeOS is really not a development platform, meaning if you want to do even basic Python or other language development, you're generally out of luck. In response to this, you could either try to find an online integrated development environment (IDE) or buy a whole new laptop, but why do that when you can just run a full Linux environment? The answer is that you wouldn't, because running an OS like Ubuntu

on your existing laptop will save you money and allow you to develop offline, which is not a word you would often hear associated with a usable Chromebook. Of course, for all the productivity benefits that are being suggested, there are many entertainment and social application benefits. One of the first things I was able to do on my Chromebook running Linux was install the Spotify desktop client, which provides significantly more options



Photo by David Sobel

than the web client. Another benefit I had was being able to install Pidgin, which is a great messenger program that allows you to connect multiple social media chat accounts, including Facebook messenger. For the gamer in me, I was able to install emulators for a multitude of game systems. With these examples in mind, it should be clear what sorts of benefits you can gain by ditching ChromeOS. So what reason should you have to run Linux alongside versus replacing ChromeOS as a whole?

The simplest reason to use something like crouton is to avoid opening up

your Chromebook and modifying the system, simply adding the basic functionality of a full Linux desktop right there in Chrome OS (to be reached by a keyboard shortcut). That said, I have encountered some problems in terms of graphics acceleration and media playback using crouton, so your mileage may vary with it. Another thing of note with crouton is that by default it will install Ubuntu 12.04, which is notably old at this point in time. With this in

OS, as it happens, is Linux-based, but the amount of it that the user sees is very minor and you could hardly call the whole thing a Linux distribution. That said, there are a few options here in terms of distributions. The first option is to opt for the normal Linux experience and run an OS like Ubuntu or, as I use, GalliumOS. Ubuntu is a well-known Linux distribution, with an amazing amount of hardware support right "out-of-the-box." GalliumOS, which runs on top of the same system as Ubuntu (Debian), is noted as being highly optimized for Chromebooks and, from my usage, has been rather consistent with that statement. Another, notably different, option is Remix OS, which is a desktop-compatible version of Android that, as expected, allows you to run Android apps natively on your device yet also have a full desktop experience. The last time I tried the OS, it was in beta, but at this point it's apparently ready for prime time, so perhaps it'll be in your future. In the end, though, it comes down to your personal preference, because most features will generally work with either crouton or a full install, but mileage may vary.

A few words of warning: if you care about your warranty, the mod method may not be for you. In this case, go with crouton. If you don't care, then go with the full install, because I've found that after replacing ChromeOS I have had no reason to go back. It's also a good idea to have a Chromebook model with 4GB of RAM and at least an Intel Celeron, such as the Toshiba Chromebook 2, in order to get solid performance. For more information on the installation methods involved, either Google them to find out for yourself or ask someone else to help you out, because there's nothing better than getting the most out of your cheap device. If for some reason you mess up, it's a simple process to restore your Chromebook back to its factory state. So, what do you have to lose?

mind - as the guide will tell you - it's possible to change which Linux distribution and version is installed with crouton. Essentially, if your goal is to simply gain the freedom of running Linux and its basic features and easily remove it if need be, then give crouton a try. However, if your goal is to take full advantage of all Linux has to offer, I might suggest the modification method, which I will detail a few options for.

From experience, if you want a bit more consistent and stable functionality and have a bit more technical know-how, you should replace Chrome OS entirely. Chrome



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When I was young I read fairy tales. Stories of mythical kingdoms overcome by a feared and powerful force. These forces were always defeated in the end, always destroyed by the good, the just, and the kind. And for the rest of time the kingdom lived in harmony.

When I was an adolescent I read history books. I studied the great empires of the world. And I observed: the good, the just, and the kind, eventually overthrown in name of the feared and powerful. Thus reiterating a common theme is history that the biggest bully gains the most for the longest. The cruel thrive as the considerate die.

Recently I have been asked the age old question: if you could be loved or feared which would you pick. Without missing a beat I reply "feared". And people laugh, they assume I am joking because no "good" person would rather be feared. And this particular time I was asked, it was followed by the question "why". And I was honest, "ignorance is bliss but it is not power. If I dismiss the historical reoccurrence of leaders maintaining power through fear then I am dooming myself to the fate of all other "good" people. I do not need love if I have control. Because if I don't have control, someone else will and opting for love will not save me."

- Madelyn Walsh

Trickling Thoughts

Every creation that mankind devised
Started out as a simple thought in the mind
A few neurons that fired their synapses in line
To formulate thoughts that grew over time

Every invention that humans created
Was once grabbed by society to be judged and then rated
But what would've become of the lightbulb back then
If Edison had decided that the criticizers should win?

Every sheer wonder built up by some hands
Was grown in the mind into a grand plan
It overcame obstacles and climbed over walls
It fueled a heart up for someone to stand tall

So whether or not the idea seems minute
Use your passions inside to push the thought through
For who knows if your thought will become divine
You'll never know if you keep it trapped in your mind

- Sonia Kamdar



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EDITION

VOLUME 97 — No. 161

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
THE UNITED PRESS

CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA, MONDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 8, 1941

20 PAGES

FIVE CENTS

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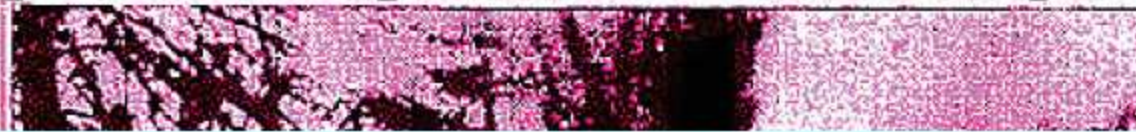
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Obama Sweeps to Historic Victory

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By JONATHAN WEISMAN
AND LAURA MECKLER

Obama

WASHINGTON—Sen. Barack