

TechNews

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TECHNOLOGY SINCE 1928McCormick Tribune Campus Center
Room 221
3201 South State Street
Chicago, Illinois 60616E-mail: editor@technewsit.com
Website: http://www.technewsit.com

TechNews STAFF

Editor-in-Chief	Anoopa Sundararajan
Assistant Editor	Annie Zorn
IT Manager	Kristal Copeland
Copy Editors	David Sobel Soren Spicknall Alexandra Detweiler Reno Waswil
Layout Editors	Sheree Emmanuel Jennifer Coelho
Distribution Manager	Reno Waswil
Financial Advisor	Vickie Tolbert
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Our mission is to promote student discussion and bolster the IIT community by providing a newspaper that is highly accessible, a stalwart of journalistic integrity, and a student forum. TechNews is dedicated to the belief that a strong campus newspaper is essential to a strong campus community.

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SUBMISSIONS

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

The editors reserve the right to determine if submitted material meets TechNews' policy and standards. For more information about our editorial standards, please email assteditor@technewsit.com.

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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>