

TechNews

STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF
TECHNOLOGY SINCE 1928

McCormick Tribune Campus Center
Room 221
3201 South State Street
Chicago, Illinois 60616

E-mail: editor@technewsiit.com
Website: http://www.technewsiit.com

TechNews STAFF

Editor-in-Chief	Anoopa Sundararajan
Assistant Editor	Annie Zorn
IT Manager	Kristal Copeland
Copy Editors	David Sobel Soren Spicknall
Layout Editor	Jennifer Coelho
Distribution Manager	Reno Waswil
Financial Advisor	Vickie Tolbert
Faculty Advisor	Gregory Pulliam

MISSION STATEMENT

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 a dedicated to the belief that a strong campus newspaper is essential to a strong campus community.

GENERAL INFORMATION

TechNews is written, managed, and edited by the students of, and funded in part by, Illinois Institute of Technology. The material herein does not necessarily reflect the opinions of Illinois Institute of Technology or the editors, staff, and advisor of TechNews. There will be no censorship of TechNews publication by the faculty or staff of IIT. Sole authority and responsibility for publication and adherence to the values set forth in this policy rests with the TechNews staff. This paper seeks to bring together the various segments of the Illinois Tech community and strives through balance and content to achieve a position of respect and excellence. TechNews strives for professionalism with due respect to the intellectual values of the university and its community. All material submitted becomes the property of TechNews, and is subject to any editorial decisions deemed necessary.

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 technewsiit.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@technewsiit.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor may be submitted by anyone, but are subject to review by the Editor-in-Chief. All letters-to-the-editor become the property of TechNews upon submission. TechNews does not accept or publish anonymous letters or stories.

ADVERTISING

Legitimate paid advertisements, from within or outside the IIT community, which serve to produce income for the paper, are accommodated. TechNews holds the right to deny any advertisement unsuitable for publication. Media Kits are available upon request. Ad space is limited and is taken on a first-come, first-serve basis. Contact the Business Manager at business@technewsiit.com for more information.

LOCAL & NATIONAL ADVERTISERS

To place an ad, contact us via email at business@technewsiit.com.

Undergraduate Studies Committee holds first meeting of the semester

Soren Spicknall
COPY EDITOR

The Undergraduate Studies Committee (UGSC) of the Illinois Institute of Technology is a body of faculty and staff members (as well as a representative of the students, SGA Academic Affairs VP Akash Raina) tasked with formulating major policies regarding how undergraduate teaching and learning takes place at the university. Meeting every other week throughout the academic year, the group is a step along the path to undergraduate degree modifications, and is tasked with writing and directing the implementation of various policies which impact the academic path of Illinois Tech's students and setting expectations for its faculty. Though much of the UGSC's work requires final approval from the University Faculty Council (UFC), the group is integral to the university's internal process of undergraduate program development.

At its first meeting of the fall 2016 semester on September 13th, the UGSC gathered only briefly to discuss some business left over from the previous semester. No votes were held, but topics from the body's final

meetings of the spring were expanded upon and clarified among those in attendance.

First, the UGSC discussed implementation of its course feedback policy, formed last semester from a dialog with SGA about third- and fourth-year students lacking meaningful information about their academic progress before the final date for class withdrawal in certain courses. The UGSC had passed two pieces of policy representing "minimum" and "optimal" standard feedback metrics to which professors would be held, and both standards were accepted by the UFC in spring. However, the approved course feedback language has yet to be placed anywhere in public view, and the assembled group debated the merits of its potential placement in the student handbook in an email to all faculty, and more. The group settled on placing the feedback language (which is included in full in the UGSC's April 26th meeting minutes) in the student handbook, and working on including it in the academic bulletin so that professors could be held to it unambiguously.

In a similar vein, the UGSC discussed implementation of a proposal last year to allow certain courses to be taken on a pass/fail basis, approved by UFC the previous semester

after a full academic year of negotiations and wrangling over specific language. The new policy, covered in previous TechNews issues, is slated to become active in spring 2017, and will be placed in the academic bulletin then. Departments must internally discuss which courses they will allow external students to take as pass/fail, as well as which external electives their in-major students can take as pass/fail, before the policy becomes effective. Dr. Kathryn Spink, representative of the Biology department and former chair of the UGSC, mentioned that her department had already conducted that decision-making process, but no other department representatives could yet claim the same.

While the business discussed in the first UGSC meeting of the semester was largely focused on topics covered in the past, the group is likely to tackle newer and more complex challenges as the year continues. Information about the UGSC, including a list of voting members, full minutes, and a schedule of upcoming meetings, is available at iit.edu/~ugsc, updated this year by the office of Marketing & Communications to fit the visual style of Illinois Tech's web design standards.

EWB discusses solutions from sanitation project in Nicaragua

Abhinaya Iyer
TECHNEWS WRITER

Summer is probably one of the best times of the year, with the sun radiating heat and all the temperatures rising to about a 100 degrees Fahrenheit. But not all countries are as lucky as the United States to have all the luxuries of air conditioners, swimming pools and ice cream stores nearby to cool the heat of the summer. Central America, one of the continents closest to the equator is hit by the sun's rays the most with the temperatures rising to about 140 degrees Fahrenheit. Most of the villages here don't even have basic healthcare and sanitation facilities for daily life, let alone an air conditioner during summer!

The students of Engineers Without Borders (EWB) recognized the alarming issue and as part of their projects decided to help a village in Nicaragua, about two hours southwest of their capital Managua. Each time the students of the EWB pick a community, the idea is for the project to last for five years and be fulfilled to maximize the satisfaction of the citizens. The Nicaragua project started in 2012, where the initial idea was to build a bridge. The village was accessible by only one road, which during the monsoon season flooded, cutting off the connection of the village with the outside world including hospitals, schools and many other services. This was an alarming issue in the village and the EWB students decided to take this project up as one of their own. The initial phase of the project was to carry out multiple assessments of the land. A hydrologist was brought in and multiple tests were done on the land to understand the situation. Other than assessments, the students helped the villagers build healthy relations with the municipality and the Rotary club.

Building any structure in a location, especially a location that isn't in your country, isn't a one month process, but rather a process requiring a deep understanding not only of the land but also of the culture, weather, buildings around and many other factors that influence a village and its surroundings. The conclusion

from the studies weren't exactly expected and didn't seem very plausible with their budget. The floodplain was too deep and had no direction, so to build a bridge of that scale would not only cost much but require an equal commitment from the government and the villagers. Not seeing a positive outcome from the bridge, the EWB moved from building a bridge to address the issue of sanitation.

The sanitary conditions in the village weren't exactly ideal in the mind of an average person. They didn't have bathrooms, typically using holes dug in the ground as their toilets. Most of the latrine holes were built close to the well, which wasn't very sanitary. In a recent storm, the school latrines were knocked down, leaving a school with about fifty students were without a bathroom. Seeing the poor conditions of the sanitation facilities in the village, the EWB students decided to take this matter into their own hands. The goal was to build bathrooms that could be useful for the villagers and still be hygienic. In addition, they taught the villagers about healthy cleaning habits. A detailed analysis on the culture of latrines and how they were built prior to their visit was carried out. After a detailed study and analysis, a design for a latrine was laid out. A two-chambered latrine was designed that would have two holes on either end of the chambers. One chamber would be used for six months or until it got filled. After it was completely filled, it was closed and the other chamber was used for six months. During this six months, human waste would be converted into compost, which could then be used by the villagers in their fields or sold in the market. Seeing that the construction of a new latrine not only meant hygienic living conditions but also better compost, the villagers agreed to the proposal of the new idea. They got the contractors to custom build a latrine where the liquids and solids were separated. The liquids were then sent away from the bathroom and the excreted matter was stored as compost. The matter of odor was addressed by adding ventilation pipes, which also kept flies away.

As for construction, contractors were hired from outside, aided by the students and villagers, to construct the chambers. Hand washing education was carried out by building a hand washing station and talking about the importance of washing your hands. Building a handwashing station was harder than a latrine chamber due to electrical requirements and needing to connect the faucet to a nearby well as a water source. Although the layout was designed here at Illinois Tech, the execution proved to be harder than just designing. Most of the construction took place over this summer under the guidance of our students. During the course of the past five years, the village has become more independent and well-connected with the rest of the world. "The importance is where the village was when we started versus today. It makes sense to leave the village and start elsewhere because they are well connected and they are much more vocal with their thoughts and needs today than they were five years ago. Yes, they are much more aware of their own needs," said Oscar Guzman, the president of EWB when asked if they were better off today.

The team who worked on the Nicaragua project ranged widely, from speaking Spanish to carrying out fundraising activities here at Illinois Tech. The entire team was very enthusiastic about the project and very satisfied with its work. Saeed, a second year chemical engineering student said, "Living with the villagers was harder than I thought it would be. Sleeping on the beds made of jute or just surviving the heat without an air conditioner but the outcome and happiness in the end was worth all the effort."

Every summer may never be the same as the previous one and both the villagers and the students of EWB can vouch for the statement, "There is much to happen between the lip and the cup."



Photos courtesy of EWB