

biITcoin and the Blockchain Education Network team up with WIIT at the Chicago Bitcoin Airdrop

Reno Waswil
DISTRIBUTION MANAGER

The Blockchain Education Network (BEN) is a grassroots network that promotes and empowers students and schools around the world in educational initiatives in their campuses and communities. On Saturday, September 24, BEN partnered with Illinois Tech student organizations biITcoin and WIIT by way of Dev Bharel, the president of the former, to put on the “Chicago Bitcoin Airdrop.” The event was meant to complement similar airdrops done all around the country, such as at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the University of Florida, but on a slightly larger scale.

The course of the event spanned about eleven to twelve hours in total, and included a “street teams”—made up of Bharel along with students Patrick Bartman, Siddarth Ramesh, and Dominik Wiegel (who, as per the

name “Airdrop,” brought with him a remote control drone)—and a “studio team”—made up of students and WIIT personnel Jordan Mynes and Reno Fera-Ducatt.

The street team’s goals were to spread educational information about Bitcoin, the popular cryptocurrency, and blockchain, the public ledger over which Bitcoin transactions take place. Furthermore, they would guide participants through the process of setting up their first Bitcoin wallets on site, if applicable. They did not limit their span to Illinois Tech, but traveled around the city, spending time at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) Student Center East, the Depaul Lincoln Park Campus Student Center, and the University of Chicago Reynolds Club.

As this happened, the studio team remained broadcasting live for over ten straight hours via WIIT 88.9 FM terrestrial and online radio streaming from the A. Sidney Katz studio. This offered an outlet to the event for those that could not take part in-person,

including keeping listeners up-to-date with how it was going, and providing a platform for discussion and education for listeners by way of in-depth interviews and trivia with people calling into the station.

The street team started their exploits on the McCormick Tribune Campus Center (MTCC) Bridge at about 10 a.m., and the radio team began soon afterwards. Spending two to three hours at each destination, the street team encouraged passing patrons to take part in an educational discussion, which included explaining to them how they could set up a Bitcoin wallet on their phone. If they elected to work through the process right there with them, participants were even given about \$6 worth of free Bitcoin to their new wallet care of the BCN, hence calling the event an airdrop.

On the radio end, between songs from a playlist curated by Mynes, he and Fera-Ducatt had very interesting conversations over the studio phone with notable members in the Blockchain community and relatively

uninitiated persons, alike. Their callers included Dean Masley—executive director of the BCN—as well as Dawn Newton—manager at wallet naming service “Nextki”—and many more. In addition to this, they heard from relatively bitcoin-uninitiated listeners who called in for a chance to win about \$25 worth of bitcoin by answering trivia question related to the topic. They would also occasionally get on-site check-ins from the street team by way of either phone calls or via the mobile broadcasting device they brought with them.

After over ten hours of conducting the event, both teams congregated at Illinois Tech’s RET Center Auditorium at 8:30 p.m. for food, a recap presentation, and a “Bitcoin 101” event put on by biITcoin and presented by Bharel. This was the last chance people had to set up their wallets and get before finally closing what came together to be a successful though tiring event.



Photos courtesy of Reno Waswil

President Student Advisory Council meets to discuss ideas, plans for Fall 2016

Annie Zorn
ASSISTANT EDITOR

This past Thursday afternoon marked the first President Student Advisory Council Meeting (PSAC) for the 2016-2017 school year. The PSAC is a committee of representatives from different aspects of student life such as Athletics and Greek Life that gather with the President and Provost monthly to address their concerns and ideas about improving campus and the relationship between students and administration. 12 PSAC members along with President Cramb and Provost Bronet talked about 3 issues: Student Issue and Ticketing System, Transparency in policy changes, and involvement with developing areas of Chicago.

The first topic in the meeting was brought up by Gabriel Conners. He discussed

creating a new ticketing platform for student input on issues that would work in a similar way to maintenance or OTS tickets. The main objective would be to have a channel for students who have concerns but don’t know how to go about solving them. The following discussion was primarily about logistics and how the system could realistically be implemented either through a tab on MyIIT or its own website. The President and Provost liked the idea but stressed the importance of making benchmarks, having the system be transparent, and filtering out individual issue in favor of larger, more general matters. President Cramb mentioned contacting the Staff Advisory Chair, Jacqueline Anderson, about collaborating on the idea.

The next topic was brought up was a desire to have more transparency from the administration when it comes to making policy changes. There were some issues such

as feeling as though the updated alcohol policy was treating students unfairly or that the new student handbook was barring students from their right to protest. After clarification by the President and Provost the board decided that the main problem that needs to be addressed in all of this is the issue of communication. Provost Bronet mentioned that sometimes the administration may not be aware of what can cause an issue and that communication, possibly through the PSAC, SGA, or another student group can make sure that students voices are being heard. President Cramb said that he is very interested in feedback from students when it comes to policymaking.

The last topic to be brought up was about how Illinois Tech can be more involved with the surrounding community. President Cramb mentioned the current efforts of the university to connect with the community and gave contacts so that the board could work on

finding a way for students to get more involved with these community outreach programs. Conners brought up the idea of having a “community corner” to inform students and community members about what is going on with each other and have a way for the neighbors to be more involved. Provost Bronet showed her support for the idea of having a community corner, talking about how it aligned with her idea of “make the invisible visible”.

The meeting ended with the president concluding that the topics discussed were important and open-ended enough that the PSAC could spend the rest of the semester on them. President Cramb and Provost Bronet suggested that they divide into subcommittees to efficiently get the work done. The next meeting will be sometime next month and the PSAC will meet before then to discuss next steps.