

SGA Communications Committee makes a push for community service

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Although its direct impacts on campus life are not as readily tangible as its fellow Student Life and Academic Affairs committees, the Communications Committee of Student Government Association (SGA) is nonetheless a vital component of SGA's branding and operations. From building a solid social media presence to creating regular TechNews articles, Communications is all about ensuring that the student body of Illinois Tech is aware of who SGA is, what SGA does, and how SGA can help each and every one of us. One way Communications hopes to accomplish this is by identifying with Illinois Tech students and organizations on a baseline level-through a common pursuit of community involvement. Thus, one of the more recent additions to the Communications repertoire is an involvement in community

service projects such as toy drives, volunteer days, and local children's events.

The origins of SGA's role as a community service advocate lies in the tenure of last year's Vice President of Communications, Subarno Saha. It was under Saha's leadership that community activity became a main priority of SGA operations. "I really began to see the scope of how SGA could bring not only the students but also different departments together through service," Saha stated in an interview. "I really wanted the SGA to have a very successful semester school-wide service events and so I took the project under ComCom's [Communications Committee's] wing. I had a wonderful team working on the projects with the help of many students and several departments, we had a very successful toy drive in the Fall and Big Event in the Spring." Indeed, last school year, the Communications Committee facilitated SGA involvement in two different service initiatives. The Fall 2015 semester saw the first iteration

of the Holiday Hawks toy drive. Under this program, Illinois Tech united with Peter Cooper Elementary School to match local elementary school children with on-campus organizations. These organizations were tasked with providing holiday gifts for these children in a campus-wide display of charity and holiday giving. The end result was over 100 local children received a gift from the Illinois Tech community. Similarly, SGA partnered with the Office of Campus Life (OCL) in the Spring 2016 semester to garner support for the Big Event. Within this event, teams of Illinois Tech students were dispatched across the city to local volunteer sites in a wide-reaching day of service. It is the hope of SGA that such projects become a mainstay of SGA operations in order to better integrate the entire Illinois Tech community in a collective pursuit of service learning. Subarno Saha himself reflects upon this project with his desire to "see the Community Service project become its own dedicated committee that would have amazing

impacts in unifying the campus community, and improving the Chicago community, through service."

Although not quite ready to become its own committee, community service is still a main priority of current Vice President of Communications, Jelani Canty. Personally making connections to local volunteer organizations, specifically the Boys and Girls Club of Chicago, Canty is confident that SGA will continue to remain an advocate both for uniting the population of Illinois Tech through this noble pursuit and for promoting positive change within the entire Chicago community through such projects. Any student organizations already pursuing such projects are encouraged to reach out to SGA and specifically the Communications Committee for possible collaborations and promotions through Student Government Association's vast web of connections and competencies.

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