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Food Advisory Board re-established to shape the future of on-campus dining

Soren Spicknall
COPY EDITOR

In recent years, a body composed of students, Illinois Tech Dining Services staff, and university administration have met twice a month to discuss major decisions involving Sodexo's dining facilities on campus. Including official representatives of the Student Government Association (SGA), Residence Hall Association (RHA), Office of Campus Life (OCL), and Residence and Greek Life (RGL), Illinois Tech's Food Advisory Board (FAB) has been responsible for many of the changes to dining in its lifetime. The

introduction of the popular meal exchange program, expansion of vegetarian and vegan options, and establishment of an ice cream bar in the Commons have all stemmed from conversations in Food Advisory Board, and it continues to be one of the most direct ways for students to offer regular input to Dining Services.

Last year, FAB was primarily headed by Ricky Stevenson, who stepped down from those duties after obtaining an time-consuming internship opportunity. The group was briefly taken over by Jay Morris, the SGA senator representing RHA, in an attempt to bring the group under the purview of both organizations, but stagnated for a month or so

following Morris's death in spring. At the end of the 2015-2016 academic year, the group was headed by John Munoz, a member of SGA's Student Life Committee.

Since then, FAB has been largely stagnant as SGA and RHA worked to determine which of the two organizations had the power to re-form it. Various university administrators had spoken about committing to contradictory doctrines of responsibility for the group, and with John Munoz leaving his position as a senator, it wasn't clear when FAB would begin to meet once again. Finally, though, it has been conjured into existence once again under SGA, and led by Munoz just as at the end of the last semester. Its first

meeting is scheduled for Friday, October 28 at 4 p.m. in the Pritzker Club.

While SGA, RHA, OCL, and RGL maintain official membership in FAB, all students are technically welcome at the group's meetings. Last year, a few active student leaders made regular appearances, most consistent among them being Adrian Dueñas, Jr., who was a volunteer in two of SGA's committees at the time. Those participants have an equal seat at the table of discussion, and their concerns and input help form policies, options, and programs enacted by Illinois Tech Dining Services.

2016 Students Speak survey now open, covering new departments

The Center for Research and Service

With the approval of the President and Provost, your fellow Illinois Tech students are once again looking for your input in discovering how we can improve the quality of student's experiences with various service areas and departments here at Illinois Tech. The Students Speak program aligns with the President's and Provost's commitment to advancing student satisfaction and the quality of services provided to students.

The project is headed by a committee of students, who are tasked with identifying how the university's services can make your lives as Illinois Tech students better. Their focus is on you – their fellow students and they want to understand what your needs, concerns, and ideas are surrounding the university. The committee is made up of a diverse team of individuals that come from many different backgrounds, ranging from SGA, the Leadership Academy, the Chicago-Kent College of Law, Camras Scholars, the Greek community, graduate student organizations, and more. They are committed to helping the administration establish benchmarks of

performance for student services, identify priorities for improvement, create action plans for change, map progress, and instill accountability for those changes.

Having identified areas within the university services that are important to students and have not been surveyed in at least two years, the survey has been developed to focus on each of those key areas and the committee asks that students provide feedback so that they can gauge what the university is doing right, what needs improvement, etc. The committee will present the results from the Students Speak survey to the President and Provost in January and will also give feedback to the departments and service areas included on the survey. Student committee members also submit specific recommendations on how administrators can make the necessary changes needed to increase student satisfaction with their offices' services. These recommendations will stem from the survey findings collected and from additional input from members of various student organizations.

The Students Speak committee is supported by Dr. George Langlois, the Executive Director for the Center of Research and Service (part of the Lewis College of Human Sciences)

and the Illinois Tech Leadership Academy. For those that do not know him, Dr. Langlois is an Industrial / Organizational psychologist whose office also conducts the annual faculty survey and provides consultation to numerous high profile clients outside of Illinois Tech. His knowledge and expertise in survey design and analysis serves as a valuable asset to the committee. The Students Speak project is especially important to Dr. Langlois, as he received his PhD here at Illinois Tech and the project allows him and his office to give back to the university by helping to make students' experiences here the best that it can be.

The committee has the manpower, the determination, and the contacts, but they need one more crucial piece in order for this survey to make a difference – YOU! They need as many students as possible to provide feedback on the various student services in order for to really gauge what has been working well for students and what needs improvement. Traditionally, the number of student responses has been close to half the total student body and the goal this year is to get an even larger proportion of students to participate. A couple minutes of your time is all it takes to help drive positive change by ensuring that your voice

is heard when the committee presents their findings to the President and Provost.

As an added incentive for participating in the survey, there will also be a raffle drawing that any participating students will be entered in, where they will have the chance to win one of several assortment of prizes including: \$20 gift cards, Illinois Tech apparel, and Illinois Tech coffee mugs and thermos cups! This is your chance to influence positive change for all Illinois Tech students and to have your opinions heard by the university's leadership and senior administrators. Again, the Students Speak Survey is focused on you, the student and this is your chance to help make a positive, lasting impact for current and future Illinois Tech students!

The survey goes live October 24th and continues through November 7th. All students will be sent an email with a link to the survey, but in case you miss it, you can simply go to (http://www.iit.edu/students_speak) and complete the survey there once it goes live, or stop by the kiosk that will be set up on the bridge in MTCC during lunch hour. Take the survey and let your voice be heard – it only takes a few minutes of your time to make a difference at Illinois Tech!

An inside look: a weekend at Open House Chicago



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Photos by Steven Milan Moreno