

'Facilitator's Guide' teaches students to lead discussions

By Lisa Kwiatkowski
TECHNEWS WRITER

Toby Causby was invited to present A Facilitator's Guide to the Universe on February 6. The day started with an introduction of Toby detailing his consulting past, as well as his background as an adjunct professor at DePaul previously, and at Columbia currently. He asked for our expectations: why am I here, what am I looking for, and what am I hoping to find?

The program walked through the four core competencies of good facilitation - stewarding the process, developing and maintaining balanced participation, optimizing the environment and managing distractions, and dealing with difficult situations (and challenging people). The day was spent providing us with some group discussion topics, and finally, giving us the skills to effectively facilitate a group discussion.

At the end of the program, Toby asked all of us to answer a few questions to reflect on the day. For my reflection, three ideas worth sharing are: empty your cup, silence, and flip-flop. These ideas, as written, don't really make too much sense, but this is what they mean.

The idea of empty your cup is a way to diffuse situations where someone is endlessly complaining or heckling. If someone says, "This sucks!" and you ask them why, it gives

them an opportunity to express their feelings, or realize that they don't have any concrete response. Moreover, the first response they give usually isn't the underlying reason they're upset about the situation. Continuing to ask questions allows you to get to the root of the problem, find a solution, and diffuse the situation.

To demonstrate to us what he mean by "silence," Toby walked to the front of the room, sat down, and was silent. It was only six seconds later when Bruce Fisher jumped in to break the silence. When facilitating a group, sometimes the best way to get responses is to employ silence. Ask a question and pause. Generally, someone will volunteer an answer within ten seconds, and if not, then it may be necessary to rephrase the question or ask if anyone needs a clarification.

The final idea I thought was worth sharing was the "flip-flop." This idea is useful when there is a difference in

power dynamics - males and females, professors and students, old and young. The idea of the flip-flop is that for every male voice, you get a female. This is a great way to pull others into the conversation and ensure a diversity of ideas.

My three ideas worth sharing was just a small sample of the topics that were covered. This presentation certainly met the goals set forth, and left us all enlightened with new strategies to use when facilitating groups.



Campaign : < / end hate >

By Utsav Gandhi and Mohini Lal
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Last week, you may have read about our work as One Chicago, One Nation (OCON) 2011 Community Ambassadors. OCON, in partnership with The Chicago Community Trust (CCT), Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC), and Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN), seeks to bring Chicagoans from diverse religious backgrounds together through meaningful social action.

We have decided to try to provide assistance at the Benton House, a historic community center in the Bridgeport Community in Chicago. More specifically, we are aiming to work with the Food Depository, Urban Garden, Senior Programs and Youth Technology Corps (the latter aims to connect underprivileged youth to technology and community resources.) We believe this is a practical service opportunity to reach out to our immediate community while still addressing the role of faith and non-faith practices.

Looking for motivation to join our campaign? This is a story shared by Sara Louise Dawson, a student at Shimer College, which gives us an insight as to what her motivation is to be a part of this initiative.

"A friend of mine recently asked me, "Are you at peace with yourself?"

I was shocked he had asked. Of course I was. How could someone even come up with that question?

But then I remembered that he had only known me a few months, didn't know much about the religious tradition I grew up in, had assumed that I was a Christian, and knew very little of me. So maybe, to someone who wanted to know more about me on a personal level, the question made sense.

But my answer was still the same. Yes, I am at peace with myself.

I think I owe a lot of my inner peace to my upbringing in Religious Science, my brief conversion to Wicca when I was thirteen, and then my transition to Unity Church as a sophomore in high school. I was raised in a tradition that gave me power and responsibility for my own

actions, words and beliefs. I was raised believing (and still believe) that love is all there is. God and Love are synonymous in my book, and I see the divine as an infinite source of unconditional love. This is what has given me the most peace in my life, with myself and with others, no matter their beliefs or religious practices.

I was homeschooled all through school, and my parents encouraged me to read as much as I could about anything I was interested in. I took a class on Living World Religions my Junior year, and there I learned that there was a slew of other religious beliefs and practices that I didn't know anything about. This class was really eye-opening, not just in that it gave me an idea about more of the religions that were practiced by people around me, but the intolerance of some people in my class. One of our assignments was to go to a ceremony of a religion we had no experience with. I was really excited about this, but some people were too wrapped up in their own bigotry to open their minds to other practices.

Since then, I have been determined to ask questions about things I don't understand, especially when it comes to a belief in God or lack thereof. I devour books and engage my peers in conversations about God, the universe and the way things are organized. I'm grateful for the experiences that I've had as a spiritual person in a world that can shunt belief to the side, and I've learned from it."

April 2nd, 2011 has been chosen as our day of community outreach, when we plan to have an interfaith concert where there will be artistic and musical performances, in the presence of various local religious leaders. At this stage, we are looking for volunteers who will help us plan this event and mobilize students on our campus. We already have students from Shimer who are very willing to devote time and energy, and are now looking for more participation from the IIT Student Body. If you are interested in joining our campaign, please get in touch with us at endhatewithaction@gmail.com. It's not that great of a time commitment, but with your help, we can change a part of the Bridgeport/Bronzeville area for the better.

WIIT rededicates studio to alumnus

By Alex Miller
TECHNEWS WRITER

In recognition and celebration of a generous contribution by IIT Alumnus Sidney Katz, the WIIT studio will be renamed the Sidney Katz studio this Thursday. A small ceremony starting around noon will include a reception with light snacks, and a few speeches to commemorate the occasion. All students are invited to the event and greatly encouraged to stop by if they have the time.

Betsy Hughes, the VP of Institutional Advancement, will commence the affair by discussing Katz's connections to IIT, and why this dedication is so important to him and the school. This will be followed by a speech by the Dean of Students, Katie Murphy Stetz. Katie will connect the dedication to the impact the station and donation has on student life. There will be a ribbon cutting ceremony to commence the grand renaming, then Sid will be interviewed "On-Air" in the studio.

As an IIT alumnus himself, Sidney has invited several of his college friends to attend the event and celebrate with him. Katz was a DJ in the WIIT studio until his graduation in 1962 with a bachelor's in electrical engineering. He is now a partner in the law firm Husch Blackwell Welsh Katz.



Person You Should Know:

John Collins

By Harshita Iyer
TECHNEWS WRITER

At IIT, most students only get exposed to our classmates and our professors at best. But IIT is an institution, and every institution needs a business department to keep its blood and soul together. As the Vice President of Business and Operations at IIT, this is basically the function served by John Collins. He is the man who takes care of everything on campus that is not related directly related to academics and financial aid. He is the one in charge of all business functions of IIT, public safety, facilities management, design and infrastructure, real estate, all food services on campus, all auxiliary services like 7/11 and the Bookstore and the post office. He is also the coordinator of the Emergency Crisis Response Plan on campus. Try saying all that in one breath!

He has been at IIT for the past 11 years, and was in Detroit for all his life before that. Throughout his career, he had always been involved with business and facilities management at various other locations. He has been to several training sessions and conferences with counterparts at other universities to come up with the best possible plans for emergency crises and institution management in general. He has organized several "Crisis Response Drills" which are very useful in determining whether the communication lines are good enough to allow quick communication in the event of a crisis.

And yes, he was the man who was at the forefront of the operations on the day of the bomb scare on campus last semester. It was his decision, after discussion with the Provost and the President of IIT to evacuate all buildings and send back the 1000-odd visitors who were on campus that day.

He has a complete open door policy. In fact, this was practically a walk-in interview. His team responds to student demands either through the Student Speak



Surveys, or through complaints or concerns that students bring to him directly. He is also behind the exciting new bicycle-renting program at IIT, which is to become operational in the Spring. According to the new program, there will be two locations on campus, where the bicycle racks will be placed, with up to 20 bikes at each spot. This is inspired by similar city-wide systems in some American and many European cities, and is something that the city of Chicago is also working on across the city. It is to be funded jointly by the SGA and the Campus and Conference Centers.

To the students, Mr. Collins words were "We are one hundred percent focused on student and customer service, and maintaining the university's strategic plan". So if anyone out there has any concerns about any system at IIT, this would be the person you should be talking to. His team truly does want to help anyone who raises a concern, so make full use of it!