CMC Fall Career Fair brings 160 corporations to campus

By Ryan Hynes
TECHNEWS WRITER

On Thursday, September 22nd, the Career Management Center hosted its annual Fall Career Fair.

This was the largest fair ever, which is remarkable in the light of prevailing economic conditions. The CMC put months of tireless effort into organizing this fair and attracting the best employers for IIT students. It was a significant improvement over the previous Career Fairs in recent memory, in terms of both organization and participation from visiting recruiters.

The event itself was a tremendous success. Over 160 different corporations, from different industries like finance, marketing, IT, engineering, and government research institutions came to campus to meet with and recruit IIT students. Some of the firms represented, like kCura, traditionally has employed a large number of IIT alumni, and are always looking to hire more IIT graduates.

To put all of this in perspective, IIT is one of the smaller schools in the Chicago Metro area, coming in around 7500 graduate and undergraduate students.

IIT's career fair however, is the largest in the region - bigger than the fairs put on by DePaul, Loyola, UIC, and The University of Chicago. All this means that IIT students have an even greater opportunity to impress employers and network.

The Fair was a good experience, even for the underclassmen, who got a taste of what it means to actually go out and impress employers. It's all about going up to them and asking for opportunities and projecting yourself in a way that convinces them that you can be a significant addition to their organization.

If you missed the Fall Career Fair, don't panic. The CMC puts on a Spring Career Fair in February as well. This fall's fair was a great event, and is indicative of IIT's reputation for producing alumni with both technical and professional skills that make them a valuable addition to any workplace.

Indian Ocean's Chicago performance supported by SGA VP

By Pranamee Sarma
TECHNEWS WRITER

Indian music is world famous. The broad and exotic range of instruments and styles, influenced by the Indian "ragas" (series of Indian musical notes on which a melody is made) is apparent in all the forms.

Indian Ocean is a group of musicians who are world class representatives of what Indian music has to offer.

Indian Ocean, as the name suggests, blends music from all the corners of India, building a crescendo of amazing beats and mystifying atmosphere.

The drummer, Amit Kilam, provided beats, especially with the Gabgubi (an ancient instrument from West Bengal, India which looks like a small drum with 2 strings attached for rhythm modulations).

The Gabgubi is a perfect touch for Indian folk songs. Susmit Sen, a stand out at their performances, is known for his unique way of playing the guitar, which is actually the base for the Indian touch for this group.

The latest addition to the group is Himanshu Joshi on the vocals with Rahul Ram and Tuheen Chakravarty with the Indian tabla, but capable of performing with almost anything in the group. The best part of the show was the riveting musical duet (jugalbandi) between Amit on his drums and Tuheen, who was at the beats on the guitar fretboard rather than his usual tabla.

For the ones who are oblivious to the group's activity on the music and entertainment front, Indian Ocean is known for its musical hits such as "Ma Rewa" "Kandisa" and "Banday" (from the acclaimed movie Black Friday). Their music is a symbol of the richness in Indian culture.

This musical evening was brought to Chicago by Association for India's Development (AID) with Mission India Foundation (MIF), and our very own, Gokul Butail (SGA VP of Student Life at IIT) gave IIT students access to this event at discounted and affordable prices.

Thanks to him, IIT students got to be at the concert for a mere $15 per ticket, meet with the band members, get some photographs taken together and dance and revelad with the rhythm.

Photo by Pranamee Sarma

BME department hosts lecture on nerve regeneration

By Utsav Gandhi
CAMPUS EDITOR

Kicking off the Engineering Themes lecture series, with an emphasis on Health, was a visiting speaker from the University of Austin, Texas – B.F. Goodrich Endowed Professor in Materials Engineering, Caroline Schmidt, who addressed students, staff and guests on the 21st of September, talking about her extensive research on neural tissue regeneration.

Armed with a PhD from the University of Illinois and having spent time at MIT as a Post-Doctoral Fellow, her expertise and seniority in the field was clearly evident in the passion with which she conveyed her thoughts – so much so that even for non-BME students, it was easy to understand the relevance of her research.

Injuries related to the spinal cord and peripheral nerves, certain types of cancer, traumatic accidents, and congenital defects – all these could be factors wherein the body can not initiate and/or sustain natural nerve regeneration – lead to a great scope in the field of biomedical engineering to devise ways in which to assist the body to do so.

Usually, the way the peripheral nervous system responds to nerve injury is that the nerve endings – the axons - die off, while the Schwann cells remain. The neuron then sends out new signals to regenerate, which will lead to a painful neuroma or, failing to reach their target.

To reestablish the pathway artificially, sewing may be used, depending on the extent of the injury and the age of the person.

In case of a large injury, the procedure is time consuming and costly, and Dr. Schmidt's lab works to develop alternatives - hollow PNS guidance conduits.

These look and feel like nerves – though we must note that on their own, conduits are not good enough, and a 28-day process is needed where fibrin cables have to form over longer distances. The main concerns while choosing the material for the conduits was that it would be non-immunogenic, could be modified, was FDA approved, non-adhesive and enzymatically degradable.

Getting the physical "architecture" right was probably the most important factor considered in the research and development of these conduits – they needed to mimic nerve structure on both a micro- and sub-micron scale.

To conclude, Dr. Schmidt presented her views on the BME department at IIT, derived from what she had seen during the day.

She said that it is increasingly becoming important for college engineering departments to build on to the past and look at the future at the same time – and the way to do that is to get alumni involved, along with a clear vision for the future.

She said that the BME department at IIT (and this is true for all other departments as well) was unique in the way that due to our setting in a global city, we have the unassailable advantage to forge strong partnerships with nearby industry and research institutions, an advantage that her department, like many others, did not enjoy.

She also mentioned that developing PR is hugely influential in boosting the department's image – this includes, but is not limited to, sprucing up the website to make it more navigable and utilizing the connections the department has with the Pritzker Institute and BMES.

Dr. Schmidt has outlined the importance and her vision, for the field as a whole as a response to a very pertinent question, "What is the future of biomedicine and biomedical engineering?" I encourage you to visit http://www.utexas.edu/know/2011/09/14/big_question_schmidt/ to gain an insight into this fascinating question.