

Dr. Bruce Fisher: Looking back on a career



By Ryan Kamphuis
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Few faculty members are as well-known or as admired by the student body of IIT as Dr. Bruce Fisher, the director of IIT's Center for Research and Service and the directory of IIT's Leadership Academy. That's why the IIT community was surprised and saddened by Dr. Fisher's recent announcement to leave his positions at IIT and move on to working at an I/O psychology firm. With his tenure at IIT coming to a close, now serves a proper time to look back at Fisher's time at IIT.

A graduate himself of IIT's College of Psychology in 1984, Fisher returned to IIT in 1999 in order to help establish the Center for Research and Service. Initially made interim director in 1999, Fisher became director of the Center after one year, a capacity he has served unto this day.

Despite his deep involvement in the Center for Research and Service, the capacity that Dr. Fisher has served that has made him so well known to the students of this university would have to be his time as the director of IIT's Leadership Academy. In 1999, Fisher was approached by IIT Trustee Al Self, who had the idea of establishing a leadership training program at IIT. "Leadership development had

always been a passion of mine," said Fisher, "and they asked me to be interim director of the new Leadership Academy. I said absolutely, this sounds really cool!" A year later Fisher was asked to become the permanent director of the Leadership Academy. As director, Fisher created the Leadership Academy curriculum, including the wildly popular Sophomore Leadership Retreat and the Leadership Academy Scholars full-tuition scholarship program, both of which are some of what Fisher considers to be his greatest achievements. "The sophomore retreat has been a really fun and exciting program. It's a blast, and to afford to offer our students that opportunity has been a pleasure. We've shown research that retention of students has enhanced due to the retreat. Students who don't attend the retreat are twice as likely to leave IIT before graduation as those that do," said Fisher.

The final major program that Fisher was a part of at IIT was the establishment of the Student Speak survey. "I've had the pleasure of working with the best this university has to offer, both students and faculty, to make Student Speak happen," said Fisher, "and I feel that, to some extent, the survey has helped to establish a culture of student service. It helped faculty realize that we are here to serve the students, and that has helped increase student satisfaction at IIT."

Looking back on his tenure, Fisher remembers many things that have made his time at IIT amazing and unforgettable. When asked what his favorite memory of IIT was, Fisher replied, "Establishing the sophomore retreat and conducting the life mapping seminar at the retreat, and seeing people being affected by that is one of my favorite things. I love seeing people realizing just what they can do and being a part of that. We built that retreat from scratch, and I'm proud of it." Fisher also talked about how honored he was that during his time at IIT he was viewed as a trusted advisor by past-President Collins and President Anderson. "Having that level of trust in me, and allowing me to support them has been very rewarding. I've always been humbled that they felt I could assist them in leading this university," remarked Fisher. Despite these achievements, and his many other great achievements, Fisher feels that his greatest achievement here has been the ability to, "coach and mentor some of the students here. I'm proud of them and what they've achieved. And for me to be able to spend time with them has been really great. I think there are maybe 50 alums out there who have touched me, and I hope I've touched them."

The future for Dr. Fisher looks just as bright as his time at IIT has been. "I have accepted a partnership at a global consulting

firm called Strategic Talent Solutions, which works with executives of global corporations," said Fisher, "so I'm still going to be able to work with leadership development and training." Fisher feels that he has the time to do one last thing before it's time for retirement, and he feels that this position is just that. Even though Dr. Fisher is leaving his positions at IIT, he still plans to be quite involved with IIT. "I am not just leaving IIT. I plan to be an IPRO judge; I hope to be a member of the Center for Research and Service's board of directors. I will also always be ready to help people at IIT, whether it be members of the administration or aspiring leaders in the student body," said Fisher.

Dr. Fisher closed his interview expressing thanks to Dean Ellen Mitchell, calling her, "The best boss I ever had," and expressing thanks to Presidents Collins and Anderson, "who believed in me." He finally said that, "I will never forget about IIT. I grew up here as a graduate student. I had the best 13 or 14 years of my career here, and it will always feel like home, and I will always care about the place. IIT is the best, and the quality of the students here is amazing. You all have been inspiring. Because I see what kind of character, motivation, and skill we have in the pipeline, which is all very inspiring. It makes me feel pretty darn good about the future."

Newly renovated 16th floor of IIT Tower



The Wagner Institute of Sustainable Energy Research (WISER) and the Galvin Center for Electricity Innovation recently finished a complete renovation of the 16th floor in the IIT Tower. The Smart Grid Training Center is already up and running! Questions about the project can be sent to wiser@iit.edu or campussustainability@iit.edu. Photos by Christina Noonan.