

# URJiit to display student research in spring abstracts issue

By Mike Purdy  
OPINION EDITOR

In its debut year, the Undergraduate Research Journal (URJiit) is preparing to launch its spring abstracts issue to showcase student research endeavors at Illinois Tech. The URJiit team hopes to have this issue finalized and printed between late March and early April in anticipation of the first full edition of the journal, which will be arriving in fall 2012.

The Undergraduate Research Journal is an official student organization devoted to encouraging and rewarding undergraduate-level research across all academic disciplines. With a vision set on promoting a distinct and enriching educational community, URJiit provides undergraduate researchers with a prime opportunity to augment awareness of

their work through publication. URJiit began as an Interprofessional Project in 2010, which allowed for a well-developed organizational infrastructure along with professional standards for submission, peer-reviewing, and editing. With such a solid foundation already in place, the current executive team has been making positive strides toward gaining a stronger foothold on campus following a brief period of dormancy.

The spring abstracts issue, which is currently in its editing phase, will be an eight-page exhibition of undergrad research summaries from various departments throughout campus. URJiit has been soliciting for research abstracts with much fervor since the semester's beginning, and has received about 10 abstracts thus far. These research previews include such topics as biomaterials, cancer cells, computer-assisted graphing, the Menger Spore,

and an invasive species of crab. The deadline to submit an abstract for the spring edition was March 9, but an abstract is not necessary to achieve publication in the full issue this fall. With this edition looming in the distance, there will surely be more research submissions rolling in throughout spring and summer. Eventually, URJiit would like it to become mandatory for summer undergraduate researchers to submit and publish their findings for the rest of the university to enjoy. The website, urjiit.wordpress.com, provides clear guidelines and instructions for submission, making it easy for any student to submit work for review.

Pending a Finance Board decision, URJiit will have the funds necessary to print 500 copies of the spring abstracts issue, which will be distributed campus-wide within the next month. The design and editing boards at URJiit have been working hard to ensure that this

issue is a success, and although preliminary, will build momentum for the organization as it continues to learn and grow. In its long term plan, URJiit hopes to become a top name amongst undergraduate research journals across the nation, joining the ranks of THURJ (Harvard) and CURJ (Cal-Tech), both of which are award-winning journals.

In an effort to obtain such a lofty goal, URJiit is always looking for diligent students who may be interested in becoming involved, whether it is through submission, design, editing, or another area of expertise; any help is welcomed! In the near future, URJiit would like to hold a competition for a creative logo design, with the winner taking home a prize and having his or her name mentioned in the fall issue. If you are interested in URJiit, or have any questions, be sure to e-mail urjiit@gmail.com.

## RHA conference (continued from page 1)

**6. Is there a National conference? When/where/ will IIT send a delegation and who can apply to go?**

Right now, there is an annual national RHA conference which is open to colleges and universities across the nation and is programmed in a similar fashion to IRHA. This conference is known as NACURH (National Association of College and University Residence Halls). Like IRHA, NACURH offers a unique theme every year (Last year, it was camping) and allows RHA's to compete in roll call, display, banner, philanthropy, and showing off school spirit. There are also regional conferences that various RHA chapters can attend.

IIT falls under the GLACURH (Great Lakes Association of College and University Residence Halls) region, and we're planning on bringing a few delegates there shortly!

**7. What was the best experience you all had at the conference?**

I'd say that the best part of the conference was simply the fact that everyone is having so much fun! It's a place where you don't have to be embarrassed about getting excited and showing off your school spirit,

and you may even discover more about your capabilities as a leader along the way. It was through first attending IRHA that I had developed my confidence in public speaking, and I am very grateful that I was given the opportunity to attend. Whether it's through working on the banner as a team, attending programs hosted by other schools, or just making some new friends along the way, you certainly emerge out of the program feeling like you have learned something new. I

In the boardroom, it's like discovering new aspects about residence halls, service, new and different possibilities and opportunities in the residence halls; being open to learning about other schools, their work, remarkable people and their contribution to residence halls; evaluating and debating on the pros and cons of different bids, applications and decisions.

In the process you discover a new you! IRHA has given me, the Conference Coordinator, lessons of life. It has left me feeling better not only about being a part of RHA and IIT, but also about the fact that I can bring about a change and make things happen! It has given me the zeal to make a difference in the community; it has fostered leadership skills

in me and I feel more capable and complete when I look at myself after the IRHA weekend. Thank you IRHA!!

**8. How do such conferences get you more excited about your overall college experience?**

Basically, I see conferences like IRHA not just as a cool opportunity to network with students from other RHA chapters but also as a great chance to basically have fun and show off some school spirit! You get to explore more about life in other colleges, and you can check out other projects and programs that students have been working on.

You also become a better leader, more confident with new dreams for yourself and return with enrichment ideas for the residence halls and the community.

**9. Do you see IIT hosting a conference of this sort? Does the IIT RHA have any specific ideas in mind if that was to become a reality?**

Although our RHA would be really excited for hosting an upcoming IRHA conference, I think we're more concerned about integrating our chapter further with the RHA conference scene before considering to host a conference. Hosting an IRHA conference

would take a great deal of work and would also require the hosts to have a great deal of experience in coordinating large programs. We would have to further our own understanding of how to coordinate the whole program like it has been in previous conferences, and there would also be safety considerations given the fact that we are in the city.

However, we really look forward to being able to host business meetings (a part of the IRHA conference, especially in the preparations stage for all the conference coordinators of the schools attending the conference) sometime in the future. So far, RHA hasn't really considered how they would go about hosting a conference, but we'll keep you guys posted when we do.

**10. Was there a group chant or spirit song?**

Definitely! We actually used our cheer from last year again and quite a few more cheers during this year's IRHA conference. Some of the cheers we used were specialty IIT cheers, while a few others were general IRHA cheers that everyone could chant to. We would like to share a couple of cheers which had particularly embraced our school spirit:

## SGA updates: 1(00)% Campaign, Keating, hookahs

By Utsav Gandhi  
CAMPUS EDITOR

The Illinois Tech Student Government Association (SGA) greatly appreciates the tremendous feedback and buzz generated with the launch of the 1(00)% Campaign, as highlighted in last week's edition of TechNews. The website for the campaign is up and running at Campaignfor100.weebly.com and every Illinois Tech student is encouraged to frequently check the website for updates.

One of the other major campus-wide initiatives launched by the SGA this past year also made its presence felt in last week's Opinion section, when a highly popular VoteBox suggestion (sga.uservoice.com, an online suggestion box which allows students to submit votes regarding popular proposals and is watched keenly by university administration) was highlighted by TechNews writer Chris Schaffer, objecting to the inclusion of hookahs on the list of drug paraphernalia as decided by university policy. The rapid growth of this issue caught the attention of the SGA Executive Board, and they have followed up accordingly.

Labeling the issue as "Under Review," this is what the Executive Board has to say:

"We've met with Erin Gray, the director of Student Conduct, to talk about this issue. The origin of this mandate comes from many instances of finding illegal substances used in conjunction with hookahs. As a preventative measure, it was deemed that the school would not allow the possession of a hookah on campus grounds. That is why you've found it

listed as drug paraphernalia in the Code of Conduct. However, [Grey] was receptive of the stigmatizing effect of this rule. The policy is now under review and we'll make sure to update everyone as soon as we know more."

Keep reading TechNews for more updates after spring break, as this matter is definitely not a closed book yet. Of course, any responses to the above comment are welcome and can be emailed to sga@iit.edu.

Another hugely popular suggestion, shared anonymously a few days before Thanksgiving last year, has garnered about 175 votes. The suggestion was to bring indoor soccer back to Keating.

Labeling the suggestion as "Completed," this is what the Executive Board had to say: "We have received our final say from Athletics about all the options proposed to keep indoor soccer going at Illinois Tech. As a suggestion from SGA, we believe your best bet in implementing a solution, other than foam balls, would be to form an official student organization.

This way, you can propose for the more expensive curtain solutions through the SAF (as Athletics cannot budget for that option at this time; see explanation below), but continue conversations with Athletics through that very student organization. We will be closing this topic as completed, as we want to give you all your votes back and it's now up to everyone involved with indoor soccer to follow through with the next steps of forming a student organization, continuing conversations with Athletics, and proposing for more desirable solutions."

Athletics said, "Indoor soccer has indeed

returned to Keating Sports Center. What many don't know is the decision was reached in early December after several options were researched and explored. The areas we looked at were expanding our current curtain/netting system, wall padding, and the soccer ball type. The curtain/netting system represented the best, but also the most expensive, option available. We quoted for additional curtains/netting last May. However, the cost exceeded our budgetary means, and we were unable to purchase them. We also researched wall padding to help minimize future damage to Keating. These pads were not high enough to protect all the windows in the playing area. Also, the padding would greatly reduce the natural lighting the building provides and thus was not considered viable. We also researched several different types of both indoor and outdoor soccer balls. It was decided that a lighter indoor training ball would be used to minimize damage to Keating. This ball has been used by our varsity soccer programs and should be acceptable for recreational use. Our top concerns are to protect our facilities such as Keating and to limit potential damage to the building. This allows us to maintain Keating and provide a safe environment for students to come and engage in recreational pursuits. We have been as proactive and fair as possible to allow indoor soccer to be played again in Keating, and we understand not everyone can be satisfied by our decision. We ask that you work with us and our staff to be proactive to ensure no further damage occurs to Keating and the rules are strictly followed so indoor soccer can continue. Thank you for your time and understanding. Work Hard! Study Hard! Play Hard! Go Hawks!"

Finally, the SGA suggests students show some more support to the following suggestion as it definitely looks promising enough to enhance the overall student experience at IIT. Michelle Athena Olmedo shared an idea on February 24, 2012, to "...have an area for recreational use that promotes student creativity." She explains further: "Let's have some place on campus where students can do some type of artwork, music, photography and other things of that nature. The school is always trying to promote creativity, but I don't believe there is anywhere where students do this. Students aren't really allowed to go to VanderCook unless they are taking classes there; I know of a darkroom on campus for those who like photography, but only architecture students can use it. My idea is that it'll be an area for students to have all sorts of things to just express creative freedom. Also, I think this would be a great way for student to "decorate" the school and be more spirited."

SGA VP of Communication Kelly Lohr said, "I think it would be great to have something like the Idea Shop, but totally for recreational use, with all the materials needed to be creative, like a dark room, computers fully loaded with software for creative work, paints, anything that's open to students to get inspired. I've talked with at least one alumnus who has a similar vision. I'll ask around, and see what some next steps would be to making a place like this happen. If you'd like to help, contact me at lohrrkm@gmail.com."

Definitely a great idea to promote student creativity, which really can have huge impact on student productivity.