

EWB-IIT attends MCN conference

By Utsav Gandhi
CAMPUS EDITOR

One of the many advantages of joining the student chapter of a regionally or nationally recognized organization is the opportunity to travel around the country for annual conventions and conferences. These usually bring with them: career enriching workshops, keynote sessions by some of the most brilliant minds in the field, and invaluable networking with other students working in the same field.

Engineers Without Borders IIT is the student chapter of a national organization committed to bringing environmentally and economically sustainable engineering projects, in an effort to advance the standards of life in developing countries. One of the overarching targets of the national organization is to help advance towards the Millennium Development Goals that were set forth by the United Nations Development Program, in the year 2000. These are a set of eight goals including universal education, maternal and child health, environmental sustainability, and the alleviation of poverty, hunger and disease - which the United Nations wishes the world to achieve by the year 2020. EWB-IIT had the unique opportunity of going to Northeastern University in Boston, MA, to attend the Millennium Campus Conference this past weekend. This brought together over twelve hundred college students and professionals from the industry/government/non-profit world engaged in achieving one of the more of the MDGs just like EWB.

The conference was a unique opportunity to interact with some incredibly passionate students putting forth their skills to advance the complicated topics of global development. Healthcare, environment/sustainability, groundwork engineering projects and developmental economics were some of the overarching themes of the Conference.

Even more inspiring was the opportunity to listen to what the keynote speakers had to address.

Dr. Jeffery Sachs - who conceptualized the MDGs himself and is considered the world's leading living economist - was there, the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize winner was there, and so was Dr. Paul Farmer - a visionary expert in developmental healthcare around the world. Their words, calls to action and the sheer passion exhibited by the other attendees have nothing but inspired us to channel our own passions in developmental work. Traveling to Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology was in the icing on the cake - a learning experience in itself.

Some of the sessions offered valuable tips on making a career out of global service, using social media effectively to spread advocacy on our college campus, building sustainable partnerships with grass-root communities while carrying out developmental work, the eternal debate of working locally vs. globally when pursuing a career in developmental work, and the pressures faced by the developing world with respect to climate change.

An innovation expo featured some unique social engineering projects undertaken by students from across the country such as a soccer ball, which produces electricity as you play with it.

Engineers Without Borders offers unique projects for its student membership. Even if you are not interested in making a career in this field, these projects provide valuable experience in teamwork, communication and critical thinking. Come to their General Body Meetings every alternate Monday at lunch, look up their website at ewbusait.moonfruit.com; follow them on Facebook (EWB IIT) or Twitter (@EWBUSAIT) or email them athit.ewb@gmail.com to get onto their mailing list.



Photos by Utsav Gandhi

MSI volunteer information sessions

By Shreeyeh Rajan
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It all started last semester when my roommate asked me if I was going to attend one of the MSI info sessions. The confused look on my face probably answered her question.

She told me that it was something I should definitely attend, and that it would be worth it. I attended the session, applied for it, and was selected! I cannot tell you how right my roommate was.

As an IIT student, this is one of the best opportunities you could ever have. Teaching children about science by performing live experiments in front of them and then noticing how their faces light up when they understand it is a priceless moment. Also, it's not only about science at the Mu-

seum of Science and Industry; you have fun the whole time. The interns, coordinators, facilitators, and all the workers at the museum are so amusing you keep smiling to yourself the whole day.

This experience builds your leadership skills, boosts your confidence, and through this process you learn more about yourself. Nothing can tell you how that feels, because it's something you discover for yourself. The MSI info sessions will be held in MTCC Room 109 (near the Commons, next to the One Stop) from 12:50 to 1:50 p.m. on Wednesday, September 26 and Thursday, September 27.

To apply for one of the volunteering positions, you must attend one of the info sessions. Don't miss this opportunity to volunteer at one of the best sightseeing places in Chicago.



Image courtesy of Museum of Science & Industry

NSF Director delivers Darsh Wasan lecture

By Utsav Gandhi
CAMPUS EDITOR

Students may have seen the traditional programming events put together by Union Board and the Office of Alumni Relations, among others, during Homecoming Week. However, every year, Homecoming and the presence of alumni on campus also bring with itself some annual educational and academic lectures. The Chemical and Biological Engineering department, for example, puts together the much-awaited Darsh Wasan Lecture; delivered by eminent professionals from industry or academia. For example, two years ago, IIT was the host to the alumna Dr. Susan Solomon; who is credited to have made the initial discovery of the ozone hole. The Darsh Wasan Lecture was established in 2008 in honor of IIT Motorola Chair and the Vice President of International Affairs Darsh Wasan's extraordinary contributions to the university over the last forty-eight years, wherein he has held virtually every academic and administrative post.

Dr. Subra Suresh, director of the National Science Foundation, delivered this year's lecture, "Challenges and Opportunities for Global Science." on Tuesday, September 18th. Earlier, he also held the position of Dean of the School of Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (yes, MIT!). Stressing on NSF's unwavering mission to focus on encouraging the spirit of research among the student population, Dr. Suresh defined the NSF's role in cutting-edge science as the harbinger of an era of observation and data interpretation. The huge inflow of globalized data information that we see today brings a formidable challenge of trying to ascertain who will archive it and how we make it permanent. Governments will

have to work with individuals, academia and private research institutions to ensure personal freedom, intellectual rights and international cooperation among the scientific community. The NSF, under his leadership, has invested \$75 million in the emerging fields of robotics, nanotechnology and the Human Genome Project. Internationally, he stressed on the importance of collaborating with science institutes in Chile (where 70% of all the world's astronomical observations are made), partnerships with CERN (recently in the news for the Higgs-Boson Particle) and a \$50 million supercomputing center in Wyoming.

Dr. Suresh also spoke about his recent collaboration with US AID (an agency authorized to send US taxpayer money abroad to support science in developing countries); a project called PEER (Partnership for Enhanced Engagement in Research), which has seen the number of projects go from five at the time of inception to forty-five at present. "Good science anywhere is good science everywhere" - provided that open and transparent processes are followed. With that in mind and keeping in consideration the importance of collaborative policies to advance scientific research around the world, he spoke about the recently introduced Global Summit on Merit Review, initiative, a convention of G20+OECD countries to develop a globally conducive environment for innovation.

The talk was followed by a reception and dinner; with a chance for students to personally interact with Dr. Suresh as well as other esteemed alumni. The presence of such a reputed academic and scientist on campus is surely an occasion to remind ourselves that Illinois Institute of Technology is at the forefront of initiating positive discussion to advance science and technology.