

OPINION

An alumnus airs their grievances with President Anderson & Director Mitchell.
Page 3

CAMPUS

Humanities Department & OCL sponsors Women's History Month
Page 5

A&E

A review of the infamous reddit.com.
Page 6

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OPINION 2-3
CAMPUS 4-5
A&E 6
SLIPSTICK 7
SPORTS 7

President, Provost Forum focuses on budgetary concerns

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Between the recently announced 4.75% tuition increase and the move to NCAA Division Three athletics, there are a lot of controversial moves the university has recently made, that is garnering buzz within the student body.

Students, faculty, and staff all came to the Hermann Hall ballroom on Thursday February 28, during the lunch hour for the Spring 2013 President and Provost Forum in order to ask question about these recent decisions. Organized by the Student Government Association, the Forum aimed to increase the transparency of IIT's administration by giving students an hour when they could ask President John Anderson, and Provost Alan Cramb any questions they could think of regarding the university. And ask they did.

Before taking any questions, President Anderson took the floor to talk about the recently-formed Diversity Committee that had been created. Anderson explained that the university should be a place where, "diversity is accepted, and civility is expected," and that this committee could help achieve this by creating an environment that is inclusive and respectful. Both the President and the Provost sit on this committee, and described the committee's current plan of creating a list of eight to 10 rules of behavior that will promote civility and respect on campus. Anderson read off a few of these rules, which included, "ask rather than assume," "use please and thank you," and, "give people the benefit of the doubt." Anderson also

stressed the importance of using face-to-face communication as much as possible, limiting electronic communication, and attempting to always talk face-to-face when one has to speak about something negative.

After this, the President and Provost began to take questions that had been collected for several days by SGA through a Google Form. The first question asked what the school was doing to make life more enjoyable for commuter students. President Anderson brought up the recent opening of the BOG as the commuter lounge before deferring the question to Dean of Students Katie Stetz. Stetz talked about how the BOG was a big step in making campus more enjoyable for commuters, but that more work should be done. She talked about an upcoming meeting she had with the Commuter Student Association to address ways that the school could help commuter students. Provost Cramb then took to the floor to talk about steps the school was making to improve the IIT shuttle bus, which included optimizing the schedule, and ensuring that drives held to the schedule more strictly. Cramb then finally implored commuter students to work with Dean Stetz if they have any ideas on how to make their lives easier.

With that question answered, all of the forum's questions turned to the topic of the recently announced 4.75% tuition increase. The first question regarding this asked why their was a tuition hike, especially when most scholarships don't increase in value as tuition is increased. Anderson explained that 60% of IIT's revenue comes from tuition, and

that from a pure numbers sense, tuition has to increase because the university's expenses increase every year. The President went on to explain that increasing tuition makes it possible to improve the university, which is in the best interest of students. Anderson spoke of the many new academic and athletic programs at IIT which needed to be funded, the 43 new faculty that were hired last year that needed to be paid, and the maintenance of facilities that needed to be done. He also explained that since IIT did not have a sizable endowment, the only real way to raise the money to make these improvements was through tuition increases. Anderson closed his statement by explaining that this tuition increase has been the smallest in his time as President of IIT, and that his goal is to make the university better, which should be all of our goals, and that a tuition increase has to happen to make this happen.

A follow-up question was then asked by a forum attendee, who asked what the school was doing to add more students, which would increase the amount of revenue the school had access to. Provost Cramb used this as an opportunity to talk about the university's efforts to add 1,000 students to the undergraduate population by broadening the reach of IIT and marketing how exciting IIT is. Cramb talked about the recent introduction of co-terminal degrees, which allow an undergraduate student to graduate with a Master's degree, as one way of doing this. Cramb also talked about the school's efforts to increase the four-year graduation rate.

Another question about the tuition

hike was then posed, this time asking why, with the increase in tuition, things that benefit a small number of people were being prioritized over things that benefited everyone. Almost immediately after reading the question, President Anderson asked if this question was referring to the university's plans to put artificial turf on IIT's soccer field, which caused the room to laugh. Anderson explained that by turfing the field, the whole field would be able to be used much more often, which would benefit all IIT students. It could be used for much longer every year, and would be able to be used by intramural activities, ROTC, and the community, as opposed to just the varsity soccer teams. Anderson also explained that this decision essentially paid for itself, due to the fact that \$500,000 was spent every year to maintain the existing grass field, and that the upkeep costs for artificial turf were a third of that. Anderson then went on to say that he could not think of anything else that could possibly be used as an example of the school prioritizing things that benefitted the few.

With that question answered, the President and Provost went on to answering a question that asked how students could get involved with the creation of IIT's budget. The President deferred this question to Provost Cramb, who said that if students were to assist in making IIT's budget, they should begin thinking in the long term. Cramb explained that most budgeting decisions were made considering the next several years, and that very few decisions were short-term ones. He also

(continued on Page 3)



Photos by Kevin Zheng