



# TechNews

Student newspaper of the Illinois Institute of Technology since 1928

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## Student, faculty, alumni success highlighted in local media

**Utsav Gandhi**  
CAMPUS EDITOR

As one of the major technology institutes in the Chicagoland area and a primary center of research, along with having a premier law school, institute of design, college of architecture as well as a marketed school of business, IIT is frequently spotlighted in the local and national media for the accomplishments of its current faculty, students and alumni. As students we receive an email digest almost daily, delivered by IIT's Office of Marketing and Communications, called "IIT Today". You can check out their news archives at <http://www.iit.edu/news/iittoday/?cat=7> to read about these accomplishments and get excited about attending IIT!

Athletics is starting to gain more and more coverage in the local media, especially with the recent revival of the basketball team. DNAinfo.com shared a story on February 22, 2013, "IIT Men's Hoops Center Relishes A Second Chance to Play Varsity Ball," that tells the story of Scarlet Hawks center Ian Sisson, a recent architecture graduate, who played as a freshman and recently led the newly returned basketball team in 2012-2013. Ian had previ-

ously helped create an IIT men's basketball club team, and six of those players became the foundation of the collegiate squad.

One of the most prominent IIT alumni of all time has been Martin Cooper, the inventor of the cell phone. He worked with Motorola after graduating with a degree in Electrical Engineering in 1950, and made the first ever phone call on a portable cell phone forty years ago. News media around the world marked the 40th anniversary of this historic achievement on April 3, 2013. Other illustrious IIT alumni include Dr. Susan Solomon, who is credited with the discovery of the hole in the ozone layer over Antarctica; and Leon Lederman, a Physics Nobel Laureate/one-time Director of FermiLab and founder of the Illinois Math and Science Academy.

Crain's Chicago Business also recently previewed an upcoming story about IIT: the "Fueling Innovation" capital campaign, and the new directions the university has taken over the past five years under President John Anderson, on April 5, 2013. Incoming students will more frequently hear about this campaign during their time at IIT as it a major fundraising effort to attract more undergraduates and to build a 100,000-square-foot innovation center, which would be the first new academic building on campus in 30 years. Several benefi-

ciaries have contributed thousands of dollars, and their names can be seen enshrined on the walls outside the ballroom in the McCormick Tribune Campus Center. Furthermore, the university is also undertaking the renovation of two important academic buildings, Engineering 1 and Life Sciences.

IIT also has a very active interest in robotics, with an active student group (Illinois Tech Robotics) as well as some groundbreaking research being conducted by professors in the Computer Science and Mechanical Engineering Departments. The Perspectives/IIT Math & Science Academy robotics team, The Iron Wolves, recently advanced to compete at the FIRST Robotics Competition World Championship earlier this year, and was profiled in the Chicago Tribune on April 24, 2013.

IIT's Architecture and Civil Engineering Departments have also left physical imprints on structures in the Chicagoland area. Those familiar with the CTA Green Line may have noticed the new CTA Morgan Station, which opened last year. This station was designed by IIT Architecture Adjunct Professor Carol Ross Barney's Ross Barney Architects, for which his work was featured in the 'Architect Magazine' on April 25, 2013. CAEE (Civil, Architectural and Environmental Engineering) Professor and Chair Gongkang Fu

is also approached frequently by the media to discuss important developments in the industry. He spoke with NBC 5 News about aging bridge infrastructure following the collapse of a Washington state freeway bridge on May 28, 2013.

IIT also has recently made a visible public effort to support immigration reform and has come out in support of undocumented students. Tanya Cabrera, assistant director of minority student outreach and diversity initiatives at IIT and chair of the Illinois Dream Fund Commission, may have been one of the admission counselors incoming students may come across during their application process to IIT. She recently spoke with Crain's Chicago Business about the difficulties in fundraising to provide scholarships to children of undocumented immigrants in Illinois.

Perhaps one of the most impressive student accomplishments to be highlighted in the media in recent times, a recent graduate of the Law School and a resident of Plainfield, IL, Jennifer Wood, was featured in the CBS 2 News story, "Mom of Seven Kids Celebrating Mother's Day With Law Degree." IIT students continue to shine and bring laurels to the university, and keep the flag of school spirit flying high.

## First Year Experience Program implements new agenda

**Ryan Kamphuis**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Coming to college is one of the most exciting experiences that people will have. Between the newfound independence, the huge number of new people to meet, the numerous opportunities to get involved, and all of this while living in the third largest city in the country, an IIT student's first year can be just as intimidating as it is exciting.

This realization is what lead to the Office of Campus Life (OCL) creating and implementing the First Year Experience (FYE) program in the fall of 2012. "Our overall goal for the program is to help people," said Director of Campus Life, Ryan Miller.

Stemming from research done on other university's first year experience programs, IIT's FYE program was original comprised of three components: the Peer Mentor

program, Freshman 15 events, and Hawk 101 lectures. The Peer Mentor program paired each incoming student with an upperclassmen to serve as a mentor that could help the incoming student navigate and become confident at IIT.

The Freshman 15 was a collection of 15 events that were viewed by OCL and the student body as essential events for students to attend. Finally, the Hawk 101 lectures were a series of workshops on student leadership and other topics at IIT.

After a year of implementation, OCL has taken the opportunity to step back and evaluate the First Year Experience Program, and they are making a few changes in order to streamline the program and make it more effective.

"We felt that we were very successful considering this was the first year this program was being implemented," said Miller. "But we could still improve."

One of the big steps being made to improve the program is the elimination of the Hawk 101 workshops.

"The Hawk 101 program attendance on the student side was pretty limited," said Alex Garrett, Coordinator of Campus Life. "By eliminating the Hawk 101 program, we can focus on using all of our resources to make the Peer Mentor program a success."

The Peer Mentor program had trouble with limited freshmen response in its first year, and OCL thinks by putting more emphasis on the program and equipping it with more resources, the Peer Mentors will be able to do more with the program, making the program more appealing for freshmen to take part in. Another change being made to the FYE program this year is emphasizing the Peer Mentor program during Welcome Week and throughout the semester by planning a few mandatory events.

This year, the Peer Mentor Meet

and Greet will be a mandatory part of Welcome Week, and will be organized so that no other events take place during that time period. Last year the Meet and Greet was at the same time as iPad distribution, causing many to skip it. Steps are also being taken to ensure that incoming students meet their Peer Mentors earlier and get to know them better.

"I think our big hope with this program is that every incoming student will have someone they can go to for help and who will tell them who to talk to within administration to get things done," said Miller.

With these changes the Office of Campus Life is confident that the First Year Experience program will be able to better get first year students used to life at IIT.

Miller and Garrett have made it clear that they will work hard to ensure the success of the program so that all incoming students will feel welcome and feel like they are part of the IIT community from day one.

## SGA President welcomes new students to IIT

**Rani Shah**  
SGA PRESIDENT

Welcome and congratulations on being admitted to the Illinois Institute of Technology!

We're not the average college experience - we're better. The land of Scarlet Hawks houses students who build farms on campus, students who question the status quo, students who lead world innovation, and students who order Sarpinos pizza three times a week. Being so fantastic all the time is exhausting though, and in our downtime IIT students get creative. Hackathons, carnivals, midnight

volleyball, public policy forums, touring the city of Chicago, or just running around your dorm floor while your RA chases you; get excited!

We are the IIT Student Government Association (SGA), the governing body of all IIT students. In a nutshell, we approve new student organizations, allot funding for student groups, and most importantly, work on projects to improve IIT. Our library is now open 24 hours a day, five days a week after months of SGA work.

Our efforts have also caused Spanish language courses, course evaluations for all classes, and most importantly, the Illinois Tech Harlem Shake to happen. More than just

projects, we bring school administration and students together.

Have an issue with school policy or just see room for improvement? Call SGA and we're on it!

Frequent meetings with President Anderson and the rest of our amazing administrators, faculty, and staff make change possible.

So drop by and say hi! You'll see fellow SGA members lurking around our office in the MTCC either working furiously to change bylaws and policies or looking for free food; both of which are equally important. Come out and run for Senator while you're at it. Be a rep. Fresh talent is what we thrive off of, under-

graduates and graduate students both. Engineering, Architecture, Political Science, Math, Shimer, Vandercook, Journalism, Computer Science, or Life; whatever your major, you're encouraged to join the SGA!

Once again, congratulations on being accepted to what I believe is the most unique university in the world. Welcome to success, welcome to life-long friendships, welcome to innovation; welcome to the Illinois Institute of Technology!

Sincerely,  
**Rani Shah**  
Chemical Engineering '14  
Student Body President