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Welcome Week 2013

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CAMPUS EDITOR

By far some of the most exhilarating days to be on campus, Welcome Week, organized by the Office of the Dean of Students and the Office of Campus Life, has consistently upped the ante on establishing a welcoming atmosphere for incoming students to get excited about attending IIT. It also encourages returning students to get back into the groove as they share stories of summer experiences and internships.

Culminating one of the most successful orientation sessions in recent memory, with record enrollment figures, again credit to the Office of Campus Life (and not to mention the fabulous student Orientation Leaders), Welcome Week 2013 presented a host of social events for the incoming class to interact with each other, and get acquainted with campus and the city of Chicago a little better.

Thursday August 15 was Move-In Day for the dormitories, with the resident advisors just having completed training and having made their respective communities more welcoming with bulletin boards and door decorations. A sumptuous barbeque at the Commons, by now an annual tradition, awaited everyone, and the weather was perfect for families to enjoy some quality time with their students during their first full day on campus. The rest of the day had more fun activities for students once they had moved in, like a life sized Angry Birds competition, complete with balloons filled with shaving cream. This was followed by one of the most anticipated events now running into its third year, Playfair! A giant round of icebreakers for an hour, meeting multiple people in one go, hosted by a fantastic stand-up comedian – the game involved the ultimate game of rock, paper & scissors, spontaneous standing ovations and culminated in the launch of SGA-organized campus wide “Assassins” game. Resident Advisors also organized the year’s first hall meeting, outlining policies and regulations.

Thursday was exciting for more than one reason as students finally were able to get their hands on the coveted U-Passes, which were shiny new Ventra cards for most returning students. These were just in time for the Leadership Academy-organized Fresh in the cITy, an Amazing Race-type scavenger hunt across the city of Chicago for the new students to get acclimatized with the city, as well as its transit system. Organized by an external agency called the GoGame for the first time, it involved multiple opportunities for students to step out of their comfort zones and bond with their fellow incoming class, frequently stepping outside their comfort zone (planking on mailboxes, dancing to YMCA with random strangers at the Bean, stealth dancing at expensive steakhouses.) The evening saw the return of hypnotist Frederick Winters at a packed BOG, showcasing the sheer, absurd power that can be held over willing college students, both actively and passively.

Friday was the busiest day of the week, starting off with academic breakfasts and the academic convocation; featuring meet and greet as well as welcome speeches by department deans, faculty, the university administra-

tion, the current SGA President Rani Shah.

“Orientation was your first day of choices at Illinois Tech. This is the start of an exciting set of challenges for you—because remember, if something doesn’t challenge you, it won’t change you,” wise words, to start off the new academic year from Shah. Ray Ballard, alumni from the Class of 2010, also spoke.

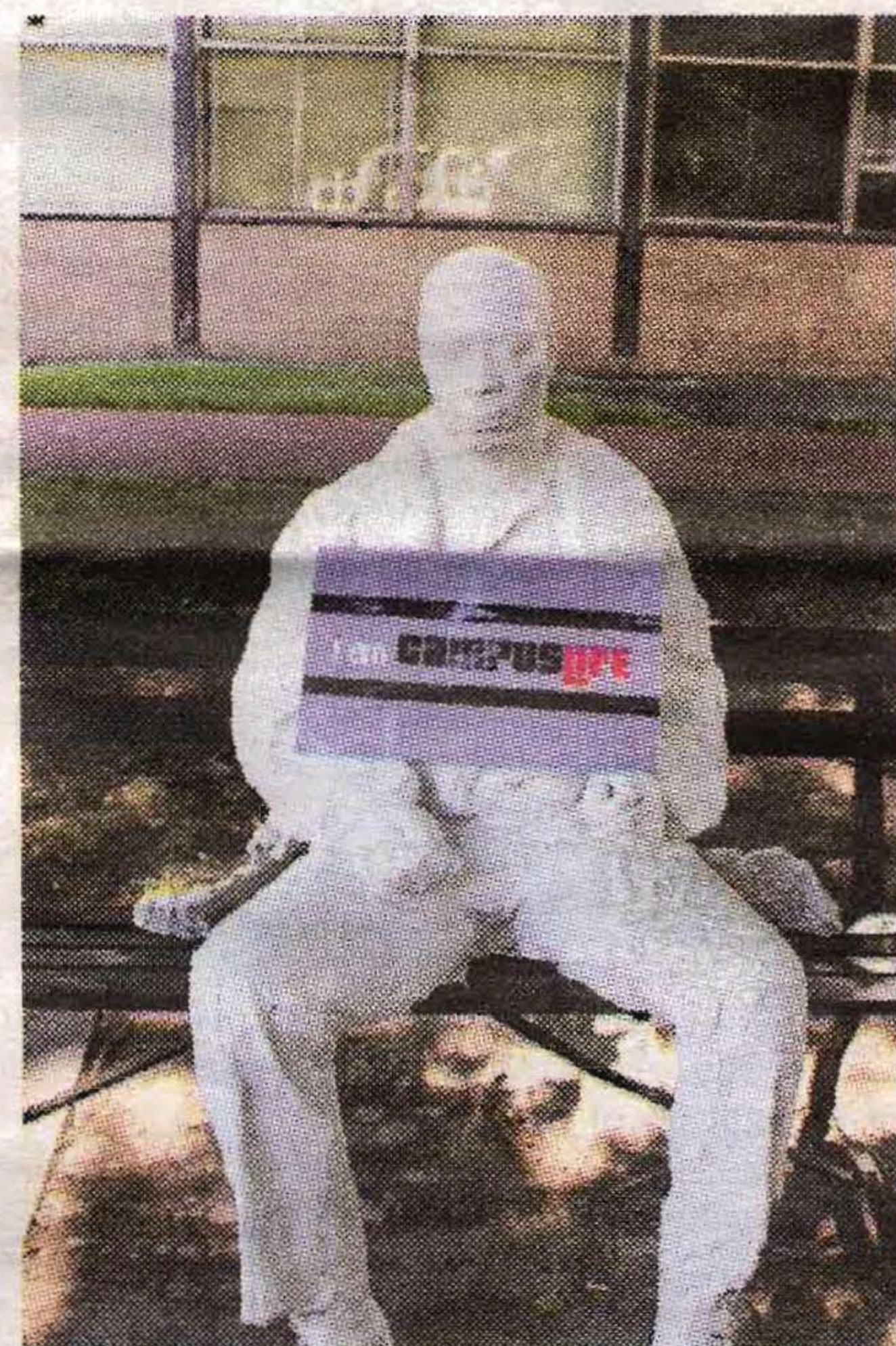
This was followed immediately by a super successful student organization festival, Peer Mentor Meet and Greet, as well as the much-anticipated shopping shuttles to Target, Best Buy and Bed, Bath & Beyond.

The Peer Mentor Program at IIT is a recent initiative of the Office of Campus Life wherein a sophomore, junior or senior student (in good academic and judicial standing) is assigned to each incoming freshman, transfer and exchange student. The Peer Mentor is the new student’s connection to campus life and helps them transition successfully to student life at IIT.

That wasn’t the end of Friday, though. A special program called Sex Signals followed the shopping shuttles, generally appreciated for its healthy, honest depiction of relationships and dating while in college. It also touched upon sexual harassment prevention and the bystander effect. This program was followed by a screening of Wreck-It Ralph, the recent Disney feel-good computer animated family comedy.

Saturday was just marginally less busy, starting off with a Peer Mentor led First Year Experience Service Event to different neighborhoods in the city, followed by a service fair offering different opportunities for volunteering, organized by the Office of Spiritual Life and Service Learning. The afternoon saw a successful awareness event tying up with the Civility Code, recently introduced at IIT, called “We are IIT”. Students participated in an activity learning how to communicate with those from another culture, as well as exploring their personal stances on various issues about diversity and intercultural understanding. The evening saw the official kick-off of Greek recruitment; Taste of the Quad. It featured bouncy houses, a cupcake truck and a mechanical bull, among other things. Sunday was more relaxed, allowing students a bit of a breather before the start of the classes, as well as classroom tours with Orientation Leaders.

The Office of Campus Life’s (and campus partners’) paramount planning were instrumental to setting up a fantastic Welcome Week. Hopefully, it excited incoming students, returning students, faculty, and staff for the coming year.



Photos courtesy of the Office of Campus Life