Chicago Innovation Chase sponsors Lightning Round

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Utsav Gandhi CAMPUS EDITOR

The IIT Main Campus was host to an exciting, fast-paced innovation and entrepreneurship challenge this past week wherein students from different disciplines competed to develop a business idea or service in order to be able to leverage it to the market. The Chicago Innovation Chase was created in 2008 by two Illinois Institute of Technology students, Adam Berg and Gustaf Josefson, who wanted to design a program which would put students through an accelerated business and design experience "like no other". The Chase is now organized by Eurekatory, a non-profit company led by Jodi Houlihan, Director of Community Affairs at IIT.

Eurekatory is an organization dedicated to "researching, designing and executing educational curricula focused on innovation, invention and entrepreneurship." The Chicago Innovation Chase® is a nationally run intercollegiate innovation tournament focusing on curricula-based educational competitions for students. Its goal is to unlock talent necessary to succeed in today's extremely competitive workplace that demands a need for differentiation and diversification. In the semifinals, held in March this year, teams of students were given two 12-hour blocks to devise an innovative approach with a practical business-minded solution to a real-world, urgent, STEM problem. They are required to work from scratch—under pressure and with constant deadlines—to develop stages of their ideas with consistent feedback from industry experts and mentors, and to ultimately get the idea ready for launch in the public domain.

Over the course of the competition, the team undertook the same process as a startup company would as it went through various iterations of design, research, prototyping, market management, proposal drafting, and presentations, all with the aim to solve a critical world problem. The challenge given to the team was centered on the medical concerns of the elderly, and the teams each worked on diabetes, sleep disorders and hip injuries.

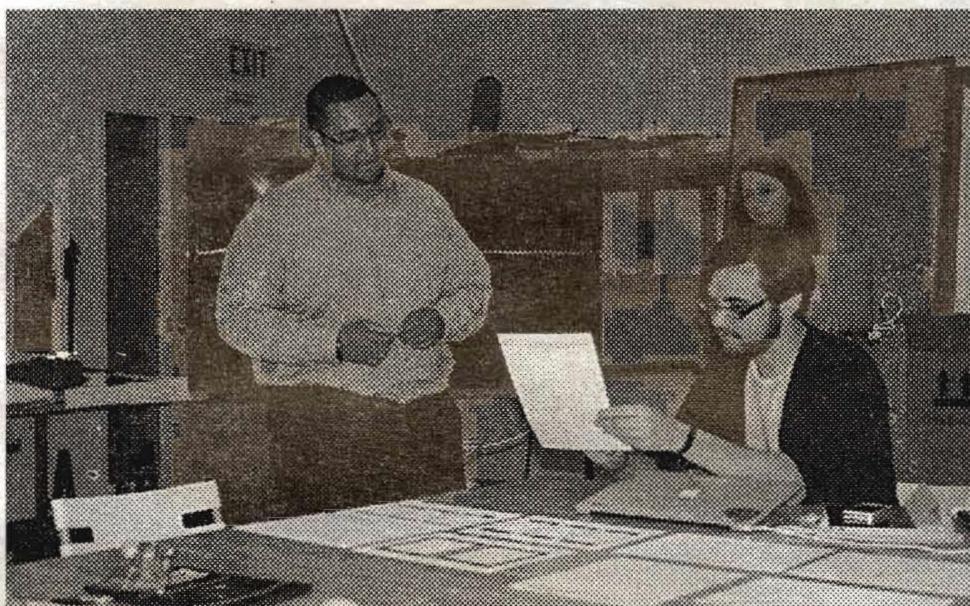
The Lightning Round of the Chase was held this past weekend on the IIT campus, with teams taking forward their products and services, this time with some additional mentoring and guidance from various experts from the Institute of Design as well as the innovation industry. Sessions included ones on Design Thinking, Competitive Landscaping, Business Ethics, Brand Development, User Experience Studies, Customer Personas, Analytics, Behavioral Economics, Financial Analysis as well as Funding and Investment Strategies, among other things. Sleep Better, a service offered by Team Paradigm Shift, aimed to recognize and treat sleep disorders by monitoring activity levels/preferences and promoting high activity during the day. SugarCube, offered by Team South Side Synergy, aimed to tackle compliance of glucose level check-ups for diabetes mitigation, through the use of social networks. Hip Alert, the product which won the competition, was created to prevent hip injuries due to falls by enabling efficient communication at the time of fall.

The three day competition provided an excellent opportunity for students to network with industry experts and mentors on various aspects of business development. It also helped them to immerse themselves in the practical application of many concepts we may or may not learn in class, but that are crucial to develop for the professional workspace. One of the most exciting sessions was when students were required to go around the city to strategically placed investors, and pitch their products to them in the hopes of securing funding. The event ended with a team presentation for constructive feedback from the esteemed judges. The logistics of the event ran extremely smoothly, with the participants very well cared for, especially in terms of meals and nourishment provided.

The Idea Shop (Jeremy Alexis & Rima Kuprys), Community Affairs, University Technology park (Cassidy Turley) and WISER (Dr. Mohammad Shahidehpour) were among the many IIT entities who graciously offered space in some of the best conference rooms located on campus for the competition. External acknowledgements include those due to representatives from BP, Walgreens, Gravity Tank, Spar'd, Grubhub, Wrigley Mars, the IIT Institute of Design and Doblin; among many others. The event also would not have been possible without the generous initial funding of Professors Keith Bowman (MMAE) and Vince Turitto (BME) who also provided the research problem for the teams to work on. It is rare to find such opportunities as a student to be able to experience a real world project; the participants would definitely recommend the experience to any student even remotely interested in learning how critical thinking and innovation processes work in the real world.







Photos by Utsav Gandhi

Red Cross chapter launches on campus

Travon Cooman

COPY EDITOR

"I have been a member of the Red Cross for eight years and have witnessed the great impact and relief they provided during dire times," said Jahna Soomer-James, the founder of the newly formed Red Cross IIT chapter. "Creating a Red Cross IIT chapter allows us access to resources that will help us raise awareness on issues that impact our lives like campus safety and disaster preparedness while connecting us to other university chapters like Loyola, Northwestern and University of Chicago." Soomer-James remarked that because IIT is so diverse and

the students have such a strong presence in the community, she thought that it would make sense to incorporate "the largest humanitarian organization that has an equally international representation into our campus life."

Red Cross IIT's mission is to promote the principles of the American Red Cross. These principles include humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality while providing biomedical, health and safety, disaster relief, armed forces emergency and international services. Members of the organization will be able to develop values such as accountability, commitment, trustworthiness, collaboration and humanitarianism.

Students as well as faculty are invited

to join Red Cross IIT in learning new skills, being trained and certified in courses such as First Aid (CPR and AED), babysitting, water safety and Pet First Aid. Those who are trained can have the opportunity to be deployed when emergency assistance is needed in other parts of the country. Moreover, these acquired skills can be useful in the event of emergencies such as fires, flooding and snow storms that may affect the IIT community and Chicago at large. Students, especially those living alone for the first time, will also be sensitized about securing all important documents that can be easily carried with them upon evacuation when emergencies occur.

Red Cross IIT invites everyone who is interested in learning more about

the organization and partnering with the American Red Cross to their first General Body Meeting on Tuesday, October 1 at 1 p.m. in the Siegel Hall auditorium. Their American Red Cross headquarters advisor will also be speaking to the attendees at this meeting, and will be assisting those interested in creating an American Red Cross volunteer connection profile and helping them enlist in their certification courses that will be offered.

The organization's page can be found both on Facebook (https://www.facebook. com/pages/Red-Cross-IIT/339955862808680) and HawkLink (https://iit.collegiatelink.net/ organization/redcross), where the upcoming activities will be posted.

CMC increases outreach, assistance with new advisor

Travon Cooman

COPY EDITOR

The Career Management Center (CMC) has responded to the need for more outreach and assisting students with their professional development by hiring a new Advisor, Yahaira Guilfu-Diaz. "We saw 550 students in the first four weeks of the semester and we needed an advisor to do more outreach," said Andres Garza, the CMC's Executive Director. "We are glad she is here. I want you to know that this overall strategy to do more is why we hired an additional advisor."

Diaz, who has prior experience as a Career Coach, not only loves to travel and try new foods, but also does mission work with World Vision, a humanitarian aid, development, and advocacy organization dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. Having formerly worked with Olive-Harvey College students who had undeclared majors, she was committed in helping them decide on a career field that might suit them best based on their personalities and interests. It was during her research on reputable Engineering Universities for her students that Diaz heard about IIT. "A lot

of my experience just in Career Coaching and professional development is over eight years," said Diaz. "Just the experience of having to work with adults and more traditional college has helped prepare me," she said, when asked about how her former job has prepared her to serve as an additional Advisor at IIT. Furthermore, she stated that her personal interest of travelling abroad has helped her connect with students in a different way.

Diaz, in collaboration with the other CMC advisors have been engaged in many outreach activities including workshops and mock interviews especially before the Career Fair a few weeks ago. Despite not knowing the history about how IIT students prepare for such events, Diaz urges students to approach their careers in a strategic manner. "Undergraduate students should start early. It's never too early," she emphasized. Students can select three organizations they would like to work for and can find the common skills that would be required of them to be hired and work towards developing these skills as a good strategy they can employ. She also mentioned that being active in the different organizations on campus could help develop skills that will be useful to



Photo by Travon Cooman

their professional careers.

When asked about the recurring problems she encounters with students concerning planning their careers, Diaz reiterated that students should not wait until the last minute to plan their careers. Since a resume is their marketing piece as well as a working

document, effort must be put into it and it. should be built over time. She is encouraging students to come visit the CMC so that they can receive guidance in their careers. She will also serve as the career advisor for the students from the College of Architecture and the College of Life Sciences.