

Tales from the Victory Lap: Existing as members of minority groups @IIT

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Miriam's Story:

As an incoming female at IIT, advice from upperclassmen about the IIT ratio, dating, and social life at IIT is usually given unsolicited. Early on during my time at IIT I heard, "The odds are good, but the goods are odd." This adage is one that I heard repeatedly as a freshmen on campus from the upperclassmen women. In addition, I was told that you can't be too nice to the guys at IIT or they will automatically assume that you are attracted to them.

At first I wasn't worried, because most of my close friends in highschool had been guys; I could handle the IIT ratio. As my first semester progressed, I realized that I needed to have some female friends who

could understand and relate to my unique experiences: being the only female in a class, having upperclassmen hit on the freshmen girls, or having a crush on a guy who wasn't confident enough to make the first move. I needed to find a community of women to inspire me, challenge me, and most of all to support me.

Whether it is joining SWE (Society of Women Engineers), making a close groups of girl friends, or joining a sorority—like I chose—finding a community of women at IIT was surprisingly not very difficult for me.

Through joining numerous at organizations, I found that while women are a minority group at IIT, women are frequently leading major organizations across campus and represent a large number of the involved students on campus.

During Monday night chapter

meetings at ASA, it is often hard to remember that, as females, we are minorities. Communities, like the one offered by the sororities, are invaluable to students who find themselves a minority group at IIT. If a community doesn't currently exist for you, I challenge you to build one for others who may also feel alone.

Will's Story:

Being gay on IIT's campus can feel lonely. Many students have never interacted with a member of the LGBT community before coming to IIT. Because of that, equal rights for LGBT members isn't something many IIT students want to talk about, but it is a topic that is taking the world by storm. As a community, we should work together to make everyone feel welcome.

I came to terms with my sexuality my third year here at IIT. Because of my role as a resident adviser and my close relationship

with the Office of Campus Life, I found a lot of support from administration. For my own healing process, I decided to help program events geared towards LGBT issues and trying to create awareness. While attendance was never what I wanted at events, I've loved the quality of events I've had. We can talk about these issues; we just have to be open.

IIT students are intelligent and passionate individuals; we constantly question everything, but we are willing to donate our free time to worthy causes.

I am always amazed at how much heart IIT students have. My friends have proven to me that I can be who I want to be, that if someone can't accept it then they're not worth my time. IIT students care about each other and we should start showing it. Let's be compassionate and inclusive of everyone, regardless of sexual orientation.

'Sharing Table' fosters interaction between undergrad, graduate students, staff, faculty

Shireen Gul
COPY EDITOR

Who could understand the relationship between a student and an instructor better than me?

Three years ago I was an instructor myself and now I am a student here at IIT. When you enter an institute for the purpose of education all you hope for is to have a good instructor because they play the major role in education.

Usually you have really good instructors but you are afraid to bond with them especially when you are new to the institute as well as the community.

You don't know what the culture is like and are unsure of the people with whom you interact on a daily basis.

But then again, IIT is here to help us out with our problems. IIT Student Center for Diversity and Inclusion (SCDI) organized an amazing event called "The Sharing Table." The Sharing Table is held on the first Thursday of every month during the academic term. It is a special program to help foster personal interaction between undergraduates, graduate students and faculty. You can engage yourself in spirited conversation about hobbies, culture, sports, or current events while dining at The Commons. A small group of students are given the chance to learn a great deal about their instructors in this type of social setting.

I was lucky enough to be selected

as the student ambassador for this program. I have personally attended both of the meetings so far and they have both really helped me. The latest lunch was held on Thursday, October 3, 2013. We had a good number of faculty, staff and students who attended the lunch and I am hopeful that it will be even better next time.

I observed that sharing a meal and eating together with your instructor or faculty member (who might be your ideal) creates a strong primal bond. Students feel more relaxed in this type of setting than in the classroom at a desk. They will share more about themselves and their world both at school and away from it.

Improving students' relationships with instructors has important, positive and long-lasting implications for students' academ-

ic and social development. If a student feels a personal connection to a teacher, experiences frequent communication with a teacher, and receives more guidance, then the student is likely to become more trustful of that teacher and show more engagement in the academic content presented.

So all the awesome students out there who really want to spend some quality time with your instructor, please mark your calendar for the next luncheon, which will be held on November 7th at The Commons. We also have personal invitations that you can give to your instructors. You can get them by just sending an e-mail to scdi@iit.edu. Don't forget to follow us on twitter and instagram @iitdiversity and like us on SCDI IIT. Hope to see you all there next time!

IIT feminists united
presents:

Take Back The Night Week

October 21 to October 25* * *

monday- Between Friends speaker

12:45-1:45 MTCC Brown Room

betweenfriendschicago.org

tuesday- Self-Defense class

6:30-8 MTCC Ballroom

register @ tinyurl.com/selfdefense2013

hosted by Women's Services

wednesday- Keynote speaker

"He Said-She Said" by Ryan Shank | Siegel Hall Auditorium @ 7

thursday- Sex Ed Boot Camp

7:30

hosted by Student Health and Wellness Center

friday- Walk A Mile In Her Shoes

registration @ 6:30 bandshell on the Quad

march @ 7

sign up @ tinyurl.com/iitwalkamile

email us @ iit.feministsunited@gmail.com

find us on facebook

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Free Speech @IIT

and interpretation of "freedom of speech," including some rhetoric about the WBC itself, the panel started fielding questions from the audience on the topic of free speech.

Some of the more interesting questions asked the panelists to choose what aspect of the current legislation surrounding free speech would they choose to change, and how does free speech manifest itself when talking about student affairs of a university like IIT's which is so racially and culturally diverse. The International Center, represented by International Student Advisor/SEVIS Coordinator Tanya DePass, briefly mentioned some of their own outreach activities in order to spread some cultural awareness about what may or may not be regarded as free speech in different cultures or countries.

However, the case remains that all entities of the university need to be cognizant of hate speech and take efforts to correct it whenever encountered.

An event like this is crucial to the functioning of a university and the promotion of respect and empathy for all, stemming from a basic understanding of etiquette and community awareness. Universities can be breeding grounds for great discussions on civility and ethics, wherein the future leaders of tomorrow can come together and set expectations for what the free voicing of opinion will be like. This is crucial to the progress of our communities in specific and human society in general.