Fall Cleaning's e-waste brings in scavengers

Kyle Stanevich & Austin Gonzalez
STAFF WRITERS

Illinois Tech's Office of Campus Energy and Sustainability's Fall Cleaning is a great event to help properly dispose of the e-waste (electronic waste) that is filling most homes and businesses. This recycling event also allows an interesting and fruitful opportunity for enterprising individuals to salvage parts and accessories. Two students could be seen wheeling around an abandoned shopping cart as they ferried old servers and network arrays to and from their dorm. A somwhat unexpected result from this event is an insight into possibly a root cause of many problems seen on campus.

Not more than 24 hours after the first stack of computers were left in Stuart Building did the buildings front entrance look like an area in need of natural disaster relief aid.

What seemingly occurred was a piranha-like feeding frenzy as people grabbed and destroyed old computers boxes, and other equipment to get theirs. Seeing others take something, people immediately propogated on the idea of free electronic goodies (regardless of the fact that the 7-to-20-year-old equipment would only ever be useful to the geekiest of geeks.)

What probably started as a thoughtful reuse became mindless grab and dash; 75% of what was taken will more than likely end up back in the trash, this time to be hauled to a landfill instead of being rightfully recycled.

This is only a hypothesis of what could be seen from the aftermath of the event.

The scene of mangled carcasses of what used to be technology strewn about was one of careless disrespect towards the campus and quite saddening. There are certain problems around campus where administration is confused about how to make things better. There is a vicious cycle of expectation whereby the students expect to be catered to, and administration expects nothing but excellence and pride, but no one is willing to start it positively.

Solving it is no small task, but one side has to start. There are those who did their part and cleaned up the train wreck of computer parts in Stuart.

The intent of the event was great, but things got quickly out of hand; greedy and disrespectful actions, such as those brought out during the fall cleaning, are the reason events that could make the campus better sometimes stall.

Everyone can stand to be mindful of how our actions can be disruptive of the campus, that we all want to improve.

Tales from the Victory Lap:
Student fees fund campus activities

Miriam Schmid & William Syvongsa
TECHNEWS WRITERS

The last time you were billed from IIT, you may have noticed a line reading Activity fee, $110. You probably paid your bill including that random fee and didn't think much about it. That $110 may not seem like too much to you, but multiplied by the current student population of IIT of over 7,000 students, this sum of money is quite significant. Now you are probably interested what happens to this money. Each semester, it is deposited into the SAF, Student Activities Fund, that is, in turn allocated to student organizations.

In a 1932 issue of the Armour Tech News, we first find mention of the activities fee. Since that time, the fee has fluctuated but as far as can be told from TechNews archives, the student activities fee has been collected consistently over the years. Currently, this fund is allocated through a branch of the Student Government Association, Finance Board. According to the Finance Board Guidelines, "Finance Board aims to fairly allocate the [SAF] to promote student life and increase student involvement at Illinois Tech."

According to the SGA constitution and bylaws, "Finance Board shall consist of the Chair of Finance Board and nine members. Each member shall serve as an advisor to a number of student organizations, and shall advise them during the budget process of requesting funds from the Student Activity Fund."

This board of students is chosen after they are "nominated by a member of the student body, recommended by the Finance Board Selection Commission, and approved by a two-thirds vote of the Senate." The selection commission "shall consist of the Chair of the Finance Board, SGA Advisor, current members of Finance Board, and two to five student representatives, to be elected by the Senate."

This is a lot of information but we want you to fully understand the importance of both the Student Activities Fund and Finance Board. Because of the two, your college experience can be a rich and diverse journey.

From the Outside: Will

Unlike Miriam, I have not really dealt with Finance Board too much in my time here at IIT. I'm more familiar with the SAF and what it could do for me. From my various roles in different student organizations, I have come to rely on the SAF as a way to enrich my student organizations' mission and goals as well as provide something to IIT's campus and students. The SAF can be used towards four categories for student organizations. Those are programming, conferences/competitions, operations, and capital.

Programming is the most important one; it is the one that students see the most. Did you know that Homecoming is funded mainly through the SAF? Or that Taste of IIT can happen because of the SAF? That Bill Nye was able to come to our campus because of the SAF? Even if you are not involved, student organizations are able to program events that appeal to you and hope that you will attend.

Conferences/competitions is the next category. Students organizations are able to fund some of the costs for heading to conferences or competitions. This means that professional organizations are able to attend networking conferences or career fairs. This also means that some student organizations are able to partially fund trips to compete against other schools in big competitions. As financially conscious students, this opportunity to travel without shelling out the full cost is underutilized but also something we need to be careful of; we need to advertise better these opportunities since everyone is paying into the SAF.

Operations is a category that funds printing money or supplies that will expire after a year and are needed to keep the student organization running.

Capital is a category that funds permanent item that other students will then have access to after purchase. For example, a grill has recently been purchased through a student organization and other student organizations are allowed access to this capital item per stipulations created under the capital category outlines.

Through the SAF, we have access to a lot and I wish the general population of IIT students would use it more. You don't have to get involved necessarily but attend events hosted by the school. There are so many that are free because of the SAF. You're paying $110. Why wouldn't you want to make sure you're getting your money's worth?

The Insider: Miriam

I have learned a lot about Finance Board. I started out as a Finance Board representative giving three Saturdays a semester to 14 to 16 hour hearings and deliberations to allocate funding. I became President of Union Board, which receives significant funding from Finance Board. I then spent two years on Judicial Board (one as Chief Justice) hearing more than 25 petitions regarding Finance Board and SAF funding. I have allocated SAF funds, I have received SAF funds, and I have made decisions regarding contested allocations.

From these experiences, I have come to realize is that Finance Board is the most important piece of student life at IIT. While some may question the rationale of allowing a board of students to manage this amount of funding, I believe that is exactly why student life continues to grow and reflect the interests of the students at IIT. This allows for more flexibility, adaptability, and investment of the students into student life.

As Chief Justice, I spent hours hearing from student organizations, which were dissatisfied with Finance Board, their processes, and funding decisions.

While I believe that there are Finance Board has room to improve, I believe the best way for organizations and students to work effectively with Finance Board is through a greater understanding of the history and role of Finance Board, but more importantly playing an active role in the selection of new Finance Board representatives. In order for Finance Board to function at its best, students like you have to take an interest into 'who' is placed on the board before complaining about Finance Board.

The next time that you meet with your Finance Board representative, take some time to thank him or her for all of the work that he or she puts in. From experience, Finance Board is likely the most underappreciated position a student can have at IIT despite being one of the most critical to student life on campus.

My challenge to all students is this. Next time nominations are open for Finance Board, make sure that you are nominating strong candidates who are responsible and can fairly make decisions in the best interest of all the students at Illinois Tech.

Working together we can ensure that this awesome opportunity of funding from the students, by student, for the betterment of student life is maintained at Illinois Tech.