

# TechNews

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## President & Provost Forum responds to student concerns

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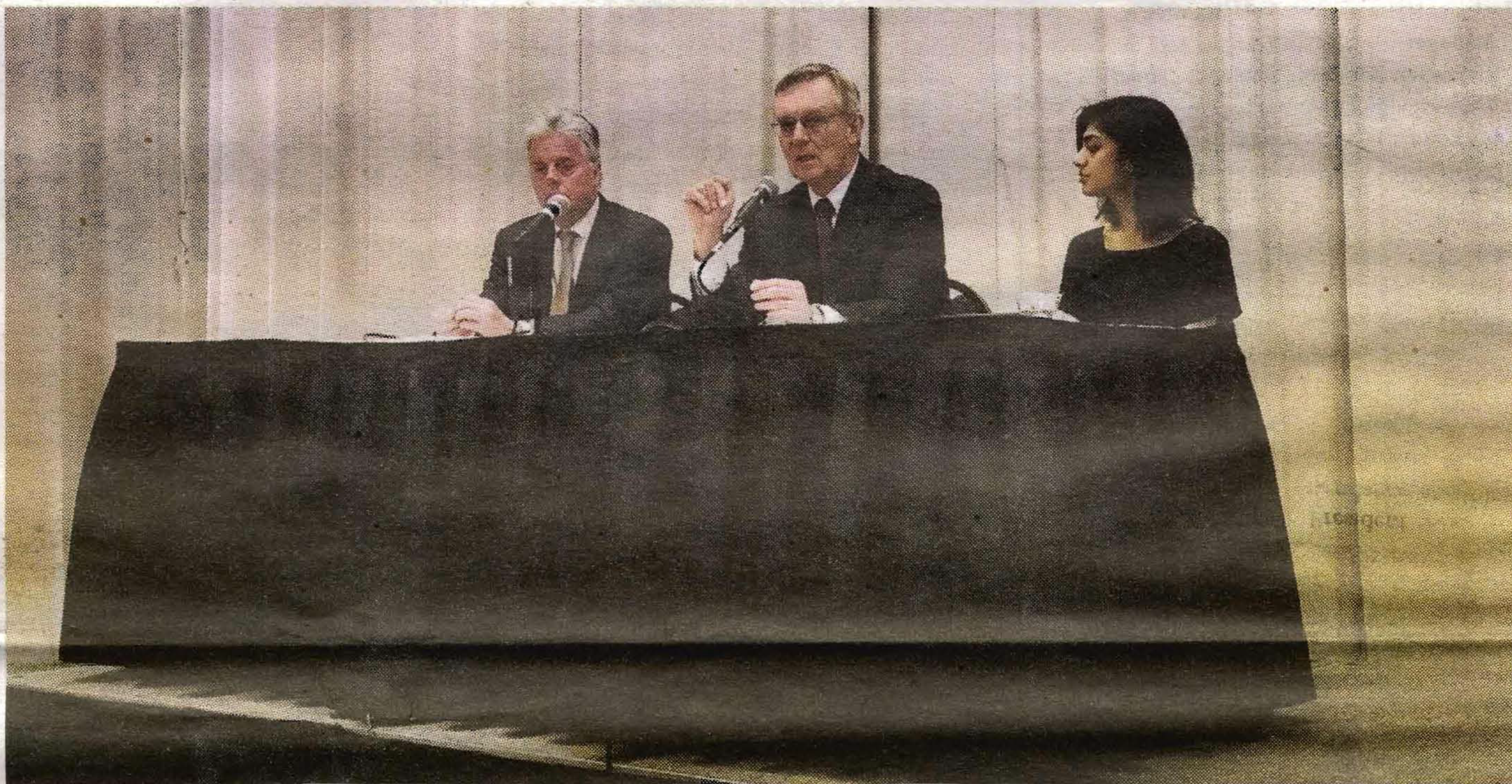
With lots of changes coming to the university in the future, including a new Innovation Center, a solidified transition to National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division Three athletics, and a recently-announced 3.8 percent tuition increase, there are plenty of actions being made by university administration that have the student body asking questions. Luckily, each semester, the students, staff, and faculty gather to hear the answers to these questions with the President and Provost Forum.

Members of the university community came to the Hermann Hall ballroom on Tuesday, March 4 during the lunch hour for the Spring 2014 President and Provost Forum hosted by the Student Government Association (SGA). In what SGA President Rani Shaw called "one of the most well-attended President and Provost Forums ever," the Forum aimed to increase transparency of Illinois Tech's administration by giving students an opportunity to ask questions of university President John Anderson and Provost Alan Cramb.

Akinade Aderle, SGA Vice President of Academic Affairs introduced this semester's President and Provost Forum. Aderle explained that the format of the forum would be to follow certain categories for questions to shape the conversation. As with previous years, SGA offered students the opportunity to submit their questions ahead of time through an online form.

The first set of questions focused on the upcoming Illinois Institute of Technology Innovation Center. The first question, received via the online form, asked the administration what the general plans for the Innovation Center would be, including where it will be located, when it scheduled to be completed, and how much it will cost. President Anderson responded that the innovation center will be a new building on campus that will allow students to focus on application of what they know and allow them to come up with new ideas. He explained that the Innovation Center does not yet have a solidified location, but that it will be on-campus. The President went on to clarify the timeline for the new building, saying that the building will be designed by late summer of 2015 with construction beginning by 2016 with a two-year construction period. The building will house Illinois Tech's Institute of Design, IPRO classes, Entrepreneurship Academy, Leadership Academy, and the Idea Shop, which will be moved from its current location in Tech Park. President Anderson closed the question by talking about money; the goal for construction is \$40 million dollars, and we are currently at the \$30 million dollar mark.

A follow up question was asked by a member of the audience, inquiring as to how all members of the IIT community—not just those in engineering majors—will be involved in activities in the Innovation Center. Provost Cramb answered the question, mentioning that the Innovation Center will be something



used by all, where students of all backgrounds can work together to use each other's strengths. President Anderson added that the new building will allow more people of different backgrounds to be brought together under one roof to further collaboration and innovation.

The second category for questions was related to the university's change from being a member of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics to the NCAA. The first question in this category—submitted via the online form—asked the President about some restrictions being placed on athletes during the transition between the two organizations. President Anderson verified that students who received 4-year athletic scholarships will retain those scholarships until they use up all of their eligibility, and that after that time no more athletic scholarships will be offered to incoming



students.

An additional question on the topic of athletics came from the audience; a student asked how IIT intends to incentivize students to compete in sports at the college level without rewarding athletic scholarships. President Anderson responded that the incentive of athletics should not be payment, but the experience and character-building that comes along with playing a varsity team sport. He and the Provost also mentioned that expanding athletics facilities is something that the university is looking toward as our athletics program expands and grows.

Another question, still on the topic of sports, was asked as a follow up from the audience; it noted that student athletes need to be supported more and asked if the administration has any plans for further supporting

their student athletes. President Anderson suggested that faculty attendance at athletic events would help facilitate further support, and recommended that student athletes invite their professors to their competitions. Provost Cramb also says that he appreciates the support that the student community has given athletes so far and thinks that even more can be done.

After these questions, the floor was opened to students, allowing them to ask any remaining questions before moving on to the final category of questions. A question came from the audience regarding underutilized spaces on campus, including Main Building and a few uninhabited residence halls. President Anderson answered that Main Building needs to be modified such that is safe before being used fully again. "The building only has 35,000 feet of space to use, and it would take a fortune to fix it. There's no reason to use donations or tuition money to renovate the building; it's not something we need right now." Provost Cramb answered the half of the question regarding residence halls. He mentioned that we have a growing student body and are approaching maximum occupancy in student housing. The Provost says the two buildings should be back and being actively used by students within a few years as our student population grows.

The final category for questions for the event regarded tuition. A question submitted from the online form asked the President and Provost what the causes for an increase in tuition are, and what steps are being taken to ensure that IIT remains affordable to students. President Anderson said, "What's listed as tuition and what's paid as tuition are very different things. Nearly all of our students received a substantial amount of financial aid." He also added that tuition increases are also used to improve the university: "We don't want to stay stagnant; we want the university to become stronger and more visible."