

TechNews

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MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to promote student discussion and bolster the IIT community by providing a newspaper that is highly accessible, a stalwart of journalistic integrity, and a student forum. TechNews is a dedicated to the belief that a strong campus newspaper is essential to a strong campus community.

GENERAL INFORMATION

TechNews is written, managed, and edited by the students of, and funded in part by, Illinois Institute of Technology. The material herein does not necessarily reflect the opinions of Illinois Institute of Technology or the editors, staff, and advisor of TechNews. There will be no censorship of TechNews publication by the faculty or staff of IIT. Sole authority and responsibility for publication and adherence to the values set forth in this policy rests with the TechNews staff. This paper seeks to bring together the various segments of the Illinois Tech community and strives through balance and content to achieve a position of respect and excellence. TechNews strives for professionalism with due respect to the intellectual values of the university and its community. All material submitted becomes the property of TechNews, and is subject to any editorial decisions deemed necessary.

SUBMISSIONS

TechNews is published on the Tuesday of each week of the academic year. Deadline for all submissions and announcements is 11:59 p.m. on the Friday prior to publication. Articles, photos, and illustrations must be submitted electronically to the TechNews website at technewsiit.com.

EDITORIAL POLICY

The editors reserve the right to determine if submitted material meets TechNews' policy and standards. For more information about our editorial standards, please email assteditor@technewsiit.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor may be submitted by anyone, but are subject to review by the Editor-in-Chief. All letters-to-the-editor become the property of TechNews upon submission. TechNews does not accept or publish anonymous letters or stories.

ADVERTISING

Legitimate paid advertisements, from within or outside the IIT community, which serve to produce income for the paper, are accommodated. TechNews holds the right to deny any advertisement unsuitable for publication. Media Kits are available upon request. Ad space is limited and is taken on a first-come, first-serve basis. Contact the Business Manager at business@technewsiit.com for more information.

LOCAL & NATIONAL ADVERTISERS

To place an ad, contact us via email at business@technewsiit.com.

Tricia Downing: an inspirational woman

Shireen Gul
COPY EDITOR

It was a regular Thursday evening and I was working on my assignments when I suddenly realized that Tricia Downing would be here for Women's History Month but I didn't want to go alone on this cold evening. So I asked my few friends if they were willing to come along with me but they refused to accompany me, as they were tired. Because I really wanted to go there, I got dressed up and went there with the intention that I will come back in 10 minutes but who knew this event will be so inspirational.

I got some free food (which is always awesome) and entered the auditorium. The moment I entered the room, I saw this beautiful lady sitting on her throne (calling that a wheel-chair for her would be an insult) with her head high and smiling face, spreading her positive vibes around every corner.

The moment I saw her all I could think of was that how blessed I am. I realized that how easy it is to be thankful when we are being blessed, but the challenge is to be thankful when times are tough. A moment before I was complaining about The Commons food but she made me realize that just remember it could be worse than what it is now.

Tricia Downing, a passionate cyclist was living a perfect life 14 years back. That time she was only 31 years old and she already had everything she could have asked for. It was in the summer of 2000, when she drove across the country in 23 days and completed 18 races. She returned from her adventure and was all ready for a new beginning: her dream job awaited for her, and, was steadfast to make the next summer the year when she would make another world record in cycling. But who knew what the future is holding for her.

It was September 17, 2000, one sunny Colorado afternoon and like always she started her day with what she loves the most. She was training on her bicycle with her friend Matt, when not only she but her complete life collided with a car. It was that dark day in this athlete life when everything changed in a minute, and in a blink she becomes paralyzed from the chest down.

As mentioned on her website, "a competitive road and track cyclist and lifelong athlete, losing the use of her legs is devastating on all accounts.

As she re-learns to do everything

from sitting straight up to navigating through her house in a wheelchair to returning to work and operating a handcycle, her grueling recovery takes her to the very core of her athletic mettle."

Sitting in that room and listening to her that how each day she struggled with her life made me feel so small in front of her. I just kept on thinking about all those times when I would complain about every useless thing, which can be changed and even if it didn't, it would have not made a difference. I kept looking at her shining face and thought, what if I could not walk or was bed ridden for a while? Would I be able to have same positive energy within me or I would have died from depression. I just looked down and said, "I am a healthy person who can walk," so I have no rights to complain about my life.

Trust me, it's not that easy to face this society with a wheelchair, no matter how hard you try but somewhere in your heart you know



Photo courtesy of Shireen Gul

that people are looking at you with pity. They feel bad for you. Downing was once walking, not only walking but was an athlete and she knows exactly how it feels to walk on your own feet. It's not easy to overcome this feeling but this lady did it.

When she was sharing her experience of the first triathlon, I was amused to see her passion for sports. I was listening to her single word and was watching her single movement. As a communication student I could see that she is doing everything as a normal person would do while giving presentation.

She was moving back-forward, moving her hands, having eye-contact with her audience, cracking jokes to give some comic relief and smiling after every few minute, just to make sure that we are not sad but happy to see her. I can still hear her voice when she said these golden words about her experience, "When I entered the field, all people could see was my disability but when I finished the race all they could see was my ability."

Yes, these words made me think about my abilities and give me inspiration to be better every day. When she was telling us about the time when she moved from rehab to her own house and her all family left her all alone there, that was the moment when my heart broke into thousand pieces. I so badly wished that I knew her that time so I could have helped her. But before my this feeling could go further she looked at me and smiled and said that this was the time which made her stronger, because she ignored the little demon on her shoulder and promised herself that she will do something remarkable in her life.

Yet, she did and till now she has completed over 100 races, including marathons, duathlons and triathlons. She was the first female paraplegic to complete an Ironman triathlon and qualified for the Hawaii Ironman World Championships in 2006 and 2010. And another great achievement for her was when in 2011, she competed as part of the U.S. Rowing team at the World Championships in Bled, Slovenia.

What a true inspiration you are Tricia Downing. I am so glad I attended your inspirational speech and learnt how to be thankful. I thought I am strong but I was wrong, I am not an inch as strong as you are. You are a living role model for all those women who think they can't do anything. I am blessed to meet you.

Thanks to IIT Office of Spiritual Life and Service Learning and IIT Campus Life for bringing her here. Trust me we all should really start being thankful for things we have in life, and what happens, because tomorrow - what we have, could be gone.

If anyone is willing to be inspired then you must order her book *Cycle of Hope*, which chronicles Downing's journey from the first terrifying moments of impact with the car through rehab and her emergence as a world-class athlete. Please visit her website for more information trishdowning.com and you can also email her at: trish@trishdowning.com

A letter to my fellow students

Olurotimi Akindele
TECHNEWS WRITER

Dear fellow students, I am Timi. Olurotimi Akindele: a third year student-athlete studying political science. I humbly write to you, as I have now announced my candidacy for the Student Government Association (SGA) Presidency.

My reason for running is purposeful. My aim and objectives are sound, good, and detailed. I have a hope and passion to see a well-rounded IIT community. A community where friendships are built and enriched, a place where education remains valued, and a realm where the hope of a better tomorrow is continually realized through an attentive and responsive Student Government that is a vibrant, productive clear voice for all IIT students.

It is my intention to make those of us who are unaware of the SGA's positive influence on campus aware of its activities. Besides, the positive aspect of every SGA is that it has the means and ability to affect the well being of every student for the better. It is every student's classical medium. And if I were to be elected President, I intend to utilize the power of the SGA Presidency to improve our overall IIT ex-

perience; yes, for you my fellow student.

I seek to use great care, effort and efficient coordination, in every SGA idea, operation, and plan that benefits us students: plans to create more collaboration amongst organizations, plans to improve athletic enthusiasm and participation on campus, plans to connect IIT organizations with other universities and possibly co-host events together, plans for professional development days, and plans to invite elected officials for civic engagement interactions and thus foster community service outreach.

Most importantly, one of my proposed plans is to have a supplemental transcript for IIT students. This transcript will be an addition to our current academic transcript. We shall move to call the proposed transcript, the "ECA" or an "Extra Curricular Activities Transcript."

The need for this type of transcript is that it complements a student's academic progress and resume. It is a concise transcript that entails and highlights a student's non-academic success, growth, and competency during their time here, at IIT. Basically, it serves as a portfolio that I hope the IIT administration will use to authenticate and assist students in documenting their leadership roles, professional activities, athletic awards/participations,

and any outside of the classroom attainments. It is important to create such a transcript because it will convey and shape IIT students holistically, show how well rounded the student is, and it will enhance the student's application for jobs and scholarships.

This is one of my ideas for the IIT community, and a priority objective. I intend to passionately campaign for it.

Please note that if you have questions, let me know, and if you have ideas, send them to me. They are welcome and will be further developed if necessary. I promise dignity, productivity, vibrancy, and professionalism; along with a good and steady stride. These are fair and doable ideas. So let's do it.

SGA will grow towards efficient pathways, and I intend to invite and include various minds to make better the operational ends of the SGA to form a merged consensus. I aim to revamp, refocus, and renew SGA so that campus life can be improved.

A place where friendships are formed, where partnerships are built, and where great ideas are nurtured for future times. This new SGA will move to be a propellant for these pathways. Let's make IIT better. I humbly seek your support and vote. Tuesday, April 8, 2014 is Election Day. Come out and vote. Thank you very much for reading.