

OPINION

Read a review of the beverage
Soylent.

Page 2

CAMPUS

Check out an International Students
Feature about South Korea.

Page 4

SLIPSTICK

Turn to Slipstick for puzzles, poems,
more.

Pages 6-7

**TUESDAY,
JANUARY 31,
2017**

Volume 187 | Issue 2

technewsiit.com

TechNews

Student newspaper of Illinois Institute of Technology since 1928

OPINION 2
CAMPUS 3-5
SLIPSTICK 6-7

Illinois Tech's Health Physics Program celebrates its 20th anniversary

Reno Waswil

DISTRIBUTION MANAGER

The use of radiation by research, government, and industrial agencies, while providing many advantages, does introduce concerns about the health of workers and the general public who may be exposed to high-intensity radiation. Both ionizing and non-ionizing radiation emitted from nuclear power plants, medical equipment, research laboratories, etc. do not come without serious hazards, and because of that, such industries are in need of health physics at their facilities. A health physicist, according to the Health Physics Society's website, is an individual who "controls the beneficial use of radiation while protecting workers and the public from potential hazards."

Illinois Tech's own professional master's health physics program, a program in the Department of Physics which endeavors to train the future health physicists of the world, just so happens to be celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, and is doing so with pride.

Appointed the first full time

director of the program in 2013, Dr. Shih-Yew Chen is a leader in the radiation protection field. Dr. Chen has served as both a Senior Environmental Systems Scientist and Strategic Area Manager at Argonne National Laboratory, as well as on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Science Advisory Board/Radiation Committee, along with many other accolades related to the field. Last week, he agreed to speak to TechNews about the history of the program, what he has done to change the program since his appointment, and what he is planning to do to commemorate its anniversary.

According to Dr. Chen, the program started out in 1997 as an online master's program (an area in which Illinois Tech was a pioneer) by a group of physics faculty at the school in response to the recognized need for such professionals in industry.

Over the years, the program's enrollment has held steady at 30 to 40 students at a time, many of whom were professionals already in the career pursuing further education (a group that the program is mostly geared towards). "This is quite remarkable," Dr. Chen commented, "as many of the health

physics programs have experienced a severe decline." He chalks this up to the institution's reputation and recruitment. Illinois Tech separates itself from its academic peers by being a major institution in professional development with industrial focus," relays Dr. Chen.

Dr. Chen cites four major changes to the program since becoming its director. These are: appointing an academic advisory board of national health physics leaders, updating the curriculum, appointing qualified faculty to specialized areas, and boosting marketing and recruitment efforts. All of these, he alleges, have, with their combined effort, made the university "a premium health physics institution in the nation." He spoke also about promoting recruiting efforts to local students so as to complement the large online enrollment population with a more pronounced on-campus one.

Speaking more on the merits of the program and its students, Dr. Chen boasted that "it is quite striking that IIT health physics students have won in three consecutive years (2014-2016) one of the most prestigious [awards], The Dade Moeller Scholarship

Award! This alone could attest to the fact about the quality of IIT Health Physics education."

As for the anniversary of the program, Dr. Chen calls it a major accomplishment, stating that it "represents IIT's academic excellence overall, and further affirms the leadership status long held by the program." Plans to commemorate the occasion, both on campus and nationally, are in order. These include inviting several prominent speakers in the field to the campus to give talks and seminars throughout the year, a campus celebration in the spring, and a "major event at this year's Health Physics Society meeting in Raleigh, North Carolina in July."

Finally, Dr. Chen announced a video series in the works, near completion, that is being made with the help of IIT Online under the name "Rad Hawks Talks." It is named after the Illinois Tech Student Chapter of the Health Physics Society "Rad Hawks," which was formally established last year. The video project and is set to air soon over several media outlets, once approved.

Protesters take stand against Trump's immigration ban at O'Hare



Photos by Anoop Sundararajan