Why do Student Access, Success, and Diversity Initiatives matter at Illinois Tech?

As the job market continues to change, it is important that Illinois Tech graduates continue to stand out as innovative, entrepreneurial individuals who have received a distinctive education. It is our task as an institution to create pathways and develop support systems to empower our students and community. In order to accomplish this we seek to create an ecosystem of shared learning among students, educators, employers, and the Chicago community. By establishing partnerships across university departments as well as with alumni, corporations, communities, and national foundations, we are better able to inspire our students and create opportunities for them to develop their ideas and aspirations beyond the classroom.

During the past year, the Office of Student Access, Success, and Diversity Initiatives (SASDI) joined with Career Services to further our mission to support and empower students’ access to and success in higher education and career development. Our programs and initiatives over the past year further this mission, and, as we look ahead, we hope you will join us as we continue to support transformational ventures at Illinois Tech.

Gerald P. Doyle, Vice Provost
Student Access, Success, and Diversity Initiatives

Mission

The mission of Illinois Institute of Technology’s Office of Student Access, Success, and Diversity Initiatives (SASDI) is to create partnerships which support and empower students’ access to and success in higher education and career development. We build and steward sustainable and transformational partnerships through impactful initiatives. This approach contributes toward the diversity of Illinois Tech and supports mutually beneficial community relationships in alignment with the university’s strategic plan.

Vision

We seek to become a source of and resource for great ideas and best practices that are inspiring and impactful. In collaboration with our partners, we aim to expand innovative pathways and support systems for a diversity of students to access and succeed in their higher education and career development. We do this to develop global learners into culturally competent and career-ready graduates, thus contributing to Illinois Institute of Technology’s role as a leader in the fields of STEM+ education.
**Through Access:** We seek to identify and enhance the academic progress and career development of students through a combination of imaginative and persistent educational approaches of innovative and global learning.

**Through Success:** We seek to create an innovative educational environment that provides global learners with equitable support and the proper opportunities to develop and achieve their dreams, inspire generations, and succeed as diverse and culturally competent graduates.

**Through Diversity Initiatives:** We seek to increase the diversity of the Illinois Tech community in celebration and recognition of the value of the various facets of diversity, contributing toward an environment in which the STEM+ classroom and workforce reflect the rich diversity of Chicago, the U.S., and the world.

**IMPACT AREAS**

**CREATING PATHWAYS TO ILLINOIS TECH AND DEVELOPING SUPPORT SYSTEMS**

**Diversity Initiatives** By supporting outreach and initiatives targeting a diversity of students, SASDI staff members raise awareness about the opportunities at Illinois Tech.

**Transfer Partnerships** By partnering with area community colleges, with a special emphasis on the City Colleges of Chicago, we support the creation of pathways for transfer students.

**High School Engagement** SASDI’s events and programs, most notably the IIT Boeing Scholars Academy, engage high school teachers and students, which enriches our students and educators, exciting them about science, technology, engineering and math.

**Career Services** Career Services enhances student success and adds value to an Illinois Tech degree by creating opportunities to connect with employers and improve job search skills.

**Community Outreach** SASDI staff host educational events and programs that build mutually beneficial and sustainable relationships within the Bronzeville community and the greater City of Chicago.

**International Outreach and Engagement** In order to support Illinois Tech’s global reputation, SASDI staff coordinate with internal and external partners to facilitate pathways for international student enrollment, ensure the success of our international students by offering a wide range of support, and introduce visitors to our campus and resources.

**Awards and Recognition**

**Humanitarian Education Award** - Syrian American Medical Society

- Gerald Doyle

**Civil Rights Award** - Vision

- Gerald Doyle

**National Latino Education Institute Young Emerging Leaders Award**

- Tanya Cabrera

**Chicago Scholars’ 35 Under 35: Young Leaders Making an Impact**

- Annie Senior

- Chicago Public School students visited Main Campus during Fall STEM Launch.

- Lydia Patton delivered the 37th Commencement Address to Antigua State College.

- Ayisat Riley and Lisa Montgomery attended the National STEM League STEMFest for Chicago-area high school students.
Ongoing Programs and Initiatives

Diversity Initiatives

Many SASDI diversity initiatives target a multitude of college students who face significant challenges in completing higher education. Our outreach seeks to help students and their families overcome major barriers to enrollment, such as lack of knowledge of pathways to higher education and concerns about funding their education.\(^1\) The office also helps to support their success by supporting the student organizations on Illinois Tech’s campus that provide the important social support that is proven to help them continue pursuing their degrees and career goals.\(^2\) Through such efforts, SASDI staff support these students’ access to an Illinois Tech education and their success on campus, thereby increasing the overall diversity of our community.

Transfer Partnerships

By partnering with local community colleges, the SASDI team helps to develop a pipeline for community college students to successfully transfer to Illinois Tech. The Presidential Scholars scholarship program has helped to attract more than 250 high-achieving community college students to Illinois Tech. Both the Presidential Scholars and FastForward to Illinois Tech programs provide cohorts for students to support one another in their transition, which may help mitigate the phenomenon of transfer shock\(^3\) and has been proven to contribute towards degree completion.\(^4\)

High School Engagement

The SASDI team engages area high school students through a variety of programs and events such as the IIT Boeing Scholars Academy, Navy STEM Launch, Engineering Career Day, and Young Women in STEM Day. These activities help to close the Aspirations-Attainment Gap in underrepresented ethnic groups by equipping students with knowledge of college admissions and financial aid processes and exposing them to college cultural norms, all of which are proven to be significant factors in post-secondary enrollment.\(^5\)

Career Services

In 2014, Career Services joined with SASDI under Vice Provost Gerald Doyle. The SASDI and Career Services teams have begun the process of integration, creating new initiatives such as VIP Career Camps, After-hours with a Career Development Coach, programming based on the 2-Hour Job Search process, and the restructuring of student employment processes. Ultimately, the goal of Career Services is to streamline essential activities such as employer relations, increase collaboration across the university in support of student career development,
provide engaging, practical events and workshops for students and alumni to learn about the job search and career development processes, and connect with potential employers. By streamlining these essential functions, students will be better able to develop core career competencies which are proven to lead to greater career success. In the future, Career Services will develop a number of initiatives to increase partnerships with alumni, corporations, and organizations in support of the career development of Illinois Tech students.

Community Outreach

In conducting community outreach, such as The Wild Formula Learning Network and Parent University, the SASDI team seeks to fulfill the mission and vision of Illinois Tech by heightening the university’s reputation in the city of Chicago. SASDI also believes that “by doing what is needed, our [university]... will also be generating insights and new knowledge from [outreach].”

International Outreach & Engagement

The SASDI team works in collaboration with IIT Admissions to support enrollment pathways and continues working with students after their arrival to support their success while at Illinois Tech. The team has two established cohort-based initiatives for Syrian and Caribbean students and has recently begun a new initiative for Palestinian students. The cohort model was chosen because of its ability to provide exceptional support and increased interpersonal connections within the university. The Caribbean and Syrian student initiatives have both demonstrated the success of this model and, in order to support these and other enrollment initiatives, as well as the university’s international reputation, SASDI also works in collaboration with EducationUSA, WorldChicago, and the Institute of International Education to promote the opportunities available at Illinois Tech and bring visitors to Illinois Tech’s campus.

Career Services

Student Engagement

700+ students served through workshops
1,300+ students served through one-on-one coaching sessions
2,900+ semesters worth of student employment

Co-op/Internship

Registered Semesters
578 in 2013-2014
662 in 2014-2015

Employer Engagement

4,725 Jobs posted in Jobs4Hawks (since 8/1/2014)
1,407 Employers active in Jobs4Hawks (since 8/1/2014)
280 Employers at Career Fairs and Career Connections
34 Employers doing Employee Spotlights
41 On-campus interviews

Placement

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>94%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Non-Doctoral</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Doctoral</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*79% of international students remained in the U.S. for work or continued studies.

New Initiatives

FastForward to Illinois Tech

FastForward to Illinois Tech was developed in response to low transfer and completion rates of traditional-aged students (defined as those attending college directly after high school) who begin their college careers at community colleges. By offering support and mentorship to community college students in the Chicago area who applied to Illinois Tech out of high school, FastForward seeks to play a part in increasing completion and transfer rates among this cohort.

FastForward began as a pilot program in the summer of 2014 with seven students, all of whom had applied to Illinois Tech for Fall of 2014 but were starting at an area community college. A kick-off lunch was held in August and students were paired with peer mentors (current Illinois Tech students who had transferred from a community college). The students were invited to Illinois Tech events and given student IDs, which allowed them to access campus facilities such as the library. SASDI staff members have had check-ins with these students throughout the year to ensure that they are progressing with their studies. FastForward will transition to the Admissions staff for further development.

VIP Career Camps

VIP Career Camps were created as intensive workshops to assist students in preparing for their job search. These interactive, half-day workshops cover basic job search skills, such as resume and cover letter writing, utilizing social media, and interviewing. They also teach students and alumni how to highlight their unique skill sets to employers, build their brand and social capital, and successfully network. Attendees have the opportunity to incorporate what they learned through a series of practice activities throughout the workshop. The VIP Career Camps have been especially successful in reaching students who have had little or no contact with Career Services and in helping students identify their own level of preparedness for their job search. Both of these factors have encouraged many attendees to make appointments with Career Services staff in order to improve their skills beyond the introduction they received at the VIP Career Camp.

The current format of the VIP Career Camp is open to all students and alumni but focuses on soon-to-be graduates and recent alumni who are transitioning into a new career. These groups were targeted because they have the most imminent need for job search assistance, but future VIP Career Camps may be focused on different audiences such as Master’s or First Year students, each of which are at distinctly different points in their career development.
Parent University

Parent University was created to provide parents of first-generation, aspiring college students with the knowledge and resources needed to support their children throughout the college preparation and admissions process. Ultimately, this helps parents understand that, with the right tools, college is attainable for their children in addition to illuminating a pathway to their enrollment at Illinois Tech. Parent University upholds Illinois Tech’s strategic vision in being a positive influence within the city of Chicago, thereby enhancing our reputation and visibility as a university.

The pilot Parent University was held in March 2015 and covered basic topics related to college preparation, admissions, and financial aid. The event was well received by the attendees and was held again in June. Recognizing that many parents put their own education and careers on hold to focus on their children, SASDI will be expanding the program by working with Career Services to invite parents to various career skills workshops—once again bringing community members and their children to the Illinois Tech campus and exposing them to the benefits of college resources.

Young Women in STEM Day

Young Women in STEM Day started as Women’s Day, an annual program run by IIT Undergraduate Admissions as an outreach event to introduce Chicago-area high school girls to STEM and other majors offered at Illinois Tech. This year SASDI managed the event, which has been held on campus in some form for the past eight years. Under SASDI’s direction, the event was rebranded as Young Women in STEM Day and emphasized reaching high school girls and their parents at an accessible level, allowing Illinois Tech to develop area female high school students who will be able to make educated decisions about their futures in college and careers.

The purpose of Young Women in STEM Day is to encourage more young women to pursue STEM and access an education at Illinois Tech, ultimately addressing the deficit of young women pursuing careers in these areas. The event requires the participation of a variety of campus partners, including numerous academic departments and student organizations. In the future, SASDI plans to include Illinois Tech alumni, corporations, and companies in the event to complete the progression of real career paths for the young women in attendance who are interested in pursuing a career in STEM.

Navy STEM Launch

Navy STEM Launch is a program whose goal is “to expose high school students enrolled in Chicago Public Schools to the STEM fields and careers in the U.S. Navy, equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary to pursue higher education and serve as leaders in their communities and beyond.” During the summer of 2014, SASDI staff ran the summer portion of the program at Illinois Tech and managed the academic year activities.
Who We Are

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Vice Provost of Student Access, Success, and Diversity Initiatives

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Information provided as of July 1, 2015.