

May 16, 2008

[The following letter was sent to all students admitted to the Department of Biomedical Engineering.]

The Office of Undergraduate Admission has notified me of your acceptance to Illinois Institute of Technology's undergraduate program in biomedical engineering. As Director of the Pritzker Institute of Biomedical Science and Engineering and Chairman of the Department of Biomedical Engineering (BME), I congratulate you on the hard work and demonstrated achievement on which your acceptance was based. At IIT, you will be joining a group of students who, like you, are highly motivated and accomplished both in the classroom and in the community. I have outlined below some of the advantages that IIT's BME program will offer high-caliber students like you.

Multi-faceted Students and Faculty

Biomedical engineering is one of the fastest growing engineering fields and our department is rapidly expanding to meet the increased demand. At IIT, our BME program is specializing in neural engineering, cell and tissue engineering, and medical imaging. We also have an interest in biomaterials. All tracks prepare students for advanced study, either in graduate school or medicine, as well as for positions in industry. Our student population is approximately 35% female and 65% male. Our first two graduating classes have distinguished themselves by being admitted to medical schools at the University of Chicago and the Mayo Clinic and graduate schools at Cornell, Georgia Tech, and Yale. BME graduates have also secured positions at Medtronic, Baxter Labs and Abbott Labs. Our faculty is also quite diversified, consisting of 4 female and 8 male members. They are a young faculty, but are rapidly becoming known for their capabilities in research and education.

New Teaching Labs and Classrooms

Of particular note, we have just opened our four undergraduate teaching laboratories and our brand new departmental space in Wishnick Hall. The labs are equipped with state-of-the-art resources to help students appreciate various types of behavior important in biomedical engineering, especially human signaling and sensing and how such measurements reveal the inner workings of many of the sensory organs. If you are planning to be in Chicago and would like to visit, please do so and see what our students are doing in classes, laboratories and research.

Undergraduate Research Opportunities

With respect to research opportunities, we encourage and facilitate the opportunity for students to participate with faculty in their labs alongside graduate students. On average, BME faculty mentor three to five undergraduate students each year. We have a summer research opportunity funded by the NSF known as Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) in diabetes. About 50 students have participated in this program during the last three years. The program's students are supported for a 10-week period by either NSF or the BME Department through the award of Ross scholarships.

Opportunity to Customize Curriculum

We also encourage students to consider study abroad, either during their academic year or a summer semester. I heartily endorse foreign learning as a broadening experience. I, myself, spent three years abroad after my doctoral studies and the experience was a very positive factor in the success of my career. I think it is even more so today when global opportunities abound. Michael Morley, one of our graduating students this year, has recently been awarded a Whitaker International Fellowship and will pursue his M.S. degree in Colombia. He looks forward with great anticipation to this adventure. You can read about Mike in the "Student Spotlight" section of the BME Web site (bme.iit.edu/).

Professional Society Network

We recently co-organized the national Biomedical Engineering Society meeting in Chicago in 2006 and the Midwest Bioengineering Conference in 2008 together with the bioengineering programs at Northwestern University and the University of Illinois at Chicago. Attendance at BMES 2006 was in excess of 2300 students, faculty and industry participants. The Web site is www.bmes.org/ for those interested in finding out more about the discipline. The recent MBEC meeting was held on the campus of IIT and more than 225 students, faculty and industry members attended the meeting, which was primarily focused on student careers and job opportunities. The Web site for the meeting is www.mbecconference.org/.

I would be happy to answer any specific questions you might have about the BME undergraduate program. Please contact me by email (turitto@iit.edu) or phone (312.567.5100). I look forward to seeing you in June/July for Summer Orientation.

Sincerely,

Vincent Turitto, D. Engr. Sci.
Chairman
Department of Biomedical Engineering