

July 2, 2008

[The following letter was sent to all students who have sent in an enrollment confirmation and deposit and are not majoring in Psychology.]

I am delighted to learn of your admission to Illinois Institute of Technology; welcome! IIT is a unique gem in one of the greatest cities in America. We are dedicated to education in the professions of law, architecture, engineering, psychology, design and the sciences. As Dean of the Institute of Psychology, I would like to offer you my perspective on what makes us special and how Psychology can strengthen your academic training regardless of your major.

In a recent meeting of the Association for Psychological Science, Nobel Prize winner Daniel Kahneman and other notables spoke about psychology as a hub science. They talked about the need for knowledge on human behavior, motivation and change across all disciplines and professions. They cited the top problems facing America and the world: illiteracy, violence, the environment, food and water shortages, and health. They spoke about the need for a convergence of knowledge from the various disciplines with the psychological science of human behavior so we are better able to solve the very human challenges before us. IIT is a place where that can happen, where the most important areas of work can be brought together to converge on these important problems, and where you are provided with an experience designed to allow you to begin to make a difference before you graduate. Allow me for a moment to describe why you should include Psychology as part of your future study while at IIT.

Stature and Quality

- ◇ Programs in the Institute of Psychology are separately accredited. The American Psychological Association accredits our clinical doctoral program; the Council of Rehabilitation Educators accredits our masters program in rehabilitation counseling. These groups assure quality of instruction; all of our full-time faculty members teach at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.
- ◇ Our industrial/organizational program was ranked 13 in the country by the Gourman Report of Princeton Review; our rehabilitation counseling program is ranked by *U.S. News* between numbers 5 and 13, depending on the year.
- ◇ Our faculty members serve as officers of several national-level professional organizations and edit a stunning array of professional journals.
- ◇ IIT is ranked one of “America’s Best Colleges 2008”—a key component of which is peer assessment—and a “Best Value” national university by *U.S. News & World Report*.

Major Tracks

Finding a focus is important for career planning. Psychology majors can achieve this focus by selecting a specialty track drawing on an array of courses across the university. These tracks include:

- ◇ Culture, Conflict and International Relations
Today's world is characterized by diversity, which contributes to the richness of culture, but also to tensions associated with those differences. The global economy and the reach of information systems transcend political and national boundaries. This specialty track

affords students the opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of issues associated with culture, international dimensions, and the fundamentals of conflict emergence and resolution. This is a great stepping-stone for graduate programs in business, social and personality psychology, political science, policy, and international relations.

◇ Psychology of Emerging Technologies

This specialty track focuses on the human dimension of technological development. Just as advances in computer science have led to changes in relationships, business communication, and accessibility, emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, and genetic engineering will produce equally broad social changes in the future. Students who complete this track may wish to pursue careers in law, sociology, genetic counseling, humanities, public policy, or journalism.

◇ The Human Environment

Architecture influences many aspects of human life, including work, leisure activities, family life, and, ultimately, social interaction. Public spaces and multiuse buildings represent current areas of particular interest to architects whose attention is increasingly set on sustainability. The built environment must now, more than ever before, include consideration of human needs, behavioral patterns, social concerns, resources both natural and economic, environmental consciousness, and planning for the future. The integration of human concerns in the designed environment is the focus of this specialty area. Relevant careers are architecture, city planning, urban development, resource management, business, conservation, human factors, and consulting psychology.

Minors

Within the Institute of Psychology, we offer three minors that are available to other majors. These represent areas of strength in psychology and are also important for psychology majors to know about because they are disciplinary subspecialties in which we offer graduate training and accelerated dual degree programs. These minors are Organizational Psychology, Psychology (general for non-psychology majors), and Rehabilitation Services.

In the Classroom

Except for the ever-popular introductory level courses, Psychology's classes are small—usually comprised of fewer than 20 students. Our faculty members typically use teaching models that encourage student participation. Faculty know students by name and work closely with them on research; our faculty care about their students, often maintaining contact long after students graduate. Complementing the full-time faculty are carefully selected part-time faculty, most of whom we have trained ourselves. Only a few schools can boast the individualized attention that we give to our psychology students.

The Campus Experience

Some believe that a technological university is not a place where students can have fun, but we know better. Our students do some of the coolest and craziest things. We have Greek chapters, pumpkin launches, sky diving, dancing, theatre, and student chapters of professional societies. Our campus is global in its flavor—food and faces—with students from over 20 different nations, each reflecting the culture and market of their home country. This ensures that our students learn to understand and work in ways that reflect the rainbow of the future.

Our faculty members are trained in the leading issues of their field and have been known to lead the sailing club, play chess with students over lunch, present at conferences with undergraduates, and eat in the cafeteria while discussing research with students. Our small class sizes and excellent faculty ensure that our students graduate with an academically sound and rigorous education tempered by the real-world expertise of accomplished, professional leaders.

Teamwork

IIT has a special program of interdisciplinary teamwork, which is a requirement for all undergraduate students. The Interprofessional Projects Program (IPRO) and Entrepreneurial Projects Program (EnPRO) engage teams of 10-12 students representing varying majors, including engineering, psychology, architecture, science and others, and encourages them to develop solutions to a real-world problem. The teams are diverse, with differing views and academic backgrounds that form the basis for innovation and creativity.

The IPRO/EnPRO courses allow students the experience of professional presentation when, at the end of the semester, they present to a team of judges as part of the university-wide celebration of IPRO Day. These communication and presentation skills are more typical of a graduate education, than an undergraduate one, and set our students apart from their peers in other universities. The IPRO, EnPRO, and psychology research experiences position psychology students to excel academically.

As you can see, the academic programs in the Institute of Psychology provide a whole host of possibilities. Everything involves psychology. Our programs can help you use your talents to launch your career, whether in psychology or an allied area.

We believe your college years will be one of the most exciting times in your life and I encourage you to include Psychology as part of your future study while at IIT, as I know it will be valuable to you throughout your lifetime. I am confident you will find us to be a place that will help provide the foundation to move your career forward to success.

Sincerely,

M. Ellen Mitchell, Ph.D.
Dean and Professor
Institute of Psychology