

February 12, 2010

Dear Student and Family:

In the foreword to *Opening Up Education*, scientist and author John Seely Brown writes that as “the world becomes more complex and interconnected at a lightning-fast pace,” the learning that we achieve together as a university community will need to combine the rich resources of an academic setting with those outside of the traditional classrooms and research labs. Furthermore, Brown notes that our focus need not only be on “*what* we learn but on *how* we learn,” and that our social learning “involves not only ‘learning about’ the subject matter but also ‘learning to be’ a full participant in the field.”¹

The ideas that Mr. Brown outlines in *Opening Up Education* are the very same ideas that have guided and shaped one of IIT’s great educational pillars for more than a decade. I would like to highlight IIT’s unique Interprofessional Projects Program (IPRO) course experience – the practical, hands-on experience we provide all undergraduates. We invite you to read the enclosed reprint of an article on the IPRO Program originally published in *interface* – a publication for the alumni and friends of the IIT Armour College of Engineering.

In addition, please visit the IPRO Web site, <http://ipro.iit.edu>, to learn much more about the team project-centered learning experiences that you can participate in as an IIT student. By clicking on the “IPRO Projects” link, you will discover a rich diversity of projects to suit every interest – encompassing service learning, venture development, sustainability, process improvement, and research investigation. Several have an international dimension that further broadens your perspectives and offers problem-solving opportunities for learning about other cultures and making the world a better place. IPRO team projects are offered year-round to fit every schedule and need.

Here are some highlights:

- All undergraduates complete two three-credit-hour IPRO team projects as part of IIT’s general education requirements, typically in the junior and senior years.
- Every semester, IIT organizes 40 to 50 IPRO project teams involving 450 or more students and numerous sponsoring organizations, with each team personally coached by one or more faculty members from across the university.
- A sampler of IPRO projects includes:
 - Creating a Zero Energy Lab
 - Preparing for the Solar Decathlon 2011 Competition
 - Assistive Devices for Blind Swimmers and Other Exercise Activities
 - Automating the Prediction of Failure in Wind Turbine Farms
 - Creating Learning Modules for Fab Lab at Museum of Science and Industry
 - Designing a Mobile Recording Studio
 - Robotic System Applications to Healthcare and Elderly Living Environments
 - The Acara Challenge: Affordable and Sustainable Water and Energy Solutions for India
- Through their IPRO project experience, students gain valuable knowledge in working as part of a multi-disciplinary team to solve a complex, open-ended problem; managing a project; strengthening communication skills; and developing perspectives on ethical decision-making.
- Recent sponsors, community partners, and collaborators include A. Finkl & Sons, Access Community Health Network, Argonne National Laboratory, Brookfield Zoo, Chicago Public Schools, Comcast, Electrical Contractors Association of the City of Chicago, Exelon, Honeywell, McDonald’s Corporation, Museum of Science and Industry, Morton Arboretum, National Pasteurized Egg, NAVTEQ, Queen of Peace High School, SmartSignal, Sargent & Lundy, and State Farm Insurance.
- The IPRO course is a great way for students to “learn the way they’ll work” in a collaborative fashion that leads to innovative solutions to problems.

- Through IPRO teams, employers get to know students and offer them internships or career positions as a result of their work in a team project.
- As IIT continues to reinvent the IPRO experience in the years ahead, students will learn the "IIT IPRO Way" which will inspire collaborative innovation through a greater emphasis on user-centered design, entrepreneurship and creativity.

I hope this brief introduction to the IPRO Program has given you a glimpse into one of the amazing educational opportunities available to you at IIT. If you would like to learn more about the IPRO Program, a specific current project, or share an idea that you might have for a future project, I encourage you to contact Tom Jacobius, Director of Interprofessional Studies, by phone at 312.567.3986 or via email to jacobius@iit.edu, or Jennifer Keplinger, Program Coordinator for the IPRO Program, by phone at 312.567.3940 or via email to keplinger@iit.edu.

Over the course of the next several months, I will continue this conversation with you as you prepare for your arrival on campus in August 2010. Our work together has already begun, and we look forward to your arrival as a member of our community, the IPROs that you will join and create, and the change that you will bring to the world.

On behalf of President John Anderson, Provost Alan Cramb, and the Offices of Admission and Financial Aid, please accept our very best wishes for the New Year for you and your family.

Sincerely,

Gerald P. Doyle
Vice Provost
Undergraduate Admission & Financial Aid

P.S. SAVE THE DATE: Please join us on Friday, April 23, 2010 for IPRO Day, where this semester's IPRO teams exhibit their work through presentations and exhibits; and compete for awards. More information is available at <http://ipro.iit.edu/ipro-day>.

Enclosure

¹ These introductory themes are drawn from one of my favorite scientists and authors, John Seely Brown, in his foreword to *Opening Up Education*, edited by Toru Iiyoshi and M.S. Vijay Kumar. If you are ever looking for some additional reading, I would recommend this work.