

Leadership Ledger

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Spring 2009

A WARM WELCOME FROM THE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

ON THE RIGHT PATH WITH KEDGE

BY ROSS BRAZZALE

Kedge is an academic program for high ability IIT students who have been faced with unfortunate circumstances that have affected their academic undergraduate performance. Designed by Institute of Psychology Dean M. Ellen Mitchell, the program's name, "Kedge," refers to a small anchor used to help sail boats that have run aground. Dr. Mitchell and Associate Provost Mike Gosz invite students to apply to the program and interview all applicants for the small class (16-18) each semester.

The cornerstone of the program is Psyc227, a 3 credit hour class that helps set students on the right path with everything from core psychological knowledge about the determinants of academic success, and preventing procrastination, to meeting with professors. Psyc227 has been at IIT since the fall of 2007 and has thus far proven to be of immense importance to more than 60 students.

An important component of the program is matching each student with a peer mentor who serves as an academic coach for the Kedge student. Leadership Academy scholars serve as these mentors in the class. Each mentor meets with an individual student an average of twice a week to assist him/her in organizing and planning class assignments and improving performance in their classes. Peer mentors serve a vital role in supporting the overall class objectives and in helping students with the myriad challenges of college.

Leadership Scholars took on an additional role in Fall 2008, serving as teaching assistants for a newer course, Psyc180. This 1 credit hour class currently has 3 sections and is designed for at-risk first and second year students. Leadership scholars assist the instructor by monitoring students' academic planners and acting as leaders and role models in class discussions. Thus far more than 180 students have benefited from the 1 credit hour class. This program helps students learn from their mistakes, often the source of richer learning than our success.

One Kedge student has said "the programs has saved my life, I'd be flipping burgers were it not for Kedge." Dr. Mitchell believes that college presents many challenges and that it is tough to be in the top 2% of your high school class and then go to college to become one of the 98% who are below the top 2%. Many students underestimate how much time, persistence, and life balance is needed to succeed.



SEMINAR SUMMARIES BY RAY BALLARD

Getting to the Summit

A web-based computer simulation was used by Heather McLinden to challenge 70 students to work in teams to successfully summit Mount Everest. Team skills and decision making abilities were put to the test, if they were to make it to the top.

Destructive Leadership

By featuring destructive leaders throughout history, Dr. Bruce Fisher lead 66 students through a highly interactive seminar which resulted in a deeper understanding of the dark side of leadership and what can be done to overcome it.

Selling Yourself and Your Ideas

Leaders need to know when to turn on the charm, influence others, and leave an audience convinced of their ideas. In this seminar, facilitated by Jeff Sucec and Karen Kimsey-Sward, 86 participants observed the tools of persuasion as well as keys to making their ideas heard, a particularly useful skill to learn for interviews.

Confrontation and Conflict Resolution

Confrontation is a natural phase of any relationship. By working with examples in large groups, small groups, and partner settings, 76 participants under the guidance of Dr. Bruce Fisher perfected their conflict resolution strategies in preparation for the real world stage.

SCHOLAR ALUMNUS PROFILE:

ANKIT MEHTA

BY BRUCE FISHER

I recently had the pleasure of interviewing Ankit Mehta for this article. We talked first of reflections on his IIT experience. We then talked extensively about his career progress. I am very pleased to share with you Ankit's experiences, plans, and advice.

Ankit indicated that his proudest moments at IIT included his acceptance as a Leadership Scholar. Ankit was among the first class of scholars selected for the scholarship, and he felt it to be a great honor. (I really don't think that he was just saying that to make me feel good.) Ankit also noted the formative nature of his role as a news editor for TechNews, suggesting that the experience enabled him to become truly connected to the IIT student community. Finally, Ankit shared the great honor of being selected for the Lincoln Academy, an honor that goes to the IIT senior that was most distinguished in terms of academic and co-curricular accomplishments.

After graduation, Ankit attended Harvard Medical School, participating in the Harvard/MIT pathway that emphasizes the practice of medicine along with a strong research emphasis. This was consistent with his desire to become an "academic triple threat" with a combined focus on research, clinically helping patients, and teaching. His career goals began to crystallize within this framework with a desire to ultimately contribute as part of a teaching hospital.

Ankit's experience at Harvard/MIT progressed a bit more smoothly than he had anticipated, owing to his preparation at IIT and the non-competitive approach to a Harvard education (i.e., there were no grades given, only qualitative feedback directly from professors). His formative experiences at Harvard included a research program investigating the role of fibroblasts in tumor metastasis. He was able to work with giants in the field, such as Drs. Raghu Kalluri, Judah Folkman, and James Watson, and found them to be a very "down to earth."

He also reflects fondly on the close friendships he developed with his Harvard cohort and their future plans to travel and work together to improve health care in third world countries. He noted that the primary challenge during his time at Harvard was "figuring out exactly what I want to do," noting opportunities in neurosurgery, orthopaedic surgery, and general surgery. As part of the process of making such decisions, he grew more focused and eventually decided on neurosurgery.

After his graduation from the Harvard/MIT program in June, 2007, Ankit completed his surgical residency at the Brigham and Women's Hospital at Harvard. This past June, 2008, Ankit began his residency in neurosurgery at Duke. He works long but rewarding hours caring for neurosurgery patients and working in the ER. He assists

with surgeries on a daily basis, frequently working under the supervision of the esteemed Dr. Allan Friedman. Some of you may recall that Dr. Friedman was the neurosurgeon that performed surgery on Senator Kennedy last year after his brain tumor was discovered. On some occasions, Ankit has responded to emergencies that required him to perform bedside procedures. Among these, he performed an extra-ventricular drain whereby he drilled into the skull of a patient, inserted a catheter into the vertical to drain cerebral spinal fluid and help control intracranial pressure.

Ankit's development as a surgeon has challenged him to balance his empathy for patients with the need for a professional and balanced approach to their diagnosis and treatment. He noted with some surprise that his direct interactions with patients results in him getting into people's life stories very quickly. He shared examples of life altering discussions with some patients. An especially difficult case involved him identifying a brain tumor for a young woman with two children. She had come to the hospital complaining of severe headaches and had no idea it would be cancer. He noted how "her life was changed in a second." He also indicated his comfort in being "there for her when she needed someone." He admitted that "you feel sad and you take it with you in training." From these experiences, he has developed an increased capacity for self-control and an enhanced understanding of how to positively impact patients' reactions to difficult situations.

Ankit's plans for the future (after his five year residency at Duke) include academic neurosurgery at a top-tier university. Along with his activity as a neurosurgeon, he will teach and conduct research. His area of specialty will likely include brain tumors and/or cerebral vascular disease (i.e., aneurysms). Longer term, he hopes to lead an academic department and the medical community. While he did not mention it, I personally believe that he will one day become surgeon general.

When asked for advice to give young scholars, Ankit in his typically modest fashion offered his view of success. The keys, he said, include believing in your heart that "nothing is out of reach," and then "working hard and fully dedicating yourself to your goal." He indicated that "you don't need to be the smartest, but you must be the most dedicated. You must be willing to sacrifice for what you believe in."

In closing, Ankit offered thanks to Al Self, benefactor of the Leadership Academy, and Ed Kaplan, university trustee, for providing him with the opportunities he experienced while at IIT. He wanted them to know that their contributions and leadership continue to help form dreams for the future.



ACADEMY ALUMNAE GIVE BACK DURING SOPHOMORE RETREAT

BY KATHERINE HAMMES

Adding a new twist to the Sophomore Leadership Retreat, Annie Ranttila and Jason Tenenbaum, two distinguished LA alumnae, were asked to be guest speakers this year. Ranttila and Tenenbaum, who graduated in 2006 and 2007 respectively, used skills developed during Leadership Academy to leave their mark on the IIT community and are now bringing these skills to the world at large.

As a student, Ranttila was president of Alpha Sigma Alpha and was involved in many other student organizations; now, she is a studio professor in the IIT School of Architecture. Similarly, as a student, Tenenbaum headed the initiative to Bring Back the Bog, was president of Student Government, and was a member of Phi Kappa Sigma; now he is an Aero-

space Engineer for Lockheed Martin.

Both seemed enthusiastic about sharing their experiences, with Ranttila even stating she was “excited and surprised to find out that [she] was selected to speak...it was quite an honor.”

Ranttila focused her speech on what IIT meant to her and how to make the most of your time there. “IIT is such a small school, which some people would look at as a fault, but for me, it was one of the best parts! Because of its size, it’s big enough to be renowned and respected, but small enough for one person to make a difference... sometimes students get so wrapped up in grades...they forget to take time to build relationships. The two have to work together in order to have real success.” For the rest of the weekend, Ranttila enjoyed interacting with newer students by “reminiscing about Leadership Academy. Sophomore Camp, and IIT,” finally stating “it was wonderful.”

At the end, Ranttila provided these inspirational words, “The Leadership Academy is the best and the brightest of IIT, and of all the things I did at IIT, being part of it is still my proudest accomplishment. It gave me the tools to make the most of who I can be.”



Saagar Patel (Civil Engineering '09) -

My proudest accomplishments this year for SGA begins with the reorganization of the Student Senate to make to make it smaller and much more manageable. We also tackled some more controversial issues regarding academic dishonesty and creation of good Samaritan policies regarding students reporting unsafe behavior and substance abuse to the proper authorities. Additionally, SGA began outreach to the community by inviting Alderman Pat Dowell, the Alderman in the 3rd Ward (IIT's Ward) to the campus to forge positive relations. This opportunity has led to a large service day deemed The Big Event. On April 25th, IIT students, faculty, alumni, and staff were asked to go out and give back to the surrounding community.

Stacy Morton (Architecture '11) -

As Vice President of Student Life this past year, I have been able to give back to the campus that has given its all to me. Throughout the year, I have been working to implement a Student Sustainability Committee, now known as Gangreen, to help our campus implement innovative sustainable projects such as the new recycling program and reducing overall energy usage in buildings. I have also had the opportunity to work with several outstanding students in providing new service efforts on and off campus, more efficient computer labs, greater choices for on campus food, and enhance campus safety. It has truly been an honor to hold this position and work with others who care just as much about IIT's campus as I do.

SCHOLARS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

BY MELISSA LEE



Aya Eid (Biomedical Engineering '10) - Throughout the year, I have been involved in several academic research projects with multiple faculty members. Select research projects involving bioinformatics, modeling polymer physics, and researching grassroots NGOs in which I was apart are designed to promote and improve rural healthcare in Ghana. I am expecting a manuscript publication on protein interactions in the near future. During the Fall '08, I was the VP of Bog programming for IIT's Union Board. I committed my efforts towards collaboration with interested students and student organizations to book weekly entertainment in the campus bar and recreational center. Within the Leadership Academy, I headed the marketing committee in advertising to the IIT campus, communicating all the exciting opportunities available to the undergraduate student body and ensuring the success of our monthly events.



GRADUATING SENIOR PROFILES

BY KATHERINE HAMMES

ALLISON BAGBY

Allison Bagby will be graduating with a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering and Engineering management. Upon graduation, Allison plans to be working for F.H. Paschen, S.N. Nielson here in Chicago, following an internship which has continued since last summer. Before she begins work, she will be spending five weeks exploring Thailand and visiting Cambodia and the Temple of Angkor Wat.



ELLIOT BARLOW

Elliot will be getting a B.S. in Aerospace Engineering this May, and is planning to pursue his doctoral degree in Aerospace Engineering focusing on Astrodynamics and Satellite Navigation at the University of Colorado at Boulder.



NICOLE DENNIS

Nicole Dennis is graduating this Spring with a B.S. in Civil Engineering, specializing in Construction Management. After graduation she will be staying in Chicago and working with The Rise Group, LLC as an Assistant Project Manager. She is currently working with Rise as an intern assigned to the Public Building Commission project.



KATHERINE HAMMES

Katherine Hammes will be graduating with a B.S. in Chemical Engineering. Post graduation, Katherine will be attending Cornell University to pursue a Ph.D in Fiber Science, specializing in research in with microfibers.



MELISSA LEE

Melissa Lee is graduating with a B.S. in Biochemistry, and plans to spend the months after graduation finding in job doing biochemistry research or working for a biotechnology company. Eventually, she plans to return to school to pursue a Master's degree.



YACIN NADJI

Yacin Nadji will be graduating with a B.S. in Computer Science. He plans to pursue his Ph.D. in Computer Science with a focus on systems security at Georgia Institute of Technology. After receiving his Ph.D., Yacin plans to do research and teach at the university level.

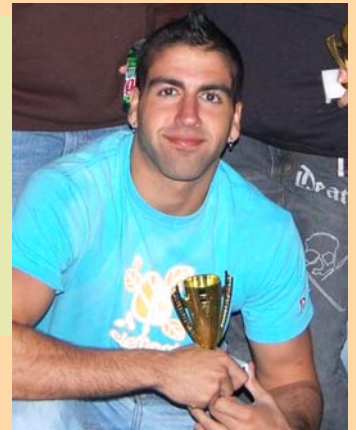


SAAGAR PATEL

Saagar Patel will be graduating with a B.S in Civil Engineering and a B.S. in Architectural Engineering with a specialization in Structures. Saager currently has a part-time job at Primera Engineers as an Energy Engineer, and hopes to continue work in this area after graduation. He also will be becoming a LEED AP and receive his Professional Engineers license in the near future. Eventually, he would like to receive a Master's in either Public Administration or Business Administration.

AMIR RAHNAVARD

Amir Rahnavard plans to continue his education with Medical School after graduating IIT with a Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Engineering. The Rosalind Franklin University of Medical Sciences will provide him with a great education opportunity to pursue his passion and apply himself wholeheartedly as a physician in many county hospitals of Chicago. He hopes to gain inimitable experiences dealing with a variety of patients and cases.



ADIE RIOS

Adie plans to move to Boston to look for work on the east coast while trying to apply for graduate programs in city planning. She looks forward to taking the few months to organize her portfolio and look at a few programs, primarily MIT and UC Berkeley.

TONY SARACINO

Tony Saracino will graduate this Spring with his degree in Architectural Engineering. During the course of his studies he became a LEED Accredited Professional. He is currently working on obtaining his Italian citizenship. Next year he will move to Berlin Germany to investigate European Sustainable Architectural Engineering practices while his wife performs her dissertation research.



JASON SOO

Jason Soo is receiving a B.S. in Computer Science. Beginning in August, he will be continuing at IIT, pursuing a Master's in Computer Science. As an undergraduate, Jason worked for the IIT Information Retrieval Lab and plans to continue this work through graduate school.

DECEMBER 2008 GRADUATES

KEVIN FRANKE

Kevin Franke graduated with his B.S. in Psychology in December 2008. Since then, he has been working



as a Velocity Ambassador for the Velocity Initiative, an outreach effort that IIT is conducting in order to reconnect with its alumni. During this time, Kevin traveled to Florida, Arizona, New York, Massachusetts, and Washington, D.C to connect with alumnae around the country. Beginning next August, he plans to pursue a Ph.D. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology.

DANIEL HUTCHINSON

Daniel Hutchinson graduated with a Bachelor's in Molecular Biochemistry and Biophysics. He plans to return to the field of research after he concludes his employment at his current job at IIT as a Velocity Ambassador. He would like to focus on scarless wound healing and the genetic pathways of the Wnt gene family, feeling that dedicating a year to this field of research will greatly aid him in my career as a doctor. He plans to enter into medical school in August of 2010. As a doctor, he hopes to continue the type of volunteer work he has done in Peru but with new skills in medicine.



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DECEMBER 2008 GRADUATES

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NIKHIL MANDREKAR

Nikhil Mandrekar graduated with a Bachelor's in Business Administration and specializations in International Business and Entrepreneurship. He currently works as a Project Manager at the Jules F. Knapp Entrepreneurship Center where he coaches entrepreneurs to establish their own businesses. He is also in the process of setting up his own custom suiting company in the City of Chicago. Nikhil plans to pursue a Master's in Environmental Management at IIT following which he intends to return back to the United Arab Emirates.

A NEW FACE IN LEADERSHIP BY RAY BALLARD

Through her charm, character, leadership and work ethic, Heather McLinden has taken the Leadership Academy by storm! Heather earned her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from the University of Missouri, Co-

lumbia, and then came to IIT in 2002 to work on her graduate degree in Industrial and Organizational Psychology.

She teamed up with the Leadership Academy as an Associate from 2003 to 2005 and then went on to work as a consultant at Baxter, Project Manager at Stanard and Associates and teach undergraduate and graduate classes at Elmhurst College, IIT and the Chicago School of Professional Psychology. In 2008, Heather returned to the Leadership Academy as the Associate Director where she has worked to advise scholars and assist in the Academy's leadership development process while completing her doctoral degree.

Heather rejoined the program in the fall alongside Dr. Fisher and was quick to reconnect with the scholars. She is extremely organized and communicative, and really grabbed the respect of the scholars through her actions. Heather presented this year's first seminar, "Getting to the Summit," and received terrific marks. It is her goal to continue building strong, mentoring relationships with the scholars, continue the Academy's commitment to developing leaders throughout IIT's undergraduate student body and further establish the Leadership Academy as the premier organization for student leaders on campus.

On a personal note, we would like to congratulate Heather and her husband, Patrick, on their beautiful daughter, Eva, born in January.



The IIT LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

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The Leadership Academy invests towards developing students to be true leaders and to empower them to inspire the same in others. It offers five seminars each academic year, a retreat aimed at developing leadership skills, teamwork, and strong sense of communication for each sophomore class, and a certificate in Leadership Studies, awarded to students who complete 40 hours of Leadership Academy sponsored events.

Each spring the Leadership Academy identifies undergraduate students who show exceptional leadership potential and awards with a multi-year, full tuition scholarship. Award recipients then participate in an intensive leadership development program.

The Leadership Academy also places a strong emphasis on students becoming involved in serving the community at IIT and around Chicago.

For more information about the Leadership Academy, please visit our website: <http://leadershipacademy.iit.edu>