



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

ILLINOIS INSTITUTE  
OF TECHNOLOGY

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**MAYOR EMANUEL, ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY ANNOUNCE INNOVATION  
CENTER**

*New Hub of Creative Education, Technology, and Entrepreneurship to be Built at IIT's South Side  
Campus*

CHICAGO– Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) President John L. Anderson announced today that IIT is building a 100,000 square-foot Innovation Center at the university's south side campus. The state-of-the art building will house workshops and media labs and offer students and faculty a centralized facility with a singular purpose of promoting the basic elements of innovation and transitioning new ideas into products and processes.

“The new Innovation Center promises to be an investment in both the education offered at IIT and the future of Chicago,” said Mayor Emanuel. “It will help unlock the potential of thousands of students while providing Chicago businesses with a pipeline of new products, processes and talented graduates to hire.”

The five-story building overlooking the Dan Ryan Expressway will house IIT's Idea Shop, Leadership Academy, Entrepreneurship Academy and Institute of Design, but it will be more than an academic building and serve to attract creative thinkers to Chicago.

“The Innovation Center at IIT will be a facility where students and faculty can work with business, industry and the community,” said President Anderson. “It will combine the power of higher education with Chicago-style imagination, determination and boldness to fuel innovation

It will be the bridge between the classrooms and the technology park—and a portal to the future.”

The Innovation Center will be home to IIT's Interprofessional Projects Program (IPRO), a unique educational approach oriented toward collaborative projects by multidisciplinary teams rather than silo disciplines, offering students an opportunity to gain valuable skills that will serve them in future technology jobs.

The Innovation Center will provide new educational experiences for students with an emphasis on creative thinking in addition to analysis. The Innovation Center will offer spaces dedicated to interdisciplinary thought and action, acting as a bridge between IIT's classrooms and University Technology Park. It will also promote interactions and collaborations among people from different disciplines and walks of life, from first year undergraduates to PhD students and professors to technical professionals and entrepreneurial business people.

The Innovation Center will also feature:

- ✦ A materials workshop and lab that includes fabrication and rapid prototyping equipment to facilitate the production of models in wood, metal, acrylics, and wax;
- ✦ An electrical workshop to create circuitry and electronic-components;
- ✦ Computer labs and media stations to facilitate the creation of mobile apps, digital videos, interactive games, 3D models, animation, and eBooks; and
- ✦ Flexible space with movable walls that can be configured in multiple ways.

As home to the IPRO Program and Idea Shop, the Innovation Center is where IIT students will apply what they have learned in the classroom to solve real-world problems with industry, government, and non-profit sponsors. The students gain valuable experience working within interdisciplinary teams to create products and take them to market, solve technology problems in the developing world, develop new educational initiatives and other solutions for Chicago, Illinois, and beyond.

The center will provide a space for companies at University Technology Park and around Chicago to tap into the talent and enthusiasm of IIT students to help take their businesses to the next level. Currently home to 27 companies in a 4-building complex, including 15 startups in the incubator, the technology park is an ideal place for students to gain exposure to the early-stage business process, and the Entrepreneurship Academy at the Innovation

Center will help students to bring their own business ideas, often starting as IPRO projects, to reality.



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In addition, the Innovation Center will be available to high school and middle school students, many of them from Chicago, who attend summer programs at IIT, including those enrolled in:

- ▲ Exelon Summer Institute
- ▲ Boeing Scholars Academy
- ▲ Design Build Workshops
- ▲ Computer Discovery Camp for Middle School Girls and
- ▲ Academy for Future Leaders in Science and Technology

After the center is built, IIT will be able to increase the number of CPS Students who participate in the Exelon Summer Institute and Boeing Scholars Academy from more than 100 to more than 200.

Visible from the Dan Ryan Expressway to visitors and prospective students, the center will be architecturally distinctive in Chicago's tradition of bold structures and a physical reflection of IIT's distinctive educational focus.

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**Founded in 1890, IIT is a Ph.D.-granting university with more than 7,700 students in engineering, sciences, architecture, psychology, design, humanities, business and law. IIT's interprofessional, technology-focused curriculum is designed to advance knowledge through research and scholarship, to cultivate invention improving the human condition, and to prepare students from throughout the world for a life of professional achievement, service to society, and individual fulfillment. Visit [www.iit.edu](http://www.iit.edu).**