



Andrew Mills, MMAE Undergraduate Senior

MMAE Undergraduates: Real Research and Real Experience

In January 2002, Andrew Mills flew to Reno, Nevada to attend the national American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) conference. Unlike most students at the conference, this IIT senior was there as a presenter. He delivered his paper, "Optimization of High Frequency Actuators for Weapons Bay Noise Suppression" to a roomful of academics and industry professionals, responding to questions and participating in the discussion. Mills was able to have this experience, in part, because of the close relationship he has developed at IIT with one of his professors, Dr. Ganesh Raman. Raman encouraged Mills to develop his research skills while working on one of Raman's projects during Mills' sophomore year. By his junior year, Mills was ready to assume the role of primary author on his conference paper.

Mills likes that IIT has many academic and non-academic extracurricular activities to be involved in. He stayed as a guest in one of the fraternity houses on campus when he visited as a high school student, then he joined the fraternity when he came here as an enrolled freshman. The small-school atmosphere at IIT, with the active professional societies and intramural sports, appeals to Mills, who grew up in a small town.

Some of the more interesting things Mills has participated in at IIT as a member of student organizations are going to Cleveland to visit the NASA center with the student chapter of the AIAA, and skydiving with a group from his Introduction to the Professions course. He is currently working with IIT's chapter of Tao Beta Pi and a Chicago youth center to provide tutoring for area children.

undergraduate

Associate Professor Michael Gosz won the Ralph L. Barnett Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1999 for his work with the Introduction to the Professions course curriculum. He is pictured to the right teaching that course.

Jon Dees, a senior MMAE student at IIT, doesn't spend his summers working at a pool or an ice cream stand. As soon as he finishes his last final exam, Dees packs his bags and heads to a different kind of summer job-his cooperative research job at NASA. Dees works as a paid engineer at the Dryden Flight Research Center at Edwards Airforce Base in California. As a cooperative education student, Dees started out doing small tasks on the base, learning on-the-job skills that reinforced the information he was learning in school, and graduated to more highly skilled tasks, the experiences of which are going to make him a prime recruit when he graduates this spring.

Dees appreciates that the small-school atmosphere at IIT has given him access to a lot of personal attention from our faculty. He says that a technical field such as engineering requires hands-on help from instructors if you really want to understand what you are doing. Dees has also taken advantage of the leadership opportunities that a smaller program provides. He is a member and former officer of the student chapter of the AIAA, a student-run division of the professional society that works on special projects, brings in speakers, and organizes student field trips.

Dees is confident that his education has prepared him for either of his two primary options-graduate school or a career with NASA.

Undergraduate Studies

May 2002 saw the graduation of the first class to go through the revised programs in MMAE. Compared with ten years ago, the current programs have greater emphasis on teamwork, communications skills and projects without sacrificing any technical rigor.

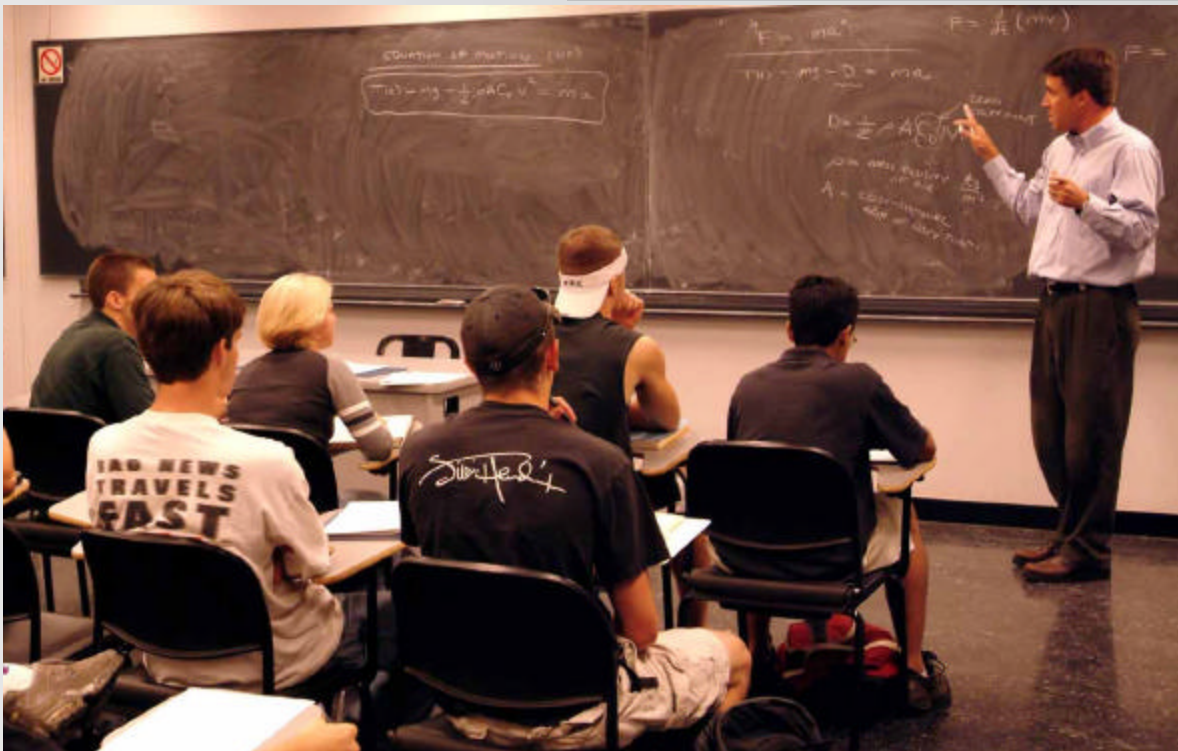
Some fine-tuning of the programs has taken place and now it is possible to complete a double major in any two of our three programs in nine semesters. The double major option has been well received by students looking to enhance their employment potential in today's volatile economy.

MMAE had 67 freshmen matriculate this Fall, with Aerospace leading the way in numbers. Our MMAE100 class (Introduction to the Profession) is also home to ten "open major" students, so we had to add an extra section of MMAE100, bringing the number of sections to four.

As usual, our retention rate for freshmen is above the university average.

Finally, thanks to all graduates who returned our survey questionnaire. The information from this survey will be used for improvement of our programs.

John Kallend
Associate Chair for Undergraduate Studies
kallend@iit.edu
312-567-3054



ES