



Wellness, Welcome, and Belonging: Empowering Students through Connections and Communities

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Illinois Institute of Technology and Galvin Library

- Private, non-profit, STEM-focused
- Located in Bronzeville neighborhood, Chicago, IL
- Bachelor's- PHD program
- Fall 2025 enrollment: 7,502, representing 117 countries

Paul V. Galvin Library

- Main Library at Illinois Tech





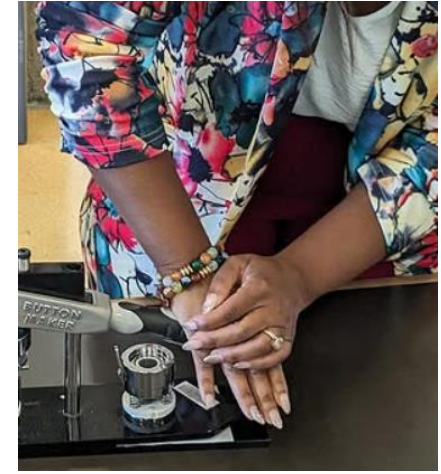
Fostering Belonging

- Extend instruction beyond research skills
 - Create welcoming, supportive spaces for all students
 - Connect students to campus resources, services, and communities
 - Led by the **Programming, Outreach, Engagement, and Marketing (POEM) Committee** at Galvin Library
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Library Open House

- Since Fall 2023, Galvin Library has hosted Open House during Welcome Week
- Designed to help students:
 - Explore the library and its resources
 - Connect with peers and library staff
 - Create a positive feeling associated with the library





Open House Activities

- Guided tours & information sessions
- DIY rock painting & miniature canvas painting
- Friendship bracelet making
- Pronoun pin-making
- Library scavenger hunt mystery game

Event Promotion

- **Internal:**
 - Library social media (Facebook and Instagram)
 - Signage posted in the library
 - Library News Story posted on the library website
 - Local library monitors
- **External:**
 - Illinois Tech's twice-weekly newsletter
 - Signage brought to new student orientation events
 - University event site
 - Office of campus life newsletter



Assessment

- Attendance
 - 2023: 174 students (4 hours)
 - 2024: 100 students (3 hours)
 - 2025: 43 students (1.5 hours)
- Feedback (2025)
 - Emoji Wall: 90% of emoji responses were positive 😊❤️
 - Mad Libs Feedback Form: students highlighted favorite parts and requested additions



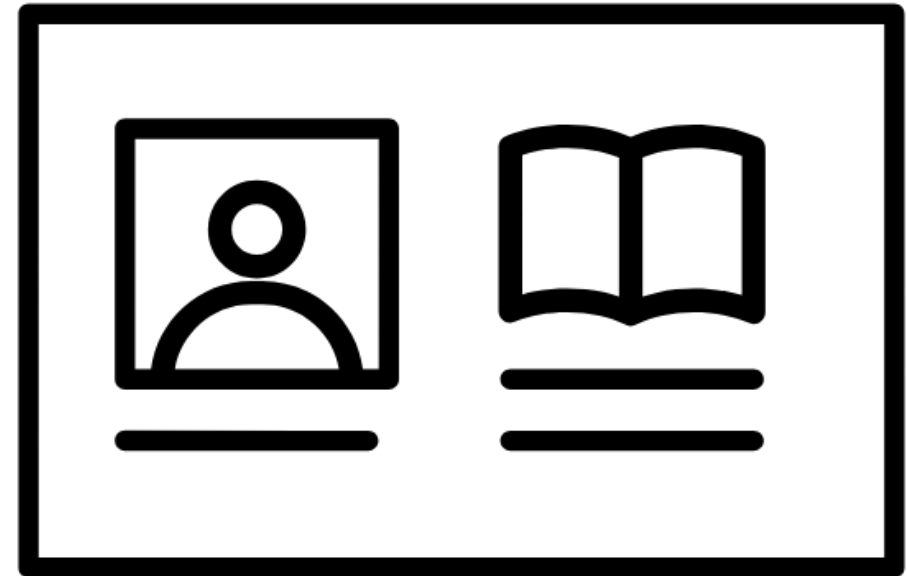


Any Questions?

Public Library Card Drive

Galvin Library partnered with the local branch of the Chicago Public Library to host a library card drive.

Needed to come to the Galvin Library with state ID / drivers license with current address OR a piece of email with current address



Library Card by Good Wife
from [Noun Project](#) (CC BY 3.0)

Planning & Promotion

**CELEBRATE NATIONAL LIBRARY
WEEK WITH GALVIN LIBRARY AND
THE CHICAGO BEE BRANCH!**

**LIBRARY
CARD
DRIVE**

**TO RECEIVE
YOUR CARD,
YOU NEED:**

- A STATE ID OR DRIVER'S LICENSE WITH YOUR CURRENT ADDRESS
- PARTICIPANTS WILL RECEIVE THEIR CARDS ON-SITE
- IF YOUR ID DOESN'T SHOW YOUR CURRENT ADDRESS, BRING A PIECE OF MAIL OR A BILL POSTMARKED WITHIN 30 DAYS.

**THURSDAY, APRIL
10TH
1-3PM
UPPER LEVEL BY
THE STAIRS**

**REGISTER FOR A
FREE CHICAGO
PUBLIC LIBRARY
CARD!**

SNACKS PROVIDED!

- Reached out to the local branch – very interested
- Chose a date that worked for everyone
- Galvin Library created promotional materials – flyers, campus-wide promotion, social media – and provided snacks
- CPL brought swag and informational materials to give out

Execution & Turnout

Execution:

- 2 librarians from the public library came and set up a table
- Event ran for 2 hours
- Snacks provided by the library

Turnout:

- 26 students received library cards
- A few staff renewed their cards as well!
- CPL librarians were thrilled with the turnout –more than they expected!

What We Learned

- Public library didn't accept PO box numbers, but students live in the dorms with PO boxes
 - They were able to pull up a bill displaying physical dorm addresses
- Will work out a better system moving forward
- Excited to work with them again in the future



Overall Impact

- Helped make the library feel approachable and student focused
- Strengthened students' social and academic support network
- Helped frame the library as a space that supports growth beyond the classroom
- Fostered a sense of belonging in their community



Question 1:

[https://tinyurl.com/](https://tinyurl.com/mphcmvuk)

[mphcmvuk](https://tinyurl.com/mphcmvuk)

What belonging or wellness-based initiatives is your library currently implementing?

Wellness Initiative

Challenges of studying in Galvin Library

- 16' high ceilings
- Open floor plan
- No individual study rooms
- Sensory overload and other challenges for neurodivergent students

Applied for Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS) My Library Is.. Grant in January 2025

- Creating Inclusive Spaces: Enhancing Library Resources for Neurodivergent Students

Wellness Initiative

Received \$1500 Grant

- Books
- Happy Lights for Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)
 - SAD is a type of depression
- Items for Tranquility Kits
 - Disposable foam earplugs
 - Sanitizing hand wipes
 - Affirmation/wellness cards
 - Fidget spinners
 - Magnetic fidget spheres
 - Marble maze mats
 - Stress balls
 - Spiky sensory rings
 - Worry stones

Planning

Brainstormed ways to raise awareness about these new resources in POEM meetings

Reached out to psychology faculty as well as Office of Student Life and Student Health and Wellness Center staff

Decided to hold an event so students could see and touch the books, lights and kits

Ruled out October 2025-too many events already scheduled

Decided National Stress Awareness Day was a good fit

Marketing

- Social media posts
- Flyers
- Illinois Tech's twice-weekly online newsletter
- Posted event on Illinois Tech's new student engagement platform



National Stress Awareness Day Event

- Held event on November 5, 2025
- Kits, lights and books available for students to see and checkout
- Activities included coloring and button making
- Snacks provided
- Event ran for 2 hours



Assessment

Attendance

- 25 students and staff attended
- Approximately 1/4 of attendees stayed for the entire event
- Event was scheduled to run for about one hour but ran closer to 2 hours

Feedback

- Students expressed appreciation for event
- Books and kits were checked out during the event
- While the resources are for everyone, they make our neurodivergent population feel seen and heard

Question 2:

<https://tinyurl.com/>

[mphcmvuk](https://tinyurl.com/mphcmvuk)

What's one simple way you could build a stronger sense of belonging for your students?



Questions?

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