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MAYOR RAHM EMANUEL ANNOUNCES THINKCHICAGO: CHICAGO IDEAS WEEK 2016

Sixth Annual Program Welcomes 200 Top Technology, Engineering and Computer Science Students to Chicago; Record High Number of Nearly 900 Applications Received for 2016 Program

Mayor Emanuel announced today the start of ThinkChicago: Chicago Ideas Week 2016. This three-day event will bring 200 of the nation's top technology, engineering and computer science students to experience first-hand all that Chicago has to offer as an innovation hub and take part in one of the nation's most diverse and inventive ideas festivals. This year, ThinkChicago received nearly 900 applications for an expanded program of 200 slots – up from 150 in last year's program – with selected students coming from 13 states and 27 universities.

"Chicago welcomes these talented students to have the opportunity of a lifetime making connections, hearing from industry thought leaders and exploring our great city," Mayor Emanuel said. "Student interest in Chicago's tech sector has reached record high levels – and for good reason. Chicago's tech community is as diverse, innovative and entrepreneurial as they come."

"Millennials are recognizing that Chicago is a unique, global hub for technology and innovation," World Business Chicago President & CEO Jeff Malehorn said. "Students participating in ThinkChicago: Chicago Ideas Week will experience the best Chicago has to offer while attending one of the nation's leading thought-leadership festivals."

Applicants were selected based on academic excellence, a demonstrated commitment to technology and innovation and a stated interest in exploring Chicago's thriving tech ecosystem. ThinkChicago: Chicago Ideas Week 2016 attracts up-and-coming technology talent from across the country to the city of Chicago. Of the 200 students attending this year, 91 percent hail from the Midwest, with 75 percent coming from Illinois. 56 percent are in engineering or computer science disciplines, 17 percent in business, 14 percent in social sciences, 6 percent in economics, 3 percent in mathematics and 2 percent in natural sciences.

"Chicago Ideas strives to be a source of inspiration for young tech entrepreneurs who can hear first-hand lessons in leadership from some of our world's brightest minds," Chicago Ideas Week Founder and Co-Chairman Brad Keywell said. "The programs are designed to foster connectivity and spark action so these talented students can develop an in-depth relationship with Chicago's thriving tech scene."

“The University of Illinois System is proud to once again partner with Mayor Emanuel, World Business Chicago and Chicago Ideas Week to host the best and brightest students as they explore Chicago’s thriving tech scene,” University of Illinois President Tim Killeen said. “ThinkChicago is critical to help supply the highly skilled workforce of today that will ultimately drive economic growth across the state in the future.”

As a part of the program, ThinkChicago students will take part in robust programming and attend a variety of events that include:

- Keynote addresses by Mayor Rahm Emanuel; Jimmy Odom, Sr. Vice President of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Intersect Illinois and Shradha Agarwal, Co-Founder and President, ContextMedia;
- A civic tech panel discussion with Danielle DuMerer, First Deputy Commissioner & CTO, City of Chicago – Department of Innovation and Technology; Katie Olson, Director of Program Design, UI Labs; Shelley Stern Grach, Director of Civic Engagement, Microsoft; Kenneth Watkins, CSO, Blue1647 and Tom Alexander, COO, 1871
- Attendance at Chicago Ideas Week talks, including “Business In Motion: The Keys to Creating a Company That Thrives” and “Leadership: How Today’s Leaders Make Critical Choices”;
- A special “My Kickstarter Story” discussion with Charles Adler, Founder, Center for the Lost Arts, Co-founder, Kickstarter and Max Temkin, Founder of Cards Against Humanity;
- Tours of company office and innovation hub spaces and a showcase career fair, including 1871, Civis Analytics, Coalition: Energy, ContextMedia, IRi, MATTER, mHub, Microsoft, Motorola Mobility, Northern Trust, Sprout Social, tastytrade|dough, Uptake, and more.

Students will also take part in a ThinkChicago Civic Tech Challenge, a pitch competition among ThinkChicago participants to propose ways in which the City of Chicago can use technology to address challenges related to urban sustainability, transportation and civic engagement. Students will have the opportunity to work closely with industry leaders who will serve as mentors throughout the competition. The team with the winning proposal will receive automatic acceptance to ThinkChicago: Lollapalooza 2017 and four-day passes for Lollapalooza 2017. At this summer’s ThinkChicago: Lollapalooza, the winning team created a program to encourage festival attendees to patronize small businesses, visit cultural institutions and explore Chicago’s vibrant neighborhoods.

Chicago Ideas Week is a seven-day ideas festival that features 150 programs and attracts 30,000 attendees. The dynamic events include stage programs featuring globally recognized speakers and labs that offer hands-on experiences. Chicago Ideas Week’s mission is to provide programming that is open to the public at a nominal cost to engage a diverse audience. As one of the world’s largest, most affordable ideas festivals, Chicago Ideas Week aims to inspire action through entertaining events, thought-provoking content and grassroots initiatives.

ThinkChicago: Chicago Ideas Week is organized by the Mayor’s Office, World Business Chicago, University of Illinois System and Chicago Ideas Week. This year’s ThinkChicago programming is

made possible by contributions from Center for Lost Arts, Chicago Ideas Week, Chicago's First Lady, Civis Analytics, Enova, Horizon Pharma, IBM, kCura, Lollapalooza, MakeOffices, MATTER, Microsoft, Motorola Mobility, Northern Trust and 1871. For more information visit www.chicagoideas.com and www.thinkchicago.net.

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