

Student Stories Project: Ivan Blount

Audio version available at: <http://www.alumni.indiana.edu/profiles/students/blount.shtml>

[IU fight song]

Welcome to the Indiana University Student Stories Project, a production of the IU Alumni Association. I'm your host, Alana Salata. In this series, you'll get an insight into what it takes to be a student leader here at IU, from the perks –

“One of the members of the club brought the Mad Money show to campus. Now, that was a big step for both the school and the club.”

– to the hard work –

“Graduate school takes up more time and energy than you can anticipate.”

– to the memories that will last a lifetime.

“I traveled to India in the fall of 2006 with 60 students from the Kelley School of Business.”

Join me on this journey through the lives of IU student leaders.

[IU fight song]

SALATA: Today we're at IU South Bend speaking with Ivan Blount of the Student Government Association.

BLOUNT: My name is Ivan Blount. I am a senior. My major is organizational leadership and supervision, and my hometown is South Bend, Indiana, and my current position with the Student Government Association is president-elect. And as far as interests, I enjoy reading and spending time with my kids.

Why did you choose to attend IU South Bend?

Actually, I attended a college prior to IU South Bend, so after leaving that school I came back home and wanted to further my education. So IU South Bend, I felt, was best for me. But I'm actually a Purdue student.

Tell me about a meaningful or enjoyable experience you've had at IU South Bend.

I actually work for Student Services at IU South Bend, so my experience with the university is a bit more personable than your average student, I could say. I've really appreciated the faculty and staff and that manner in which they've embraced me just as a student trying to persevere, with kids, especially. So they see my determination and they've been very helpful in a lot of

different avenues, so... I can't say anything other than just the staff themselves have been very outgoing and personable.

What advice would you give to incoming freshmen and other students just starting out at IU South Bend?

For students and other freshmen coming in, basically to get involved in something – to become a part of the university outside of just going to class and going home. It's a growing campus. This year in particular, they'll see the apartments being built; we have new infrastructure being built within the library; our Associates Building is being renovated – so there's a lot of new things taking place, but they need to get themselves connected with the campus some way. I think clubs and organizations are a great way to do that.

Tell me a little about the Student Government Association at IU South Bend.

The Student Government Association at IU South Bend is very proactive. It's an organization composed of a variety of people from diverse cultures and backgrounds. They're really involved in the campus, basically. Last year they just funded our wellness program, investing \$30,000 in the program, so that just goes to show that they go over and beyond what a traditional club or organization that I've seen has done.

How did you find out about the Student Government Association, and why did you decide to become a member?

Actually, a friend of mine was a senator and had basically called me and told me to come to a meeting to see what I thought about possibly becoming a member. After the meeting, I decided I did want to become a more active student on campus. And it's something about the SGA and the way that they govern themselves and the connections that they make, not only in the school but in the community as well, that I wanted to become a part of.

Tell me about a Student Government Association event or program that you were involved in that you are particularly proud of.

As a senator with the SGA, I was given the opportunity to help assist a club on campus, which was the Civil Rights Heritage Center, in a trip that they take annually down south to visit ... segregation, when civil rights was a big thing back in the '60s, and we passed a proposal that they had for a large sum of money, and it sent approximately 21 students on this trip. And it was a life-changing experience for many of the students, so that's definitely a proud moment of mine with the SGA.

What challenges have you faced during your participation in the Student Government Association?

Just dealing with issues, I'd say challenges to overcome – seeing the different views and perspectives of students and the issues that concern them. Sometimes looking out for the benefit of the whole sometimes muffles out or shadows individuals' concerns and issues, and it's hard to

get people to really see the bigger pictures sometimes, because they're only looking at one perspective. So, just being able to help and assist everyone, I guess, in the best fashion, which is always a challenge within itself, is always an issue. You know, that's always happening.

How have your leadership skills developed over the course of your participation in the Student Government Association?

My leadership skills have developed and will continue to – more so this year, I think, than prior years, because I'm president-elect – just in standing up for what's right. Especially for the students speaking to the administration. We have different needs and different wants and concerns, and just being able to verbally communicate what the students want and why it's important to them – many times it's not in the budget from the administration's side, and we have to try to find some kind of happy medium where we can both be, you know, happy with the outcome. I think just in finding the ways on how to go about it, you know, learning curves, basically process of elimination, problem solving, things of that nature, that's what the student government has helped me to do.

What are your future goals, and how do you think IU South Bend has helped prepare you to meet those goals?

Future goals – I have a lot of them. First I need to graduate. But outside of school, I plan on going to graduate school. So I think it's helping me to view the world on a lot of different levels – really being able to assess my situation. And my goals, in line with that, you know, is basically just to finish school and try to become the best person I possibly can be. I'm not quite sure exactly which avenue of business I will end up in as far as my career. I'm really enjoying higher ed, so I might just stay here in some type of facet – not necessarily IUSB, but higher ed – or go corporate, become a manager of some sort at a business or factory or something. I really don't know what the world has in store for me.

What will you miss the most when you graduate?

Probably the atmosphere. Friends, faculty, the support, the love and drive for the culture – just new things always evolving on the level of college education. There's a sense of determination, you can feel it, and just passion that some people have that's unparalleled. And I know it will be there in the real world when I graduate, but it'll have a different reality to it.

We've been talking with Ivan Blount of the IU South Bend Student Government Association.

[IU fight song]

This series was produced by the Indiana University Alumni Association, with special thanks to the IU Marching Hundred and director Dave Woodley. I'm Alana Salata.

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