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## [Galvin Center Hosts Smart Grid and Resume Building Workshop with the Next Steps Program](#)

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Robert W. Galvin Center for Electricity Innovation hosted a Smart Grid and Resume Workshop on August 3rd for students from the Next Steps program, a summer STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Education Initiative of the Chicago Housing Authority and sponsored by Siemens. Through the workshop, 23 students enjoyed an informational session on Smart Grid technology and possibilities followed by a one-on-one resume critique with Galvin Center staff.

“The students came prepared with long lists of questions. They were very interested in the Smart Grid idea” said Melissa Gordon, Director of Education and Workforce Training at the Galvin Center. “They were especially curious and excited about IIT’s microgrid. The functioning grid powering the campus helped turn the idea of Smart Grid into a tangible concept for them.”

The workshop was hosted in Wishnick Hall, one of the many buildings powered by electricity distributed through IIT’s “Perfect Power” microgrid system. Funded by the Department of Energy (DOE) in 2008, IIT’s Perfect Power system distributes power in loops (as opposed to typical radial distribution) to limit the impact and possibility of blackouts. When a fault occurs, the system’s many switches can detect it within 0.3 seconds and re-route power to avoid or isolate the blackout. The microgrid’s smart meters are also able to better distribute energy and lower the daily peak load of the campus, even during high-peak times- such as Chicago summer where the city’s grid is typically strained to handle cooling systems in record temperatures. In the event of a city blackout, the grid is even able to disconnect itself completely switching into “island” mode. The Perfect Power system saves the campus nearly \$1 million a year by reducing peak levels and the axillary costs associated with power outages such as contaminated research and alternative housing for students.

“The Perfect Power System is an excellent demonstration tool for our short course and workshop participants, at any education level.” added Andrew Barbeau, Managing Director of the Galvin Center. “It cuts through the ambiguity of the Smart Grid concept and shows that it works.”

This workshop is among the many organized by the Robert W. Galvin Center for Electricity Innovation as part of the center’s [Education and Workforce Training](#) initiatives. Other programs include short courses, technical certifications, university coursework, and webinars. All of these programs will be housed in the state-of-the-art IIT Smart Grid Education and Workforce Training Center, on the university’s main campus, following the completion of renovation in mid-October. All programs through the Galvin Center are informed by research by the center and West Monroe Partners shedding light on [Smart Grid Skills requirements](#) and current training gaps in the industry. This research is a first-step providing an in-depth view at what skills the Smart Grid technology industry will actually require, not just in engineering but in business, management, and other areas.



The CHA students are already ahead of the curve. “I was delighted to hear that a large group of them aspire to be engineers. The students were quite an intelligent bunch; they were so eager to fill up their resume, they had a page long full of activities they participated in since grade school,” said Gordon. “It was refreshing to see such spirit and interest in the power engineering field. They were not only curious about the Smart Grid concept, but also about programs at IIT, specifically. We talked about all of the options available to them at this school and others, I have no doubt that this group of individuals will be helping to drive the industry in the future.”

Learn more about [Next Steps Program](#)

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