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**MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES THINKCHICAGO PROGRAM FOR TOP STUDENTS FROM REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES**

*Program will attract best and brightest students from around the Midwest in conjunction with Chicago Ideas Week*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced ThinkChicago, a special program that will bring top students from regional universities to Chicago for meetings, lectures and interactive sessions designed to foster a better understanding of Chicago's world-class business climate.

"My administration is committed to investing in the next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs," said Mayor Emanuel. "This annual event will bring students from throughout the Midwest to Chicago to experience our city's vibrant business climate and culture, showing them that Chicago is a dynamic place to start a career, grow a business and build a life."

The weekend will consist of meetings with industry leaders and visits to business headquarters around the city, including Microsoft, Google, Groupon, Threadless, Excelerate Labs, GrubHub, and Accenture. Additionally, every participating student will receive free admission to the first annual Chicago Ideas Week, where they will hear from and interact with leaders on all manner of topics, from education to technology to architecture.

Every student will receive free admission to the TEDxMidwest conference being held in Chicago. The students are expected to hear from some of Chicago's private sector, non-profit, and government leaders. The weekend will also include tours of Chicago's cultural attractions, as well as events that will showcase Chicago's vibrant nightlife, in an effort to help students understand the potential that Chicago offers for their post-graduation home.

Chicago Ideas Week (CIW), a seven-day public platform for ideas and innovation, will be held for the first time on October 10 - 16, 2011. The event, which will feature lectures and interactive sessions, is presented by Brad Keywell, co-founder of Lightbank and Groupon, Mayor Emanuel, and former Mayor Richard M. Daley. CIW brings together some of the world's brightest minds, positioning Chicago at the center of innovation and global connectivity.

The students selected to participate in ThinkChicago will be outstanding seniors from colleges and universities in Michigan, Ohio, Missouri, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. Students who are interested in applying can do so at <http://www.chicagoideas.com/thinkchicago>. August 30 is the deadline for applications.

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