IPD (Interdisciplinary Product Development) is a two-semester curriculum that integrates the latest technologies and best practices for innovative product development. The course combines Industrial Design, Mechanical Engineering, and MBA/Marketing students from all three colleges to work together in cross-functional teams to research and develop new product concepts. The course focuses on the early stages of the product development process, from identifying market opportunities through initial prototyping. Eschewing the old sequential model of product development, in which a design idea originates in a business unit, is given visual form by industrial design, and then passed off to engineering, this course teaches current best practices of true integration of all three disciplines from the very earliest stages of product development.

The course is team taught by faculty from the three colleges. Each year, a corporate sponsor is recruited to serve as the client, and provides the financial support to incorporate outside resources and materials not normally available to an academic environment. Funding is used to cover the course expenses associated with paying for professionally conducted market research, team building exercises, innovation training, rapid prototyping, materials and supplies, as well as other significant course expenses. The client company, in association with the IPD faculty, also provides an interesting and challenging assignment that will result in the research, conception and development of innovative product concepts for the client.

The corporate sponsor for 2004-2005 is the Copco division of Wilton Industries. Students taking the course are required to sign a Confidentiality Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA), and an intellectual property agreement that gives the client ownership of the work product of the student teams.

Important Information for interested MIE students:

Only students eligible to take ME396 in Spring 2005 may take the course sequence. The course is a year-long commitment. The fall ME444 course counts as a technical elective, and the spring ME445 course counts for senior design (in other words, you do not need to also take ME396). There are usually about 12 spots for MIE students, and enrollment is by consent of the instructor only.

If you are interested in taking the course, please provide Dr. Scott (email to mjscott@uic.edu, or put in his mailbox in 2039 ERF) the following information:

1. Your name.
2. Your social security number.
3. Your expected graduation date.
4. The term in which you did or will take ME447, and your grade in that course, if you have taken it already.
5. Your current GPA.
6. If you could have any engineering design job out there, what would it be? You may give a type of product or a company.

For further information, please contact Dr. Scott by email, or drop by his office (3057 ERF). There may also be further information at http://design.me.uic.edu/IPD