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CWIT update

THE CENTER FOR WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY AT UMBC

CWIT Scholars Program Celebrates TEN Years!

By Dr. Penny Rheingans, CWIT Director

I usually begin these notes by reminiscing about the semester just ending. This time, I'll take the opportunity to reminisce a bit more broadly. This fall marks the tenth anniversary of the CWIT Scholars Program. I thought I'd take a very brief moment to reflect on those ten years.

The first CWIT cohort (C1) entered in the fall of 2001, with seven brave souls willing to a give a new program a shot. Their majors were all in the IT area: Information Systems, Computer Science, Computer Engineering, and Interdisciplinary Studies. CWIT is fortunate to have Scholars from that very first class (and the ones that follow) still actively involved with the program, serving as role models, mentors, advisors, and resources. Lindsay Mannchen (now Cox) and Natalie Podrazik of C1 remain engaged in the CWIT community and continue to support current CWIT Scholars. The C3 cohort sent our first Scholar directly to a PhD program (Katie Gibson at Penn). The C5 cohort broadened the definition of CWIT by including engineers outside the traditional IT areas. Kevin Lee opened the door for the Mechanical Engineers who followed. The C6 cohort was our first "big class", entering sixteen strong. Leaders from our C6 and C7 cohorts (especially Andi Robinson and Paridhi Jain) joined forces to create the CWIT Student Council, giving Scholars valuable leadership experiences and a larger voice in CWIT directions. The C9 cohort pushed the total number of CWIT Scholars to 100 – with the addition of the C10 class, that figure has grown to 107! Over the history of the program, CWIT Scholars have had a 90% graduation rate in technology majors, a figure of which they deserve to be enormously proud.

Here in the present, CWIT Scholars continue to be active in leadership on campus and great role models for aspiring creators of technology. Once again, we have seniors anxious to get a head start on their careers by graduating a semester early. Elizabeth Leon and Oana Tibu (both Information Systems) will both graduate this December. Methzli Rodriguez (IS/HAPP SITE Scholar) is also graduating in December.

CWIT has a wide circle of friends and supporters whose selfless contributions have been essential to our accomplishments. We are endlessly grateful for their energy and generosity. We're looking forward to the New Year (and the next ten years!), with new things to learn, new collaborations to build, new ways to inspire more youngsters to consider engineering and IT, new Scholars to select, and new dreams to follow. Hope to see many of you in the coming semester.

Reflections of a CWIT Alumna...

Now that I have a daughter of my own, I'm even more thankful for the work that CWIT is doing to educate and equip women for careers in technology. I can only hope that Abby will have the opportunity to attend an event like Computer Mania Day or participate in a program like ESTEEM (an after-school middle school program designed to expose kids to science and technology) when she grows up.
-Lindsay Cox, C1

For me CWIT was a support group. It gave me confidence when I doubted myself as an engineer. Even now, three and a half years into my career as an Electrical Engineer and a week away from completing my Masters of Electrical & Computer Engineering at John's Hopkins, I am still faced with moments of insecurity. In those moments I rely on the values of the center and the encouragement I found there to pull me through. My peers in CWIT became my friends, many of whom I still keep in touch with, all of whom I admire and respect. -Amanda Williams, C3

In Their Own Words...

Internship, research, service, and study abroad are four common elements of the CWIT experience. All members of the CWIT community are expected to actively engage in activities outside of the classroom that will allow them to enhance their well-rounded college experience. Here, you read the stories of some of these students' valuable experiences:

Internship

MICHAEL BARRETT, C8

"Over the summer of 2011, I had an internship with **Google** in Mountain View, CA. working on a project for debugging Google's web server system. It was easily the best experience of my life, and I can't wait to go back next summer. Beyond learning more about working in the field, I made amazing new friends and had countless new experiences. I even had a chance to go Skydiving!"

JENNIFER GUY, C8

"This summer I had the opportunity to intern with **NAVAIR** and assisted a mentor with projects throughout the summer. This experience confirmed my interest in engineering and showed me some of the possible applications of my degree. Academically, I applied some of the knowledge that I have learned thus far and learned a few things to apply to the classes I am taking now."

Study Abroad

(Top): Alex in Stockholm, Sweden; (Right): Samantha Celmer (C8) and Michelle Racine (C8) on a trip to Paris as they studied abroad in Manchester, England in Spring 2010.

Research

JESSICA IZUMI, C9

"This past summer I had the amazing opportunity to participate in the Hooked on Photonic REU (Research for Undergraduates) at **Georgia Tech**. I worked on conducting many experiments with changing variables. To present my results, I worked on a scientific paper, a poster and an oral presentation. This experience was extremely valuable to me, I learned how to conduct research at a graduate level and the many pathways that I could take after completing my undergraduate degree at UMBC."

Karen (second from right) with lab-mates at Stony Brook University

KAREN DICKENS, C9

"Last summer I had the opportunity to work as an image processor in a Microfluidics Lab under the Department of Mechanical Engineering at **Stony Brook University**. This experience was truly amazing because I was exposed to a new field that required me to be open-minded so that I could learn new things. By allowing myself to become completely indulged in the material, I developed an understanding and interest in my work. After working in a lab environment, I also developed a reassurance that supports my desire to pursue a MS degree."

ALEX MARKOWSKI, C7

"Studying in **Sweden** has been a wonderful experience for me. It's given me the opportunity to be submersed in a culture entirely on my own. I've learned about many traditional Swedish customs and have even learned to cook some of the local cuisine. During my stay, I traveled to Denmark, Norway and Finland, all of which were fantastic countries that I would love to experience again. I would highly recommend anyone interested in studying abroad to look into the matter further. I've had a great time in Sweden and would love to do another study abroad."

Service

Lily (center) with UMBC volunteers, including CWIT Scholar Morgan Madeira (third from right)

LILIAN JOHNSON, C8

"The Baltimore-Washington chapter of Society of Women Engineers (SWE) hosted a hands-on engineering event for 6-9th grade girls called **Wow! That's Engineering!** on Saturday, September 10th. The event was all day long and it was a great experience helping the girls with the fun hands-on projects from building a roller coaster for a marble to candy boxes with alarms that would go off when the lid was opened. We had eight UMBC students volunteer."

Tylynn with College Gardens students.

TYLYNN PETTREY, C10

"This past summer, I participated in a service-learning experience at **College Gardens**, a Baltimore day camp. My job description included playing with the K-6th grade kids, teaching them crafts, and promoting positive, respectful behavior. I had a great time, but I also got to experience the under-privileged side of Baltimore first hand. I delved into the kid's culture, learned how they thought, and gained much insight on how to reach them and their community."

Fall Event Highlights

Contributions to this section by Rebecca Baldwin, C8

CWIT Retreat

As a jump start to prepare for the transition to college, incoming freshman CWIT Scholars participated in team-building activities (including College Park's challenge course), networking with faculty and industry representatives, and learned other academic skills!

"The CWIT retreat eased my transition into college. I enjoyed the educational and fun aspects of it, and loved getting to know my cohort members before school started." –Tylynn Pettrey (C10)

C-What? Day

This event is an important one for CWIT because it allows the Affiliates and Scholars to bond over lunch, a friendly competition of family feud, and minute-to-win-it games. The entire day "was creative and a lot of fun while still being very organized" (Samantha Celmer, C8 Chemical Engineering). In addition to the fun, the CWITs were able to network with industry representatives from their major.

"Overall, the event helped me to meet the new CWITs and a lot of commuters who are studying Computer Science. I also met a representative from Northrop Grumman who gave me her business card! The games we played were a LOT of fun." –Katrina Chan (C9)

Scholars Reception

This annual event allows for internal and external supporters of CWIT to connect with each other and be inspired by the program's mission. October's reception in the Skylight Room celebrated the 10th Year Anniversary of the CWIT Scholars, and included fabulous speeches by CWIT seniors and alumni, COEIT's Dean Warren DeVries, Interim Provost Philip Rous, and UMBC's President Freeman Hrabowski.

"This year's CWIT scholars reception was made even more special by the presence of CWIT alumni to celebrate the tenth anniversary. Hearing the insight and perspective of alumni, in addition to the perspective of other students, made me feel like I'm a part of something a lot bigger than my four years here. As always, the faculty in attendance were engaging and entertaining, and I look forward to next year's scholar reception!" –Emily Scheerer (C9)

Women In Technology Series

CWIT's Fall Women in Technology (or WIT) series included two events design to connect students with successful female professionals in the information technology and engineering fields. The "Small Talk, Big Results" event in September allowed students to practice their networking skills and receive valuable feedback from industry professionals. The October WIT event allowed students to interact with two panels of women in IT or engineering, and included a small networking fair afterward.

"Practicing networking skills helped me become more comfortable." (noted on an evaluation form from the September WIT event.) "It's important to remember that what you come out of school doing is not generally what you'll be doing for the rest of your life. Don't be afraid to change." (a lesson learned from the October WIT event)

conGRADulations!

CWIT's December 2011 Graduates

Elizabeth Leon (C7 CWIT Scholar)

B.S. Information Systems; Interned with Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, and Social Security Administration; After graduation plans to work at Computer Sciences Corporation.

"Being the independent person that I am, I always thought that I didn't need the support or community that CWIT provided. Now, I realize that I could not have done it without CWIT. I will have my BS in IS after only 3.5 years, and thanks to the extra push that CWIT gave me to attend networking events I received a full-time job offer before I even graduated! It is nice to have the peace of mind knowing that my hard work and the support that CWIT provided has finally paid off. Thank you!"

Methzli Rodriguez (SITE Scholar)

BS. Information Systems & B.S. Health Policy and Heath Administration; Interned with Booz Allen Hamilton, Johns Hopkins University, Lockheed Martin and CNSI; After graduation plans to work at Northrop Grumman.

"Completing the last couple of exams and papers has brought about mixed emotions for me. While I have been saying I will be done soon for the last couple of weeks, I have also been reflecting on the years spent at UMBC. In summary it has been an amazing couple of years. Not only has the time flown by through the joys and hardships, but they have shaped the person I am today. UMBC and the CWIT/SITE family have provided me with all the support a young lady like myself needed as I officially entered adulthood. The life-lasting friendships, the invaluable life skills and the knowledge that I have obtained throughout these years will help me as I move forward. Once again thank you all and good luck to everyone on all your future endeavors."

Oana Tibu (C7 CWIT Scholar)

BS. Information Systems; Interned with CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield; After graduation plans to work at CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield.

"Being a CWIT scholar has been a great opportunity for me, and I am grateful for the experience that I got through this program. I met a supportive community, made friends, participated in numerous events and activities, and I connected with leaders and mentors from the industry. All the networking events gave me confidence and guided me towards becoming a leader in the future."

CWIT Industry Mentoring

By Dr. Susan Martin, CWIT Associate Director

Mentoring is a foundational component of the CWIT Scholar experience and each fall our rising juniors are paired with an industry mentor. In September, 29 junior and senior Scholars were intentionally matched with an industry volunteer or CWIT alumna from one of 16 organizations. Mentors are from AAI Corporation, Day 1 Studios, 29th Street Publishing, Harris Corporation, JHU Applied Physics Lab, NAVAIR, NAVSEA, NBC Universal, Northrop Grumman Corporation, Praxis Engineering, T. Rowe Price, and UserWorks, Inc., and more.

This year's mentors, 24 women and five men, are all very highly accomplished engineers, IT, and other STEM-related professionals who are dedicated to sharing information, offering professional networking opportunities, and giving honest advice and feedback to their protégé. Scholars regularly communicate with their mentor by email, phone, and Skype, and are encouraged to arrange face-to-face meetings at least monthly to discuss a series of suggested professional development topics. In addition to providing information and a positive role model, the Industry Mentoring experience is designed to develop Scholars' commitment to actively participating in mentoring throughout their careers, both as a protégé and a mentor.

Information about the Industry Mentoring Program and an application are available on the CWIT website: http://www.cwit.umbc.edu/industry/mentoring/.

Mentoring matches will be made in July of 2012 with our next group of rising Juniors.

CWIT Affiliates Program Taking Hold!

By Dr. Susan Martin, CWIT Associate Director

In the fall of 2011, 428 women were enrolled in engineering and computing majors in the College of Engineering and Information Technology out of a total of 2,578 students (16.6%). Approximately 10% of all women in the College are currently CWIT Scholars. The Affiliates Program is a high value, low cost way to extend many of the benefits of being part of the CWIT community to non-scholars. The Affiliates Program exists to build community, create opportunities for, and positively contribute to the academic success of all women (and interested men) in engineering and computing majors. Affiliates activities are strategically coordinated with those of the CWIT Scholars Program to maximize opportunities for both Scholars and Affiliates.

With sponsorship from Lockheed Martin, the Affiliates program model was refined and program elements expanded. The number of Affiliates grew to 64 in 2011-2012 from 33 in 2010-2011. This Fall a total of 122 students participated in Affiliates events which included a half-day Affiliates Retreat, an Affiliates Program Peer Mentoring Program, and monthly Affiliates Lunch meetings. Thirty-one new freshman and transfer students were paired with a returning student mentor in September to help ease their transition as a new engineering or IT student. Information about obtaining internships and preparing for finals was shared in the Affiliates lunch meetings. The evaluation forms from Affiliates activities provide some initial evidence of the value of the program. Student comments included: ***"I feel like I have the resources to find information if needed just from being a part of this group."*** And "***I took my mentee to meet one of my previous teachers because she wanted to learn how to get to know faculty better."*** Additional assessment is underway to understand the impact of the Affiliates Program on participants' sense of community and persistence. Thank you Lockheed Martin for allowing us to grow our Affiliates Program and ultimately connect more women (and men) in the College with each other and our CWIT community.

A BIG THANKS! CWIT Scholars Mentors

FACULTY

Taryn Bayles
Marie desJardins
Charles Eggleton
Amy Hurst
Brian Reed
Julia Ross
Gymama Slaughter
Anne Spence

PEER (BigWIT)

Amy Ciavolino
Kristen Dagenais
Annette Englehart
Lily Johnson
Morgan Madeira
Aasam Tasaddaq
Katelyn Toy

Alumni News

Lauren Anthony (C4) recently began a new job as a Consultant at Microsoft in Charlotte, NC.

Heidi Brueckner (C1) was married to Mr. Wesley Robertson in October 2011.

Lindsay Cox (Mannchen) (C1) gave birth to a daughter, Abigail Juliet Cox, on September 16th weighing in at 7lbs and 3oz and 20 inches long.

Travis Mayberry (C3) recently began working on his Ph.D. in Computer Science at Northeastern University in Boston, MA.

Emily Toy (C5) recently received her Masters in Information Systems from UMBC.

Amanda Williams (C3) recently received her Masters in Electrical & Computer Engineering from Johns Hopkins University.

2011 Scholar Graduates— What are they up to now?

Justin Bass (SITE)
Design Engineer, RMF Engineering

Thomas Davis (SITE)
Lockheed Martin

Cassie Dobrzanski (SITE)
U.S. Navy NUPOC Program

Paridhi Jain (CWIT)
Starting family accounting business

Asmita Korde (CWIT)
NASA Goddard & EE Masters Program at UMBC

Mariano Mumpower (SITE)
Mechanical Engineer at Key Tech

Angela Nealen (SITE)
Environmental Engineer at Constellation Energy

Michael Rahimi (CWIT)
Consulting Analyst at Accenture

Littleton Riggins (CWIT)
SAIC

Krishna Sheth (CWIT)
IS Masters Program at UMBC

Christopher Wolf (CWIT)
MITRE

CWIT's Fall Calendar

August:
Aug 12 - 14 - CWIT New Scholar Retreat
Aug 31 - Family Meeting

September:
2nd – CWIT Table at Involvement Fest
7th – Ice Cream Social (open to the entire College)
8th – Peer Mentors Orientation
10th – Affiliates Retreat & C-What? Day
22nd – Women in Technology Series: Small Talk, Big Results

October:
3rd – Seniors & Juniors Cohort Meeting
4th – Annual Scholars Reception
5th – UMBC Career Fair
7th – Big/LilWIT Kick-Off Event
17th – Sophomores Cohort Meeting
18th – Women in Technology Series: A Successful Career
24th – Men in CWIT Cohort Meeting

November:
1st – WISE & CWIT Presents: An Intro to Public Speaking
7th – CWIT Family Meeting
12th – CWIT Peer Mentors Lunch

December:
5th – CWIT Family Meeting
14th – CWIT Study Break
22nd - Undergraduate Commencement

Thanks For Your Support!

LOCKHEED MARTIN
HARRIS
NORTHROP GRUMMAN
BAE SYSTEMS

Send newsletter submissions to Katie Glasser at kglasser@umbc.edu

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