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CWIT update Cyber Corner

THE CENTER FOR WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY AT **UMBC**
AN HONORS UNIVERSITY IN MARYLAND

Note from the Director

By Dr. Penny Rheingans, CWIT Director

Welcome to our slightly delayed fall newsletter – we were so caught up in our initiatives that we forgot to stop to reflect a bit. We caught our breath over winter break and are now ready to look back on our fall. It's been a busy season with lots of new faces. We've been blessed with three new CWIT staff members.

Erica D'Eramo joined us as our new Assistant Director in August. Erica has worked as Director of New Student Programs at Cedar Crest College and the Engineering Transfer Support Program Lead at the University of Michigan. She has a B.A. in Business, Organizations, and Society from Franklin and Marshall College and a M.A. in Higher Education from the University of Michigan. From her position at Cedar Crest College, she brings significant and relevant experience working with first year students, undergraduate women, and peer leaders. There she successfully implemented highly engaging educational, social, and diversity related enrichment, including orientation events, retention programs, and a peer mentoring program. From her position at the University of Michigan, she brings relevant experience supporting transfer students in engineering programs. Erica takes primary responsibility for our CWIT Scholars Program and CWIT Living Learning

Community.

Danyelle Ireland joined us as our new Associate Director in September. Danyelle has worked as a Program Analyst for the Division of Data, Assessment, and Research of the Office of the DC State Superintendent of Education and as a Program Coordinator at the Cesar Chavez Public Charter Schools in Washington DC. She has a BA in African American Studies and Family Studies at UMCP and a PhD in Educational Psychology from Howard University. Her doctoral dissertation research on "The Roles of Social Identities in the Achievement, Motivation and Retention of Black Undergraduate Women in Computing Disciplines" is directly relevant to the mission of CWIT. From her position at the Office of the DC State Superintendent of Education, she brings significant and relevant experience with educational data analysis and the use of data to inform school practices. From her position at Cesar Chavez, she brings relevant experience in needs assessments and evaluations of school culture, data collection and communication, and project management. Danyelle takes primary responsibility for industry relations, program assessment, and our grant programs, including the TSITE Scholars program and our new Pathways Project for Transfer Students.

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By Cindy Greenwood, CWIT Assistant Director

The Cyber Scholars & Affiliates Programs have continued to grow, as we welcomed our fourth cohort of Scholars in Fall 2016 and reached a record number of Affiliates with 100 students beyond the Scholars Program being connected to our activities. Highlights from the past few months include:

Through a grant from the Business Higher Education Forum (BHEF), we were able to fund more than 20 students' participation in the National Cyber League fall competition season. Through the same grant, we also completed a bus trip to Northrop Grumman for students to tour the Cybersecurity Operations Center in November and are currently working to connect students with research opportunities on campus and covering the cost for students to take certification exams.

Pictured: The Y4 cohort of Cyber Scholars and Associates

We also partnered with STEMRules, an online source for news related to diversity issues in technology, to host a panel of cyber professionals from diverse backgrounds who talked with students about their career paths, issues related to underrepresentation in the field, and other topics.

Our Scholars continue to be engaged across campus and beyond, serving as teaching assistants, resident assistants, leaders of student organizations, volunteers on CWIT event planning committees, and much more.



Men in CWIT

By: Avery Riehl, CWIT Scholar

Over the past year, Men in CWIT has focused on deeper discussions about our place as advocates for women. We've discussed the concepts of personal identities and intersectionality ("how is being a black woman in STEM different from being a white woman?"), as well as discussing what "feminism" is, and whether, as advocates for women, we consider ourselves to be feminists. In order to be more effective allies, we discussed minority experiences, such as microaggressions and impos-



tor syndrome.. Using resources from NCWIT and similar organizations, Men in CWIT also discussed workplace culture and what being an advocate will mean in our careers. Even as career engineers, women are more likely to handle unpaid office work, such as taking meeting notes or making coffee. Unless gender inequities like these are exposed and discussed, progress won't be made.

Director's Update, cont'd

Erin Poandl is the new face at our front desk. She joined CWIT as the new General Assistant in September, supporting CWIT office operations, fiscal management and student programming. Prior to joining CWIT, Erin served as Human Resources Specialist/Benefits Administrator at EVI Technologies, LLC in Columbia, MD. Erin has extensive experience in human resources, accounting and education, and has an M.S. in counseling and clinical health psychology. She is enthusiastic about utilizing her expertise and wealth of experience to support the CWIT community.

With the continued growth of our programs, our community has grown to 103 Scholars this fall. We've also welcomed more Affiliates than ever before to our programs and community. It's exciting to be part of such a vital and healthy community.

We celebrated five new graduates at December commencement –

Robert Thompson (CMSC, Cyber, now at BluVector), Rachel Cohen (CMSC, Cyber, now at APL), Vincent Liu (CMSC, Cyber, now at Northrop Grumman), Oladipupo Eke (CMSC, TSITE, now at Northrop Grumman), and Olivia Tillett (ME, TSITE, still weighing her options). Both have been integral parts of the CWIT community and we're looking forward to see what amazing things they do next.

With the New Year, we've jumped into selecting our next cohort of Scholars. We've just sent out our invitations to Scholar Selection Day in February. We're looking forward to seeing many of you there as faculty or industry interviewers. As always, we could not do what we do without the generous support of our supporters and partners across UMBC and beyond. We are grateful for your strong and unwavering support. Stop by to visit and meet our new folks!

Grace Hopper Celebration

By: Dr. Danyelle Ireland

The Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing (GHC) was held in Houston, TX this past October. GHC, produced by the Anita Borg Institute and presented in partnership with the Association of Computing Machinery (ACM), is the world's largest gathering of women technologists. Fifteen UMBC students traveled with CWIT to GHC and were sponsored by the BRAID initiative. Additionally, one T-SITE Scholar attended GHC through a scholarship from the Anita Borg Institute.

Many UMBC students had successful job interviews and several even received job offers while at the event. They also enjoyed the presentations and networking opportunities which exposed them to top industry professionals, innovative technical topics, and discussion on the representation and inclusion of women in tech.

When asked about their experiences, UMBC attendees said the following: "At Grace Hopper I learned about the kinds of jobs I would like to have. I also learned that there are more women in computing than I originally thought there would be! I was/am excited about all of the opportunities that I have before me. I had job interviews for places

I would have never thought I had a chance at and I had opportunities to meet women who are working on incredible things in the techfield."

"The Grace Hopper Conference was AMAZING. I attended sessions that empowered me and showed me how courageous women are. I had the privilege to hear the CEO and President of the Anita Borg Institute for Women and Technology, Mrs. Telle Whitney, talk about her personal experience for the first time during the ABIE Award. Her speech thought me that we all go through difficult times in life but what makes the difference is the courage to take risks, embrace adversity and listen to our inner core."



December Graduates



Above: Robert Thompson, Vincent Liu, and Rachel Cohen, Cyber Scholars (pictured with Cindy Greenwood, Assistant Director, Cyber Scholars)

Below: Oladipupo Eke and Olivia Tillett, T-SITE Scholars



Alumni Updates

- Thomas Davis (SITE)** - Recently moved to Seattle and will join Amazon as a Support Engineer this month.
- Alec Pulianas (C9)** - Was promoted to a level 2 engineer at Lockheed Martin.
- Emily Scheerer (C9)** - Was promoted to Assistant Project Manager and Associate Level 2 this past November at JHU/APL.
- Natalie Podrazik (C1)** - Joined Google on the Google Docs team in NYC this past September.
- Mariya Smolkin Frate (C2)** - Graduated with her MBA from San Diego State University in August and got married in September; a big year!

BEST of CWIT: Building Excellence

Through Scholarships in Technology

By Erica D'Eramo, CWIT Assistant Director

On October 14th, CWIT hosted our 3rd annual BEST of CWIT recruiting event. CWIT welcomed high school students from across the state of Maryland to learn about CWIT and attend sessions that include *What is it like to be a Computer Major?*, *What is it like to be an Engineering Major?*, *What is it like to be a part of the CWIT community?*, and *Thriving as Women in the College of Engineering and Technology*.

This event highlighted both the CWIT and Cyber Scholars Programs as well as the Affiliates program. Prospective families were able to participate in sessions to learn about the meaningful experiences our students are having with CWIT. Parents heard from the Office of Residential Life, Office of Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid, and the Honors College. We hope that BEST of CWIT will continue to grow in popularity as we try to increase our visibility within the community!



Fall Highlights

T-SITE Update

By: Dr. Danyelle Ireland, CWIT Associate Director

Since the fall of 2012, CWIT has awarded scholarships to 32 transfer students from Maryland community colleges as part the Transfer Scholarships in IT and Engineering (T-SITE) program. T-SITE Scholars are currently funded by two grants from the National Science Foundation S-STEM program (DUE-1154300 and DUE-1458343).

One hundred percent of all T-SITE Scholars in the first four cohorts were retained in engineering or computing majors. The average time to graduation for T-SITE Scholars is three years after transferring to UMBC. Additionally, eighty-six percent of T-SITE scholars in the first four cohorts have engaged in an internship or research experience. Our fifth cohort of T-SITE Scholars entered in fall 2016. We look forward to continued academic success and professional opportunities for T-SITE Scholars.

T-SITE Scholars are a highly visible group of students at UMBC and they have influenced the conversation about transfer student concerns for engineering and computing majors. Knowledge gleaned from the T-SITE program will inform CWIT's newest NSF-funded project called the Post-Transfer Pathways program, which will provide pre- and post-transfer advising, as well as a special first year experience course, for incoming transfer students in computing and engineering majors starting in Fall 2017.



Applications for the sixth T-SITE cohort, entering in fall 2017, are due on March 15, 2017. The online application and program information sheet are available on the [CWIT website](#).

Pictured: The T5 cohort, taken at the New Scholars Retreat in July 2016

CWIT Living-Learning Community

By: Erica D'Eramo, CWIT Assistant Director

In the Fall of 2016, the CWIT LLC has put on fun and exciting events like a week-long game of tag and a large potluck-style Family Dinner where dishes and cuisines of all cultures were brought to one table to discover and enjoy. This year, the CWIT LLC will have several great events that will bring the community even closer together. During the month of February there will be an Ice Cream Bar and Pizza movie night featuring, *Interstellar*, as a thank you for 100% contribution on a Resident Satisfaction survey. Later in the semester, there will be several other movie nights, Family Dinners, and a two special events called "CWIT Creates" where the community spends two Fridays out of the semester to create and learn about different technical skills and tools that they've never had the time to learn on their own. With all the excitement and participation being made this semester, we can already tell that this one will be one for the books.



Message from CWIT LLC Resident Advisor, Kwame Robertson:

"When I was applying to become an RA, I've always had this vision in my head of what I wanted to be as an RA; a resource and a helping hand for residents. In my second year of being an RA and being able to be the RA for the CWIT LLC floor has given me the very experience I had envisioned two years ago. Being on the CWIT floor has helped me make everlasting bonds, make me a better person, and most importantly, become a resource and influential leader that I never thought I could have become. I have a long road of progress ahead of me, but being on the floor has helped forge a clear path for me to walk, just as I have helped my residents on their journey. I always reminisce on the day I was offered the position of being an RA of the CWIT floor and I always thank my past self for making one of the best decisions of my life. I thank CWIT and my floor for the all wonderful friendships and memories made and I can't wait for what the future holds for me here."



Cyber 101

By: Cindy Greenwood, CWIT Assistant Director

Twenty-three high school senior and junior girls participated in the second annual Cyber 101 overnight program the weekend of September 24-25, 2016. The event was planned and facilitated primarily by current Scholars and Affiliates, including Alejandra Diaz (Y1), Alex Jackson (Y1), Teddy LaFemina (C12), Stephanie Pearre (Affiliate), Bailey Rouk (Y3), and Bryan Vanek (T4). Additional current students assisted with various parts of the program as well. These students led sessions to introduce students to topics such as cryptography, networks, malware, and more. Several of the participants had little to no experience with cybersecurity, while others had participated in competitions and had other experience. We host this event to show that there are other girls with similar interests and to give them a chance to connect and learn with one another. Several of the participants expressed that they have been the only girl or one of very few in their computing classes and attending this program was an encouraging experience. Our Scholars also benefit from the experience. "Planning these types of events really helped me learn about the topics more in depth while also helping the students be introduced to the material. I really enjoy getting to know all the students and speakers that attend!" says Alejandra Diaz, senior, computer science.



Connecting with Industry Professionals

By Dr. Danyelle Ireland, CWIT Associate Director

In Fall 2016, twenty-six industry professionals generously gave of their time to serve as mentors as part of our Industry Mentoring Practicum (IMP). Each fall, CWIT, Cyber and T-SITE scholars enroll in a five to six session practicum that is offered in collaboration with UMBC's Career Center. Several of this year's mentors participated in these sessions - in addition to working with their assigned mentee. At the practicum sessions, mentors shared valuable information about their own career paths, lessons learned along the way, and practical tips for professional success in tech industries

This year's mentors were from Asymmetrik, Ltd. (Ryan Blace), GE Aviation (Steve Schrantz and Holly Murry), GE Healthcare (Ed Belsinger, Kina Limbasiya, and Zozscha Bomhardt), Harris Corporation (Frank Morgan), HireVue (Joan Worthington), Leidos (Emily Toy), Loyola University Maryland (Patricia Malek), National Security Agency (Matthew Seligman), Northrop Grumman (Robyn DeWees and Susan Wilson), Patterson High School Academy of Engineering (Sharon Ball), PayPal Credit (Jeff Hoelter), Praxis Engineering Technologies (Tarisa Holbrook), Quotient, Inc. (Rebecca Bartlett), Red Arch Solutions, Inc. (Rithy Chhay), T. Rowe Price (Blake Kizer, Luthe Petry, Pankaj Upadhyay, and Paula Fetterman), Tenable Network Security (Katie Hirsch), The Whiting-Turner Contracting Company (Julia Rigdon), and UPS (Saija Chirayath). Additionally, three Scholars in chemical engineering were matched with online mentors through MentorNet, a national nonprofit dedicated to fostering a pervasive culture of mentoring women and minorities in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields.

Here's what some of our Scholars had to say about the 2016 IMP experience:

"I liked having the chance to update my resume and cover letter, as well as look at UMBCworks to see what internship opportunities were available."

"The Industry mentor meeting paper was useful, as it helped me to organize my thoughts before meeting with my mentor."

"I liked the Values and Workplace Culture Assignment because it caused me to think about a lot of factors and components of the workplace culture that I would otherwise have not thought about."



FALL 2016 HIGHLIGHTS

July:
22-24 New Scholar Retreat

August:
13 Affiliates Retreat
31 CWIT Ice Cream Social

September:
7 CWIT Family Meeting
12 Faculty Mentor Luncheon
14 Men in CWIT Meeting
26 Breakfast with your Major
28 Big WIT/LiWit Kick-Off
29 Fall Career Networking Event

October:
5 New Scholar Reception
10 Men in CWIT Meeting
14 Best of CWIT
26 Pick your Classes
19-21 Grace Hopper Conference

November:
14 Men in CWIT Meeting
19 Affiliates Conference

December:
12 CWIT Family Meeting
22 Undergraduate Commencement

SAVE THE DATE!!

Feb 25 Scholar Selection Day
March 27 Pick your Classes
April 4 WIT: Spring into Leadership
April 21 CWIT Showcase

Fall Career Networking Event

Approximately 30 computing and engineering professionals from Northrop Grumman, Lockheed Martin, JHU/APL, UPS, GEICO, GE Healthcare, and several other organizations joined CWIT for our annual networking event to help Scholars and Affiliates work on their professional networking skills. The event format was speed networking, allowing for each student to interact with multiple professionals.



Affiliates Update

By: Cindy Greenwood, CWIT Assistant Director

Record numbers of CWIT and Cyber Affiliates registered during the fall semester. Approximately 230 students signed up for the Affiliates Program and we have been working to offer enough activities to accommodate them all. We had the opportunity to add three new programs this fall, thanks to a grant from the College of Engineering & IT focused on expanding Affiliates offerings. First, on August 13, we offered an Affiliates Retreat to help students build a community of support before the school year began. Then, on November 19, was the Affiliates Conference, where students attended sessions focused on academic success strategies and professional development. And finally, on December 14, we offered a Stress Buster Event with food, board games, and other activities to help students relax before finals.



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