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# CWIT Update

THE CENTER FOR WOMEN  
& INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

## A Word From The Director: Dr. Penny Rheingans

This fall has flown by with new activity and new aspirations. Our freshmen have matured before our eyes and are preparing to take their first set of college final exams. Our sophomores and juniors have stepped up as leaders and mentors. Our seniors are looking for their places on the next stage. Krishna Sheth (Information Systems) and Collin Reed (Computer Science) are graduating a semester early in the rush to go do great things. This newsletter will give you a taste of what's been going on around CWIT.

This year has been marked by a determination that CWIT and SITE Scholars must become leaders and agents of change here on campus. They have worked hard to welcome and mentor our new Scholars and Affiliates, revive a dormant Society of Women Engineers (SWE) chapter, support other students through tutoring and RA positions, and contribute to research teams working on challenging problems. We have seen their leadership skills bloom as they have worked to help others.

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, 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 you're having as much fun as we are!

## Women in Technology Speaker Series Makes Its Debut!



*What exactly is networking and why should I be doing it?*  
*What career options exist for me as an engineering (or IT) major?*  
*How do I apply for graduate school?*  
*I have a 4.0, isn't that enough?*  
*What steps can I take right now, while I am a student, to be better prepared as a women engineering or IT professional?*

These are just some of the questions that were addressed in our new Women in Technology Series. CWIT staff intentionally designed and marketed a set of monthly panels to our Scholars, Affiliates and students in the College of Engineering and Information Technology to address a number of relevant professional development issues. September's panel, *Networking Tips*, challenged attendees to take advantage of any and all opportunities to network. The panelists' experiences with SWE and IEEE were testaments to the importance and payoff of professional society involvement. In October, the focus was *Navigating Career Paths*. This event combined two simultaneous engineering and computing focused panels followed by open networking time. Attendees learned about panelists' current positions, career paths, and heard sage advice about how to cultivate opportunities. Four of our Scholars

(Michele Racine, Emily Krause, Shreya Mohan, Morgan Madeira) practiced their public speaking skills as panel moderators and all attendees polished their 30-second commercials and dressed in business attire during the networking with panelists and industry representative. In November, attention turned to considerations for *Continuing Your Education*. A panel of experts and current graduate students, moderated by Katelyn Williams, demystified the pieces of the graduate school application process and discussed how graduate education differs from undergraduate studies. The series wrapped up with some hearty discussion about *Thinking Beyond the Grades*. Attendees spent time discussing communication, leadership and teamwork skills in small groups and then heard more about the importance of these soft skills from two Northrop Grumman professionals. CWIT will continue to offer these professional development and networking opportunities to our community and all students in the College. In March 2011, the series will continue with *Women in Leadership*, featuring conversations with mid to executive-level women.

### SPECIAL THANKS!

To all of our Fall Panelists: Dr. Morgan Trexler, JHU APL; Susan Farley, Booz Allen Hamilton; Rachel Foster, Laureate Education, Inc; Dr. Ashley Corbin, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and UMBC alumna; Lauren Sanford, Lockheed Martin Information Systems and Global Solutions; Shannon Jenkins, JHU APL; Louise Carroll, GE Healthcare; Terri Racine, U.S. Army Research Lab; Kristen Crizer, NAVAIR and SITE Scholar alumna; Dr. Renetta Tull, PROMISE Program; Jennifer Gill, Mechanical Engineering Graduate Student and GSA Executive Board Member; Dr. Gymama Slaughter, CSEE Department; Dr. Marie desJardins, CSEE Department; Stacey Ambuehl, Chemistry Graduate Student and President of WISE; Lisa Scoles Corbin and Ana Luisa Ramirez, Northrop Grumman Corporation.

# In Their Own Words...

## INTERNSHIP

**"The environment was fast paced and interns were empowered to drive deliverables for the projects they were assigned to. I learned that information technology is not just about support. IT's value is in improving everything and anything that touches internal and external customers. Every day brought a new challenge and the whole experience was incredibly rewarding."**

—Michael Rahimi, C6 Information Systems, General Electric (GE) Capital

**"I worked with four other students to program autonomous robots. We developed algorithms and wrote code for path finding techniques and object detection techniques for the robot. At the end of the summer we did a demo and presented our work to the other inters and mentors. For this experience I was able to use the knowledge I learned in school and see the practical outcome of it as well. In addition to working on our robots, we had the opportunity to attend talks by physicists, scientists, astronauts and even a noble prize winner. I gained a lot of knowledge from those lectures that I wasn't able to attain from just school work."**

—Asmita Korde, C6 Computer Engineering, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center

Internship, Research, Service, and Leadership are four important 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 on- and off- campus:

**"For my research project, I performed a simulation study to help validate software that NIST uses to certify Standard Reference Materials for X-ray diffractometers. It was an invaluable experience to contribute to a real research project and work closely with professionals in the field. I developed friendships with other interns that will probably last a lifetime. It was a fun summer and I now have a better idea of what I would like to do in the future."**

—Morgan Madeira, C8 Computer Science, National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)

## RESEARCH

**"Over the past two summers I have worked at the Army Research Laboratory (ARL) located at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. I was a member of the Warfighter Survivability Branch (WSB) both summers. At the end of my first year I presented a research paper I had wrote and worked on all summer to the Survivability Lethality Analysis Directorate (SLAD). This past summer I did more in depth and more interesting work in the WSB Laboratory handling, photographing, measuring, weighing, and cataloging wound fragments for input into fragment database. At the end of this summer, my coworker and I wrote and presented a technical paper and briefed our information to the ARL Senior Executive Service (SES) members. Our presentation was then chosen as a semifinalist in ARL Summer Student Symposium and we were invited to present our results to the Director of ARL. The work I did over these past few years has really made me feel like I am making a difference in the world, specifically helping our troops overseas. It has been a wonderful experience and opportunity, and I cannot wait to work there again this winter."**

—Michelle Racine, C8 Chemical Engineering



In October, some of the students in the CWIT community volunteered their time to help at the U.S. Science and Engineering Festival on the National Mall. The students helped successfully run a booth and engineering activity at the fair for a local non-profit organization, LETS GO Boys & Girls, that focuses on motivating students from underserved communities to consider STEM careers.

**"I had a great time volunteering at the Science and Engineering festival and teaching kids about buoyancy - hopefully I have motivated a new generation of engineers!"**

—Yvonne Okafor (CWIT Affiliate), Mechanical Engineering

In the Fall 2010 semester, some Scholars volunteered their time to tutor high school students or students at UMBC.

**"It was a blast tutoring high school students. It's a very satisfying experience to see your tutees succeed and know that you had a hand in their success."**

—Aasam Tasaddaq, C7 Mechanical Engineering

## SERVICE

### CWIT Student Board

**"The Student Board would like to thank and recognize all the scholars and affiliates who have been actively participating in our events. We had a very successful bake sale and scholar kick-off event, where scholars got to connect with each other and build their support system here at UMBC. We would also like to thank**

**Alex Markowski for his contribution as VP of Student Events this semester as he will be participating in a Co-Op with NSA this spring. Michael Barrett has been appointed the interim VP of Student Events for the remainder of the school year. This spring keep an eye out for the upcoming Food Network Challenge, another bake sale, and other fun events for students to participate in. Happy Holidays!"**



—Andrea Robinson (C6), President; Paridhi Jain (C6), Vice President; Alex Markowski (C7), Vice President; Amy Chou (C7), Secretary; Shreya Mohan (C8), Treasurer

### Society of Women Engineers (SWE)

**"SWE is open to all students in the College of Engineering and IT. We plan to hold events for young girls to encourage them to pursue science, engineering, and technology, to sponsor social and professional networking events for our members, and to sponsor members to attend national SWE conferences. Our chapter's mission is also to complement the technical skills we learn in class with soft skills such as leadership and networking that are important at job fairs and in a work place. This spring, SWE is participating in Johns Hopkins' Applied Physics Lab's Girl Power on Sunday, March 6. We will help run tables with demonstrations and hands on activities that demonstrate STEM concepts to elementary and middle school girls."**

—Lilian Johnson (C8), UMBC SWE President



Additional UMBC SWE Board Members: Morgan Madeira (C8), Vice President; Michelle Racine (C8), Secretary; Shreya Mohan (C8), Treasurer; Ima Udofa, General Member; Dr. Susan Martin, Advisor.

## LEADERSHIP

# Fall Event Highlights

## CWIT Retreat

A lot more than just a CWIT Overview - incoming freshman CWIT Scholars (the C9 class) participated in team-building workshops, gender diversity skits, active networking with faculty and industry representatives, and learned other academic skills to help ease the transition from high school to college!

*"The CWIT retreat was a great bonding experience. It was nice coming into college knowing that I would*

*have a family of friends. Climbing the tower was a great adventure; I've always had a fear of heights but the cheering and support of the other CWITs helped me to challenge myself and climb to the top."* - Jessica Izumi, C9 Chemical Engineering



## 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 involved about 100 of CWIT's closest friends and family, and included fabulous speeches by CWIT and SITE seniors and UMBC's own President Freeman Hrabowski.

*"The several speakers at the CWIT Scholars Reception were well spoken and inspirational, showing the many paths scholars follow to achieving their goals. The night was a great showcase of where CWIT is now and where it is going in the future."* - Alec Pulianas, C9 Computer Engineering

## conGRADulations!

CWIT's DECEMBER 2010 GRADUATES

**Krishna Sheth (C6 CWIT Scholar)**  
**Information Systems**

**Interned with NAVSEA, Black & Decker, and Enterprise Community Partners**  
**Working part-time with NAVSEA during Graduate School**

*"CWIT has played a huge role in my entire college experience. One of the main reasons I chose to attend UMBC was because of CWIT and the opportunities it offers. The program not only provided me with academic and professional support, but also offered me a close knit community. I also built friendships through CWIT that made my years at UMBC even better. I plan to continue my studies with a Masters in Information Systems. Even though I won't be officially a part of CWIT as a Graduate student, I definitely plan to stay involved with the community and CWIT's mission."*

**Collin Reed (SITE Scholar)**  
**Computer Science**

**Interned with UMBC and the University of Maryland, University College**

## A BIG THANKS! CWIT MENTORS

### FACULTY

TARYN BAYLES  
MARIE DESJARDINS  
AMY EVERHART  
ANITA KOMLODI  
CHUCK LABERGE  
WAYNE LUTTERS  
TIM OATES  
CHINTAN PATEL  
JOHN PINKSTON  
PENNY RHEINGANS  
JULIE ROSS  
ANNE SPENCE

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ERIC BRUNER  
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AMY CHOU  
TOM DAVIS  
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JUSTIN ERMER  
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MARY IGOE  
PARIDHI JAIN  
LILY JOHNSON  
ASMITA KORDE  
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ALEX MARKOWSKI  
LISA MCPHERSON  
SHREYA MOHAN  
ANGELA NEALEN  
CHESSKA O'NEAL  
ANDI ROBINSON  
DANIELLE ROMIG  
KRISHNA SHETH  
RACHEL SWEETON  
BRYANT SZELISTOWSKI  
AASAM TASADDAQ  
OANA TIBU  
KATELYN TOY

## CWIT Affiliates Program:

Through its Affiliates program, CWIT contributes to creating a supportive environment for all women in the College of Engineering and Information Technology. In late July, all incoming women undergraduates in the College were emailed information about CWIT and invited to become part of our expanded Affiliates program. In addition, we reached out to non-CWIT Scholars living on the CWIT Living Learning Community and in the Mechanical Engineering S-STEM program. The group is comprised of 24 women and 9 men. Sixteen are transfer students.

This year's Affiliates are actively participating in many of the same academic and professional development activities as our Scholars. They are expected to attend monthly family meetings, networking events, and to volunteer for service experiences. Affiliates participated in a half-day mini-retreat held the day before the fall semester began and were paired with an upper-class CWIT Scholar peer-mentor in their major. Affiliates have volunteered at the LETS GO Boys and Girls booth at the U.S. Science and Technology Festival on the mall in October and are serving on the planning committee for the 2011 Bits and Bytes program for high school girls. Way to go very involved Affiliates! Some of our most active Affiliates are: Owen Abe (MENG), Susan Adams (CS), Ester Babalola (CS), Chitra Gadwal (CS), Heidi Gray (CS), Annekia Harding (MENG), Samurdhi Kalenga Korlage (MENG), Kellie LaFlamme (CS), Amanda Mellot (IS), Yvonne Okafor (MENG), Elijah Reamer (CMPE), Erin Williams (CS), Kathryn Williams (CMPE) and Mariam Zonga (CMPE)! This year's Affiliates will serve as peer mentors to next year's Affiliates group.



# CWIT By The Numbers...

## Profile of CWIT's Fall 2010 Freshman Class (C9):

**675**...Average math SAT score  
**4.29**...Average high school weighted GPA (on a 5.0 scale)

### 2010 CWIT Scholars Program Applicant Pool:

- 59**...Total CWIT Scholars Program Applications (73% Female)
- 30**...Applicants were interviewed during Scholar Selection Day (80% Female)
- 18**...Interviewed applicants were offered the CWIT scholarship (78% Female)
- 14**...Selected applicants accepted the CWIT scholarship offer (86% Female)

### UMBC's Center for Women and Information Technology (CWIT)

Did you know...

- \* In Fall 2010, there were a total of 68 CWIT (48) and SITE (20) Scholars being supported by the CWIT program. 75% of CWIT Scholars and 35% of SITE Scholars were women.
- \* In Spring 2010, 15 (25%) Scholars achieved a 4.0 semester GPA; The average cumulative GPA of all Scholars is 3.37.
- \* 90% of all CWIT and SITE Scholars have either graduated in six years or are still pursuing their studies in a IT or Engineering major. The average for all first-time full-time students entering UMBC since 1995 is approximately 60%.



### 2010 Scholar Graduates:

#### Angela Brown (CWIT)

Software Engineer at Raytheon Solipsys

#### Jenny Donoghue (SITE)

Masters program in Chemical Engineering at UMBC

#### Kevin Lee (CWIT)

Interning with First Source Electronics

#### Morgan Markowski (CWIT)

National Security Agency (NSA)

#### Dominique Monteil (SITE)

Ph.D. program at École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) in Switzerland

#### Teresa Oswald (CWIT)

Software Engineer in Northrop Grumman's Professional Development Program (PDP)

#### Wenjing Wang (CWIT)

Lockheed Martin

## Alumni News

**Lauren Anthony (C4)** has been working for Deloitte as a Technology Strategy & Architecture Consultant for their Federal Practice since July 2010. She expects to graduate from UMBC with a Master of Science in Information Systems in May 2011. She also moved from Fairfax, VA to Centreville, VA in September.

**Lindsay Cox (Mannchen) (C1)** has changed jobs and now is working for Erickson Retirement Communities.

**Bobby Hite (C3)** was recently promoted at the Department of Defense. He also finished his Masters in Computer Science at Johns Hopkins University at the end of August, and in July he celebrated his one year anniversary with his wife Kerry.

Hello CWIT Scholars and Families,

Just a reminder that the Parents for Women and Information Technology (PWIT) group's activities for the 2010-2011 school year are under way. We just finished preparing a "little something" for the Scholars just in time for those finals that are around the corner. In the spring we will be having our annual picnic once again, which was so much fun (and windy!!) last year. We will also be purchasing the honor chords for our graduating scholars in May. Thank you to the freshman families that graciously joined us and donated this fall. We are now asking for additional donations from our other CWIT families. Any amount is appreciated, so that we can continue the program and support our current batch of CWIT scholars for 2010-2011 and beyond.

Please contact Liz Barrett at [lizbarrett@verizon.net](mailto:lizbarrett@verizon.net) or Terri Racine at [tmrrac@aol.com](mailto:tmrrac@aol.com) for more information, or simply mail your donation, care of PWIT, to Liz Barrett, 11923 Gold Needle Way, Columbia MD 21044.

Thanks, Liz & Terri  
Co-Chairs, Parents for Women and Information Technology (PWIT)

# PWIT

Send newsletter submissions to Katie Glasser at [kglasser@umbc.edu](mailto:kglasser@umbc.edu)

### CWIT Staff:

Dr. Penny Rheingans  
Director

Dr. Susan Martin  
Associate Director

Ms. Katie Glasser  
Assistant Director



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## WHERE HAVE THE SCHOLARS BEEN?

### Summer:

**Jul 30 - Aug 2** - CWIT New Scholar Retreat

**Aug 30** - CWIT Affiliates Retreat

### September:

**1st** - CWIT Family Meeting

**1st** - CWIT Table at Involvement Fest

**8th** - CWIT Open House (open to the entire College)

**10th** - CWIT Peer Mentors Orientation

**10th** - Peer Mentor Pairs Meet & Greet

**21st** - Women in Technology Series: Networking Tips from Successful Women in Industry

### October:

**2nd** - 2nd Annual C-What? Day (Coordinated by Student Board)

**4th** - Seniors Cohort Meeting

**6th** - UMBC Career Fair

**7th** - Annual Scholars Reception

**8th** - CWIT Peer Mentors Lunch

**11th** - Juniors Cohort Meeting

**18th** - Sophomores Cohort Meeting

**21st** - Women in Technology Series: Navigating Your Career Path

**25th** - Freshmen Cohort Meeting

**29th** - CWIT Student Board Bake Sale

### November:

**1st** - CWIT Family Meeting

**2nd** - Women in Technology Series: Continuing Your Education in Graduate School

**12th** - CWIT Peer Mentors Lunch

**30th** - Women in Technology Series: Thinking Beyond the Grades

### December:

**6th** - CWIT Family Meeting

**10th** - CWIT Holiday Party (Coordinated by Student Board)

**14th** - CWIT Study Break

**22nd** - Undergraduate Commencement