

CWIT UPDATE

Your Bi-Annual Digest of CWIT reflections and updates



A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Dr. Carolyn Seaman

Hello CWIT Community!

Greetings from a remote and virtual CWIT! Like the rest of the planet, our world was shaken up in March when everything was locked down and went online. We were fortunate to have the resources, the technology, and the expertise to make this transition, but it was a big lift. We have managed to put nearly all of our regular programming online (including Pick Your Classes, which was our first challenge on the very first day of UMBC's physical closing), and have also amped up our social and community building programming throughout the summer to keep the CWIT community close and strong. Read more about our response to the COVID19 event later in this newsletter.

As you might remember, a year ago the CWIT team, with support from all our stakeholders, completed a visioning exercise in which we examined our vision, our mission, our strategic goals, and our values. One of the things we chose to enhance going forward is our support of our students' many identities. While our name and our mission focuses on women, we are now more explicit about recognizing the barriers that all women face, not just as women, but also by way of their racial and other identities. The CWIT Team has been engaging in professional development and educational opportunities to equip ourselves to take on this work more intentionally. So when the national dialogue related to the Black Lives Matter movement came front and center this summer, we were ready to engage. We started with a written Response to Racial Violence, and have followed up with the first of a series of discussions among CWIT students with the goal of allowing a space to care for each other, to listen and support each other, and to develop skills in talking about and taking action towards greater racial justice.

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The Center for Women in Technology

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A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Dr. Carolyn Seaman

Before the pandemic hit (seems like a long time ago, right?), CWIT welcomed a new staff member. I'd like to introduce you to Thomas Waters, Jr., our Coordinator for Allies in CWIT and Strategic Projects. Thomas comes to us from UMBC's Meyerhoff program most recently, and before that Residential Life. Before coming to UMBC in 2016, he was at SUNY Buffalo, serving as an advisor and completing a MS in Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration. His passion areas include STEM student success, diversity and inclusion, and mentoring. Thomas is working on a revamp of our Allies in CWIT curriculum, as well as several other projects identified in our strategic plan, including helping us identify and remove barriers to inclusion in our event planning and communications. Thomas and his wife, Ashley, are also expecting their first child in December. Welcome, Thomas!



Another staffing note is that my status has changed just a bit. I joined CWIT as Interim Director in the summer of 2018, after CWIT's former Director, Dr. Penny Rheingans, left UMBC for the University of Maine. As of August 1, 2020, I can drop the "Interim" and am now simply the CWIT Director. I'm so thankful for the opportunity to continue this work, and with such an amazing group of people. Many thanks to all those who have helped me live into this role, and who have supported my continued service as Director.

CWIT is preparing to support our community this fall in our continued (mostly) virtual world. Some of our new scholars and affiliates will be living on campus on our LLC, and will be participating in a partially on-campus First Year Experience course. Supporting these students, as well as the dozens of other scholars, associates, and affiliates who will be spread all over the area and the globe, will be the focus of our efforts. This will require creativity in adapting existing programs, initiative in adding new programs to address new needs, and some sadness at having to let go of some things that simply can't be done in this environment. We miss our students terribly, and our usual excitement about the new academic year is tempered by the knowledge that we will not be able to see most of them face to face for some time yet.

To all our students, alums, campus partners, industry supporters, and friends, we wish for all of you health, safety, intellectual challenges, and peace. I hope you enjoy this report of our recent goings-on and find it useful as a way to keep in touch with us. Thank you for your continued support of CWIT.

Carolyn Seaman

CWIT Director

CWIT'S PROGRAMMATIC RESPONSE TO PANDEMIC & PROTEST

Dr. Danyelle Ireland

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has altered undergraduate education in unprecedented ways, including abrupt campus closure, unplanned transitions to online classes, and virtual student support services. Further, women and underrepresented minority students are even more vulnerable to academic marginalization, access limitations, and bias in these emergency remote settings. To mitigate the effects of this disruption in COEIT, CWIT strategically planned for assessment and programmatic responses to support student success in the new post-pandemic reality. Additionally, as the summer approached, we were confronted with the ongoing racial pandemic and prompted to engage with the Black Lives Matter discourse -- issues that intersect with our core value of inclusive excellence within CWIT and the UMBC community more broadly.

Our overarching priorities were to sustain the community and a connection to campus outside of classes, maintain quality of programs to provide reassurance and encouragement for students, and provide efficient messaging with reduced burden on students. We started by launching a needs assessment survey in March 2020 in order to triage areas of student concern and also solicit feedback from students about how they preferred to engage with CWIT in the new virtual format. We then reviewed all remaining activities for the Spring 2020 semester, made decisions (modify vs. cancel) based on what was practical, relevant, and necessary, and documented all actions taken to modify our program model for ongoing inquiry. The main assessment question guiding our inquiry is: how well did the CWIT Spring 2020 virtual programming model meet needs and concerns expressed by COEIT undergraduate students in the wake of COVID-19 and subsequent closure of UMBC's physical campus?

Spring 2020 Program Modifications

Based on student feedback and staff discussion, most programs and events continued as planned but were modified for an online format and delivered via the Google Hangouts, WebEx, and BlackBoard Collaborate platforms. Attendance requirements were relaxed, though we still saw high engagement.

Continued Virtually	Modified for a Virtual Format	New Virtual Events
Weekly—Sophomore Leadership Prac	Pick Your Classes Event	Virtual Bingo (prizes from PWIT)
Weekly—Cyber Practicum	Spring Into Leadership	Two new peer mentoring events
IMPACT and Cyber Workshops	Stress Buster Event	
Scholars Program Meetings	Senior Celebration (for graduates)	

Despite the aforementioned success of our program modifications, logistical challenges and safety concerns caused us to cancel or postpone several initiatives this past Spring. We canceled three K-12 outreach events, the Living Learning Community Dinner and Floor Meeting, and our CWIT Showcase event. We also postponed our end-of-year picnic and are hoping to reschedule it for a time when our community can again gather safely.

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CWIT'S PROGRAMMATIC RESPONSE TO PANDEMIC & PROTEST

Dr. Danyelle Ireland

Impact of the CWIT Virtual Programming Model

Student concerns were identified via a needs assessment survey launched on March 26, 2020. Responses were fairly evenly distributed among freshmen through seniors. While all respondents had received communication from at least some of their professors about assignments and grading for the rest of the semester, by the start of April about half of the respondents had not yet heard from all their professors. The obstacles students were most concerned about included:

- Having access to a quiet place to study and work
- Feeling stressed and distracted by the news
- Increased expectations to engage in online coursework
- Social distancing and quarantining protocols

In addition, there were some anecdotal comments about some instructors adding more requirements and added class time that were not part of the course before spring break.

We considered this feedback as we re-envisioned the remainder of the semester and articulated expectations to our community. A brief formative assessment was conducted after each event in Spring 2020 and used to inform our planning for the next event; however, here, we will highlight three points of community-wide assessment: Pick Your Classes (3/27), Spring Into Leadership (4/7), the CWIT End of Year Survey (5/29).

Pick Your Classes (134 attendees, N= 36 student responses to survey)

- 83% had no technical difficulties that hindered participation
- 66% received helpful advice from peers and 57% provided helpful advice to peers
- 53% felt more confident about their Fall schedule after the event (another 33% were neutral)
- 69% valued the ability to connect with the CWIT community via this event
- Generally satisfied with the online format, especially the breakout rooms by major in BlackBoard Collaborate.

Spring into Leadership (103 attendees, N= 20 student and 19 professional responses to survey)

- 90% - had no technical difficulties that hindered participation
- 100% agreed or strongly agreed that after this event they could envision themselves as a professional in their field
- 90% learned something that can help them navigate their career more successfully
- Students appreciated the opportunity to hone networking skills and loved the keynote.
- Professionals reported that their expectations were met, even with the new event format; provided some feedback on how to improve virtual engagement with students (e.g., less focus on video and more on how to effectively use a microphone).

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CWIT'S PROGRAMMATIC RESPONSE TO PANDEMIC & PROTEST

Dr. Danyelle Ireland

CWIT End of Year Survey (N= 45 respondents, Scholars and LLC Affiliates)

- After the Spring 2020 semester, 33% of respondents saw their GPA impacted, and many 47% didn't feel prepared to proceed with their major.
- 68% of senior respondents have not yet graduated and will continue working to complete their bachelor's degree in Fall 2020.
- 100% of respondents rated one-on-one meetings with professional staff good or excellent; students continue to value these meetings, especially for personal support, and goal setting/monitoring.
- 97% feel welcome at CWIT events and see CWIT as effective in meeting most of the needs of women/allies in COEIT; however, there is concern around CWIT's ability to support engineers at professional events and in Industry Mentoring (majority of resources are for computing).
- Students are generally grateful for CWIT's support model, especially this past academic year:

"The (CWIT) network has really helped me figure out what I want to tell people when I'm first meeting them in a professional setting and the study groups, friendships, and events were super fun."

-Spring 2020 Freshman

"Thank you for a great year! I appreciate all the guidance and efforts to create a diverse, respected, safe environment. All the academic, personal help goes a long way."

-Spring 2020 Sophomore

"CWIT was very supportive when everything happened after spring break and I am really grateful for that. They really helped during this super challenging online learning time."

-Spring 2020 Junior

Summer 2020 and Beyond

We continued to support students through Summer 2020 at virtual orientation for new students as well as a virtual New Scholar Retreat. As Dr. Seaman mentioned in her welcome message, CWIT published a message in Response to Racial Violence, and is organizing a series of discussions among the CWIT community with the goal of allowing a space to care for each other, to listen and support each other, and to develop skills in talking about and taking action towards greater racial justice. This engagement is supported by and draws upon the existing expertise of campus partners, such as the Mosaic Center for Culture and Diversity, who have been leading this important work at UMBC. In addition, we have thoughtfully planned for the Fall 2020 semester, which will primarily be online, to ensure continued support, connection, and success for students in the CWIT community. Our assessment of this work is ongoing and welcome your feedback and engagement with us as we undertake this effort -- we're all in this together!

T-SITE SCHOLARS UPDATES

Dr. Danyelle Ireland

To date, the Transfer Scholars in IT and Engineering (T-SITE) program has successfully served 53 transfer students from Maryland community colleges within the CWIT community at UMBC. As of May 2020, 92% of the T-SITE Scholars in the first six cohorts have graduated, with an average time to degree of 2.8 years after transferring to UMBC. Ninety-eight percent of all incoming T-SITE scholars have been retained in a computing or engineering major. These results are far exceeding the average metrics of STEM transfer students nationally.

This year T-SITEs have held or secured impressive internships and professional positions at employers such as American Express, Balti Virtual, Northrop Grumman, and __ (Shrabani's new position...awaiting email response)_. We look forward to welcoming the T9 cohort into the T-SITE family and the CWIT community. I have no doubt that they will carry the distinguished T-SITE legacy!



Pictured above: T-SITE Scholars at the CWIT Winter Retreat in February 2020



Pictured above: CWIT Scholar Sabrina Rodriguez (left) and CWIT Affiliate Amal Hussain during Bits & Bytes

CWIT AND CYBER AFFILIATES UPDATE

Kate O'Keefe

Our CWIT & Cyber Affiliates kicked off the semester with our Welcome Back Pizza Social, which allowed students and faculty to catch up after Winter Break and socialize before classes began. Some of the other events that CWIT & Cyber Affiliates participated in during the spring semester included multiple IMPACT workshops, Pick Your Classes, virtual game nights, and a Finals Preparation Workshop designed and presented in collaboration with the Academic Success Center. During the 2019-2020 academic year, we had 162 students sign up to be CWIT or Cyber Affiliates, with 84 of those students participating in at least one event during the spring semester. We are looking forward to seeing our returning and new affiliates in the fall!

ALLIES IN CWIT

Thomas Waters, Jr.

Upon reviewing student feedback and embracing an expanded vision for developing allies of women in technology, Allies in CWIT will look a little different in the upcoming academic year. During the Fall 2020 semester, a dedicated group of male-identified students within the CWIT LLC, Cyber, and T-SITE communities will be expected to choose from and participate in pre-approved learning opportunities. The purpose of these opportunities is to build students' knowledge about and increase their exposure to topics surrounding gender equity, social justice, and/or identity-based allyship. In Spring 2021, those same students will then deeply engage in weekly conversations about effective allyship for women in a newly designed format of the group-based course known as Allies 101 (or PRAC 109). We are excited about the changes as we continue to expand Allies in CWIT!

If you'd like to suggest/share any resources or Fall 2020 events that support the mission of Allies of CWIT, please email twaters2@umbc.edu.



Far left: COEIT Faculty & Staff at Bits & Bytes

Center: Dancing at Winter Retreat

Near left: Bus trip to Northrop Grumman

SOPHOMORE LEADERSHIP

Thea Robertson

This year, the C17 cohort of CWIT Scholars had the chance to explore their leadership abilities in a practicum course taught by instructors Erica D'Eramo and Thea Robertson. Sophomore Leadership is an opportunity for CWIT scholars to enhance their academic and professional skills as they transition into upperclassmen, and to strengthen connections and friendships within their cohort.

Based on survey results from C17, this year's seminar sessions focused on self-reflection, innovation, leadership, and conflict resolution. Each session was facilitated by representatives from departments and programs throughout UMBC; for example, Romy Hubler and David Hoffman from the Center for Democracy and Civic Life led a discussion on innovation and leadership, and CWIT student leaders Frances Watson, Olivia Bailey, Mariela Guardado-Martinelli, and Sammie Maygers were on a panel about how they earned their various leadership roles on and off-campus. These sessions were held on-campus in February before the university physically closed.

Fortunately, the instructors quickly adapted to the pivot to a virtual space in March. A webinar, followed by a Q&A portion, on leading through conflict resolution was hosted by Kaleigh Mrowka, the Assistant Director of Residential Education. As a final project, all Scholars were required to create a "life map" depicting their personal journeys around issues of leadership, using the lessons learned throughout the course. They presented their "life maps" in small, peer-facilitated groups on Blackboard Collaborate, a virtual classroom platform.

Despite the unique challenges C17 faced during the semester, they have progressed as thoughtful and innovative leaders; We're ready to transform the C18 cohort next spring!

BITS AND BYTES — February 2020

Kate O'Keefe

A committee of 11 current Scholars and Affiliates planned and facilitated our annual Bits & Bytes overnight program for 22 high school junior girls from all over the East Coast, including Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. The girls spent the night on our Living-Learning Community floor, thanks to several current Scholars and Affiliates who served as hosts and welcomed the participants to UMBC. We are hopeful to see these participants as CWIT community members and UMBC students in 2021!



WELCOME TO CWIT EVENT — April 2020

Erica D'Eramo

Prospective students who were invited to join the CWIT community participated in the second annual Welcome to CWIT Event. The CWIT team eagerly shared all of the unique opportunities that we have to offer, but most importantly we wanted students to connect with current Scholars and Affiliates in the COEIT majors. The 35 attendees learned about CWIT activities and opportunities through an interactive game of CWIT Kahoot and then joined virtual "breakout sessions" by Scholar and Affiliate Program, where they met with upperclassmen and asked questions about their experiences, passions, challenges, and what they love most about CWIT. Several students shared that this event helped them to decide to become a CWIT community member in the Fall!

WINTER RETREAT — February 2020

Erica D'Eramo

Tools for Dialogue. Vision, Mission, Values. Your Input.

Scholars and Living Learning Community Affiliates joined the CWIT team and members from the Division of Student Affairs in a community retreat on Saturday, February 8, 2020. With over 100 members in the UC Ballroom, we learned tools from UMBC's INTERACT program, a typically 5-week program, re-structured into a half-day retreat. Students learned and practiced the necessary skills to become inclusive leaders and engaged community members. By completing INTERACT Dialogues, CWIT students have joined hundreds of other students who have made the commitment to ensure that UMBC is a place where all students feel that they belong.

The retreat concluded with a high level view of CWIT's Vision, Mission, and Values and how students' input in previous retreats and surveys impacted the creation of these pivotal documents that will lead CWIT into the future.



CWIT Scholars at Winter Retreat



Cyber Scholars at Winter Retreat

CWIT LLC ACTIVITIES

The CWIT LLC continued to remain active and engaged throughout the spring semester, even after many of our students moved back home due to COVID-19. Some of the activities held during the semester included game nights (including two that were virtual!!), hosting Bits & Bytes students, family dinners, and so much more. Thank you to Colin Vieson, the RA of the CWIT LLC during the 2019-2020 for doing a great job and truly making our LLC a community!

NEW SCHOLAR RETREAT — July 2020

Cindy Greenwood

For the first time ever, the CWIT New Scholar Retreat took place virtually rather than in person. Instead of spending a Friday through Sunday together on campus and at a challenge course, our incoming CWIT Scholars, Cyber Scholars & Associates, and T-SITE Scholars spent several hours in virtual events with the CWIT and Cyber staff and the student planning committee over the weekend of July 17-19. We significantly reduced the number of hours spent in sessions during the retreat in recognition that long days at the computer would be different from the long days getting to know each other in person that students would typically experience at the retreat. The student planning committee did a fantastic job of making sure each session had an interactive component to try to make the retreat as engaging as possible. The new CWIT Escape Room committee also got to create and facilitate their first virtual escape room, a component that we heard positive feedback about from attendees.

From our post-retreat feedback survey, we learned that 88% of respondents are more excited about the upcoming school year than they were before attending the retreat and 96% are excited about participating in more CWIT events and activities in the coming semester. The retreat helped 84% of respondents develop a sense of belonging in the CWIT community. While we strive for each of these numbers to reach 100%, we are encouraged that a majority of our students seemed to get out of the retreat what we hoped they would. At the same time, we will continue to work to create the best student experience possible, given our current circumstances.

A few quotes from retreat attendees include:

"I loved that the retreat allowed me to meet new people. I feel like I've made a lot of great connections. I was able to learn a lot about what to expect from CWIT and from UMBC and I am excited to prove myself as well. I gained a great understanding of the true purpose of CWIT and how I can contribute."

"I liked the virtual escape room, it was very creative and a lot of work was put into it. I understand the CWIT mission more and I am now aware of all the resources at my disposal."

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NEW SCHOLAR RETREAT — July 2020

Cindy Greenwood

"[The retreat] made me feel less nervous about my transition to college. I really liked learning about clubs and organizations, networking, and what is expected of me as a CWIT scholar. I feel prepared to succeed in my major and as a member of the CWIT and UMBC community."

"I loved the way the retreat was set up. Initially when I heard the retreat was going to be online, I wasn't sure how well I could participate with the amount of people in a virtual setting, but it was very easy for me to communicate and express my ideas. I gained a lot of confidence after I completed the retreat...I am glad to be part of the CWIT community."



Incoming Scholars & Associates



Map depicting student and staff answers to the question: "Where are you from?"

SPRING INTO LEADERSHIP — April 2020

Cindy Greenwood

CWIT's annual Spring Into Leadership event was held on Tuesday, April 7, 2020. This was the first time that this event was held virtually. The event was planned to be in person on the same evening, but the CWIT staff worked quickly to adapt the event to an online format using Blackboard Collaborate due to the COVID-19 pandemic. More than 90 students, faculty, staff, alumni, and industry professionals participated in the event and Stephanie C. Hill, a senior leader at Lockheed Martin and a UMBC alumna, was the keynote speaker.

Student attendees said:

"I liked how we were still able to have great discussions despite being online. Everyone at my table was happy to participate and I think that we exchanged some great ideas and learned a lot."

"I wasn't sure how the event was going to go being online, but I thought it was great! Thank you for the time and effort you put into planning and setting up this event."

Non-student attendees said:

"This is always one of my favorite events. Not only is clear that that students learn a lot from the keynote address, and from the interaction with faculty, industry partners (many of whom are alumni), and staff... but I also learn a lot. I win all-around--so thank you!"

"Keep virtual events coming in this time of COVID-19...it's a major way we keep in touch! Nice job, team, for organizing a successful event!"

SENIOR CELEBRATION AND COEIT AWARDS — May 2020

Erica D'Eramo

Due to COVID-19 we transitioned our typical 'CWIT Senior Dessert' event into a **CWIT Senior Virtual Celebration**, inviting graduating Scholars and their family members to mark this momentous occasion in a Scholar's career. With over 35 CWIT Scholars, Cyber Scholars, T-SITE Scholars and their families present, we heard from Dr. Carolyn Seaman and Dr. Anupam Joshi about the resilience and accomplishments of this graduating class. Each senior shared their favorite CWIT memory and where they were headed on their next adventure. Many shared about exciting jobs and graduate school opportunities.

Immediately following the Senior Celebration, the College of Engineering and Information Technology hosted the virtual **COEIT Celebration**. The following individuals from the CWIT community were recognized:

Outstanding Seniors in Computer Science:

Zoe Leckron
Matthew Manzi

Student Leadership Award in Computer Science:

Anna Staats

Outstanding Seniors in Computer Engineering

Steph Saloka

Outstanding Seniors in Chemical Biochemical and Environmental Engineering:

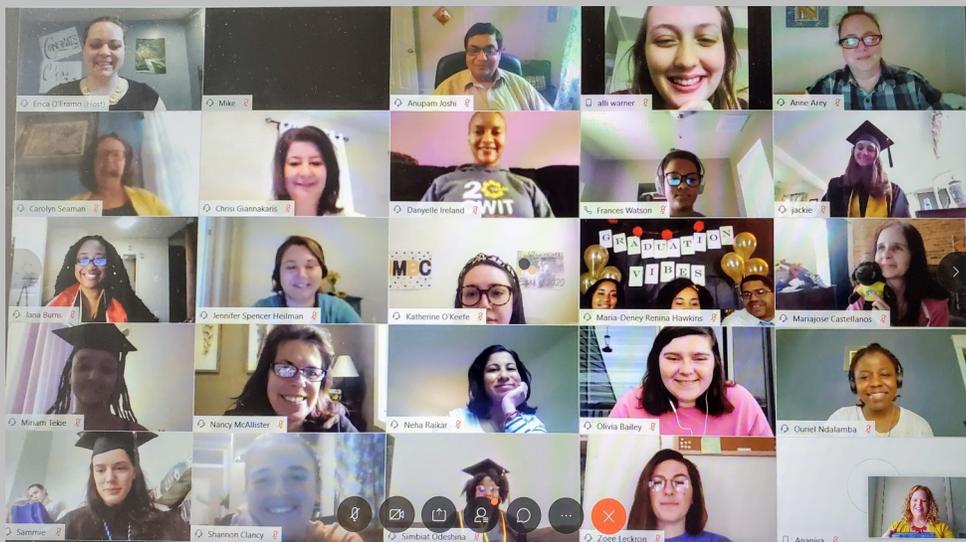
Sammie Maygers

2020 Staff Awards for Superior Service:

Cindy Greenwood



Additionally, the CWIT community—current students, alumni, staff, campus partners, graduating seniors, and their family members—joined together on Thursday, May 20, for a **Graduation Watch Party**. We were excited to celebrate together, hear from campus leadership, and applaud our outstanding graduates virtually and creatively!



CWIT, Cyber, and T-SITE Grads — We'll Miss You!



Top Row, L to R, CWIT Scholars: Mariana Bueno, Seamus Burke, Heather DeVal, Maria-Deney Hawkins, Srinithi Jayaram, Zoe Leckron, and Sammie Maygers; **Second Row, L to R, CWIT Scholars:** Tati Nguyen, Steph Saloka, Anna Staats; **Cyber Scholars:** Muhsina Helal, Britton Irechukwu, and Tim Lin; **Third Row, L to R, Cyber Scholars:** Matt Manzi, Hannah Russell, and Jackie Schultz; **T-SITE Scholars:** Shrabani Debnath, Azaria Gallo, Lubow Rashid, and Katherine Sublett.

Active CWIT & Cyber Affiliates Grads — Congratulations!

Computer Engineering

Kamran Ataran Rezai & Casey Borrer

Computer Science

Dorothy Carter, Felix Dogbe, Wendy Gao, & Megha Kottapalli

Information Systems

Emina Abdeldayem, Michelle Corpus, Jennifer Dinh, Sonali Ghante, Felice Henriquez, Harveer Kaur, Simbiat Odeshina, Adeta Ogunlaja, Simran Sandhu, & Junie Senthilkumar

Mechanical Engineering

Juliet Schick

CWIT LEADS UPDATE — Updates about our many dedicated student leaders

CWIT Student Council

- The 2019-2020 CWIT Student Council has planned multiple all-community events, including a trip to Skyzone. Although the remaining events were unable to occur due to Covid-19, they were able to host elections and welcome new Council Members to the Board. Thank you to the 2019-2020 Student Council for all of you efforts and initiatives: Carly Heiner (President), Maddie Gruel (Vice President), Zoe Leckron (Secretary), Maria-Deney Hawkins (Treasurer), Jessica Adams (Affiliates Representative), and Simbiat Odeshina (Historian).
- The 2020-2021 CWIT Student Council will be introducing regular Town Halls, new events, and collaborating with the CWIT staff to start a CWIT Instagram page! Welcome to the new council members: Frances Watson (President), Kavya Kavanakudy (Vice President), Cindy Quach (Secretary), Ouriel Ndalamba (Treasurer), Elizabeth Stiller (Affiliate Representative), and Shaniah Reece (Historian)!

LLC RA

- The CWIT Living Learning Community has been led by Colin Vieson, CWIT LLC Resident Assistant, and he has successfully coordinated monthly family dinners, movie nights and game nights. After leaving campus due to Covid-19, he continued to reach out to students, check-in on them, and provide a virtual space to interact. We are excited to have him returning to the CWIT LLC as the RA. He will face unique virtual programming opportunities for the 2020 fall semester but he has a plan!

BEST of CWIT Lead

- Student leadership and contribution has been a core element of the Building Excellence through Scholarships in Technology (BEST) of CWIT. For the 2020 BEST of CWIT event taking place in October, the CWIT staff has selected Maddy Selby as the inaugural BEST of CWIT Lead. Throughout the summer and fall, Maddy will be leading a team of CWIT community members in redesigning and planning a virtual BEST of CWIT event, open to all high school students.

Escape Room Lead

- During a trip to the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) Conference, students and a staff member brainstormed how we can utilize Escape Rooms to teach folks about STEM and CWIT information. After many hours of brainstorming, CWIT decided to create an Escape Room Lead position to focus on both in-person and virtual Escape room opportunities for current UMBC students and high school students. We are excited to welcome Olivia Bailey into the inaugural Escape Room Lead position.

CWIT LEADS UPDATE

Peer Mentoring Leads

- Our Peer Mentoring Leads continued to support our Peer Mentors and Peer Mentees with engaging activities throughout the spring semester, even after moving to an online environment in March. Some of these events included a Women's Leadership Panel, a Game Night cosponsored with the LLC RA, and an end-of-the-year celebration! Thank you to our 2019-2020 Peer Mentoring Leads for all of your hard work and dedication to helping foster these mentor/mentee relationships: Olivia Bailey, Jasmyn Frazier, and Vivian Zheng. We also would like to formally announce and welcome our Peer Mentoring Lead for the 2020-2021 school year: Reagan Roberts! We are looking forward to seeing the exciting events Reagan will help plan for our incoming mentors and mentees!

Cyber Leads

- Hannah Russell and Tim Lin, the 2019-2020 Cyber Leads, facilitated two Cyber Workshops, a Cyber Social, and an activity during a Cyber Family Meeting in the Spring 2020 semester. On February 7, they arranged for fellow Cyber Scholar Jackie Schultz to hold a workshop titled, "Introduction to Capture the Flag (CTF) Competitions," and on May 1, they had Cyber Scholar alum Alejandra Diaz facilitate an "Introduction to Splunk" virtual workshop. On February 12, Tim created a Jeopardy-style game for Scholars & Associates to play in teams during the Cyber Family Meeting to get to know one another better. And on March 4, the leads held a social for Scholars, Associates, and Affiliates with a build-your-own tacos lunch and games.
- Hannah and Tim both graduated in May and will be succeeded in the role of Cyber Leads by current Scholars Katy Leatherwood and Brianna Turgott. We are excited to see what the new leads will plan in the coming year!

K-12 Recruitment & Engagement Lead

- The K-12 Recruitment & Engagement Lead this past school year was Cyber Scholar Mariela Guardado-Martinelli. Mariela had some wonderful plans and momentum for spring semester K-12 initiatives, but unfortunately almost all of those plans were in place for dates that fell after the pandemic hit and were not feasible to do virtually. Our first-ever Tech Exploration Day for middle school girls from Baltimore City and Baltimore County was planned for a Saturday in late April, our K-12 Ambassadors were set to facilitate a workshop for elementary and middle schoolers who were going to visit campus for another event in April, and the Ambassadors had a visit planned to Federal Hill Preparatory School in Baltimore on May 1. While we were disappointed to have to cancel these events, we look forward to rescheduling them when it is safe to do so.
- Luckily, Mariela has one more semester at UMBC before she graduates, so she will serve as a co-lead for K-12 Recruitment & Engagement in Fall 2020 alongside new K-12 Lead Molly Zwack, a CWIT Affiliate. We look forward to creatively engaging K-12 students virtually in the coming semester.

IMPACT WORKSHOPS

Kate O'Keefe

During the 2020 spring semester, CWIT hosted 7 Impact Workshops for Scholars and Affiliates. Topics included:

- Leading The Way: Leadership Opportunities in CWIT by Kate O'Keefe, CWIT
- In the Shoes of a Hiring Manager by Jen Spencer Heilman, Career Center
- Undergraduate Research Opportunities by Dr. April Householder, Undergraduate Research and Prestigious Scholarships
- Why Attending Conferences Matter (and how to get \$\$\$ to go) by Erica D'Eramo, CWIT
- Persistence & Identity in Your STEM Major by Dr. Jamie Gurganus, Mechanical Engineering
- Allyship 101: Doing Politics Together--and Apart by Dr. Kate Drabinski, Gender & Women's Studies
- Finding Your True Colors Leadership Style by Kate O'Keefe, CWIT

Thank you to all of the presenters for taking the time to create engaging and informative workshops for our students this past semester!

NCWIT ASPIRATIONS IN COMPUTING

Cindy Greenwood

CWIT staff member Cindy Greenwood serves on the Maryland Affiliate committee for the National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT) Award for Aspirations in Computing, alongside colleagues from the University of Maryland, College Park, and Loyola University. The Aspirations in Computing awards program recognizes high school girls for their achievements and future aspirations related to continuing their education and careers in computing fields.

On Sunday, May 31, more than 90 high school girls from across Maryland were celebrated during the virtual Aspirations in Computing Awards Ceremony. Among the awardees were incoming Cyber Scholar Venzah Hamilton and incoming Living-Learning Community Affiliate, Emme Staats.

ALUMNI UPDATE

Tawny Barin (C3) -- "I am now VP, Video Distribution & Content Operations for NBC Entertainment so I am overseeing some really fun areas ranging from digital video publishing to AI & enhanced metadata applications."

Kevin Johnson (C10) — Kevin married fellow UMBC alum Christina Kawata on June 12, 2020.

Alec Pulianas (C9) -- Started a new job as a Software Engineer at Microsoft in Reston, VA. He also got married on May 2, 2020.

Heidi Robertson (C1) -- "We welcomed our second daughter, Ella Wynn, on June 2, 2020!"

Emily Toy (C5): "My husband, Matthew Dailey, and I welcomed a new baby, Hannah Dailey, on May 17, 2020. She weighed 7 lbs 10 oz and measured 20 inches long."

ASSESSMENT AND GRANTS

Dr. Danyelle Ireland

We've reached the end of year four on the NSF-funded Post-Transfer Pathways Program for Computing and Engineering Majors (Pathways) project. The Pathways program addresses the national need to increase the number and diversity of new computing and engineering graduates by improving the post-transfer success, retention, and graduation of computing and engineering majors from community colleges to four-year public research universities, with a focus on women and underrepresented minorities. We are encouraged that many of the successful interventions piloted through this program are in plans to be institutionalized within COEIT and in other parts of UMBC (e.g., transfer success advising model, major-specific transfer seminar courses). In the upcoming, final year of the project we will be focused on analyzing the results of this project, interpreting the outcomes, and sharing best practices via dissemination to relevant professional societies and other USM institutions.

We are excited about two new CWIT grant projects initiated this year. On August 1, 2020, Dr. Ireland received funding for an NSF "Building Capacity in STEM Education Research" award to develop a model for inquiry in engineering education research focused on women's achievement and attrition in undergraduate engineering. The research project aims to model patterns of major behavior data among undergraduate women entering and exiting an engineering program prior to graduation, elucidate the cultural ecosystem of undergraduate engineering education and its relationship to women's achievement motivation, and examine the structural modes of power, privilege, and socialization within the discipline.

Also, in response to COVID-19 and the subsequent emergency remote teaching and learning context in COEIT, Drs. Ireland and Seaman collaborated with Drs. Maria Sanchez and Helena Mentis in the COEIT Dean's Office and Dr. Virginia Byrne at Morgan State University on an NSF grant proposal (pending review) addressing the impact of the pandemic on the undergraduate student experience in COEIT and how faculty/staff can promote equitable online learning and support, particularly for underrepresented students in computing and engineering fields. In the coming year, our assessment and research efforts will be focused on investigating how well our programs respond to post-pandemic student realities, implementing a new inquiry into the gender and racial climate of the College, and measuring and articulating the impact of our Affiliates programs.

Have an idea for a feature for our next newsletter?
Submit suggestions to Cindy Greenwood at cindyg@umbc.edu

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