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CWIT update

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

From The Interim Director's Desk

Dear CWIT Community,

My name is Carolyn Seaman, and this newsletter represents my first as the Interim Director, a role I took on last August after the departure of CWIT Director Dr. Penny Rheingans. Penny has left UMBC for a leadership position at the University of Maine. We miss her a great deal, but wish her well up north, and thank her for her many years of service to our community.

By way of introduction, I have been a UMBC faculty member in the Information Systems Department since 1998. My technical research area is software engineering, in particular the study of big, old systems and how they age. Although I am new to this position, I am no stranger to CWIT, as I have served over the years as a Faculty Mentor, an application reader and applicant interviewer, Advisory Board member, and co-PI on some of the CWIT research grants. Much of the work in CWIT is familiar to me, but I am still facing a bit of a learning curve as I take on the Director role. So far, I am enjoying it immensely!

I have been appointed as Interim CWIT Director for two years. My job, beyond keeping the Center running and doing its good work, is to lead a visioning and strategic planning process during my first year. During the second year of my term as Interim, a search for a new permanent Director will be conducted.

Last December, we had our semi-annual meeting of the CWIT Internal Advisory Board. We have many new members of the board joining this year, and we've also made some changes to the IAB description and responsibilities of members. We're very grateful for the service of all the IAB members, and are looking forward to their wisdom and advocacy as we go forward!

The CWIT staff has begun a visioning process, in which we will examine our vision, mission, priorities, and programs, as we begin the next 20 years of CWIT history. The process will take place over the spring semester, and is being facilitated by Howie Schaeffer of Bonanza Communication. The output of the process will be a new strategic plan. We will be asking many of our stakeholders for input into this process, so stay tuned.

Another new development coming up this spring is the hiring of a new Assistant Director with primary responsibility for our Affiliates programs. The position will be a two-year pilot, with the possibility of continuing the position based on an extensive evaluation of its impact on improving the diversity and success of the COEIT student population. The position is currently posted on the UMBC job posting website. Please feel free to refer anyone you might know who would be a good candidate.

As always, CWIT is humming with lots of activity, from the programs we've been running and refining for years, to some new ideas and initiatives (check out our new logo - new signage and furniture are coming!). Thank you all for your support of CWIT!

Carolyn Seaman
Interim Director



Affiliates Update

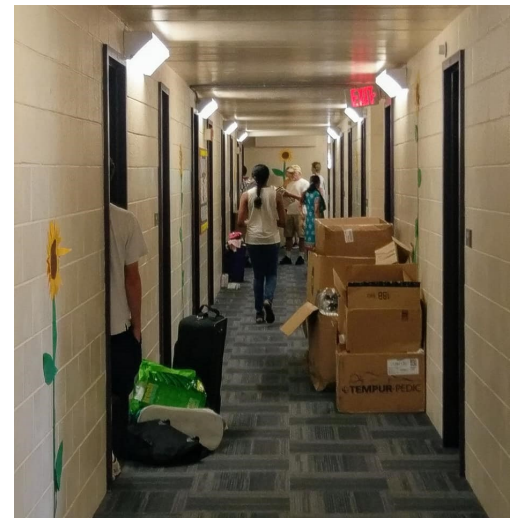
By Cindy Greenwood, Assistant Director

Thanks to help from Ken Schreihofer in Student Affairs, we have been able to implement a new system for tracking CWIT & Cyber Affiliates engagement through myUMBC. In the fall semester, 159 non-Scholar students attended at least one CWIT-sponsored event, with 40 of those students attending three or more events. Using the “levels of engagement” framework developed last year, which categorizes Affiliates engagement into areas such as “community building,” “academic success,” “professional development,” and “volunteering/planning,” 18 Affiliates reached Level 1 of engagement, 12 of those also reached Level 2, and five reached Level 3. By reaching these levels, students earn recognition in the form of CWIT Affiliates-themed items including t-shirts, drawstring bags, and more. A couple of students were already on the verge of reaching Level 4, the highest level of engagement, after only the first semester, so we look forward to seeing many students reach additional levels through the rest of the school year.

CWIT Living-Learning Community

By Erica D’Eramo, Assistant Director

The CWIT LLC had an exciting fall season. Between residents making new friends on the floor and participating in many activities- including monthly family dinners, movie nights, faculty office hours, bubble tea parties, video game tournaments, and even student-organized social gatherings, it has definitely been a semester to remember! (Photos to the right and bottom right from move-in day in August 2018)



Cyber 101

By Cindy Greenwood

Twenty-two high school senior and junior girls attended Cyber 101 in September, a free overnight program to introduce students to concepts of cybersecurity, such as network security, cryptography, malware, and more. This event is held annually and is primarily planned and facilitated by a committee of current Scholars and Affiliates. Thanks to this year’s committee: Seamus Burke, Jenna Ebersole, Tim Lin, Lauren Loftus, Amina Mahmood, and Hannah Russell.



Assessment & Grants

By Danyelle Ireland,
Associate Director

In July 2018, we received a grant from Google through the [exploreCSR program](#), which focuses on workshops aimed at increasing the participation and success of undergraduate women in computing research. This academic year, we will be implementing the grant as a collaboration with faculty in the CSEE department through our IMPACT workshop series.

We are continuing to implement our newest NSF grant, the Post-Transfer Pathways Program for Computing and Engineering Majors. This project supports pre-and post-transfer advising as well as a special first year experience course for incoming transfer students in computing and engineering majors. It also supports a Transfer Learning Community for faculty and staff in computing and engineering at UMBC and six partner Maryland community colleges. All areas of this grant are progressing successfully. We will be submitting a proposal for a new grant focused on a model for best-practices for peer mentoring in computing and engineering majors and we hope to collaborate with students and faculty from community colleges on this project as well.

Additionally, Madhura Belli (MS student in Computer Science) is working with CWIT as an educational research assistant, helping to finalize analysis of the 2017 COEIT climate focus groups and 2016 survey data. She will also assist with presenting the results to each of the departments, which will take place at the end of the Spring 2019 semester.

Right: Students and staff at Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing

Below: Students and staff at Richard Tapia Celebration of Diversity in Computing



Grace Hopper Celebration & Tapia Conference

CWIT, through funding from the BRAID initiative and COEIT, sponsored a group of 18 students to attend the Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing in Houston, TX, and 11 students to attend the Richard Tapia Celebration of Diversity in Computing in Orlando, FL. Both conferences were in September and were great opportunities for students to make professional connections, hear stories from peers and experts, and get quality career advice.

Alumni Updates

By Cindy Greenwood

Natalie Podrazik : Eleanor Podrazik Chang was born in July, and her family relocated from NYC to Boston in December. Natalie transferred teams at Google from Docs to Image Search and her husband Ricky continues to work for Grubhub/Seamless.

Katie Swanson (Y2) moved from Columbus, OH, to Seattle to work on front-end web development on [chase.com](#) as she has taken on a new role with her current employer, JP Morgan Chase & Co., Katie started this new role on January 14.

Mariya Smolkin Frates : Healthy baby boy Liam Blake Frates was born February 15, 2018 at 5 lbs 3oz and 18.3" long!

December Grads

Pictured Below: Cyber Scholar and T-SITE Scholar December 2018 graduates (L to R: Lauren Hale (Y5), Jessica Davis (T5), Achuachua Tesoh-Snowsel (T5), Victoria Herr (Y4), and Sam Mendimasa (T5). All the December grads had full-time employment lined up prior to graduation and started work with Freedom Consulting Group, GEICO, Hughes Network Systems, Noblis, and Northrop Grumman.



T-SITE Update

By: Danyelle Ireland

The Transfer Scholars in IT and Engineering (T-SITE) are currently funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation S-STEM program (DUE- 1458343). The T-SITE program is focused on serving new transfer students majoring in one of four computing majors at UMBC (computer engineering, computer science, information systems, and business technology administration). In Fall 2018, eight new Scholars (T7 cohort) joined our community, bringing the total number of T-SITEs served by CWIT to 44.

Forty-four percent of T-SITEs have been women and 50% underrepresented minorities. T-SITE Scholars in the first five cohorts came to UMBC with an average transfer GPA of 3.55 and 64 credits completed. The average time to graduation for T-SITEs is three years after transferring to UMBC and ninety-seven percent of all T-SITE Scholars were retained in engineering or computing majors. T-SITE Scholars have completed internships with employers such as IBM, General Electric, Exelon, National Security Agency, Northrop Grumman, Noblis, HughesNet, M&T Bank, Skyline Technology Solutions. Additionally, T-SITEs have completed undergraduate research experiences at the University of Pittsburgh, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and University of Arizona.

Check out our new CWIT and 20th birthday logos!



Allies in CWIT

By: Erica D'Eramo

The Allies in CWIT practicum educated allies of women in computing and engineering fields in order to empower them to positively influence the gender climate in the College of Engineering and Information Technology community (COEIT). This is a year long group based allyship course. The topics covered in this course revolve around how to be an active ally for minorities in Tech fields. These topics also include current events such as the 2017 Google Email Scandal and the "#MeToo movement."

A team of Scholars, Connor Craft and Sam Mendimasa, collaborated to create a clear syllabus and course materials that aligns with CWIT's goals. Meeting topics included: What is an ally? #StayWoke, Intersectionality, and Tips on Confronting Troubling Behavior. Final presentations focused on social movements that the allies have a particular passion for and shared it with the CWIT team and partners.

IMPACT Workshops

By: Erica D'Eramo

The Center for Women in Technology invited faculty and staff to present in the CWIT Impact Workshop series, a bi-weekly initiative intended to provide academic, professional, and personal development activities for undergraduate students in the College of Engineering and Information Technology, with a focus on women and other underrepresented student groups.

This year our overarching themes of the workshop series are **Research and Graduate Programs**. The goals of the Research and Graduate Programs workshop series are to increase students':

1. Knowledge and skills through interactive, hands-on workshop sessions that feature computing and engineering research and graduate school preparation topics,
2. Sense of belonging in the College and Department by providing opportunities for them to connect with potential faculty and peer mentors,
3. and Interest and self-efficacy regarding computing and engineering research and graduate study by demystifying the process and exposing them to strategies for success.

Best of CWIT

By: Erica D'Eramo

Over 100 high school students and their families registered for CWIT's annual BEST of CWIT event on October 19, 2018. Students and their families learned about CWIT and heard from a faculty panel. Students also attended Scholar led workshops while their family members learned about Admissions and Financial Aid and heard from a student panel. Thank you to the 21 CWIT students who were on the BEST of CWIT Planning Committee! Committee members helped to plan and present during the event and shared personal experiences about being students in technology and engineering majors.

CWIT's 20th Birthday Party

By: Danyelle Ireland

On October 30, 2018, we hosted our official CWIT 20th Birthday Party at the new UMBC Event Center. The reception guests included faculty, staff, alumni, sponsors, industry partners, campus leaders, and CWIT student ambassadors. Past directors, Claudia Morrell and Dr. Penny Rheingans, were also in attendance. It was wonderful to have the CWIT, Cyber, and T-SITE alumni return to our community and celebrate with us! We heard remarks from Dean Keith Bowman and

President Freeman Hrabowski and had a raffle for CWIT 20th Anniversary swag items. Throughout the

night, we enjoyed the sounds of JET (student jazz trio) and an acapella performance by the UMBC Mama's Boys. Special thanks to the Scholars and Affiliates who served as CWIT Student Ambassadors throughout the night and shared about their CWIT journey with our guests. We are all excited about the amazing legacy of CWIT and the next 20 years of our work!



CWIT's 20th Birthday Faculty/Staff Happy Hour

By: Danyelle Ireland

The 2018-19 academic year is special for us because we are commemorating CWIT's 20th Birthday and we have celebratory events planned throughout the year. We kicked it all off on August 27, 2018, with a 20th Birthday Happy Hour on the Dean's Patio in ITE 217. This event was an opportunity for CWIT staff and alumni to connect with our COEIT colleagues and UMBC campus partners. We enjoyed mingling with old and new friends over tasty hors d'oeuvres and cool beverages on that hot summer day! For more CWIT 20th Birthday fun, visit

<https://cwit.umbc.edu/about/cwits-20th-birthday/>



CWIT 20th Birthday Digital Storytelling

By: Ashley Amundsen,
CWIT Student Assistant

This past fall semester, I had the pleasure of working in the CWIT Office as a student assistant. My focus was on Digital Storytelling and Marketing for CWIT's 20th Birthday Celebration. CWIT has made impressive strides in changing and improving the gender climate in the STEM fields over the years. From the Living-Learning Community to networking events, CWIT has always been active in progressing its mission. My main goal this semester was to compile all of the incredible things that CWIT has accomplished into the CWIT Historical Timeline, which is now featured on CWIT's website. The archival research that this project required was incredibly intriguing to me. I read through many of the CWIT Newsletters, Retriever Weekly Articles and even met with Ms. Lindsey Loeper, who is the Acting Director and Curator of Special Collections in the A.O.K library, to find information to display on the timeline. I also assisted in collecting and editing the "Alumni Stories", which have been featured on CWIT's Facebook page as well as the website periodically throughout the year.

Connecting with Industry Professionals

By Dr. Danyelle Ireland

In Fall 2018, twenty-one 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. Scholars benefited from career planning guidance throughout the semester in the practicum and the one-on-one support of their industry mentors. This year's mentors were: Samantha Allen (Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab), Zoscha Bomhardt (General Electric), Emily Brown (Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab), Rithy Chhay (Sentinel Solutions), Nathan Cline (Northrop Grumman), Tina Coleman (ClearEdge IT), Amanda Cornwell (T Rowe Price), Heather Couvillon Lufburrow (Lufburrow and Company, Inc), Robyn De Wees (Northrop Grumman), Sarah Dietrich (Embedded Flight Systems Inc.), Beth Dixon (Lufburrow and Company, Inc), Denise Donohue (NetCraftsmen), Laura Dress (Fearless), John Ferrell (Huntress Labs), Jennifer Hanna (U.S. Federal Government (GSA)), Kina Limbasiya (Eaton), Monica Nicolau (Sylvan Learning), Janet Oren (Legg Mason), Summer Romack (Lotame Solutions), Kijafa Saunders (PCI Strategic Management), and Matthew Seligman (Department of Defense (NSA)). Special thanks to UMBC's Jen Spencer Heilman (Career Center), who led a presentation on how to respond to and negotiate a job offer, and Drs. April Householder (Undergraduate Academic Affairs), Brian Souders (International Education Services), and Simon Stacey (Honors College) who presented a panel on academic careers and prestigious scholarships.

Fall Career Networking Event

Pictured below: CWIT community Scholars & Affiliates had the opportunity to network in small groups with 40+ industry professionals across the computing and engineering fields. Many of the industry folks in attendance were alumni of UMBC and CWIT's programs, while others attended due to interest in our mission and getting to know our talented students. Companies and organizations represented included Google, JHU/APL, The Whiting-Turner Contracting Company, Northrop Grumman, NSA, T. Rowe Price, Big Huge Games, BGE, and many more.



Cyber Scholars & Associates Updates

By Cindy Greenwood



Left: Northrop Grumman hosted its third CyberEngineer Competition for Scholars & Affiliates this fall. This four-week competition allows teams of students to use their creativity, innovation, and technical skills to create a cybersecurity-related application with help from mentors who are Northrop Grumman employees. The teams then presented their apps to a panel of judges who also work at Northrop Grumman. It's a great opportunity for hands-on experience for students and we thank Northrop Grumman for their continued support.

Right: We welcomed our largest class in program history of Cyber Scholars & Associates at the New Scholar Retreat in July 2018, including 15 new Scholars and four new Associates.



Left: Five Scholars & Affiliates entered this year's Maryland Cyber Challenge, a competition which (despite its name) included teams from across the country. Our team made it to the finals after two qualifying rounds and ultimately took home first place in the collegiate division, beating out competitors such as Carnegie Mellon and the U.S. Air Force Academy. Congratulations to team members Seamus Burke, Swathi Krithivasan, Josh Mpere, Nithya Prakash, and Niara Richards who are pictured here, receiving their awards for the competition win.

Thank you to this year's faculty mentors!

Dr. Leah Croucher, Dr. Don Engel, Dr. Tim Finin, Dr. Katie Gibson, Dr. Vandana Janeja, Dr. Anupam Joshi, Dr. Karuna Joshi, Dr. George Karabatis, Dr. Nagmeh Karimi, Dr. Chuck LaBerge, Dr. Erin Lavik, Dr. Deepa Madan, Dr. Christopher Marron, Dr. Susan Mitchell, Dr. Charles Nicholas, Dr. Shimei Pan, Dr. Sreedevi Sampath, Dr. Maria Sanchez, Dr. Carolyn Seaman, Dr. Renetta Tull, Dr. Yelena Yesha, and Dr. Mohamed Younis.

Summer 2018 Events Recap

We welcomed 13 new CWIT Scholars, eight new T-SITE Scholars, 15 new Cyber Scholars, and four new Cyber Associates to the CWIT community this past July at our annual New Scholar Retreat. As always, students in attendance made meaningful connections with fellow community members, worked on their networking skills, and learned all about what it means to be a Scholar or Associate, among other components of the retreat.



A small but committed group of CWIT and Cyber Affiliates gathered on a Saturday in August before the school year began to get a jumpstart on building community and learning what they can gain and contribute by being Affiliates in our programs.

CWIT Staff:

Dr. Carolyn Seaman
Interim Director

Dr. Danyelle Ireland
Associate Director

Ms. Erica D'Eramo
Assistant Director

Ms. Cindy Greenwood
Assistant Director

Ms. Hailey Jowanowich
General Assistant

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Find us on Facebook and Twitter!

FALL 2018 HIGHLIGHTS

July:

20-22 New Scholar Retreat

August:

4 Affiliates Retreat

27 20th Birthday Faculty/Staff Happy Hour

29 CWIT Ice Cream Social

September:

6 Big WIT/LilWit Kick-Off

6 CyberEngineer Competition Kick-Off

10 Faculty Mentor Luncheon

12 CWIT Family Meeting

29-30 Cyber 101

October:

3 Fall Career Networking Event

4 CyberEngineer Competition Finale

8 New Scholar Reception

19 Best of CWIT

24 Pick your Classes

30 CWIT 20th Birthday Party

November:

28 CWIT Student Council Info Session on Job Searching

December:

3 CWIT Family Meeting

12 Stress Buster Event

20 Undergraduate Commencement

SAVE THE DATE!!

April 2 Spring into Leadership

May 11 CWIT Community Picnic

Thank You to Our Sponsors:

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The Center for Women in Technology