

CWIT UPDATE

Your Bi-Annual Digest of CWIT reflections and updates



A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Dr. Carolyn Seaman

Hello CWIT Community!

After the scramble last spring and summer to put all our programming online quickly, while at the same time climbing the virtual world learning curve, we've now settled into the new normal. The CWIT staff has done an amazing job of learning and utilizing a variety of online platforms and tools, and most importantly creatively using them to serve our students and deliver our programs effectively. Beyond the technical aspects, we've also learned more about the context in which our students live and work now. Their challenges, priorities, schedules, and stresses have all changed, and this affects not only what they need from us, but how they participate in our community.

To give you a taste, some of the events from the fall that stretched our technical, organizational, and creative energies were:

- BEST of CWIT (bringing together a dozen different information sessions, organized in 8 sessions with 3 parallel tracks, with 35 volunteers and presenters - and an escape room!)
- Affiliates Professional Development Day (involving the participation of the UMBC Career Center and the Society of Human Resource Managers of Howard County)
- New Scholar Reception (with 16 different speakers, videos, and the collaboration of the UMBC Division of IT)
- CWIT Extravaganza (in collaboration with the CWIT Student Council, including demonstrations from 7 students and staff members, bingo, and a raffle)

Last fall, 10 members of the CWIT LLC lived on campus, under COVID19 restrictions. One of our primary concerns was to support these freshmen in a new and stressful context, and to make sure the entire CWIT LLC became a cohort, even as it was spread around the world. Another group of students we especially wanted to support were our graduates - last May, this past December, and again this coming May. We can't make up for this group missing an in-person graduation ceremony, but we did find ways to celebrate the milestone, for them and for the whole community. We also ramped up programming last fall for our Affiliates program, with an eye towards

Continued on next page

SPRING 2021 *Upcoming Highlights*

February

25 CWIT/Cyber Scholar Selection Makeup Day

27 CWIT/Cyber Scholar Selection Day

April

7 Spring Into Leadership

9 T-SITE/Cyber Scholars Interview Day

Keep an eye out for your invitation to participate in this year's virtual Spring Into Leadership event on April 7. Also, if you are interested in potentially being involved with our interview days for future CWIT, Cyber, and T-SITE Scholars on the dates above, feel free to email Cindy Greenwood at cindyg@umbc.edu.



A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK (CONTINUED)

Dr. Carolyn Seaman

providing a link to campus outside of class for all COEIT students.

Despite being restricted, for the most part, to our home offices, CWIT's vision still extends beyond UMBC. We continue to disseminate the results of our work and our research nationally. Two of our grant-funded projects, both of which focus on supporting transfer students, are reaching transition points, so we are engaged in imagining and planning the next steps for that work based on what we have learned.

The CWIT staff continually finds reasons to celebrate - every student milestone, every successful event, every new insight, is noted and savored. But sometimes we celebrate all that we do in a big way. This year, it was the CWIT End-of-2020 Celebration and Trivia Night in early January. The staff gifted each other with donations to our favorite charities, and then we invited our campus partners to form teams and play against us in a rousing night of trivia. We ended up with 10 teams formed from units and departments all across campus. It was great fun and a rare opportunity to thank our campus partners. Congratulations to the Academic Success Center for winning the top prize! The CWIT staff came in third, but I think we had the most fun.

As we look forward to the spring semester and beyond, we will continue to learn and gain new skills in meeting student needs in this environment. We are planning a full slate of events and supports, and we will be choosing a new cohort of scholars to join us this fall. While the nature of our work has changed in ways we never imagined, we remain focused on our vision, to equip our students to be change agents in creating technology workplaces that are diverse, equitable, and inclusive. We are incredibly grateful for your support.

Health and peace to all of you,
Carolyn Seaman
CWIT Director



STRIVE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Cindy Greenwood

Several students who are part of the CWIT community participated in the STRIVE student leadership virtual retreat this January, hosted by the Center for Democracy and Civic Life. We are excited to see so many of our students involved in this campus-wide personal and professional development opportunity. CWIT was happy to be able to support these students by covering the participation fee for them to attend this great event.

The students who attended are: Avi Glassman, Chizaram Ugboh, Karolina Cazorla-Alvarez, Lee Ruckdeschel, Shaniah Reece, Surmayee Jain, Toni-Ann Pearson, and Tyler Kash.

"STRIVE really helped me learn about the power of my unique leadership style and the skills that I have relative to making change. It helped me find my voice and empowered me to use it. I loved the experience and I'll be sure to use what I learned from now onward." --
Toni-Ann Pearson, CWIT Scholar, Computer Engineering

GRACE HOPPER/SWE/TAPIA CONFERENCES

Cindy Greenwood & Dr. Carolyn Seaman

CWIT provided funding for students to attend three virtual national professional conferences this past fall, made possible by support from BRAID, an initiative of the Anita Borg Institute and 15 universities around the country to increase gender diversity in computing. Eleven students and two CWIT staff members attended the Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing (GHC), eight students and two staff members attended the Society of Women Engineers Conference (SWE), and six students and one staff member attended the Richard Tapia Celebration of Diversity in Computing.

The cohort attending GHC took part in sessions on topics ranging from allyship to blockchain to rhino poaching (yes, really). Highlights included keynotes from female icons Serena Williams and Megan Rapinoe. While neither of these are women in tech, they had insights to share about the role of women in society and how to achieve your goals. The CWIT cohort invited CWIT alums attending GHC to join them for watch parties for the two keynotes, providing a way for students and alums to connect.

"Even though GHC was totally virtual in 2020, I still had a great time attending. I was able to learn so much from so many amazing speakers; I'm so glad I went." -- Sarah Lunn, CWIT Affiliate, Computer Science

"Attending the virtual Tapia conference this past year was a unique and great experience. I was able to attend the workshops virtually and meet people through chatrooms. I gained knowledge about professional development to help me grow in my future career!" -- Amina Mahmood, Cyber Scholar, Computer Science

"I virtually attended GHC'20 this year and it was a blast, especially with the CWIT community. Despite it being online, the fact that we were able to have watch parties and attend the event as if we would have if it were in person made it very worthwhile. GHC was my first conference (of hopefully many more!) and it immensely helped me land several interviews/offers and make valuable connections! Thank you to CWIT for this opportunity." -- Mariah Qureshi, CWIT Scholar, Computer Science



BEST OF CWIT

Maddy Selby, BEST of CWIT Lead

The 2020 BEST of CWIT: Building Excellence through Scholarships in Technology - An Event For High School Girls Interested in Engineering & Technology

took place on October 18th. This year, BEST transitioned to a virtual conference-style event offering 14 different workshops for high school students to attend.

Thank you to the amazing BEST of CWIT Planning Committee: Ashley Amundsen, Baile Wolfe, Frances Watson, Kavya Kavanakudy, Kelsey Chesnut, Liz Emberger, Marian Singletary, Mei Vader, Morgan Donohoe, Olivia Bailey, Shaniah Reece, and Shannon Finch. This event would not have been possible without your time and dedication organizing this event! Thank you to everyone in the CWIT community (and outside!) that volunteered your time to help with this event. Finally, thank you to Erica D'Eramo and Olivia Bailey who started planning this event with me last May!

LLC UPDATE

Kate O'Keefe

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and a mostly-virtual semester, the CWIT Living Learning Community still thrived in Fall 2020. Led once again by our returning RA and Cyber Scholar Colin Vieson, we had 42 students in our LLC (with 10 of those students living at home). Our beloved Chesapeake Hall was closed for the semester due to the lowered capacity, so our LLC proudly called Susquehanna Hall their new home (with another move happening this semester....make sure to check out the next newsletter)! With in-person programming being few and far between because of social distancing protocols, we worked hard to provide virtual programming to create our community during a time when having a community is crucial. Our events included one movie night, three game nights, an arts and crafts event, and a reverse trick-or-treat. Additionally, Colin sought to provide individual support for our LLC members during this semester by hosting over 170 individual 1:1s! We are eagerly anticipating the beginning of the spring semester and are looking forward to seeing our LLC members again.



CWIT SCHOLARS UPDATES & HIGHLIGHTS

Erica D'Eramo

We have welcomed our 19th cohort of CWIT Scholars to the community in this unique hybrid of virtual and in-person engagement. This C19 cohort is made up of fourteen outstanding scholars: 3 chemical engineering majors, 1 mechanical engineering major, 1 computer engineering major, and 9 computer science majors! They have been actively involved in the Peer Mentor Program, First Year Experience Course, and CWIT Living Learning Community. They've joined in the planning and creation of events on the BEST of CWIT committee, Escape Room committee, Bits & Bytes committee, and CWIT Student Council.

Collectively, CWIT Scholars had an amazing fall semester academically, earning an average of 3.58 GPA. This is truly impressive given the changes in course format during the COVID-19 pandemic. Twenty-two Scholars earned 4.0 in the fall 2020 semester! Congratulations to all of the CWIT Scholars for their hard work and focus during this unique time. Here is a partial list of some of the amazing things our current CWIT Scholars have been up to outside of the classroom:

1. **Internships, Co-ops, and Jobs:** Federal Aviation Administration, ROTC program, General Dynamics, Qualcomm, National Security Agency, Northrop Grumman, IMB, GE Appliances Technology, Teaching Assistants and Fellow, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Department of Information Technology, Oracle, Exelon, Snap, UMBC Residential Life, and UMBC Library
2. **Research:** Labs of Dr. Mentis, Dr. Blaney, Dr. Madan, Dr. Mohsenin, and Dr. Hamidi; John Hopkins Applied Physics Lab; and US Army Lab
3. **UMBC Clubs & Organizations:** AICHE, SWE, NSBE, CS Education Frisbee, Lacrosse, Sign of Life, College Democrats, HackUMBC, Club Soccer, Sororities, Student Government Association
4. **CWIT Groups and Committees:** CWIT Student Council, Peer Mentors, Escape Room Events Committee, BEST of CWIT Committee, and K-12 Ambassadors

NEW AFFILIATES PROGRAMMING

Kate O'Keefe

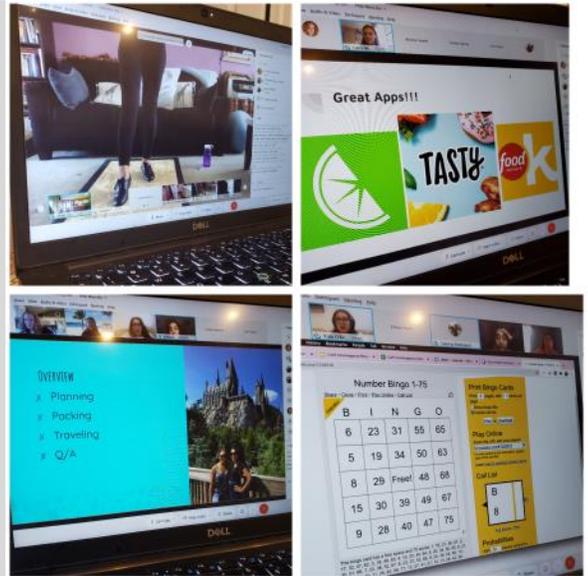
Along with our traditional Affiliates events, we also introduced a few new programs this past semester. We kicked off back in Summer 2020 with multiple Affiliates interest sessions, and then started off the school year with a Bingo Night. Additionally, along with Cyber Scholar and CWIT Student Assistant Emily King, we hosted an academic success workshop in October right before finals. This workshop focused on time management, goal setting, and prioritization. One of our biggest events of the semester, which was also brand new, was our Affiliates Professional Development Day. This 4-hour long event in November included a Networking 101 session by CWIT Assistant Director Kate O'Keefe, a Job Search Strategies session held by the Career Center (which focused on job searching virtually), a workshop hosted by CWIT Assistant Director Erica D'Eramo on Salary Negotiation, mock interviews by the CWIT staff, and résumé reviews by members of the Society of Human Resource Management of Howard County. This event allowed our Affiliates to get feedback on their job search materials and readiness, and we are looking forward to hosting this event again next year. We ended the semester with our first ever Affiliates Family Meeting, which gave us the opportunity to come together and socialize, reflect on the semester, and build our community.

CWIT EXTRAVAGANZA

Kate O'Keefe

Extravaganza was a brand new program created by the CWIT Student Council and the CWIT Affiliates Program and was designed to have our students and staff show off their skills, passions, and expertise. Held in December after finals were completed, we spent the day in sessions, playing Bingo, judging a door decorating contest, and raffling off prizes. This event would not have been possible without our community members who presented:

- "Learn to Make Easy Plant-Based Meals" by Cindy Greenwood, CWIT Assistant Director
- "The New Adventures of Toon Tanks" by Keonte Wilson-Robinson, T-SITE Scholar
- "Black Tap: Sharing the Cultural Significance of Tap and Beginner Tap Dance Lesson" by Dr. Danyelle Tauryce Ireland, CWIT Associate Director
- "Cooking With Laura: Learning to 'Adult'" by Laura McAllister, CWIT Scholar
- "Super Simple Artwork Masterpiece" by Erica D'Eramo, CWIT Assistant Director
- "Staying on Track: Journing of a CWIT Student Athlete" by Ariella Garcia, CWIT Scholar
- Travel the World with Frances and Kavya" by Frances Watson, CWIT Scholar, and Kavya Kavanakudy, CWIT Scholar



FALL CAREER NETWORKING EVENT

Emily King, CWIT Student Assistant

On Thursday, October 8, the CWIT annual Fall Career Networking Event was held online for the first time. The Scholars and Affiliates were able to form small groups with 30 industry professionals in computing and engineering fields by the use of breakout rooms. Many companies and organizations were present during this event, such as The New York Times, Northrop Grumman, T. Rowe Price, NSA, Microsoft, and several other groups and organizations. We are always thankful to host this event for our students so they have the opportunity to connect with professionals to expand their networks.

One of the industry professionals in attendance said, "The students that I met with were excellent all around! While I'm sure this year looks nothing like they expected, I was incredibly impressed with how they are overcoming the challenges that our world is facing."

CYBER 101

Emily King

In September, 33 high school senior and junior girls participated in our annual Cyber 101 program. Although it was different from other years due to being in a virtual environment, the participants were still very eager to learn about the different topics of cyber security. Our wonderful planning committee (Mariela Guardado-Martinelli, Amina Mahmood, Swathi Krithivasan, Katy Leatherwood, Emily King, and Brianna Turgott) created educational sessions on Cryptography, Network Security, Linux, and Malware. Along with these sessions, the attendees also had the opportunity to participate in a capture the flag activity, which they really enjoyed. We were thrilled to have another successful Cyber 101 event!



The following are two of many wonderful post-event comments we received from participants:

"I felt that this event truly showed me the sense of community that CWIT and Cyber Scholars creates between the members, and it made me really want to be a part of that one day."

"Thank you so much for allowing me to have this opportunity, I love learning about computer science and this event only helped to increase my passion for this subject!"

ASSESSMENT & GRANTS

Dr. Danyelle Ireland

Our Summer 2020 newsletter shared details about the comprehensive planning and assessment efforts CWIT put in place to measure the impact of our programming in the midst of COVID-19. We are continuing to monitor and modify our activities to ensure that we are offering the best supports and most enriching experiences we can for our Scholars and Affiliates. We are also integrating the information we obtain about our performance in this unprecedented time with our broader assessment of our progress towards our strategic goals.

We are in the final year of the Post-Transfer Pathways Program for Computing and Engineering Majors project which is sponsored by the NSF. This project supported 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 supported a Transfer Learning Community for faculty and staff in computing and engineering at UMBC and six partner Maryland community colleges. All aspects of this project have been implemented with great success and are in the process of being institutionalized at UMBC with support of COEIT Dean's office and Undergraduate Academic Affairs.

Our current focus is on research grant proposals for 2021 which will include funding to support future cohorts of T-SITE and an investigation into the COEIT climate with a focus on gender and racial equity in emergency remote teaching and learning. Additionally, Jeanni Hines (UMBC graduate student in Sociology and Shriver Peacemaker) continues working with CWIT as an educational research assistant, to further our COEIT climate research initiatives.

T-SITE UPDATES

Dr. 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 high achieving new transfer students from Maryland community colleges who are pursuing a bachelor's degree in one of four computing majors at UMBC (computer engineering, computer science, information systems, and business technology administration). In Fall 2020, six new Scholars (T9 cohort) joined our community, bringing the total number of T-SITEs served by CWIT to 58. The T9 cohort includes computer science and information systems majors from the Community College of Baltimore County, Howard Community College, and Montgomery College. This was the first cohort to have attended a virtual New Scholar Retreat and to begin the academic year with a fully virtual semester. Despite the challenges and constraints of COVID-19 and its impact on the university experience, as a whole, T-SITE Scholars had a very successful Fall 2020 semester with an average term GPA of 3.45. Many individually earned GPAs of over 3.5 while also working 20+ hours per week, raising children and leading households, and navigating personal challenges. Additionally, T-SITE Scholars have been studying for certifications, applying for internships, and mentoring other students in COEIT. T-SITEs have always demonstrated exemplary grit and this semester was no exception!

CWIT Associate Director, Dr. Danyelle Tauryce Ireland, received an award in December 2020 from the National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students (NISTS) for her work through multiple grants to support the success of transfer students in the College of Engineering & IT. Dr. Ireland will be recognized at the NISTS 2021 virtual conference in February.



According to NISTS, "The Rising Star Award recognizes professionals who are making important contributions but are relatively new to the transfer field. Awardees organize programs that are responsive to their specific transfer student populations and show evidence of success. Rising Stars use best practices and theoretical frameworks to guide their efforts, and they use their strong communication and collaboration skills to educate others and challenge the status quo."

Please join us in congratulating Dr. Ireland!

FACULTY MENTORING

Thank you to this year's faculty mentors for CWIT, Cyber, and T-SITE Scholars!

- Dr. Chuck LaBerge
- Dr. Ben Johnson
- Dr. Jamie Gurganus
- Dr. Neha Raikar
- Dr. Janet Rutledge
- Dr. Lee Blaney
- Dr. Marc Olano
- Dr. Carolyn Seaman
- Dr. Naghmeh Karimi
- Dr. Sanorita Dey
- Dr. Vandana Janeja
- Dr. Chris Marron
- Dr. Tim Finin
- Dr. Maryam Rahnemoonfar
- Dr. Anupam Joshi
- Dr. Sreedevi Sampath
- Dr. Frank Ferraro

CYBER SCHOLARS & ASSOCIATE UPDATES

Cindy Greenwood

The Y8 cohort of Cyber Scholars & Associates had the unique situation of being onboarded to our program entirely virtually. While we wish we could have welcomed them through our traditional programs in person, they have become an integral part of our CWIT community. Six of the nine freshmen in the Y8 cohort lived on campus on our CWIT Living-Learning Community, so we did have some limited opportunities to see one another in person through our hybrid First Year Experience course and a couple of socially distanced get-togethers on Erickson Field. Scholars from all cohorts continue to be highly engaged in their academics as well as co-curricular activities. Scholar Danielle Nyamsi is the president of the university's programming organization, the Student Events Board (seb), Scholar Gabi Watson is the president of the UMBC chapter of the Information Systems Security Association (ISSA), several Scholars serve as Teaching Assistants or Teaching Fellows, and others are involved in undergraduate research, just to name a few ways our students contribute to the UMBC community.

We recognize that many people are struggling through our current times and our Scholars, Associates, and Affiliates are no exception. We have worked to provide support to our students and, overall, they are doing extremely well academically. Of our 41 current Cyber Scholars & Associates, 21 of them earned 4.0 GPAs this semester and 12 of them have 4.0 cumulative GPAs. The average Fall 2020 GPA is 3.74 and the average cumulative GPA is 3.72. We are so proud of all of our Cyber Scholars and Associates and look forward to what the spring semester will bring.

STUDENT LEADS & UPDATES



Escape Room Lead: Olivia Bailey

Travel through a virtual world of adventure and fun! Olivia Bailey, the inaugural CWIT Escape Room Lead and her team of adventure designers (aka the Escape Room Committee) met throughout the summer and fall to create unique virtual experiences for Scholars, Affiliates, and high school students. These escape rooms ranged from a Spy Kids adventure about being a computer science major at UMBC to a Turkey maze through the grocery store without being caught. The committee has hosted several events in the fall semester and has teamed up with the CWIT staff to create a Scholar program expectation escape room and other uniquely designed virtual experiences that met the goals of the event. Keep a lookout for new and exciting Escape Rooms coming to you this spring semester! Thank you to the Escape Room Committee members: Olivia Bailey (Lead), Kavya Kavanakudy, Liz Emberger, Morgan Donohoe, Shaniah Reece, Mei-lian Vader, Shannon Finch, Ashley Amundsen, Danielle Rhoten, Maddy Selby, Sophie Scheck, Frances Watson, Paisley Code, and America Proctor.

First Year Experience (FYE 101) Peers: Olivia Bailey, Kavya Kavanakudy, and Chizaram Ugboh

Fall 2020 was the first time the FYE 101 course was offered in a hybrid model, with both virtual and in-person class sessions offered. Seven sessions were offered virtually and synchronously (at the scheduled class time), five sessions were offered in person at our regularly scheduled time (with a virtual option for those unable or uncomfortable with attending in person), and three sessions were offered asynchronously (students could complete tasks for those class sessions on their own schedules). We chose to offer the class in this manner due to a majority of the students in the class living on campus this fall and wanting to offer some opportunities for in-person interaction. Olivia, Kavya, and Chizaram did a great job of rising to the challenge of this unprecedented semester and were wonderful facilitators and resources to the students in the class.

Cyber Leads: Katy Leatherwood and Brianna Turgott

In addition to taking on leadership roles with planning and facilitating Cyber 101, Katy and Brianna also hosted two virtual Cyber Workshops and one Cyber Social this past fall. Brianna facilitated her workshop as an introduction to Capture the Flag (CTF) competitions and Katy co-facilitated her workshop with Mariela Guardado-Martinelli on cryptography. The Cyber Social was offered with both a virtual and in-person component, with the in-person portion involving socially distanced activities on Erickson Field.

K-12 Recruitment & Engagement Lead:

Mariela Guardado-Martinelli

Mariela completed her final semester as our K-12 Recruitment & Engagement Lead before graduating in December 2020. One new initiative she was able to complete this past semester was to host two student panels consisting of K-12 Ambassadors talking with and answering questions from prospective students in a virtual setting. These events were a great complement to our recruitment activities. We look forward to trying more new initiatives in the spring and beyond with our new K-12 Co-Leads, Emily Wang (junior, CWIT Scholar) and Lakshmi Varanasi (senior, Cyber Scholar).

BEST of CWIT Lead: Maddy Selby (see page 3 for update)

CWIT Student Council President: Frances Watson (see next page for update)

CWIT Living-Learning Community Resident Assistant: Colin Vieson (see page 4 for LLC Update)

PEER MENTORING PROGRAM

Kate O'Keefe

The CWIT Peer Mentoring Program kicked off Fall 2020 with a brand new mentoring structure. This new structure included a Peer Mentor application process and stipend, Peer Mentor trainings and monthly check-ins, as well as more dedication to one-on-one and group mentoring. We would love to give a big shout-out to this year's Peer Mentors:

CWIT Scholars: Samantha Thorwart, Jessica Schneck, Lauren Hayden, Frances Watson, Maura Choudhary, Sabrina Rodriguez, Danielle Rhoten, Kavya Kavanakudy, Jenny Lenhoff, Kelsey Chesnut, Baile Wolfe, and Marian Singletary

Cyber Scholars: Katy Leatherwood, Amina Mahmood, Faith Madeoy Gault, Ainsley O'Garro, Swathi Krithivasan, Devin Pearson, and Moe Nur

T-SITE Scholars: Jovan Sankoh

Affiliates: Emilie Shoff, Stacy Villanueva, Asmaa Hasan, and Reagan Roberts

Additionally, our Peer Mentoring Lead Reagan Roberts did a fantastic job of hosting monthly events for the entire CWIT Peer Mentoring community. These events included a summer Kick-Off, escape room, student presentations, and much more!

A MESSAGE FROM STUDENT COUNCIL

Happy New Year from the entire CWIT Student Council! We would like to introduce our two new members Yumi Yee who was elected as our Freshman Representative and Sarah Nakhon, New Transfer Representative, a new position on the council. We are a team of elected CWIT community members that work to plan a variety of events and initiatives throughout the school year. Our goal for the Fall was to support our community and help everyone stay connected through the virtual semester.

Some events that occurred throughout the semester include virtual Spirit Weeks via Instagram, Monthly Game Nights, and Book Club. Our big event this past semester was in conjunction with the CWIT Affiliates Program and called CWIT Extravaganza. The goal for this event was to highlight the talents and passions of our various community members by having them host sessions about said talents and passions. We also had opportunities for prizes during the event. Some other initiatives that we worked on last semester include: maintaining our Instagram page, sending out a Care Package to students, workshopping a new logo for the council and CWIT T-Shirt. The goal for these initiatives were to bring a little bit of the CWIT experience at home.

For this upcoming semester, we hope to continue engaging with our community and supporting our members through these trying times. We would like to thank Erica, Kate and the entire CWIT staff for all their support and guidance through this challenging last semester as well as our entire council for all the hard work they put into bringing our community together.

Wishing you all a great semester and New Year,
Frances, Kavya, Shaniah, Cindy, Ouriel, Yumi and Sarah

CWIT & CYBER AFFILIATES UPDATE

Kate O'Keefe

During the Fall 2020 semester, our CWIT & Cyber Affiliates number has grown to 132 students. Within our program, we have 54 Computer Science students, 23 Information Systems students, 19 Computer Engineering students, 17 Mechanical Engineering students, 16 Chemical Engineering students, and two Business Technology Administration students. As always, we kicked off the semester with our Affiliates Retreat on September 12, 2020, with 17 students in attendance. This retreat was focused on community-building during this unprecedented virtual semester. Check out the rest of the newsletter to read more about our programming this year --- some returning favorites and some new events as well!



STRESS BUSTER/AFFILIATES RECOGNITION

Kate O'Keefe

One of our favorite events of the semester, Stress Buster, continued to provide a getaway from studying before finals. This semester, we hosted multiple events throughout the program, including an escape room, a mental health workshop, a household scavenger hunt, and multiple games. One student said about the event, "It was so relaxing and refreshing just to see everyone and have everyone laughing and having a moment together!". As usual, we are looking forward to hosting this event again in the spring!

IMPACT WORKSHOPS

Kate O'Keefe

Determined to keep some of our traditional programming this semester, we continued our Impact Workshop series during the Fall 2020 semester. The majority of our workshops were around a central theme this past semester: using your major/degree to give back to the community/for the greater good. As always, our workshops couldn't be done without the help of faculty and staff (this semester, both within and outside UMBC!) who put on these awesome presentations. This semester's workshop presenters included Kate O'Keefe (Assistant Director for CWIT), Dr. Nilanjan Banerjee (Professor of Computer Science and Electrical Engineering at UMBC), Dr. Stacy Branham (Assistant Professor of Informatics at University of California - Irvine), Dr. Foad Hamidi (Assistant Professor of Information Systems at UMBC) and his student team (including one of our own Cyber scholars, Karina Lopez), and Alex Nguyen (Health Educator for UMBC's University Health Services).

Check out our workshops below:

- "Becoming Active in CWIT" by Kate O'Keefe
- "When What You Wear Understands You" by Dr. Nilanjan Banerjee
- "Is Tech Ableist: How to Make Technology More Equitable for People with Disabilities" by Dr. Stacy Branham
- "Community-Engaged Research: Responding to COVID-19 with Community Mesh Internet" by Dr. Foad Hamidi
- "It's Real: College Students & Mental Health" by Alex Nguyen



ALUMNI UPDATE

Christine Abraham (Affiliate, '20) -- Christine has started a new job with Booz Allen Hamilton as a Junior Software Engineer.

Samantha (Turskey) Cooley (Y2) -- Sami and her husband Dan recently became first-time homeowners and are busy with home improvement projects on their new Anne Arundel County home.

Bethany (Von Ludwick) Batze (Y4) -- Bethany works for the Department of Defense and is part of their Workforce Matters Council (WFMC) and recently earned her PegaSystems Business Architect (PCBA) Certification. She also learned she will become an aunt in July 2021!

Becca Glatt (C13) -- Becca graduated in May 2020 with her Master of Science degree in Engineering Management from UMBC.

Victoria Herr (Y4) -- Victoria is starting a new job at Visionist, Inc. as a Cyber Systems Engineer. She also recently earned her Professional Scrum Master certification and is purchasing her first home in Baltimore County.

Elyse Hill (C12) and Natacha Ngea (T3) -- Elyse and Natacha served as panelists for a virtual event for high school and college students in December 2020, hosted by EDsnaps, an organization focused on increasing diversity in the STEM workforce.

Alex Jackson (Y1) -- Alex's story, "The Thing at the Top of the Mountain" has been selected for publication in the upcoming FAR FROM HOME horror adventure anthology from Off Limits Press. His novel, "Touched By Shadows," is also being published by JournalStone Publishing in September 2021.

Kevin Johnson (C10) -- Kevin recently earned a master's degree from Johns Hopkins University in Biomedical Systems Engineering.

Tiffany (Ernst) Jones (C10) -- Tiffany and her husband Andrew welcomed a son, Benjamin, to their family on December 7, 2020.

Natacha Ngea (T3) -- Natacha is the recipient of the 2021 Black Engineer of the Year Awards (BEYA) Modern-Day Technology Leader Award.

Nicole Racine (C11) -- Nicole graduated from Carnegie Mellon University in December 2020 with her Ph.D. in Engineering and Public Policy.

Samantha (Celmer) Vannoorbeeck (C8) -- Sam recently moved to Germany and began working in a new job in industrial hygiene with the Army Public Health Command Europe.



Pictured above: Benjamin (Tiffany (Ernst) Jones's son)



Pictured above: Elyse Hill and Natacha Ngea as panelists for virtual EDsnaps event

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR DECEMBER GRADUATES!



CWIT Grad: Srinithi Jayaram



Cyber Grads: Jenna Bilzer (Right) and Mariela Guardado-Martinelli (Above)



CWIT Affiliate Grads: Gifty Adjevi-Benison (L) and Sanaa Mironov (R)



T-SITE Grads (L to R): Karim Durrani, Azaria Gallo, Bobby King, and Raissa Batchankwe



A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

We are grateful for the generous support of CWIT's corporate sponsors and individual donors. Thank you to all who have given to CWIT! We especially want to acknowledge the following for significant financial contributions which support programs and scholarships for Scholars and Affiliates in CWIT.

Corporate Donors: General Dynamics, Lockheed Martin, NetCraftsmen, and Northrop Grumman.

Individual Donors: Robert Banz, Elizabeth Bowers, Alexa Warfield Bedwell & Theodore Bedwell, Rahul Razdan, and Marian White

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

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CONNECTING WITH INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS

Dr. Danyelle Ireland

In Fall 2020, 27 industry professionals generously gave of their time to serve as mentors as part of our Industry Mentoring Program (IMP). This year's practicum was unique in that it was our first time holding the sessions virtually. While we love seeing our students and mentors interact in person, the virtual environment did allow for some folks to participate who would have been unable to had we been in person. We were also able to provide mock interviews during one of the sessions, which would have been logistically challenging in person.

This year's IMP mentors were: Laiela Ahmad (T. Rowe Price), Lindsey Beaubien (Northrop Grumman, Space Sector), Zozscha Bomhardt (General Electric Healthcare), Tim Burke (The New York Times, Delivery Engineering), Rithy Chhay (Sentinel Solutions, LLC), Tina Coleman (ClearEdge), Amber Croxford (Northrop Grumman, Mission Systems), Kimberly Davis (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid), Robyn De Wees (Northrop Grumman Corporation), Barbara Harper (b. well Connected Health), Heidi Harris (Leidos), Katherine Hirsch (Zenimax Online Studios), Judy Johnson (Onyx Point), Joshua Klosterman (The MITRE Corporation), Mary Nettleton (Exelon), Monica Nicolau (Sylvan Learning), Alec Pulianas (Microsoft Azure Identity), Summer Romack (AWS Security), Kijafa Saunders (PCI), Candice Scarborough (Parsons, Cyber & Intelligence), Miranda Shortell (McCormick), Tabitha Stalder (U.S. Department of Defense), Travis Ward (Northrop Grumman, Mission Systems), Greg Wessel (Senior Cyber Consultant), Donna Williams (Leidos), Susan Wilson (Northrop Grumman, Mission Systems), and Joan Worthington (HireVue).

Special thanks to UMBC's Chrisi Giannakaris (Career Center) who co-led a presentation with Erica D'Eramo on how to respond to and negotiate a job offer, to Amber Croxford (Affiliates alumna) and Lauren Zavala (Y1) of Northrop Grumman who co-led a session with Cindy Greenwood on interview preparation and resumes, and to the following individuals, who presented a panel on undergraduate research, academic careers, and prestigious scholarships: Dr. April Householder (UG Research & Prestigious Scholarships), Dr. Brian Souders (UMBC Fulbright Program), Mr. Michael Hunt (UMBC McNair Scholars), Mr. Peter DeCrescenzo (UMBC LSAMP), Ms. Emily Brown (JHU APL), Dr. Toby Gouker (UMBC Department of Professional Studies), Ms. Christina Burton (Penn Engineering), and Dr. Ashley Wallace (Penn Engineering).

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