A Word From The Director: Dr. Penny Rheingans

Wow. I can’t believe it’s time for another Update. This semester has been a whirlwind of activity here in CWIT -- from the FIRST Lego League Maryland state championships, to the revived Bits & Bytes program, to new CWIT Scholar selection, to industry site visits, to … well, you get the picture. As you read through this Update, you’ll get a snapshot of just how much our Scholars are up to, both in CWIT and across campus.

Getting to watch new graduates walk across the stage is one of my favorite opportunities of the academic year. Next week, I’ll get to watch six CWIT and SITE Scholars walk: Angela Brown (Computer Science), Jenny Donoghue (Chemical and Biochemical Engineering), Morgan Markowski (Information Systems), Dominique Monteil (Chemical and Biochemical Engineering), Teresa Oswald (Computer Science), and Wenjing Wang (Computer Engineering). It’s been great to watch them grow in knowledge, skills, and confidence. It will be even more fun to watch what amazing things they do next.

We have finished selecting our C9 cohort of CWIT Scholars who will begin in the fall. This highly accomplished group of fourteen is Derek Brown (Leonardtown HS), Katrina Chan (Great Mills HS), Mallory Clites (Northern HS), Karen Dickens (Charles Herbert Flowers HS), Annette Engelhart (Elizabeth Seton HS), Julia Ford (Annapolis Area Christian School), Jessica Izumi (Chesapeake Senior HS), Emily Krause (Aberdeen HS), Christina Malliakos (Huntingtown HS), Morgan McClure (Hammond HS), Sabrina McConoughy (Reservoir HS), Courtney Melissan (Chesapeake Senior HS), Alec Pulinas (Perry Hall HS), and Emily Scheerer (Howard HS). We’re excited that they’ve chosen CWIT and UMBC and doubly excited that they will all be joining the CWIT Living Learning Community.

Finally, speaking of new people, I am pleased to welcome Dr. Susan Martin to the CWIT staff as our first ever Associate Director. Susan will be working to increase CWIT’s impact and visibility on campus and beyond. Stop by to say “hi” to Susan in her new office here in the renovated CWIT suite.

Meet the New Associate Director: Dr. Susan Martin

Joining the CWIT team is a truly a dream job for me! Doing work that supports student success has been the focus of my entire career in higher education and I am thrilled to have the opportunity to work with Penny and Katie to make CWIT’s vision and mission a reality in the coming years. CWIT’s mission is perfectly aligned with my commitment to creating educational conditions that result in learning and the personal and professional success of all students. I am especially dedicated to working with women and other groups who have been traditionally underrepresented in STEM majors and careers.

I am a graduate of College Park’s College Student Personnel Program and earned a doctorate in Higher Education Administration from George Washington University. My career path has included working as a residence hall director, serving as an academic and career advisor; coordinating a program for adult women learners at a community college, working on teams researching the experiences of sophomores and Latino students, and building a culture of assessment in the Division of Student Affairs here at UMBC.

These experiences have well-prepared me to serve in my new role. As the Associate Director, I will be working closely with Penny and Katie on initiatives that will ultimately increase the gender diversity in the College of Engineering and Information Technology. On a day-to-day basis, I will be planning and implementing initiatives, like expanding the existing Affiliates program, so that CWIT can provide support for and create community for a much larger group of women in COEIT.

Some of my other responsibilities include: data collection and reporting, the ongoing assessment of the climate for gender diversity in COEIT, grant writing, and building CWIT outreach activities for high school girls. I am really looking forward to working with our CWIT Scholars and Affiliates, COEIT faculty and staff, as well campus partners to increase the pipeline of diverse professionals entering engineering and information careers.

Working with CWIT is a dream come true and an opportunity to really make a difference!
Morgan Markowski (CWIT Scholar)
Information Systems
Interned with Constellation Energy and BG&E
Plans to work at the NSA

Teresa Oswald (CWIT Scholar)
Computer Science
Interned with Northrop Grumman
Plans to work at Northrop Grumman

"CWIT has provided me with more ways than I can count, both in and out of schoolwork. Because of CWIT, I had plenty of friends who could help me with classes throughout all four of my years at UMBC. It also provided opportunities for me to build my leadership and networking skills, meaning I had internships all of the summers at UMBC and a job waiting for me once I graduated."

Wenjing Wang (CWIT Scholar)
Computer Engineering
Interned with Geico

"Being in CWIT is like being in a big family, you might not see your family members everyday, but you know that they are always there. CWIT was the reason why I chose to come to UMBC instead of other colleges, and I never regretted that decision. This program not only challenged me academically but also helped me develop both professionally and personally with a tremendous amount of resources. I would not be where I am now without CWIT."

Angela Brown (CWIT Scholar)
Computer Science
Interned with JHU Applied Physics Laboratory
Plans to work at Raytheon Solipsys

"I think one of the greatest things that CWIT did for me was to show me just how much of a difference I could make. By giving me the opportunity to work with older women as I entered the program, I was given excellent role models, and now, as I am one of the older women that the incoming freshmen can look up to, I give them an idea of the things they can accomplish. CWIT has taught me to be proud of doing what I love, and how to be confident in myself."

Kevin Lee (CWIT Scholar)
Mechanical Engineering
Interned at Lee Electronics, Inc.
Plans to graduate in Fall 2010

"I am thankful for having the CWIT community be so supportive throughout my whole college experience exposing me to a variety of activities such as Bits and Bytes, FLL, IT Visionaries, and Computer Mania Day. In addition, I am thankful for the many networking opportunities and workshops offered through the CWIT scholarship which I would otherwise have missed. The one-on-one meetings have kept me on track and focused on my goals as well! I am proud to be a CWIT Scholar at UMBC."

Dominique Monteil (SITE Scholar)
Chemical and Biochemical Engineering
Was a research assistant at UMBC and the FDA
Enrolled in Ph.D. program at EPFL in Switzerland

"Some things that I am thankful for from SITE would be all of the networking and leadership training that we have received as scholars. Whenever I go to networking events, such as Career Fair or Conferences, I always feel comfortable and make connections will multiple groups. I see myself as a better person because of my involvement in SITE."

Jenny Donoghue (SITE Scholar)
Chemical and Biochemical Engineering
Was a research assistant at UMBC
Enrolled in the Masters program here at UMBC

"In my 3 years as a SITE scholar I have been given many great opportunities for involvement on campus as well as excellent academic and corporate guidance. I have met many great students and have benefitted from being surrounded by like-minded people all with a common goal of academic achievements. The friends I have made will continue to be a part of my life for hopefully many years to come, and I couldn’t be more grateful for the relationships I have built with the faculty. While good grades are the main focus of any scholarship group, SITE also focuses on making us not only better students, but well rounded intelligent people and for that I am indefinitely thankful."

**Introducing: The New CWIT Student Board!**

**09-10 was the inaugural year for the newly created CWIT Student Board — and they have been busy! During this last year the Student Board:**
- Created their own recognized UMBC student organization called the CWIT Student Council
- Planned the first annual “C-What? Day” for CWIT & SITE community fun and teambuilding
  - Created CWIT & SITE T-shirts for all the students in the community
  - Raised money to subsidize T-shirt costs through coordinating two bake sales
  - Conceptualized, planned, and coordinated the Bits and Bytes Program in February
  - Planned an social outing to a Orioles vs. Red Socks game in May
  - Provided student leadership to the CWIT community, and more!

In May, the CWIT community held its second-annual Student Board elections and two new officers were elected to be on the Board. These are the officers for the 2011-2012 Academic Year:

- **President:** Andrea Robinson (C6, Computer Engineering)
- **Vice President for Scholar Affairs:** Paridhi Jain (C6, Information Systems)
- **Vice President for Student Events:** Alex Markowski (C7, Computer Science)
- **Secretary:** Amy Chou (C7, Chemical Engineering)
- **Treasurer:** Shreya Mohan (C8, Information Systems)
- **Historian:** Lisa McPherson (SITE, Chemical Engineering)
- **CWIT Living Learning Community’s Resident Assistant:** Thomas Davis (SITE, Computer Science)

Spring Event Highlights

In February, 18 high school junior girls interested in Information Technology or Engineering careers had an opportunity to stay overnight at UMBC in residence halls with current CWIT Scholars, participate in an IT or Engineering Design Challenge, and learn more about what life is like as a college student. The program was almost entirely student-run by the CWIT Student Board with other Scholars’ help, and was a big success!

“I enjoyed meeting other females who intend to become engineers. Before the Bits and Bites program I did not know other females who were equally interested in the engineering field as I am. I met wonderful girls...and now we text each other almost every day.” (A B&B Participant)

FIRST Lego League Service
The CWIT and SITE Scholars had the chance to volunteer to work with the middle school kids at the FIRST Lego League Championship Tournament here at UMBC on January 30, 2010. They served in roles such as team liaisons, practice table monitors, challenge referees, team judges, and other support positions.

“Watching the excitement of the kids as they flexed their engineering and programming skills was a great experience that I am really looking forward to repeating next year!” (Michael Sola, CWIT C7)

PWIT Picnic & Alumni Reunion
A warm (very windy) Saturday in May provided the setting for the annual end-of-the-year picnic gathering for the CWIT community, coordinated and sponsored in part by the Parents For Women and Information Technology (PWIT) organization. CWIT & SITE students and their families, joined by a few CWIT Alumni, had fun in the sun by playing Frisbee, volleyball, and other games, and eating good food. Thanks PWIT!

“The picnic was a great way to end the school year with CWIT friends and their families” (Katelyn Toy, CWIT C8)

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Michael Barrett and Amy Ciavolino co-developed a web site (www.plusonedexterity.com) as a place for game developers and other members of the IT community to upload and share their creations. Priyanka Bushana, Amy Ciavolino, Dominique Monteil, and Teresa Oswald presented their research at this year’s Undergraduate Research and Creative Achievement Day (URCAD) on April 28th.

Rachel Davies, Lisa McPherson, and Andrea Robinson were chosen to participate in UMBC’s 5TRVE Retreat, a five-day leadership retreat in January. Michael Rahimi was elected President of the Persian Student Association.

Amy Chou was inducted into Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honors Society and Delta Phi Epsilon sorority.

Bragging Rights:

Cassie Dobrzenski and Angela Nealen and their Biodiesel club won this year’s imPROVE it! Competition with their proposal to create a renewable energy source for the UMBC campus.

Cassie Dobrzenski was accepted into the Nuclear Propulsion Officer Candidate (NUPOC) Program with the U.S. Navy and will begin after graduation in May 2011. Cassie is also recently engaged and set to be married June 2011!

Littleton Riggins was elected President of the Fencing Club.

Teresa Oswald was awarded the “Outstanding Achievement in Computer Science” award.

Rachel Sweeton recently earned her green belt in Taekwondo.

Mariano Mumpower received a UMBC Alvarez Engineering award, a Mechanical Engineering S-STEM Scholarship, was renewed for his NASA MUST Award, and won first place in UMBC’s Idea Competition for his entrepreneurial idea to create “The Green Bean”, an organic mobile food service stand at UMBC. Also, he and his wife recently had a beautiful baby girl!

Kellie Tilley was accepted into Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honors Society.

Andrea Robinson received the Walker Resident Assistant of the Year Award.

Scholars’ Awards & Accomplishments

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By The Numbers...

In the 2008 U.S. Workforce:
- 57...Percent of professional occupations held by women
- 25...Percent of professional IT-related occupations held by women
- 11...Percent of corporate officer positions at Fortune 500 technology companies held by women

National Percentage of Women Earning Bachelor’s Degrees 2007-2008:
- Chemical Engineering: 34.9%, Computer Engineering: 10.7%, Computer Science: 11.8%, Informatics: 13.7%, Mechanical Engineering: 11.9%

UMBC’s Center for Women and Information Technology (CWIT)
Did you know...
- Since the CWIT Scholars program’s inception in 2002 there have been a total of 86 CWIT Scholars. The average cumulative GPA for all scholars is 3.5.
- In Fall 2009, there were a total of 67 CWIT and SITE Scholars being supported by the CWIT program. 72% of CWIT Scholars and 61% of SITE Scholars were women.
- 90% of all CWIT and SITE Scholars have either graduated or are still pursuing their studies in IT or Engineering major. The average for all first-time full-time students entering UMBC since 1995 is approximately 60%.


December 2009 Scholar Graduates:

Hariklia Karagiannis (CWIT/SITE)  
Electrical Engineer at AAI, Corp.

Caroline Scheck (SITE)  
Enrolled in Masters in Mechanical Engineering at UMBC

Emily Toy (CWIT)  
Enrolled in Masters in Information Systems at UMBC

The CWIT Office contains a growing library of books for reference, academic and professional skill-building, and gender/diversity topics in IT and Engineering. Below is a small sample of what you will find on our shelves:

“Women Don’t Ask: Negotiation and the Gender Divide,” by Linda Babcock and Sara Laschever.


“Gender Inclusive Game Design: Expanding the Market,” by Sheri Graner Ray.


“Debugging Your Information Technology Career: A Compass to New and Rewarding Fields that Value Computer Knowledge,” by Janice Weinberg.

“Professors’ Guide to Getting Good Grades in College,” by Lynn F. Jacobs, Ph.D., and Jeremy S. Hyman, M.A.

Other Alums:

Tawny Barin recently began a rotation in Belfort, Cedex in France for GE Energy’s IMLP.

Heidi Brueckner was promoted to Analyst 2: Application Developer at Constellation Energy. She was also recently engaged and planning to be married in October 2011.

Lindsay Cox (Mannchen) was married on January 2, 2010 to Patrick Cox. She also changed jobs and now works for Accenture as a PeopleSoft Implementation Specialist and does government contract work.

Bethany Meyer was promoted to Senior Web Developer at T. Rowe Price in December 2009.

WHERE HAVE THE SCHOLARS BEEN?

January:
31st - CWIT & SITE Scholars Volunteered for the FIRST Lego League State Tournament

February:
1st - CWIT/SITE Family Meeting  
8th - CWIT Social, UMBC Basketball game  
22nd - Federal Government Net working Panel, including the DOE, NIH, NASA, SSA, NAVSEA, & NRC.
24th - Visionaries in IT Forum, Speaker: Hooman Radfar, CEO and Co-Founder of Clearspring Technologies

March:
5th - Dependable Strengths Workshop  
6th - Scholar Selection Day  
8th - CWIT/SITE Family Meeting  
15th-19th - Spring Break  
22nd-26 - Career Week

April:
5th - CWIT/SITE Family Meeting  
8th - Site Visit: NSA  
13th - Site Visit: Harris, Corp.  
21st - Visionaries in IT Forum, Speaker: Dr. Bernard S. Meyerson, IBM Fellow and VP, Innovation and Global University Relations

23rd - Site Visit: JHU APL

May:
3rd - CWIT/SITE Family Meeting  
5th - Bureau of Labor Statistics Information Session  
8th - PWIT Picnic and Alumni Reunion  
14th - Finals Study Break  
19th - CWIT Graduation Celebration Dinner  
24th - Undergraduate Commencement

Alumni News

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Send newsletter submissions to Katie Glasser at kglasser@umbc.edu

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Book Corner