A Word From the Director

By Dr. Penny Rheingans

Spring seemed awfully long coming and then suddenly it was the end of the semester. I’m still not quite sure how that happened, but it’s all good.

As the Scholars head into exams, I’m already looking forward to graduation. Next week, I’ll get to watch six CWIT Scholars walk across that big stage: Bhuvana Bellala (CMSC), Tiffany Ernst (CMSC), Julia Ford (CMSC), Kevin Johnson (ME), Leah Mason (ME), Angela Norton (CE), Clayonna Wheat (IS). They’ll be joined by our T-SITE Scholar graduates: Kianté Brantley (CMSC), Michael Brown (CE), and Nishay Raja (ME), as well as our Cyber Scholar graduates: Nathan Clime (CMSC), Victoria Lentz (CMSC), Lauren Mazzoli (CMSC), Kat Pfeiffer (IS), Katrice St. Rose (IS), and Brislin Thomas (CMSC). Read about their plans for the next phase elsewhere in this newsletter.

We’ve finished selecting the next cohort of all three Scholar programs. Our C14 cohort of sixteen CWIT Scholars is Tyler Boyle (Colonia HS), Maria Brown (River Hill HS), Colin Corcoran (Catonsville HS), Connor Craft (Patuxent HS), Emily Duan (Chesapeake HS), Maya Gupta (Oakland Mills HS), Erica Haschert (Elizabeth Seton HS), Sarah Heiner (Bel Air HS), Rebekah Kemske (Catholic HS), Kristin McLaughlin (Community Christian School), Sara Nabulsi (Baltimore Polytechnic Institute), Nadja Osiander (Oakland Mills HS), Meera Patel (Atholton HS), Julianna Posey (Middletown HS), Alliana Warner (Western School of Technology) and Emily Yu (Thomas Sprigg Wootton HS).

Our Y3 cohort of CYBER Scholars are Pragya Chaudhari (UMBC), Aaron Gray (UMBC), Sergei Gorkhovetskiy (UMBC), Kwame Robertson (UMBC), Bailey Rouk (CCBC), Taylor Webb (Hammond HS), Casey West (UMBC), and Danielle Zack (UMBC). Finally, our T4 cohort of T-SITE Scholars are King Carmichael (HCC), Cristina Fortiz (PGCC), Sophie Abrere Kozolan (MC), Tatiana Nikolaeva (CCBC), Kayla Pope (AACC), Moustapha Tiam (MC), Tobie Tunde-Alli (PGCC), Bryan Vanek (FCC), and Sarah Wells (AACC). We’re excited that they’ve chosen CWIT/CYBER/T-SITE and UMBC.

As I approach the end of my seventh year as CWIT Director, I continue to be awed by the spirit, accomplishments, and compassion of our Scholars and alumni. I am endlessly thankful for the generosity of our partners and supporters among the UMBC faculty and staff. This newsletter contains a window into what we’ve been up to the last couple of months. Hope you enjoy this little bit of our world.

CYBER Corner

By Cindy Greenwood

The Cyber Scholars & Affiliates have continued with another busy semester this spring. We also continued our Cyber Practicum for Scholars and Affiliates to hear from cyber professionals each week. Speakers came from organizations such as the Women’s Society of Cyberjutsu, NSA, T. Rowe Price, the Department of Homeland Security, and several others. Students have expressed that they enjoy hearing from speakers representing a variety of companies and roles within the cyber field and that the practicum helps them better understand the different types of jobs one might consider within the field.

Four of our Scholars and Affiliates stepped up this semester to help increase the cyber-related offerings for students. Alejandra Diaz, Alex Jackson, Teddy LaFemina, and Stephanie Parre have great ideas for initiatives such as cyber skill-building workshops, certification study groups, and much more. The execution of these new ideas began slowly this semester and we look forward to putting their plans into action this fall. As always, we are grateful for our corporate sponsors. Several of our students will head to Northrop Grumman, our largest sponsor, for jobs and internships this summer. We would also like to thank BAE Systems, Varen Technologies, and The Coleman Group for being Cyber Champions this year. In addition, we are excited for our students to gain summer internship experience with companies including Tenable Network Security, Mindgrub, and Google.
I am most proud of graduating on the day to just relax. Knowing I had a place in the world that led to my amazing opportunities to get back in the game. CWIT has provided me with the scholarship. CWIT has made me who I am today. I would not have gone to UMBC if not for the scholarship. CWIT has been my college and being asked to be the keynote speaker at ACC Engineering Scholars dinner.

Claudette DuPont (T-SITE Scholar) Mechanical Engineering
I am most proud of graduating and being asked to be the keynote speaker at ACC Engineering Scholars dinner.

Nathan Cline (Cyber Scholar) Computer Science Future Plans: Northrop Grumman
CWIT has provided amazing opportunities to meet professionals in the area (which led to my current job) as well as exposed me to the UMBC community at large. It was always a great feeling to know I had a place to go to on campus during the day to just relax.

Victoria Lentz (Cyber Scholar) Computer Science Future Plans: JHU–Applied Physics Lab
I am most proud of being part of the Cyber Scholars program and being one of eleven students in the nation to receive the Scholarship for Women Studying Information Security for the 2014–2015 school year.

Lauren Mazzoli (Cyber Scholar) Computer Science Future Plans: Northrop Grumman
I am most proud of my hard work throughout college. Not only did I work part time every semester since I came to UMBC, but I also took at least 15 credits per semester while maintaining a high GPA.

Leah Mason (CWIT Scholar) Mechanical Engineering Future Plans: PhD–Missouri S&T
CWIT has been my college family. They have taught me valuable life lessons, they have always been there to support me, and they are a fun group of people that I will miss very much.

Angela Norton (CWIT Scholar) Chemical Engineering Future Plans: PhD–University of Delaware
These past four years of working hard and carrying around two book bags have been worth it! I am very proud to say I have earned a bachelor’s degree in chemical engineering.

Katrice St. Rose (Cyber Scholar) Information Systems Future Plans: Federal Government
I will always remember CWIT as being the Support System I had while in under grad!

Clayonna Wheat (CWIT Scholar) Business Technology Administration Future Plans: NASA
I’m most proud of being the first person in my family to graduate with a bachelor’s degree. Becoming an example for my little cousins behind me.

Michael Brown (T-SITE Scholar) Chemical Engineering Future Plans: Carrier Corporation
CWIT has given me the opportunity for tremendous professional growth, for which I’m very grateful.

Bhuvana Bellala (CWIT Scholar) Computer Science Future Plans: University of California, Berkeley
I came in to UMBC with the goal to finish undergraduate in three years and I did it! Also, most importantly, I am proud that I have found something I am passionate about and that I have been able to create the opportunity to pursue that passion.

Nishay Raja (T-SITE Scholar) Mechanical Engineering Future Plans: Northrop Grumman
I am most proud of my research on “Improving Spatial Visualization Skills of Freshmen Engineering Students at UMBC”. I hope that in the long run, it helps in the retention of students, particularly females, in engineering.

Brislin Thomas (Cyber Scholar) Computer Science
CWIT gave me a great industry mentor and community of scholars, professors, and CWIT staff to rely on. I will miss being close by and running on campus during the day to just relax.

Julia Ford (CWIT Scholar) Computer Science
Meet our Graduating Seniors!

Tiffany Ernst (CWIT Scholar) Computer Science Future Plans: Northrop Grumman
CWIT has made me who I am today. I would not have gone to a four year university without the scholarship. CWIT has made me well rounded and a high achieving, motivated person.

Kianne Brantley (T-SITE Scholar) Computer Science Future Plans: Masters–UMBC
I am most proud of achieving my goal academic goals so far. My goals were to receive an A.A. degree in 2 years and a B.S. degree in 4 years (2 years after the A.A. while working the entire time).

Kevin Johnson (CWIT Scholar) Mechanical Engineering Future Plans: Textron Systems; Masters–JHU
CWIT has given me the confidence to go out into the working world and be confident in myself and my skills. I feel confident about working as an engineer, getting my master’s degree part time, and growing as a leader in the future.

Katrice St. Rose

Meet our Graduating Seniors!

Nishay Raja

A.A., while working the entire time). B.S. degree in 4 years (2 years after the academic goals so far. My goals were to Studying Information Cyber Science (Cyber Scholar)

Future Plans:
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Future Plans:
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ChevronTexan

Summer 2015

ALIO DESIGNS

Katherine Geisler (C11)

APG ARMY RESEARCH LAB

Sophia Haire (C12)

BECTON DICKINSON

Nicole Racine (C11)

BGE

Kourtney Rutkowski (C12)

Kelsey Hof (C12)

BOOZ ALLEN HAMILTON

John Swank (C11)

CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF LILLE

Elyse Hill (C12)

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Teddy LaFemina (C12)

Rachel Cohen (Y2)

Austin Cole (Y2)

DORIS DUKE CONSERVATION SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Savannah Steinly (C13)

EAGLE ALLIANCE

Mark Cirincione (C11)

EXELON CORPORATION

Haley Sweeton (C11)

Qeturah Olivera (T3)

FIRST ENERGY

Ohalipipo Eke (T3)

GE AVIATION

Shannon Donelan (C11)

Grace Tomsky (C13)

GE HEALTHCARE

Celia Drew (C11)

Beatrice Garcia (C11)

GOOGLE

Katie Swanson (Y2)

ICF INTERNATIONAL

Megan Lynch (C12)

NAVY CYBER WARFARE DEVELOPMENT GROUP

Michael Byers (T3)

JHU–APL

Samantha McDonald (C11)

LGs INNOVATIONS

Holly Johnson (C11)

MISSOURI S&T

Janette Phillips (C12)

UMBC IRC OFFICE

Sara Masoudi (C13)

NIST

Theodora Martin (C13)

Celestine Wong (C13)

NORTHROP GRUMMAN

Alejandra Diaz (Y1)

Vitaliy Turchekhov (Y2)

Samantha Turskey (Y2)

REU–UNIV. OF PENNSYLVANIA

Hannah Corcos (C12)

SMITHSONIAN CENTER FOR ASTROPHYSICS

Alicia Goldein (C12)

SNICKERS

Samantha Smith (C12)

TENABLE NETWORK SECURITY

Seth Jenkins (Y2)

TEXTRON

Travis Ward (T2)

UMBC JOINT DEPARTMENT

Natacha Nega (T3)

Vincent Liu (Y2)
T-SITE Update

Family, Support, Reassurance, Encouragement, Inspiration, Motivation, Fun

These are the words that T-SITE scholars used when asked in a recent focus group to describe their experience as part of the CWIT community. The T-SITE scholars program is funded by an S-STEM grant from the National Science Foundation (DUE-1154300-in its fourth of five years) to serve a total of 28 academically talented transfer students majoring in engineering or computing who have financial need, with a focus on women and other underrepresented groups. A fourth and final cohort of nine T-SITEs being funded on the current grant has been selected and will join the CWIT community this fall. Our T-SITE scholars are a wildly successful group and embody excellence in diversity! Three quarters of the 28 scholars selected are women or African American. Like most transfer students, T-SITES are have their eyes on their future career. This May more three T-SITEs are graduating and four more are on track to graduate in August or December. The T-SITE faculty mentors (Dr. Taryn Bayles, Dr. Marie desJardins, Dr. Carolyn Seaman, Dr. Anne Spence, and Dr. Gymama Slaugther-project coPIs) are an integral part of T-SITE scholar success. Nishay Raja talked about her faculty mentor like this—“I think Dr. Spence is awesome. She’s helped me through everything. …she tells me what you need to do and what classes to take. So that’s always been very helpful, even my research was through her as well. We also have some great news about the T-SITE program—it will continue! Another S-STEM project (DUE-1458343) was funded in April to serve 25 more transfer students majoring in computing. Dr. Penny Rheingans, CWIT Director, is the Principal investigator. Dr. Carolyn Seaman (IS Department), Dr. Susan Martin (CWIT), and Dr. Charles LaBerge (CSEE) are coPIs on this new project. Recruitment for the first cohort of transfer students from Maryland community colleges who intend enter UMBC in fall 2016 major in computing fields at UMBC will begin this fall.

Bits and Bytes

Bits and Bytes is a student-led event for high school junior girls which encourages young women to explore the IT and engineering fields and creates an opportunity for them to be surrounded by others with similar interests, including fellow high school students and CWIT Scholars who volunteer their time during the event. It includes a design challenge, a chance to spend the night in the CWIT LLC, and sessions about preparing for college. This year, CWIT hosted 35 high school junior girls for the annual event. For more information about next year’s program, visit: http://www.cwit.umbc.edu/hs/hsprograms/

CWIT LLC

The CWIT-LLC moved to Chesapeake Hall this year and grew to 47 students. Our wonderful RA, Erika Heffernan, did a fabulous job of having a range of programs from monthly dinners to movie nights to help students feel engaged. Our returning sophomore class on the floor also contributed to helping the freshmen students feel at home in the new space. We look forward to continuing to grow in the coming years!

CWIT Showcase

Fifteen Scholars and Affiliates presented sessions to their peers during this year’s CWIT Showcase. This event aims to give students a condensed experience similar to that of a professional conference. Students presented on research they have conducted, interesting class projects they completed, and experiences they have had (including the Clean Water Project in Kenya by Engineers Without Borders members, the Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing by three students who attended, and more).

Alumni Updates!

Thomas Davis (SITE) will be moving to Rochester, NY to be a Technical Consultant at a company called NimbleUser. www.nimbleuser.com

Denish Van (SITE) was promoted to a Senior IT Specialist at IBM and will be getting married in November 2015

Katrina Chan (C9) will graduate this May with a Master’s in Information Systems from UMBC

Katie Gibson (C3) will participate in the University of Pennsylvania PhD commencement in May with plans to defend her dissertation later this summer

Emily Scheerer (C9) will marry Ryan Brown on July 3rd. They met through the UMBC Ballroom Dance Club and he proposed at UMBC on the dock at “Pig Pen Pond.”
Shout Outs!

Scholars send anonymous kudos, congrats, and encouragement to their community

- Congratulations to Michael Brown on his new job with Carrier!
- Leah Mason—best of luck at Missouri Science and Technology!
- Tiffany Ernst, huge congratulations on your job at Northrop Grumman! Wishing you the best!
- Kevin Johnson impressed me all year with his leadership and determination. He is the de facto head of the men in CWIT group. Kevin has many leadership roles in a lot of different organizations, and it was admirable how he juggled all of his hats and provided valuable contributions to everything that he was involved in.
- I was really proud of everyone on the floor.
- Bhuvana for getting into UC Berkeley for graduate school!
- Chris Williams, Alejandra Diaz, Vaughn Jackson, Elyse Hill, Jennifer Smith, and Stephanie Pearre for taking initiative to get more hands-on practice for cyber scholars!
- I was really inspired by Sophie. She always works really hard and has a lot of good advice. I love our conversations, and I will really miss that when she leaves the floor next year.
- Shout out to Bhuvana for having been a great CWIT president and for finishing her classwork in three years.
- Congratulations to Angie Norton for working so hard and becoming an engineer!
- All our seniors moving on. You all will be missed, and we expect big things from you guys.
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