Happy New Year!

We hope everyone had a great fall quarter and winter break. Here are a few recaps from the eventful quarter:

New Ambassadors
This year we have over 30 student ambassadors. CPP WE Ambassadors serve as representatives, mentors, and leaders for the College of Engineering. The kick off meeting was held in November, led by Dr. Ontiveros and our Ambassador Coordinators, Breanna, Sevanne, and Rianne.

Ambassadors will be responsible for representing Women in Engineering at outreach and campus events, including Project Lead the Way (PLTW) and STEM activities.

Distinguished Speaker
We are proud to announce that in honor of Cal Poly Pomona’s 75th Anniversary and the College of Engineering’s 55th Anniversary, the inaugural distinguished speaker event showcased a CPP female alumna, Ms. Virginia Grebbien. Ms. Grebbien graduated from CPP in 1986 with a degree in civil engineering and is now the president of Parsons Environment & Infrastructure.

For a full recap and link to the video, visit: http://polycentric.csupomona.edu/news_stories/2013/11/preparing-engineers-to-compete-with-the-world.html

WE Chats
Each quarter CPP WE hosts WE Chats with professors from different majors in engineering. Fall quarter’s Chats focused on Civil Engineering and Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering.

This quarter we will host two more Chats. Look out for the email invitation in your Cal Poly Pomona email account.

We are very excited to start the new quarter and look forward to the continuous growth of Women in Engineering at Cal Poly Pomona.

Welcome back Broncos!
-CPP WE Staff

Winter Quarter Activities
Get the highlights from our fall events and a sneak peek at what we have planned for winter quarter.
WE Welcome Lunch

Tuesday, October 22, 2013

CPP Women in Engineering hosted over 90 guests at the annual CPP WE Welcome Lunch this fall. The lunch is designed to give students an opportunity to learn about CPP WE and to interact with their peers, faculty, staff and industry guests.

Dr. Ontiveros gave a brief presentation on CPP WE and introduced three representatives from Southern California Edison, Leanne Swanson, a District Manager in Distribution, Construction and Maintenance Organization; Carrie Meissner, Manager of Transmission Engineering; and Jessica Rodriguez, a University & Campus Relations Recruiter.

The 2013/14 WE Ambassador Coordinators were also introduced and led the attendees through an interactive ice breaker.

All students in attendance received a CPP WE t-shirt. If you are a current female student and have not received your WE shirt, stop by office 9-163.

Ambassador Kick Off

Friday, November 8, 2013

Women in Engineering is proud to welcome over 30 new student ambassadors this year. Ambassadors serve as student representatives, mentors, and leaders for the College of Engineering. They are trained to provide college tours and facilitate Women in Engineering information tables at campus events including welcome fairs, open houses, club fairs, and any Project Lead the Way (PLTW) and STEM activities.

In an effort to provide student perspective to prospective and incoming students, WE Ambassadors are encouraged to participate in all college activities, especially outreach events. All first time students were encouraged to apply to be an ambassador in the fall quarter. All who applied were then invited to attend the kick off meeting where Dr. Ontiveros discussed the role of an ambassador and gave an in-depth presentation on the mission and purpose of the Women in Engineering initiative.

Being a new program to the college, WE is still developing and growing day by day. The WE staff and faculty are excited for the progress we have made and look forward to what is in store for the future.

We encourage all students who are interested in being student ambassadors to apply!

CPP WE Winter 2014 Activities

January 10: Ambassador Winter Quarter Kick Off Meeting
January 16: WE Talk
January 25: Honors College Showcase of Excellence
February 4: WE Chat – Electrical & Computer with Dr. Phyllis Nelson
February 16-22: Engineers Week
March 4: WE Chat – Chemical Engineering with Dr. Cordelia Ontiveros
March 15: Engineering Scholar’s Day

**Check your csupomona.edu email regularly for invitations to these events**

*Volunteers Needed*
This fall, the dean's office hired three student ambassadors to work alongside the WE professional staff as Ambassador Coordinators. They will be responsible for assisting in coordinating ambassador meetings, activities, outreach efforts, and social events.

Breanna Haigler, Industrial Engineering
Event & Volunteer Coordinator, Cal Poly Pomona Women in Engineering
Vice President of Internal Affairs, Society of Women Engineers
Rotary Life Scholarship Recipient

Why did you choose to pursue a degree in engineering?
I chose to pursue a degree in engineering because I wanted to help create things that would benefit our society and communities. I didn't know much about engineering but I knew that I was good at math and science so it could be a good fit.

Who are your role models?
I have many role models. When it comes to my education and career, my father is my biggest role model. He finished college when I was 5 years old and has worked hard to progress in his field ever since. It is inspiring that he was able to finish college when taking only night classes and tending to a full time job and a family during the day. I even remember once that I went to a class with him and I was so fascinated that the desks were attached to the chairs, unlike my pre-k craft tables.

What is your dream job?
My dream job is to work for either Disney or UPS. I am good at coordinating things so I think I would do well at UPS, but I absolutely love Disneyland so it would be an honor to work there as well. Wherever I end up, I will pursue a management path. I love overseeing and coordinating things. And I love being someone that people go to for guidance.

How do you balance school work, a job, and a social life?
It is very difficult to balance work, school, and my social life. It helps that I live on campus with good friends. I am always able to hang out at home with friends while getting homework done. I write out my whole week’s schedule, down to nap times, on Sunday nights so I know exactly what I should be doing when. To balance everything, I try mostly to live in the moment. If I'm at work, then I am focused on work. When I'm studying then I focus on studying, and when I'm with friends I try to focus on having a good time. It is the in between stuff that can trip me up but keeping an organized to-do list is an easy way to keep things in order. I believe balance is one of the most important things to learn in college.

Rianne Okamoto, Civil Engineering
Archive Manager, Cal Poly Pomona Women in Engineering
Intern, RBF Consulting
Think Pink Chair, Zeta Tau Alpha

Why did you choose to pursue a degree in engineering?
My parents were a major influence on my decision to be an engineer. They both work at RBF Consulting, which is actually where they met, so it’s been a major part of my life from a very young age. They have always been really passionate about their careers to the point where I start to think they are workaholics. They would have been supportive of any major I chose but I never really had a chance. I grew up around engineers and architects so I never found it strange to just stand and admire at the architectural features of buildings or take pictures of storm drains. This is just one of the many reasons why I chose engineering as my major but it was
probably one of the initial reasons I became interested in it.

Who are your role models?
I don't have any specific role models; I admire qualities in so many different people that it would be impossible to just choose one or two. I find my sorority to be like my role model. My actions and decisions affect all of my sisters whether or not I mean them to. Like any organization we are judged as a whole even if it's the actions of only one, that fact keeps me motivated to be the best I can be.

What is your dream job?
Right now I don't know what my dream job is, I still need to take a majority of my core classes and I know once I take them I'll probably change my mind about what specifically I want to focus on.

How do you balance school work, a job, and a social life?
Lots of caffeine? And if something is important to you then it's easy to find time for it.

Sevanne Calle, Mechanical Engineering

Outreach Training Coordinator, Cal Poly Pomona Women in Engineering
Outreach Chair, Society of Women Engineers
General Electric Foundation Scholarship Recipient

Why did you choose to pursue a degree in engineering?
I knew I wanted to do engineering during high school. I took an AP physics course and I remember struggling so much in it. Despite the challenge, I loved every second of it. After taking this course, I started researching about the different majors that involved math and physics and I came across mechanical engineering. It was a perfect fit for me. I discovered that I can design devices or machines that could benefit society. I always knew I wanted to help others but I wasn't sure how my math and science skills would aid me with that goal. It was during high school when all the puzzle pieces came together.

Who are your role models?
One of my role models is Michelle Khine! She has a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering and a Ph.D. in Biomedical Engineering. She is the co-founder of Fluxion Biosciences Inc., conducts research, and is a biomedical professor at UC Irvine. She is my role model because everything she has done is what I hope to accomplish one day. I know I want to work in industry and I am discovering a passion for the research field. It would be nice to be a professor as well. Michelle's Khine's work impresses me so much. She is mainly known for experimenting with Shrinky Dink toys to create microfluidic channels. Her work has advanced the biomedical industries and medical diagnostics.

The two core role models I have are my parents. They both sacrificed their country and family to provide me with various opportunities here in the U.S. Their perseverance and faith has allowed them to attain their goals. My father balanced a full time job and school to become a Licensed Vocational Nurse while I was in high school. The program to attain an LVN license is rigorous, but his determination and endless nights proved it to be possible. My mother is an awesome person. She passed down her love for education to her four children. Now, all her four children, including myself, enjoy the fruits of having an education, enjoy learning and aspire to better humanity in any way. Despite her age, she still dreams of going back to college to accomplish her career goals. My parent's life endeavors and astounding success energize me with never-ending passion and impel me to accomplish my wildest of dreams.

What is your dream job?
My dream job includes working in industry, advancing biomedical research, teaching high school or college students, and creating educational programs/events that will aid underrepresented populations. I guess I just listed a number of jobs, but Michelle Khine is able to handle teaching, researching and working in industry all at once, so why can't I? I have several aspirations. I would like to go back to my country, Bolivia, to develop educational programs for schools. I would also want to go back to develop cheap medical devices that will aid the impoverished communities. I'm very excited for my dreams to come true!

How do you balance school work, a job, and a social life?
I balance it all by managing my time and paying attention when I am most productive for a certain task. For example, I used to be able to wake up at 2am to study and do schoolwork. But this quarter, my body couldn’t function that way. Instead, I stayed up to finish my assignments and study. I also know that when I'm with my family it gets hard to study because I miss them and I want to spend time with them. Thus, I dedicate a specific time to spend with my family, study, work, etc. An agenda really does help.
Scholarships, Internships, Jobs...Oh My!!!

NOW is the time to start looking for summer work. Whether you will be graduating in June and need a full-time job, or just looking for a summer internship, the sooner you begin the search, the better chance you have of finding a position that is right for you. Here are a few resources to get you started.

Scholarships
http://www.fastweb.com/
http://www.scholarships.com/
http://www.engineergirl.org/9539.aspx

Internships

Jobs
http://careerwomen.com/
http://www.engineerjobs.com/

First Year Experience Essay Contest

This fall, all first-year freshmen were invited to participate in an essay writing contest, based on a book titled The Story of Stuff by Annie Leonard.

In the book, Annie Leonard discusses how the modern methods of production, distribution, and consumption are damaging our planet and overall well-being. The essay prompt asked for the writer to explain to what degree they found her arguments persuasive.

The essay contest winner was Ms. Rachel Irwin, a first year Mechanical Engineering student. Rachel was not expecting to win, stating she argued against Leonard, describing how the ideas and solutions she presented, although well thought out and researched, were not realistic for the society we live in:

“I put a lot of work into writing an essay that I would be proud of, and one that I would stand behind. I did not expect to win however, but was extremely happy when I was given the news. It was an incredible experience, being able to meet with Annie herself, and hear the stories first hand, that I had read about in her book. I was grateful to have been able to share the reception with so many faculty members and talk to them about the work I had done.”

Rachel was awarded a gift certificate for the Bronco Bookstore, and was honored at a reception with Ms. Leonard.

...what scholarships, awards, achievements, etc., you have received, achieved, and accomplished this year?

Let us know about yourself or a fellow student by emailing KimberlyJ@csupomona.edu

CPP WE is committed to encouraging and celebrating the success of all of our engineering female students. Let us know and we may feature you in our next newsletter!
Faculty Spotlight:
Dr. Norali Pernalete

The College of Engineering has an outstanding group of female faculty. In an effort to strengthen student-professor relationships and build community, WE presents the Faculty Spotlight.

Dr. Norali Pernalete was born and raised in Venezuela. She attended the Polytechnic University of Venezuela and obtained an “Ingeniero Electronico” (BS-Electrical Engineering-5 year curriculum) degree at the top of her graduating class (1st). That ranking earned her a full scholarship to pursue master studies in the United States. She attended the University of Michigan—Ann Arbor and obtained a Master’s degree in Electrical Engineering with emphasis in Control Systems. After that, she moved to the University of South Florida (USF)—Tampa and pursued a Ph.D. degree in Electrical Engineering with emphasis in Control Systems and Robotics.

After obtaining her Ph.D. at USF, she became an Assistant Professor in the Electrical and Computer Engineering department at Western Michigan University (WMU) in Kalamazoo. At WMU, she had the opportunity to help develop their graduate program in Electrical and Computer Engineering, and created new courses in Biomedical Robotics. In the fall of 2006, she moved to Cal Poly Pomona as an Associate Professor in the Electronics and Computer Engineering Technology program. Shortly after joining Cal Poly Pomona, she was part of the first cohort of Teacher-Scholars in 2007, and in 2008, she obtained funding as a sole Principle Investigator from the National Science Foundation—RAPD (Research to Aid People with Disabilities) for three years in the amount of $220,000. She has publications at peer-reviewed conferences (the IEEE International Conferences in Rehabilitation Robotics—ICORR, and Robotics and Automation—ICRA). Most recently, she teamed up with professors in Computer Science and Kinesiology, and obtained the Strategic Interdisciplinary Research Grant award (SIRG). She performs collaborative research with Casa Colina Hospital for Rehabilitative Medicine in Pomona, and has supervised graduate and undergraduate students in Engineering and Computer Science.

What first sparked your interest in engineering?

I was introduced to engineering and academia from a very early age. My father is an electrical engineer who worked for many years at our city’s electrical company but then decided to pursue a career in academia, becoming a professor. My two sisters are also engineers (computer and civil). Also, while in high school, I found math and physics more enjoyable than other subjects. So, I believe that growing up in a family of engineers, being exposed to different fields (electrical, computer, civil), and enjoying math and physics were all factors in sparking my interest in studying engineering.

Have you faced any challenges as a female in engineering? How have you overcome these challenges?

Yes, being a female in a mostly male dominated field or workplace makes it challenging to further one’s career. To overcome the challenges I faced, I simply worked harder and sought out advice from people (helps if they are female as well) with more experience, who most likely had to overcome even worse challenges than mine.

What advice would you give to current female engineering students?

My advice would be to get the most out of your college experience. I have noticed that especially during laboratory sessions, female students fall behind because the equipment is being monopolized by their, mostly male, teammates. Don’t let that happen and try to get the important hands on experience that is acquired by working with the laboratory equipment. Also, I would advise them to be active in the Women in Engineering program and the honor societies of their fields.

What is the best advice you have ever received?

Work hard and make sure to be knowledgeable of the rules and expectations that will determine how you advance your career at your workplace. Knowledge is power.

Who are your role models, or who do you look up to?

In life, my family has always been my role model. In my career at Cal Poly Pomona, my role models have been the senior female faculty members of the College of Engineering who have always mentored me. I someday wish I could be as good of a mentor as they have always been to me.