Michigan State University Launches Effort to Recruit More Women into Engineering and Computing Fields

East Lansing, Mich. – Michigan State University is partnering with the National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT) to recruit and retain more women in computer science, computer engineering, electrical engineering and mechanical engineering - fields in which females remain under-represented nationwide.

A two-fold strategic plan is being developed – aimed at retaining more women students in computer science and recruiting more women into computer, electrical and mechanical engineering fields.

“We’re looking at these specific four areas because of the weak numbers,” said Laura Dillon, a professor in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at MSU. “This is a workforce issue. We need the best minds and skills to fill rapidly growing workforce demands in information technology and engineering. But it’s also about fairness. There is an abundance of good jobs in these fields. We should not be leaving out half of the talent pool.”

“Encouraging young women’s interest in technology careers is critical,” said Lucy Sanders, CEO and co-founder of NCWIT. “Our workforce needs their creativity and their innovation. The goal of this launch is to immediately increase the visibility and raw numbers of women in these programs.”

Dillon said the two-year effort will be distinguished by its focus on data analysis. “We’re pleased to be getting national consulting assistance from NCWIT. We think this data-driven approach, along with outreach at national conferences dedicated to this topic, will improve our intervention capabilities.”

Strategies developed in the project are expected to enhance recruitment and retention of women in all other engineering disciplines at Michigan State, as well.

MSU faculty and administrators participating in the NCWIT launch include Dillon, Judy Cordes, Drew Kim, Teresa Vandersloot, Tim Grotjohn, Alex Diaz and Daina Briedis. Joining the collaboration is NCWIT Extension Services Consultant Michelle Slattery from Peak Research in Colorado Springs, Colo.

About MSU: The Michigan State University College of Engineering is one of the largest and oldest colleges on campus, with six departments and 170 faculty members serving nearly 4,000 undergraduate and 850 graduate students through 10 undergraduate and nine graduate degree programs.

About NCWIT: NCWIT is the National Center for Women & Information Technology, a coalition of more than 450 prominent corporations, academic institutions, government agencies, and nonprofits working to increase women's participation in IT. NCWIT's work spans K-12 and higher education through industry and academic careers.

Related Website: National Center for Women & Information Technology
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