

Sisterhood in STEM: Hofstra University Program Supports Young Women in Science and Technology

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- [Hofstra University](https://www.hofstra.edu/) is helping young women succeed in STEM with a summer program that includes mentoring, hands-on projects and the chance to explore career opportunities.

Called the Women's Summer Program in Computing/Engineering ([W-SPiCE](#)), the program is open to first-year female students in the Fred [DeMatteis School](#) of Engineering and Applied Science at Hofstra University. Students are exposed to different disciplines, related majors, and professions in industrial, mechanical, environmental, and civil engineering as well as computer science, through hands-on projects, classroom demonstrations, and off-campus field trips.

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Students work on a project during W-SPiCE program

“Nurturing and supporting a diverse and inclusive student community is one of our top priorities,” said Sina Rabbany, dean of the DeMatteis School. “W-SPiCE is one of our robust initiatives to encourage a welcoming and accessible community for women in STEM.” The school has been recognized by the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) for its commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).

Pia Cameron, a computer engineering major from Kingston, Jamaica, knows the history, challenges and progress of women in STEM.

“My grandma was an engineer before she died. It was really hard for her because women weren't really accepted that much – especially black women,” Cameron said. “So, I like how

everything is evolving and women are more accepted.”

During the mechanical engineering part of the program, students built robotic cars and tested them on a track.

“W-SPiCE is a special program,” said Adjunct Professor Gozde Ustuner, who led that week’s activities. “Having a full week of specialized instruction allows the group to learn by doing – and figuring things out together. They were able to troubleshoot and make adjustments based on results, not grades or professor feedback. It really teaches them to think like engineers.”



Hofstra students pose with their projects during W-SPiCE program

Several students said that the W-SPiCE program creates a sense of community and camaraderie that is especially important for women in STEM.

“There’s not a lot of women in engineering,” said Stella Sourelos, a computer engineering major from Queens. “To get to know other girls here is very inclusive and a good opportunity.”

Vera Vecherskaia, from St. Petersburg, Russia, is enjoying the chance to learn about different areas of engineering.

“I want to know more about ecology and climate change,” she said. “I’m a bioengineering major but I’m thinking of switching to environmental.”

The program also helps students develop soft skills like teamwork, leadership, communication, and networking, according to Adjunct Assistant Professor Phil Coniglio, who runs the W-SPiCE program.

“To enter the corporate environment, of course, our students have to know engineering,” he said. “But to be competitive they must also know how to communicate, lead, and manage time among other important skills. Through programs like W-SPiCE, we make sure they are ready across the board.”

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