



The DeRocco Fellowship Announces 2026 Cohort of Emerging Women Leaders in Manufacturing

Eleven women pursuing careers in manufacturing and engineering are gaining hands-on industry experience through the 2026 DeRocco Fellows Program.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, June 9, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Eleven women from colleges and universities across the country are spending the summer solving engineering challenges, supporting manufacturing operations, and gaining hands-on industry experience with employers. As members of the 2026 DeRocco Fellows Cohort, they represent a new generation of talent helping shape the future of manufacturing.

Selected for the DeRocco Fellows Program, the students are pursuing degrees in disciplines including mechanical engineering, chemical engineering, biomedical engineering, industrial engineering, manufacturing engineering technology, and electro-mechanical engineering technology. Their experiences this summer span aerospace, advanced materials, consumer products, defense, industrial automation, and emerging technologies, providing valuable opportunities to apply classroom learning in real-world manufacturing environments.

The 2026 DeRocco Fellows are:

- Leslie Apanecatl-Cortes, Tufts University, PepsiCo, Inc., Coral Springs, Florida
- Ava Dioli, Purdue University, Saab AB, Linköping, Sweden
- Danielle Garrecht, University of South Florida, Florida Turbine Technologies (Kratos Defense), Jupiter, Florida
- Vaidehi Goyal, Purdue University, Hexcel, Kent, Washington
- Camila Iberico Pinillos, University of South Florida, Lithionics, Clearwater, Florida
- Bessie Jackson, Columbus State Community College, Future Technicians Learning Community Ambassador, Columbus, Ohio
- Grace Ha Eun Kim, Case Western Reserve University, Sears think[box], Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio
- Jenna Money, University of Kentucky, M.K. Morse, Canton, Ohio
- Sophie Morehead, Purdue University, Endress+Hauser, Greenwood, Indiana
- Aniya Myers, Temple University, Endress+Hauser, Pearland, Texas
- Audrey Pulley, Purdue University, Endress+Hauser, Greenwood, Indiana

At a time when manufacturers continue to face workforce challenges and growing demand for

skilled technical talent, programs that connect students with meaningful professional development and mentorship experiences are more important than ever. The DeRocco Fellows Program helps participants build business skills, professional networks, and confidence while demonstrating the critical role women play in the future of manufacturing.

"My mother, Emily DeRocco, believed deeply in creating opportunities that empower others to succeed," said Lauren Beth DeRocco Gopi, member of the DeRocco Fellows Program Board of Directors. "This year's fellows embody the curiosity, determination, and leadership that will help shape the future of manufacturing. Whether they are working in aerospace, advanced manufacturing, consumer products, or emerging technologies, these women are gaining the experience and perspective needed to become the next generation of industry leaders. We are proud to support their journey and excited to see the impact they will make in the years ahead."

The DeRocco Fellows Program honors the legacy of Emily DeRocco by investing in the future industry leaders. Through mentorship, professional development, and experiential learning opportunities, the program helps ensure that talented women have access to leadership pathways into engineering, manufacturing, and technology careers.

About the DeRocco Fellows Program

The DeRocco Fellows program is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting women pursuing careers in advanced manufacturing. Through mentorship, community, and leadership development, the program provides career-launching experiences that strengthen the industry's future workforce. To learn more or support the program, visit www.deroccofellows.org.

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