

# The Murray Center for Women in Technology at NJIT

2008-2009



The mission of the Murray Center is to ensure the sustainable advancement of NJIT women students, faculty and staff by facilitating individual growth, community interaction, and institutional transformation.

Check out the Murray Center webpage and graduate student blog!

<http://womenscenter.njit.edu>

<https://blogs.njit.edu/murraygraduatewomen/>

Murray Center for Women in Technology

265 Campus Center

973-642-4885

e-mail: [womenscenter@njit.edu](mailto:womenscenter@njit.edu)

For further information about the Murray Center for Women in Technology, contact:

Dr. Nancy Steffen-Fluhr, Director

(973) 596-3295; [steffen@njit.edu](mailto:steffen@njit.edu)

or

Talina N. Knox, Assistant Director

(973) 642-4671; [knoxt@njit.edu](mailto:knoxt@njit.edu)

or

Liz Chalk, Special Projects Manager

(973) 596-3432; [elizabeth.d.chalk@njit.edu](mailto:elizabeth.d.chalk@njit.edu)

This issue of the Murray Center Newsletter is dedicated to the memory of NJIT Alumna Roxanne Conti '07.



## A Message from the Director

On behalf of the Murray Center for Women in Technology, I want to welcome all new and returning women students, faculty, and staff to the 2008-2009 Academic Year.

Since 1995, the Murray Center has worked to ensure the sustainable advancement of NJIT women by facilitating individual growth, community interaction, and institutional transformation. Located on the second floor of the Campus Center, the Murray Center provides comfortable space where women can get together, share information and resources, and relax in a friendly environment. The main facility includes a lounge and study area, a bank of computers, a mini-kitchen, a conference room, and a multimedia library. The Murray Center also has a large conference room that any NJIT group can book for meetings.

The Murray Center is more than a physical space, however; it is also a rich array of resources for all women on the NJIT campus. The most visible of these resources is our student-focused networking programming for undergraduates, including a support system for first

year women students run by the **Murray Center Ambassadors team**. We have recently added networking programs for women graduate students as well, and we work equally hard to recruit, retain and support women faculty and staff.

Although more and more women are choosing careers in science and engineering, women faculty and students at NJIT, as at other technological institutions across the country, may sometimes still experience a *sense of isolation*. The Murray Center addresses this problem in a number of ways:



Women students using computers in Murray Center computer lab. The computer lab is equipped with 4 computer stations, 2 printers & a scanner

Photo by: Guy Chang



Murray Center Director, Dr. Nancy Steffen-Fluhr, in front of picture of former NJIT Dean of Students, Constance A. Murray

Photo by: Kai Cheng

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## Welcome Reception for First Year Women Students

The Murray Center's Annual Welcome reception for first year and returning women students was held on Monday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>.

The Welcome Reception allowed first year undergraduate, graduate and transfer women students an opportunity to network with fellow students, meet key personnel, get information on valuable university resources, enjoy good food and a chance to win one of two iPod nanos.

To facilitate networking, there were ice breakers, and reception attendees also had the chance to hear from a panel of upper level women students who talked about things they know now that they wish they had known when they were first year students. They also shared strategies that have helped them succeed at NJIT.



Above—First year students & Murray Center Ambassadors networking at 2008 Welcome Reception



Right—panel of upper level women students share strategies for success with first year students

## Director's Welcome—cont'd

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We facilitate interdisciplinary research collaborations among women faculty researchers and their male peers, working in partnership with **NJIT ADVANCE**, a 3-year program funded by the National Science Foundation. (See page 3.)

We collaborate with the **NJIT Committee on Women's Issues** in sponsoring brown-bag lunch programs for staff—for example, our timely series on financial planning strategies. And we advocate for policies that help members of the NJIT community achieve a better work/life balance.

The Murray Center encourages the continued integration of gender into the curriculum and co-sponsors seminars and workshops on a range of gender/technology and career issues. We advise academic departments on classroom best practices and on effective methods of marketing NJIT to future generations of women students and faculty.



NJIT students Jamie Lee, Mona Solimon & Karen Martinez participating in group study in the Murray Center meeting room

Photo by: Doug Plummer

Via the award-winning national **MentorNet** system, the Murray Center offers women faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students opportunities for positive, one-on-one, email-based mentoring relationships with industry and faculty mentors from across the country. The NJIT MentorNet liaison is our graduate student coordinator and **Special Programs Manager Liz Chalk**, who works with me and **Assistant Director Talina**

**Knox** to extend the reach of Murray Center programs, making sure that every woman student, faculty, and staff member has the resources and support she needs to succeed.

The key to success is being (and staying) connected. This coming year is full of opportunities to get involved with the Murray Center and, through the Center, to forge strong links to other women who share common interests, including alumnae in business and industry.

To begin getting (re)connected, please take a look at the Murray Center's Website at [www.womenscenter.njit.edu](http://www.womenscenter.njit.edu). It is full of valuable information and links to useful resources. And, of course, feel free to stop by the Murray Center if you need further information or assistance or just want to say hello. Our door is open!

Looking forward to talking with you this year,

*Nancy*

Dr. Nancy Steffen-Fluhr, Director

## NJIT Women in the News: awards, honors, achievements



NJIT Alumna **Haila A. Hudson '88**, owner of Milestones Engineering and Murray Center Advisory Board member, receives Newark College of Engineering Outstanding Alumna award



Electrical Engineering student **Barbara Ohuabunwa** (right) & graduate Architecture student **Elizabeth Bramwell** (left) 2008 ACE-Network and Murray Scholarship recipients



Murray Center Director **Nancy Steffen-Fluhr** receives 2008 Women in Engineering ProActive Network (WEPAN) University Change Agent Award. Presented by Beth Holloway, 2008 WEPAN President



Chemistry student & Murray Center Ambassador **Veronika Khariv** receives 2008 Peter A. Small Scholarship & Outstanding Undergraduate student award for the College of Science and Liberal Arts

Photo by: Guy Chan



2008 Anne Wiley Scholarship & Newark College of Engineering - Outstanding Senior Award recipient **Stephanie Montiero**

Photo by: Guy Chan



NJIT-EOP Assistant Director **Crystal Smith** received her Doctorate in Educational Leadership with a focus on Higher Education in May, 2008.



Architecture Professor **Rima Taher** published two review books to prepare architecture students for the architect registration exam



Murray Center Advisory Board member **Alice White**, V.P. Bell Labs North America, Alcatel-Lucent gives 2008 University Convocation talk.

Photo by: Guy Chan



**Eugenia Regencio** is appointed Director of the NJIT Purchasing Department

**NJIT ADVANCE**, an Institutional Transformation program funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF), works to decrease the isolation that women in science and engineering often experience. ADVANCE integrates new social networking technology with traditional face-to-face networks, linking women faculty to each other and to male peers in ways that expand social and professional connections, improve information flow, and increase the representation of women in leadership positions within the university community

In its ongoing effort to support Women-Led Research Teams, ADVANCE has thus far provided over \$350,000 in research seed money and travel grants to 21 faculty members in ten departments. ADVANCE also supports the work of a number of

graduate and undergraduate research assistants. ADVANCE-funded research teams include the Geospatial Technologies group, consisting of women faculty from four disciplines; two bio-applications projects involving a chemist, a physicist, and a biologist; biomedical research designed to help restore function to veterans and others with traumatic brain injuries; and research designed to assess the environmental risks of nanotechnology.

To foster interdisciplinary collaboration, ADVANCE sponsored a five-part seminar series in 2007-2008, focusing on cross-cutting research areas. The ADVANCE team also held small-group discussions and workshops for assistant professors seeking research resources and collaborative partnerships. Focusing on efforts to improve the recruitment and retention of women faculty, the

ADVANCE team attended and convened national seminars, made presentations on best practices to the university's Committee on Academic Affairs and the Deans' Council. In addition, ADVANCE developed faculty search committee toolkits and constructed websites on Work/Life Balance and Dual Career Resources.

This fall, ADVANCE is completing construction and testing of an interactive faculty publications database. Using information obtained from the database and from the project's Networks Survey, ADVANCE will then map the professional networks of individual faculty members and analyze the collaborative

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## Updates...Murray Center Ambassadors, Graduate Programming & MentorNet

Last Fall, the Murray Center introduced The Murray Center Ambassadors, graduate programming and MentorNet, all new programs and resources in support of its mission to facilitate the advancement and retention of women students by expanding networking opportunities. Here are updates on all three:

**The Murray Center Ambassadors** are upper level undergraduate women students who focus on helping first year women students to adjust to life at NJIT, develop strategies for a successful college career, get connected to their classmates and have some fun. There are currently 15 Ambassadors (representing various majors) who are serving as resources and role models for these students (read their profiles on <http://womenscenter.njit.edu>).



2008-2009 Murray Center Ambassadors

Over the past year, the Ambassadors organized many opportunities for first year women students to build their networks within NJIT. Prior to the beginning of the semester, Ambassadors reached out to incoming women students welcoming them to NJIT. This was followed by a "How to Survive Your First Semester at NJIT" workshop held during Freshman Move-In weekend where

Ambassadors acted out real life scenarios that might occur during their first semester at NJIT and discussed several options on how to handle them.

In collaboration with the **NJIT Center for Academic and Professional Enrichment**, the Ambassadors held study sessions before each common exam. First year students and Ambassadors also attended an off campus trip to the Bodies



First year students and Murray Center Ambassadors stop to take a picture at World Trade Center on the way to BODIES Exhibit at Pier 17, NYC.

Exhibit at Pier 17 in NYC and volunteered a full day at a local Habitat for Humanity Project. A Winter Ball is scheduled to celebrate the completion of the women students' first semester at NJIT. Students will be recognized with certificates.

Applications for new Ambassadors will be circulated soon. If you are interested in being an Ambassador or know a student who would make a good Ambassador, please contact **Talina Knox** at 973-642-4671 or e-mail [knoxt@njit.edu](mailto:knoxt@njit.edu)

**Graduate Programming.** A new blog and facebook group have been created that provide information on professional development, scholarships, fellowships, Murray Center programming and work/life balance resources.

**Lingyan Shi**, a BioMedical Engineering graduate student, has been hired as a graduate office



Murray Center graduate office assistant Lingyan Shi

assistant to assist Elizabeth Chalk to create a cohort of graduate women students and to gather information about what resources women graduate students need.

**Four \$250 travel stipends** are being offered to assist graduate women students in attending conferences and/or other professional development

opportunities where their paper and/or poster has been accepted for presentation. Applications can be submitted through February 15th.

**MentorNet.** The award winning, non-profit e-mentoring network, MentorNet offers women faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students opportunities for positive, one-on-one, email-based mentoring relationships with industry and faculty mentors from across the country at no cost to them.

To date, there are 54 NJIT community members

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## The Committee on Women's Issues (CWI)

The Committee on Women's Issues (CWI) was created in 1992 by then-president Saul K. Fenster to address the needs of women faculty and administrators at a technological university. For over 15 years, the committee has worked to improve the climate for NJIT women, including recommending specific policy changes to ensure gender equity.

Since its creation, the CWI has developed and successfully advocated for a number of diversity and work/life balance initiatives, including:

- a series of finance workshops on how to manage your finances during the current financial meltdown;
- A lactation room for nursing mothers

equipped with comfortable chairs, pumping equipment and refrigerator.

One of the committee's main objectives is to support the success of women at NJIT by increasing opportunities for networking and community building. As part of this effort, the CWI co-sponsors a number of events each year, including

- a Welcome Breakfast which introduces new NJIT women employees to their peers;
- a mid-year celebration to raise money for the CWI undergraduate women's scholarship fund.
- a spring skills-based workshop on career advancement strategies and resources;

- brown-bag seminars for women faculty and staff throughout the year on such topics as personal financial management and leadership and maximizing your professionalism. CWI members also serve as mentors, helping new women employees to adjust to their positions.

Interested in the work the CWI is doing? If so, consider joining. Meetings are held twice a month. The Committee membership includes student, faculty, and staff representatives. The CWI welcomes new members who are committed to improving the quality of life for women at NJIT. **Contact Dean Conrad** (Conrad@njit.edu) if you are interested in serving on the CWI.

## Women Engineers in Advanced Positions (WEAAP)

In January 2008, NJIT served as the venue for the "Women Engineers in Advanced Academic Positions (WEAAP): Effecting Change in Higher Education" workshop. With funding from the National Science Foundation, Priscilla P. Nelson conceived of and convened the workshop in response to heightened concerns about the future of engineering colleges across the nation and to consider how these concerns intersect with issues of gender and diversity in the field.

The workshop brought together women administrators from 17 US states and Canada, representing 18 public and 7 private institutions ranging in enrollment from 2,300 to 50,000. Three specific issues of concern emerged in the workshop proceedings: the on-going difficulty in recruiting women into under



2008 WEAAP workshop attendees

graduate and graduate education in many fields of engineering, the continuing isolation experienced by women in non-life-science engineering and technology professions in all sectors (academe, government and industry), and the change for public universities regarding decreased state appropriations, rising salaries, capped tuition and the resultant drive toward alternative funding sources.

WEAAP activities did not end with the close of the 2-day WEAAP workshop. The WEAAP members continue both formal and informal networking, and a panel session dedicated to the WEAAP workshop and on-going activities is set to take place at the ASEE Annual Conference & Exposition in June 2009.

## NJIT ADVANCE

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patterns of selected academic departments. These dynamic maps will allow researchers to better understand the structure of "invisible colleges" within the university and to analyze changes in organizational culture, as well as to provide feedback to faculty engaged in promotion and tenure.

In March and April 2009, ADVANCE will bring nationally-recognized work/life balance expert **Dr.**

**Joan Williams** to campus for a workshop with faculty and administrators. ADVANCE will also host an interactive workshop designed to assist faculty administrators in creating discipline-specific effective management strategies in problematic areas.

Faculty who have received funding from NJIT ADVANCE include Lisa Axe, Sima Bagheri, and Rachel Liu, CEE; Eliza Michalopoulou and Sunil Dhar, Math; Camelia Prodan and Ken Ahn, Phys-

ics; Edgardo Farinas and Liping Wei, Chemistry; Andrew Hill, Biology; Tara Alvarez, Bio-Medical Engineering; Gabrielle Esperdy, SOA; Nancy W. Coppola and Carole Johnson, Humanities; Marvin Nakayama, CIS; Roxanne Hiltz, IS; Rajiv Mehta, Katia Passerini, SOM; Hongya Ge, ECE; and Laramie Potts, Engineering Technology.

## New Programs Update

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enrolled in the program for Fall 2008-Spring 2009. This group consists of 31 undergraduates, 16 Masters, 6 Ph.D. students and one early career faculty member.

A MentorNet reception was held in October allowing program participants to meet and mingle.

For more information on graduate programming and/or MentorNet, call **Elizabeth Chalk** at 973-596-3432 or e-mail edc5@njit.edu.



### DID YOU KNOW!

NJIT Newark College of Engineering Chemical Engineering Alumna **Beatrice A. Hicks** was the first national President of the Society of Women Engineers (SWE)?