Women in STEM discuss gender imbalance

By Haylyne Frederic
Contributor

The Women in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) Excellence Club hosted a guest speaker panel for Women's History Month, focusing on the challenges women face in STEM careers.

The discussion highlighted the gender imbalance in these fields and shared the personal journeys of each speaker as they overcame ongoing struggles in the industry.

"I think women in predominantly male fields feel this often, feel like we can't dress in T-shirts and jeans and teach a class but my male colleagues do," Teresa Bennett, a mathematics professor said.

The club asked the speakers individually about the personal moments that they each had that inspired them to continue pursuing their own STEM fields, as well as other questions.

Family played a significant role in shaping their responses, especially for Jiongdong Pang, chemistry and biochemistry professor.

"My mother was a teacher and my mother's efforts inspired her to me one as well," Pang said.

Christine C. Broadbridge, a physics professor, stated the fact that she was a first generation college student, and wanting to be the first in her family to make such a powerful decision "none of my parents went to college," Broadbridge said.

These women discussed the dynamics with male co-workers and how they have been put in unfair and un-promising roles that were diminishing their potential. This included being asked to do various chores, such as making coffee.

The panel also addressed deeply personal challenges. Jewell Wright, a computer science professor, said requesting a bathroom break due to a menstrual cycle was difficult in a male-dominated room.

The topic of not being taken seriously also bounced across the room.

Sarah Roe, a history professor, stated how they do not take women seriously in the philosophy field with men categorizing certain jobs to be more suitable for women.

These stories had club members ask for advice on future projects and how to deal with position dynamics in male dominated workforces.

"You're allowed to say no to doing those tasks, because the men say no too!" Elizabeth Lewis Roberts, Associate Dean for STEM, said.

Earth science major Katelyn Alix, a senior, said the most important part of the meeting for her was that she really wanted to hear from people outside of her own field.

"It's really easy to get stuck in your own study," Alix said.

Alix stated how interdisciplinary her field can be and how this opportunity softened her up to interacting with biologists, chemists and physicists. Making her feel way more well-rounded and supported.

"It's really interesting to hear their standpoint on their careers and how that could affect my own," Alix said.

Physics major Mariaceleste Florian, a junior, enjoyed hearing the speakers experiences and stories and acknowledged these personal achievements and how they really made her resonate with the women.

This was especially true when it came to their troubles and their hardships and how they were able to get back on their feet in discouraging times.

"They really helped me establish what I want after graduation," Florian said.

Chemistry major Ingrid Pomaquiza, a senior, explained her doubts in her search in applying to graduate school, as well as other future plans.

She expressed gratitude with being able to ask about the speakers experiences and the hard dynamics that these women have conquered make Pomaquiza less doubtful about her future education decisions.

"This was great especially since I'm on the fence about going to grad school," Pomaquiza said. "So I think hearing about what they went through was very insightful."



PHOTO | HAYLYNE FREDERICK

Women in STEM Excellence Club honors guest speakers.



Chemistry major Ingrid Ponaquiza, a senior and physics major Mariaceleste Florian, a junior, on the second floor of the Adanti Student Center.

Seniors reflect on their journey



PHOTOS | BRIANNA WALLEN

Biology major Ericka Neves, a senior.



Psychology major Aaralyn Torreira, a senior.



Biology major Nicholas Lastrina, a senior.



PHOTO | DE'SHAUNT O'BRIEN

Sociology major Christina Pratt, a senior.

By Brianna Wallen
News Editor

As the days count down to May, anticipation builds for the students who are about to walk across the stage and receive their degrees.

For many seniors, the bittersweet moment of graduation also comes with leaving behind all that they know.

"I'm kind of sad because school has been my whole life," nursing and healthcare studies major Hillary Lim, a senior, said. "I don't know what I'm going to do if I don't have an assignment due or that I'm not going to be on campus anymore."

Lim, who is a fifth-year senior, said she plans on becoming a pediatric nurse or maternity nurse in the future.

Currently, she is a personal care assistant (PCA) at Yale Hospital and a recreational coordinator at a nursing home.

Biology major Ericka Neves, a senior, said that she is experiencing senior year jitters.

"I'm excited but I'm nervous to get started in my new career as an EMT," Neves said.

As Neves applies to physician assistant programs at various universities, she reflects on the roles that have shaped her journey.

She credits her experiences as a resident advisor and peer mentor for helping her grow into a stronger leader.

"They helped with putting myself out there and pushing myself to my limits, which helped me when applying to new jobs," Neves said.

Similarly, biology major Nicholas Lastrina, a senior, said that his role as an orientation ambassador and being a part of Residence Life, allowed him to gain personable skills will be useful in his career.

"It teaches you the ethics around it all and just communicating and connecting with people," Lastrina said.

Lastrina said his summer is going to be jam-packed with studying for the NCAT exam and preparing to be an EMT.

While many seniors are leaving the nest, others are returning to further their education. Psychology major Aaralyn Torreira, a senior, said that she plans to become a graduate intern while pursuing a master's degree in marriage and family therapy.

Torrira said that she chose to stay at the university because of its welcoming environment.

"The campus is very sociable," Torreira said. "Once you know one person you know a whole line of people and that can get you somewhere."

Nursing major Kelsey Beas, a senior, expressed her satisfaction with the nursing program.

"It prepares you as much as it can, because the majority of stuff you can't do until you have your license," Beas said.

Beas currently works at Yale Hospital and plans on returning to school to become an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) in the future.

Sociology major Christina Pratt, a senior, said that she also plans on furthering her education.

She plans on pursuing a master's in marriage and family therapy and eventually law school.

"I now have to seek out a whole new environment," Pratt said. "I'm probably going to have to adapt to that and I'm entering the next phase of who I am as well."

Despite her anxieties, Pratt said she is taking it one day at a time.

"My main focus is graduation, but I feel prepared to step into it and then go from there."

Whether they are stepping into the workforce, continuing their education or embarking on new adventures, this milestone marks a new chapter in their lives

Before these seniors spread their wings, they left a few words of wisdom for incoming freshmen.

"These four years go by really quick so take advantage of every opportunity," Neves said. "Push yourself to do things you wouldn't normally do in high school and you will be grateful for all the memories you made."

New charging stations for cars

By Solé Scott
Editor-in-Chief

With the rise of electric cars, the university is now home to new electric charging stations which have been in the works for a year and a half.

Associate VP for Capital Budgeting and Facilities Operations Eric Lessne gives insight on the brand-new electric vehicle chargers.

"The charging station are being installed in conjunction with the system's office," Lessne said.

The university will be receiving multiple superchargers from the office of planning and real estate development.

"The system office is putting out charging stations throughout the entire system," Lessne said. "We are going to be the recipient of 14 charging stations, possibly more, but a minimum of 14 new stations."

Physical education major Charles Cannon, a junior, liked the addition of the superchargers.

"I think they are very helpful especially for our commuters' students who do drive Teslas and because you never know how far they may have driven," Cannon said. "Some of them may not have the time to charge their cars, so then having the time to do it during class really does help."

The funding for these new chargers will not be coming out of the university's pockets.

"We are not paying for it as a university, the system's office is actually," Lessne said. "I'll call it a grant."

The charging stations will be open to the public and will have time limits which are being decided upon as of this story publishing.

"It's all part of the university's overall sustainability," Lessne said.

Currently there are only four in lot two next to Buley Library. However, there are plans for them to be installed in other places.

"There's going to be in lot nine, there will be some more going in Wintergreen Garage and there will be some going into the Fitch Street Garage," Lessne said.



PHOTO | SOLÉ SCOTT

Electric vehicle parking sign in the Buley Parking Lot on Wednesday, March 26.