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## U.S. WIN Sponsors Students to Attend National Conference in Chicago

The 2013 U.S. Women in Nuclear National Conference took place July 21 – 24 in Chicago, IL at the Chicago Swissôtel. This year's conference theme was "Creating Value Through Change." Over 460 attendees participated, of which 36 were sponsored college students. U.S. WIN selected students by application and paid for their registration and hotel expenses. This sponsorship was made possible by the generous support of our host, ExelonGeneration, and all of our sponsors. The following students were asked to provide their impressions of the conference.



2013 National Conference Attendees

Host:  **Exelon Generation**  
Thank you to this year's sponsors

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HITACHI



Westinghouse

Gold



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[www.winus.org](http://www.winus.org)

# Notes on My Nuclear Network

Emily Frantz  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute  
Region I

This past July, I had the opportunity to attend the U.S. Women in Nuclear conference in Chicago as one of 36 students among the 460 conference attendees. This event marked the first time I saw my network build from previous connections! This incredible experience began when I received an email announcing the scholarship to attend the conference from the Nuclear Energy Institute. I applied on a whim and was lucky enough to receive sponsorship from U.S. WIN to go to Chicago! I would be traveling to the city by myself, and arriving without knowing anyone attending. I didn't even know my roommate until I arrived at the hotel room. While it sounds daunting, I highly suggest doing it if you have the chance! Networking is not just a professional skill – it's a survival technique!



The first night of the conference, I attended the student and mentor meeting, where I met my mentor (as part of the scholarship benefit). I also ran into a colleague I had met at the Society of Women Engineers national conference earlier this year in Houston! She and I had first met at the career fair at the conference because we were looking at many of the same companies because we're both nuclear engineers. Through her I met other students from her university who offered advice on starting a U.S. WIN chapter at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI). Those students then introduced me to all of their supervisors for their respective internships.

The next day of the conference my mentor said there were a few people she wanted me to meet: her coworkers and "someone who is looking for you." I was taken aback by the latter comment, but it turns out through the grapevine, she had heard of a woman looking for me, Emily Frantz. The mystery woman turned out to be a fellow RPI alumnus who had found me via the attendees list! I learned she graduated from the nuclear engineering department about 20 years ago when there were only eight students in the major, only three of whom were women. She joked that "the number was so small the ratio was easy to beat!" She soon introduced me to colleagues who introduced me to colleagues who introduced me to a woman who was an intern program organizer – all valuable professional contacts!

The best part of traveling by myself is that I felt free to sit with strangers wherever I went: meals, sessions, and programs. By doing so, I made more connections than I could count in just the three days of the conference. I strongly suggest breaking away to meet new people! Set goals to always make a new connection, especially if you do so through a previous connection. The more you try, the bigger your network grows! Just like on LinkedIn (if you don't yet have a profile, go make one), those you meet are your "first connections," and everyone in their network has the potential to be a new direct connection to you. Put yourself out there, and give yourself the opportunity to build and grow!

This was an incredible experience and I look forward to growing my network with U.S. WIN in the future!

## Emily's advice on networking...

- **Use what you have** (U.S. WIN, SWE, school, major, interests, etc.) to make connections
- **Talk less and ask questions.** Show a genuine interest in making connections (not just building a network) and acquire information that is easier (and more interesting) to remember than just a name and job title!
- **Write it down!** Name, contact, where/when you met, and what you talked about – it may sound like a spy's notebook, but this data will come in handy when you meet so many people you can't differentiate one from another
- **Mentors play a key role in networking.** They want to help and introduce you to the right people, so don't be afraid to solicit their assistance in making connections.
- **Go outside your comfort zone** and take EVERY opportunity to network. There was a walk around the city every morning of the conference at 6 a.m., and I'd drag myself out there. I met women who are truly powerhouses, and as tired as I was, I'm glad I did it.
- **Don't stress!** Networking is something you learn, so go at your own pace — it's a marathon, not a sprint! It isn't the number of business cards you collect, it's whether the person you spoke with is going to remember meeting you.



## An Adventure in Chicago

Alexandra (Sasha) Asghari  
UC Berkeley  
Region IV



As a recent inductee into the nuclear field, I had never heard of U.S. WIN until I received an email from the Nuclear Engineering department at UC Berkeley, where I am a student. After attending the 2013 U.S. Women in Nuclear National Conference as a sponsored student, I am a strong proponent of the organization. I believe that U.S. WIN has enormous potential to influence the nuclear industry and the public's perspective of it all. There were several aspects of the conference that impressed me personally.

For one, the student sponsor program is simply phenomenal. U.S. WIN goes far beyond most other conferences in providing financial assistance. As an early student in the field, attending the conference was invaluable, yet I would not have been able to attend without the student sponsor program. Thank you to U.S. WIN for sponsoring me!

Also, having a mentor during the conference was tremendously helpful. Annemarie Hooper spotted me on the escalator heading to the very first event, and we instantly clicked. She was incredibly helpful in making me feel welcome and introducing me to people, and she was full of wonderful advice overall. Thanks for being a great mentor, Annemarie!

*“Thank you to U.S. WIN for sponsoring me!”*

Meeting successful, wonderful ladies (and gentlemen) from such varied backgrounds was inspirational. Like most people, I sometimes doubt myself and my abilities. Connecting with such remarkable ladies and listening to their stories demonstrated to me that I should fill myself with confidence instead of self-doubt. Everyone has a personal story, and no one's success at home or in their career came easily.

I will cherish the personal and professional connections I made at the conference my entire life. I look forward to seeing the ladies of U.S. WIN in the future!



## A Community of Knowledge & Experience

Manish Sharma  
Missouri S&T  
Region IV

This conference left an amazing impression on my mind. Throughout this meeting, I met with people who became involved in nuclear engineering long before I was even born. The kind of work they are involved in and the industrial experience they have was really impressive.

Overall, it was fun to be in Chicago. This meeting was exciting with the various activities planned after the meals. The motivational talk given by Ms. Lethia Owens was really inspiring. Her beautiful quotes and experiences have definitely left a positive impact on my mind. I was also fortunate to see some of the persons who have graduated from my school in recent years.

I really liked this meeting particularly because everyone was so welcoming. There were no hard and fast “rules” of talking to anybody throughout the event. Whether at the breakfast table or on the escalators, everyone had something to share with a nice attitude and smile. In addition, the conference organizers provided with a list of contact details of everyone who was present at the meeting. I am sure I will be in contact with many of these people as I prepare to graduate.



Everything from conference registration to the hotel's check-out was well-planned and organized. Other male participants may say that they felt alone or awkward during the conference, but I was not! To



me, we all belong to the same nuclear community. I have successfully utilized my time and knowledge during my stay at Chicago.

Meetings like this are a must for any student associated with nuclear engineering. Here, you get a platform specifically focused on networking and addressing the current major concerns in our field. With this in mind, I thank the whole NEI team who was involved in the smooth and successful execution of the events. In particular, I would like to thank Ms. Richiey Hayes for her excellent devotion of time. I wonder how many times Ms. Hayes has used the escalators and elevators to ensure that everything is perfectly all right? In addition, my mentor, Ms. Micki Terry, was amazing. I thank her for encouraging me to get the most out of this conference. She shared her contacts with me and arranged everything for me. I am glad that I had an opportunity to dine with her and the executives of her company, CB&I. The one word that completely describes her is "super-awesome."

My advisor, Dr. Ayodeji Alajo, always says, "If anything you are doing makes you to learn something, you are perfectly on the right track and you have done a great job." I am confident to say that I have learned a lot from this meeting. I thank Dr. Alajo for laying a definitive path for me to attend this meeting. My trip to Chicago wouldn't have been possible without his support.

Lastly, I am very honored to have been sponsored candidate by U.S. WIN. My overall experiences are enough to attend all of their future meetings, without any doubt. I am looking forward to attending the next meeting at Boston. Thanks to everyone associated with U.S. WIN!

## Manish's highlights from the National Meeting:

- The conference started with a welcome mixer, which was absolutely fantastic! My mentor not only introduced me to the executives of different companies (like Westinghouse and Chicago Bridge & Iron (CB&I)), I also had a great time with some other sponsored students, too.
- Every day there were different sessions related to nuclear engineering. The topics for the panel discussions were perfectly chosen. The great thing was that each panel had between three to five persons, generally from different companies and with different backgrounds. This mixture is helpful in understanding different strategies they are employing to accomplish their ultimate goals.
- The sessions were not only based on research and policies in nuclear field. There were also some sessions related to basics of nuclear engineering, in which I was able to have direct discussions with the speakers.
- There were sessions addressing public attitudes toward nuclear energy and its advantages as a cleaner source of energy – one of the challenges faced by the nuclear energy industry. The word "nuclear" is very sensitive as far as its public image is concerned. I enjoyed these informative sessions and hearing about the experiences of people involved in conducting surveys of public opinions.
- The short conversations at the breakfast table were incredible. I had plenty of time to make new contacts during this whole conference.
- Also, I handed over my resumes to representatives from various companies, including AREVA, Westinghouse, GE Hitachi and Exelon. These interactions not only gave me an idea of what they are planning to achieve in few years, but it gave me enough time to network with the pioneers, too.



## Lifetime Experience from Puerto Rico to U.S.

Monica I. Mercado Oliveras  
University of Puerto Rico – Mayaguez Campus

Leaving one's home country is certainly not an easy decision, but sometimes you need to accept the challenge – to keep moving and reach out to pursue your dreams. As a Puerto Rican female student majoring in electrical engineering at University of Puerto Rico, this move represented a great test. In truth, I had never considered nuclear energy as a beneficial source of power generation because it is not common on my island. Once I started working at PPL Susquehanna, my whole impression about nuclear energy changed for good! I was impressed by the detailed security, regulations and power generation benefits. It took me merely two weeks to say: "I am in love with nuclear!"



*"...I am in love with nuclear!"*

I made my best efforts to do a great job on my summer internship with the hope that, after finishing my bachelor's degree, I may come back and begin a full time career in the nuclear industry. As part of my summer internship at PPL Susquehanna, I had the wonderful experience of meeting members of PPL Susquehanna's chapter of U.S. WIN and became involved in the group. Susan Downs, PPL's U.S. WIN chapter president, talked to me about the opportunity to participate in the student-mentor program for the U.S. WIN National Conference in Chicago. I submitted an essay to apply for conference sponsorship, and shortly afterwards, I received news that I was to be the first sponsored student to represent PPL Susquehanna at the U.S. WIN Conference and also the first Hispanic student to receive this honor!

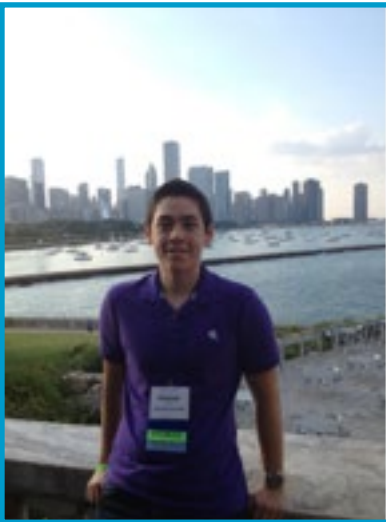
The U.S. WIN National Conference was a milestone event for me. The diversity of people and knowledge was tremendous. The student-mentor program was a wonderful opportunity to meet other students from around the country and to share experiences and career paths. My mentor, Magdalena Avila (CB&I), was an excellent point of contact throughout the conference, and she provided me with invaluable advice to pursue a career in the nuclear business line. Besides the student-mentor programs, the networking events and workshops were outstanding opportunities to keep expanding my growing knowledge of nuclear. One of the sessions that affected me the most was the plenary about women in the changing global nuclear market. Hearing about other women who had established successful careers in the nuclear market and how they achieved them was really meaningful for me. I am really grateful to have been part of U.S. WIN Chicago 2013. My most sincere thanks to PPL Susquehanna, U.S. WIN, Susan and Magdalena for being part of my rising interest in nuclear!





## Takeaways of a Man in a Woman's World

Nicholas Yap  
University of Florida  
Region II



As my flight approached the bustling Chicago O'Hare, I was anxious about how my conference experience would unfold. Thinking back, though, I had little to worry about; attending the national conference in July became one of the most enriching and exciting adventures of my young career. As a sponsored student, I'll give you some insight into my top three takeaways from the conference.

To start, I expanded my knowledge of a wide variety of topics, both technical and nontechnical. The conference agenda boasted such a rich assortment of sessions; there was something for everyone. Session subjects ranged from small modular reactors and cyber security to building your own personal brand. The speakers were equally as diverse and engaging and very well-spoken. I only wish I had cloned myself to see them all.

My second takeaway is the numerous interesting people that I met. I was lucky enough to acquaint myself with members from various fields, many of whom will inform me of internships and other prospects to forward to my classmates at the University of Florida. Additionally, the Leslie Burns Memorial Walk—while a great way to burn off some extra conference calories—was also wonderful for meeting people and generating lively conversations.

Finally, through this conference, I gained a greater confidence in my future career path. It's one thing to scour the Internet for job descriptions and testimonials, but actually speaking to someone with a career

*"It's an understatement to say that my first U.S. WIN Conference was successful."*

in the industry is much more enriching. For instance, before the conference, I searched for information about being a Naval Reactors (NR) Engineer through the Navy Nuclear Propulsion Officer Candidate (NUPOC) program. Unfortunately, even the all-knowing Google returned very little feedback, and I was somewhat hesitant in pursuing NUPOC because of the uncertainty. However, where Google failed, the WIN Conference succeeded. In perhaps the least expected scene imaginable—on the dance floor at the Shedd Aquarium dinner event—I was introduced to the Naval Reactors Outreach person, Marianna Windes, and two NR Engineers, Jamie Scheiman and Jean Barnwell. What a pleasant surprise! Jamie, Jean and I later met up on the Argonne National Lab and Fermilab tour, and they answered all of my questions regarding their experiences as NR Engineers. I am now highly confident and enthusiastic in pursuing a career at NR through NUPOC, all thanks to this encounter.

It's an understatement to say that my first U.S. WIN Conference was successful. I've developed so much through this excellent opportunity: connecting with a variety of interesting people, broadening my knowledge about numerous topics and narrowing my focus for future career paths. U.S. Women in Nuclear cultivates an environment that simply isn't possible in most other organizations. Already, I can't wait until my next conference!



## A Collegiate Perspective

Alyxandria Wszolek  
University of Tennessee  
Region II

I am a sophomore nuclear engineering student at the University of Tennessee, and I had the opportunity to attend the 2013 U.S. WIN Conference in Chicago this past July on a student sponsorship. As a whole, the experience was one of the best I have ever had, and I could not be more grateful for this fantastic program. I learned so much and was able to connect with some really great people.



On the first day of conference, I met my mentor, Bonnie Bryant, who I have to say is one of the most inspiring women I have ever met. What she has done in her career and with U.S. WIN as well as the continuous passion she possesses has further fueled my excitement for lies ahead. She helped me think about my future and gave me resources to further aid me as my schooling continues.

In general, the mentor/mentee program with U.S. WIN is well-developed. I was initially nervous going into the conference, not knowing anyone that was attending. However, being connected with Bonnie and the other people in the sponsored student program helped me quickly become quite comfortable. Everyone I met at the conference was very warm and encouraging as well.

*"I have never before experienced such a diverse group of women joined together by the passion they share for core common goals..."*

As for educational experience, I learned a lot about the current nuclear industry that I wouldn't have had the chance to know otherwise. One of the wonderful

things about U.S. WIN that I came to find out was that there was a large range of experience by the members. The organization is comprised of women at all levels and in all different career types within the nuclear industry. I have never before experienced such a diverse group of women joined together by the passion they share for core common goals that include a strong motivation for the advancement of nuclear technology and public acceptance as well as women excelling in the industry.





All the sessions that I attended were easy to understand, and the speakers ranged from policymakers to CNOs.

I can't say enough how thankful I am for the opportunity. I previously had not really known much about U.S. WIN but now I am an active member participating in the Leading Group and the Communications Committee and helping further develop our University of Tennessee U.S. WIN Chapter.



## Region I Holds Annual Workshop

Susan Downs  
PPL Susquehanna  
Region I



Region I attendees, September 20, 2013

Constellation Energy Nuclear Group (CENG) at Calvert Cliffs hosted the U.S. Women in Nuclear Region I Fall 2013 workshop on September 19-20. The workshop featured professional and personal development opportunities, including a luncheon plus plant tour and evening networking time. On September 20, Mark Flaherty welcomed the group and emphasized the necessity to adapt to change. Alain Gobert of EDF provided the keynote talk covering world perspectives on the future of nuclear power. The group also enjoyed

hearing from Enolyn Rugh of Calvert Cliff Nuclear Power Plant (CCNPP) on the topic of the benefits of a feedback-rich culture. Breakout session subjects included multi-generational communications presented by Tiffany Nickels of CCNPP and work-life balance by Rashida Weathers of the Drug Enforcement Administration. A bonus lunch presentation on the history of lighthouses was also included in the day's activities.

"Even during a busy outage season for a number of our Region I chapters, the workshop was successfully held with participation from a diverse group of professionals from approximately 20 organizations, including commercial nuclear sites, vendors, educational institutions, and government," said Sherri Kennedy, leader of the CENG Chapter of U.S. WIN, who helped introduce the workshop. "Special thanks to Lori Pyska at Calvert Cliffs, for coordinating the event, and to CCNPP for hosting."

Pyska replied "Calvert was glad to have the opportunity to host the workshop and I feel that we all had a good time sharing our work and life experiences."



## Three Mile Island Community Night

Carolyn J. Flory-MaGatz  
Exelon Corp.  
Region I

Three Mile Island (TMI) Generating Station hosted more than 450 of its neighbors for a Community Information Night held September 10, 2013. The event included a number of interactive displays and informational booths as well as bus tours of the island, replica control room simulator demonstrations and briefings on nuclear power. The more than 300 people on the bus tours saw the massive cooling towers up close as well as the southern end of the island where they saw deer; turkeys and even a bald eagle. In the simulator, visitors saw demonstrations conducted by TMI's operator training personnel, who explained how the plant can be safely shut down, even during an event involving a loss of offsite power.



TMI Operator Training Supervisor Sue Sallade demonstrates the training simulator.

TMI's U.S. WIN Chapter hosted an informational booth and facilitated a youth scavenger hunt. U.S. WIN members engaged the young audience on learning about TMI and meeting some of the people who keep the plant running safely. Once the youngsters completed their scavenger hunt, they returned to the U.S. WIN booth and were handed colorful stickers as a reward.

Other booths focused on Safety, Emergency Preparedness, Radiological Control, Environmental, PA Energy, Security, Engineering, Operations, Training, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Projects, Human Resources, Local Red Cross, Nuclear Power Briefings, Work Management and Artifacts.

Neighbor Amanda Schilling said, "We wanted to let you know that we really enjoyed Community Night at TMI. It was very informative and really gave us a good idea of how everything works. Thank you for inviting us."





## U.S. WIN Member in the News

Oak Ridge Chapter of U.S. WIN (Region II) member, **Elizabeth Phillips**, was interviewed by Peter Fairley of MIT Technology Review Magazine in late August this year on her role in building a frozen soil barrier at Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL). Media interest in the 1997 project piqued on the announcement of a frozen soil barrier to be built at the Fukushima site in Japan to stop radioactively contaminated groundwater from reaching the Pacific Ocean. Phillips was the project manager for the first application of a frozen soil barrier to contain radioactively contaminated groundwater at ORNL from leaking into a nearby creek. The barrier, which used an innovative hybrid thermosyphon technology was developed in Alaska to keep permafrost frozen. ORNL's barrier was created around a small pond that contained Sr-90, Cs-137 and H-3 in the sediments. The barrier was built over several weeks to a thickness of about 3 meters and operated for 6 ½ years. The article can be found at <http://www.technologyreview.com/news/518801/how-the-fukushima-ice-barrier-will-block-radioactive-groundwater/>



## Patricia Bryant Leadership Award

Nominations are currently being accepted for the 2014 PBLA Award. This award was established in 2006 to recognize U.S. WIN members who have made significant contributions and demonstrated leadership in the three strategic objectives of U.S. WIN. This year's deadline is March 15<sup>th</sup>. The 2014 award documents are on the WIN website at the following link: <http://www.winus.org/News/Awards>. The award recipient will be chosen by the PBLA committee, then confirmed by U.S. WIN Steering Committee by April 30th.

The PBLA committee is forming and has one opening for a Region III WIN member. Alternates are also accepted for each region in the event the primary is not available for the conference call. Please contact **Victoria Dennis** at [vdennis@tva.org](mailto:vdennis@tva.org) if you are interested in volunteering for this committee.

## Follow U.S. WIN on Twitter!

Following the 2013 National Conference, U.S. WIN kicked off a new social media campaign on Twitter. We now have a consistent presence, including original messages, interesting re-tweets, and a daily lunch quiz. Please follow [@WomenInNuclear](https://twitter.com/WomenInNuclear) to keep up with us.



We welcome your suggestions and comments either by direct message on Twitter or by email to [CommComm@winus.org](mailto:CommComm@winus.org). If you'd like to join the Twitter Team, please contact Kara Lukehart at [karalukehart@urs.com](mailto:karalukehart@urs.com) for more information.

## Want to submit a story? Here's how!

Jennifer Henning, PE  
ENERCON  
Region II

Have you considered submitting a story to the WINning Edge, but you're not sure how? It's a simple three-step process. This is how you can contribute:

### 1. Compose your story.

Brag about a great event you put on recently, tell us about something important happening at your facility, or highlight a personal achievement of a member of your chapter. You can type it in a word processor document, or even just put it in the body of an email. Make sure to include your name, plant and company, region, daytime phone number, and email address.

### 2. Add photos!

They say a picture is worth a thousand words, right? So be sure to add a photo! They make your story jump out and add that personal touch. Just make sure that you follow WIN's guidelines – get permission from everyone in the photo before you submit it. You can find a copy of the release form at the US WIN website.



### 3. Submit your story one of two ways:

Email your story and photos to [CommComm@winus.org](mailto:CommComm@winus.org) or transfer larger files using [www.wetransfer.com](http://www.wetransfer.com). Select your files (up to 2GB), enter the email address [CommComm@winus.org](mailto:CommComm@winus.org), enter your email address and upload. That's it!

For a complete set of submission guidelines, go to [www.winus.org](http://www.winus.org), click on **Member Resources**, select **Publication Materials**, then **U.S. WIN Newsletter Submission Guidelines**.



## What is U.S. Women in Nuclear?

- U.S. Women in Nuclear (U.S. WIN) is the premier network of over 6,000 women and men who work in nuclear- and radiation-related fields around the country.
- U.S. WIN members participate in networking, professional development and outreach activities through local chapters, regional organizations, and the national organization. Local chapters are organized based on company, university/college, or geographic region.
- In addition, U.S. WIN is an affiliate of the Women in Nuclear Global organization (WIN Global). The WIN-Global organization is made up of more than 3,800 members in 94 countries.