

UB School of Engineering awards new scholarships

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In support of some of their best students, faculty members from the University of Bridgeport School of Engineering are awarding scholarships they have personally funded to celebrate academic achievement and the campus's new chapter of Society of Women Engineers (SWE).

The awards will be presented Wednesday, April 1 at the SWE Connecticut Section scholarship dinner held at DeRosa's Restaurant in Westport. The ceremony begins at 5:30 p.m.

Prasanthi Thunga, a master's degree student in computer science, will receive the top \$2,000 scholarship. Nimi Chackunny, a master's degree student majoring in technology management, will receive \$1,000.

"Faculty are doing this to encourage students to pursue their degrees in engineering, and the School of Engineering matched the funds to make this possible," said Dr. Jani Macari Pallis, an associate professor of technology management at the engineering school.

Although it is a SWE event, scholarships were open to both men and women, Dr. Pallis added.

Ms. Thunga, who has a 4.0 GPA, received her bachelor's of commerce and computer applications degree from Sri Venkateswara University in 2004. She has experience as a lecturer, teaching C language courses. A recipient of a UB graduate assistantship for the 2009 spring semester, she currently works with Dr. Gonhsin Liu, associate professor of computer science and engineering.

Ms. Chackunny received her bachelor's of science degree in computer information systems from Arizona State University in 2007. Prior to coming to UB, she worked as an IT business analyst consultant at CUNA Mutual Group, where she won a project leadership award for outstanding workmanship.

This is the first year that University of Bridgeport engineering professors have awarded the scholarships, known as the "Society of Women Engineers Connecticut Section and UB School of Engineering Scholarships."

SWE is a nonprofit educational and service organization, which was founded in 1950 to established engineering as a highly desirable career aspiration for women. Both men and women are invited to be members, and the SWE chapter on the UB campus is open to all students.

According to a recent study by National Science Board, women receive just 20 percent of bachelor's degrees and 22 percent of master's degrees in engineering.