IPFW Grad Named to *USA Today* All-USA College Academic Team

Join us in congratulating Jennika Laird, *2011* Computer Engineering Technology graduate of Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW), who was recently announced as a member of the prestigious *USA Today* All-USA College Academic Team for 2011. Laird is one of only 60 named to the team, which according to *USA Today*, "honors full-time undergraduates who not only excel academically but also extend their intellectual abilities beyond the classroom to benefit society." She is currently employed as a software engineer at Diebold, Incorporated in North Canton, Ohio, and was able to find time in her busy schedule to talk with us about her IPFW experience and the future.

You're from Ohio. Why did you decide on IPFW?
As a high school student in Lodi, Ohio, I was passionate about technology and very interested in attending Purdue University. Lodi has a population of 3,000—there were only 200 in my graduating class—so even though I was excited about Purdue, I was overwhelmed by the size of the campus. I was thrilled when I received some information about their regional campuses. I noticed that Fort Wayne was just a few hours from home and the campus had just over 14,000 students. I could get the degree I wanted, in an environment that suited me. It was a perfect fit!

Why Computer Engineering Technology?
When I was quite young I discovered that I had a knack for problem solving. Once I took a C++ programming class in high school, I knew that was my future.

What classes had the most impact?
I enjoyed both the fabrication class and programming classes. Professor Jonathan Ormiston had a special, fun way of teaching students how to program and best practices. Professor Gary Steffen was a wonderful mentor who helped me gain confidence and always made class interesting. They and other faculty

Jennika Laird

provided real-world examples to clarify even the most challenging subject matter. I was also fortunate to have two internships at NASA—one in which I helped create a software interface for the NASA-developed Portable Unit for Metabolic Analysis (PUMA) used by astronauts; another in which I worked on the NASA chemical sensors team.

Who inspired you most?
My father always wanted to work at NASA as an engineer, but he was unable to finish his electrical engineering degree. Sadly, he passed away when I was 10. He'd always encouraged me in math and technology. One of the ways that I was able to stay close to him and work through my grief was to spend hours taking apart and reassembling old computers. I've always wanted to do well to make both of my parents proud.

What does the future hold?
I love my current position as a software engineer analyzing and solving ATM software defects for our customers around the world. As I'm relatively new to this role, I'm focused on the software support side. Looking ahead, I'll eventually move to a development position. I enjoy working at Diebold very much (and am happy to be close to home), but I don't want to rule out the possibility of working at NASA. With the current status of the space program, that dream is on the back burner. I plan to start working on a master's degree. And I'm getting married in June and would some day welcome having a family.

What advice would you give to an incoming freshman?
First, learn to manage your time and realize that it'll be more challenging than it was in high school. Then, set your goals higher than you think you can accomplish. It's easy to stay at a comfort level. Just strive a little further and you'll be amazed at the results. I really didn't see myself as an outstanding high school student until I made higher goals and realized it was possible to excel past my own expectations.

What did you find most rewarding about IPFW?
The small class size, supportive campus culture, and excellent faculty made a huge difference for me. Overall, I am very proud of the education I received at IPFW. Thanks to the expertise, encouragement, and one-on-one interaction provided by staff and faculty, I have been given the greatest opportunities and a successful career that I not only love, but allows me to improve and simplify people's lives. ▼

Global Connections Start at Home

Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW) hosted a delegation of 24 students from National Cheng-Kung University in Tainan, Taiwan, for a two-week leadership workshop in July 2011. Max Yen, dean of the College of Engineering, Technology, and Computer Science (ETCS), directed the workshop, which emphasized the concepts of leadership through an introduction to American history and culture.

The workshops included seminar-style in-class lectures, extensive question and answer sessions, and panel discussions featuring guest speakers. The panel discussions included a variety of topics, ranging from the role of the university to community engagement. Healthcare, energy and the environment, and women as role models of leadership were also discussed.

In addition to the classroom learning, students visited local businesses, toured area attractions, and participated in formal and informal community gatherings.

Proud Hosts of Innovation

IPFW was proud to host the first Indiana–Taiwan Technology Transfer and Entrepreneurship Summit (ITTES) in September 2011. The summit showcased 16 new technologies developed by IPFW, Indiana University, Purdue University, and universities in Taiwan for regional investors and businesses.

The summit garnered considerable praise from local economic developers for its remarkable vision. The collaboration is aimed at opening doors for northeast Indiana businesses to engage in the Asian markets.

A result of recent visits to Taiwan by Chancellor Michael Wartell, Dean Yen, and IPFW faculty, the summit continues the university's mission to establish global opportunities for northeast Indiana through international economic partnerships and the mutual exchange of technological innovation.

Students from National Cheng-Kung University in Tainan, Taiwan, visit IPFW to learn about leadership concepts.

northeast Indiana," said Wartell. "The globalization of the region is vital to our stake in the world economy. This program will lay the foundation for new business ventures in northeast Indiana, Taiwan, or both. The goal of ITTES, along with showcasing technology to local businesses, was to enhance regional economic development, create jobs, and strengthen the mission of research and education. We look forward to hosting many summits in the years to come and seeing first-hand the economic success benefits northeast Indiana stands to gain." ▼

Calendar of Events

Northeast Indiana Regional Science and Engineering Fair
March 17, 1–3:30 p.m.
(public invited to view displays)
IPFW Athletic Center Fieldhouse

9th Annual Society of Women Engineers Opportunity Banquet
March 23
Career Fair, 4:30–6:30 p.m.
Networking Dinner and presentation, 6:30–8:30 p.m.
Walb Union Ballroom

ETCS Scholarships for Excellence Luncheon
April 18, 11:45 a.m.–1:30 p.m.
Walb Union Ballroom

IPFW Commencement
May 9, 7 p.m.
Allen County War Memorial Coliseum

WFWA PBS 39, Discover IPFW College of ETCS
March 22, April 26, May 24
7 p.m.

IPFW Climbs *U.S. News* Engineering Program Rankings

The 2011 ranking of engineering programs by *U.S. News and World Report* were recently made available. IPFW was ranked 51st—up from 64th just last year, earning the distinction of the highest ranked engineering program in northeast Indiana. Decisions are based on surveys of deans and senior faculty, and a school must have at least one ABET accredited program to be considered.

etcs.ipfw.edu

Awards and Recognition:

Mohammad Alhassan
Assistant Professor, Engineering
ETCS Excellence in Research award

Suleiman Ashur
Associate Professor, Engineering
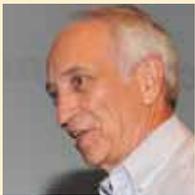**ETCS Excellence in Teaching award**

Hongli Luo
Assistant Professor, Computer, Electrical, and Information Technology
ETCS Excellence in Teaching award

Todor Cooklev
Associate Professor and Director of the Wireless Technology Center
2012 IPFW Featured Faculty

Abdullah Eroglu
Assistant Professor, Engineering
Sigma Xi Researcher of the Year award

James Isaacs
Limited Term Lecturer, Engineering,
2011 IPFW Teaching Award for Associate Faculty

Matthew Kubik
Associate Professor, Manufacturing & Construction Engineering Technology and Interior Design
IPFW DECCO Award for Innovative Online Teaching

Elizabeth Thompson
Associate Professor, Engineering
Summer Faculty Air Force Fellowship at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base

Promotions and Tenure:

Chao Chen
Associate Professor of Computer Engineering, with tenure

Beomjin Kim
Professor of Computer Science

Yanfei Liu
Associate Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering, with tenure

S. Scott Moor
Associate Professor of Engineering, with tenure

Lubomir Stanchev
Associate Professor of Computer Science, with tenure

New Faculty:

Ali Alavizadeh
Assistant Professor, Manufacturing & Construction Engineering Technology and Interior Design

Gordon Schmidt
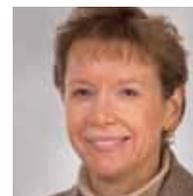Instructor, Organizational Leadership and Supervision

New Appointments:

Suleiman Ashur
Associate Professor, Engineering, became Director of Assessment for the university

Iskandar Hack
Associate Professor, Computer, Electrical, and Information Technology was appointed Chair of Manufacturing & Construction Engineering Technology and Interior Design

Linda Hite
Professor, appointed Chair, Organizational Leadership and Supervision

Kim McDonald
Professor, Organizational Leadership and Supervision, was appointed Associate Dean of ETCS

K-12 Outreach Competition

FIRST® LEGO® League (FLL), a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) robotic activity for 9–14 year olds, registered 19,000 teams worldwide with a record-breaking 227 from Indiana! Of the 208 teams who attended qualifying tournaments, 52 advanced to the State Championship held at IPFW in December, sponsored for the 11th year by ITT Exelis. ETCS Outreach works year-round with FLL, partnering with nine organizations to coordinate tournaments; recruit, register, and support Indiana teams; and promote FLL. Outstanding volunteers included 30 IPFW faculty/staff, 55 IPFW students, and 33 community professionals. The State Championship team, I-Robotics from South Bend, will now advance to the Open European FLL Tournament in Mannheim, Germany, in June.

The all-girl team, "The Miss Nerd Herds," celebrate robot success.

Future City®, a project-based competition for middle school students, sparks interest in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). ETCS Outreach partners with five organizations to recruit schools, secure sponsors, train teachers, support teams, and host the Indiana Regional. On January 28, 22 teams displayed futuristic cities in Walb Ballroom after completing five competition components: designing a SimCity virtual map; planning/building a city model from recycled materials; writing an essay on the 2012 theme of "Fueling Your Future;" writing a city narrative; and preparing a presentation. Sixteen IPFW faculty and staff worked with 73 community volunteers to support Future City in various capacities including event coordination, judging, or working at the regional event. The winning city, Nono Miglio Mare Magnete, from Woodside Middle School, will compete at National Future City Finals during National Engineers Week in February.

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