



Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) visits Washington D.C.

The UIC chapter of the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) attended their annual national conference in Washington D.C.

on October 28, 2009. The four-day convention provided engineering students from universities around the nation an opportunity to develop themselves professionally through various workshops and competitions. For many students, the conference is one of the most anticipated events of the fall semester. Attendees networked with company representatives, SHPE members, engineering professionals and the SHPE national board.

Organizations such as General Motors (GM), Caterpillar, Exelon, and Boeing were just a few of the corporate attendees. The national

conference also provided students the opportunity to obtain summer internships and full or part-time employment.



This year's activities included a welcome reception, professional and academic workshops, individual/team competitions and a gala banquet. The conference also held events for prospective and current graduate students. Information for preparatory courses for the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), graduate programs and funding was also offered. A symposium for high school students was held to expose them

to opportunities within the engineering field through presentations and group discussions.

Overall, attendance was up for participants from UIC as thirty-five members from junior chapters of SHPE, which included Chicago Public High school students, attended the conference outnumbering last year's junior participants of only four. Also, attendance for college members from UIC increased from twenty-six in 2008 to forty-eight this year. Sponsorship was provided thanks to the Aspiring Business and Engineering Leaders (ABEL) grant through the LARES program and additional support from the UIC College of Engineering and private sponsors. Three members attending the national conference were freshmen seeking future leadership opportunities with SHPE. Remarkably, SHPE-UIC was able to **(continued on pg. 3)**

Identifying a purpose in Higher Ed: My message to fellow Latino/a students

My name is Gissel Escobedo and I am a 5th year elementary-education major graduating in May 2010. As I near completion of my undergraduate studies, I relay this message as you continue navigating the path of higher education. Being a Latino/a college student is not easy. As a group, we are confronted with socioeconomic, political and academic challenges. Often, we go

through our college years rarely examining our struggles. We simply adapt to manage adversity and learn to overcome the challenges we are confronted with. I believe it is because many of us have been raised in environments that place us in strenuous predicaments of managing conflicting obligations. I always remember contemplating and saying to myself, "Gissel, you keep

going no matter how difficult it gets. Your mission is to graduate, get a better job than dad and move out of the community". I perceived a college degree as my "ticket" out of the neighborhood that would allow entrance into a middle-class lifestyle.

However, there was a point in my undergraduate studies where I began to examine and question **(continued on pg. 2)**

Inside this issue:

Developing your leadership skills Pg. 2

Tutoring Services Pg. 3

Spring 2010 Calendar Pg. 4

Developing your leadership skills by getting involved

My name is Cynthia Vargas and I am a senior at UIC completing a degree in accounting. Being a college student has been the most challenging years of my life. When I came to UIC in 2005, I moved to Chicago hardly knowing anyone and left all of my close friends behind. Back then, I learned very quickly that part of the college experience was to take advantage of the many opportunities available around campus.



I quickly understood the importance of making new friends and finding mentors to guide me through college. Fortunately, I found the Latin American Recruitment and Educational Services (LARES) program.

I can honestly say that LARES has been like my second home. During my first year, I was fortunate to work at the

program as a student aid and establish great friendships. I soon found mentors that always set aside time to listen to my problems, give me advice, and provide the support I really needed here at the university. As a student employee, I was able to network and eventually receive offers for two internships. With the help of my LARES advisor, I transitioned to work at McGraw-Hill Companies as an accounting intern and later as a program

coordinator with the National Society of Hispanic MBAs (NSHMBA). Most importantly, LARES helped me understand the importance of giving back to the Latino community and volunteering in various organizations. With their assistance, I also became a tutor for the NBC 5 - Telemundo Homework Hotline,

volunteered at various leadership conferences, and got involved with the Tax Assistance Program (TAP) where I assisted families with filing their taxes. With the help of LARES, I have been able to develop my leadership and communication skills, understand the importance of volunteering in the Latino community, and establish life-long relationships with individuals I never imagined working with.

LARES has also exposed me to the various student organizations around campus that offer professional development and enhance the leadership skills of members. They encouraged me to join the Latino Association of Business Students (LABS) whose mission is to enhance the professional skills of students by providing activities that promote growth and personal development. By joining LABS, I have been able to take advantage of such opportunities as resume workshops **(continued on pg 3.)**

Identifying a purpose in Higher Ed...(continued from pg. 1)

the challenges I had to confront. Around the same time I also began to create my identity as a Latina college student and construct the purpose of my college education. As I delved into my Latino identity and history, the harsh reality hit me that higher education was never designed for individuals like me. I was becoming more conscious of the barriers that Latinos have to face in the academy due to historical occurrences of discrimination and segregation. At that very moment, I realized the significance of support programs such as LARES and the necessity to have a Latin American and Latino Studies department. Learning about our history and culture is critical in understanding our progress or lack thereof. In addition, my understanding of the much needed support networks that

channel students down the meandering avenue of a four-year university was clear. In light of the collective struggles, I began to question my purpose here at the university. I reflected and soon realized that I could not just graduate and abandon my community. By becoming a college educated Latina, I realized my responsibility was to remain in the community where many have been marginalized by society.

Today, my college education is not just an individual achievement, but a collective success. As a future teacher, I aspire to work in my community and let our youth know that they have an identity—a bicultural identity. They need to know that their culture and language is rich in value. They need to know that they are essential to the success of their

communities.

Now I ask you, my college peer, what is the purpose of your college education? What will you do for your community? My hope is that you continue down the path of college with a mission and critically examine your experience as a Latino/a student. Your education is imperative not only for your individual success, but also for members of your community. It is my hope that together, we step up to the challenge—courageously—as we seek to restore and take ownership of our Latino experience and success.

Gissel Escobedo
UIC Elementary Education Major

Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE)...(continued from pg. 1)

set new attendance records this year.

Joel Mendoza, a current freshman at UIC, member of the Academic Olympiad team and first president of the SHPE Junior Chapter stated, "The conference was a huge success. I was able to speak with several company representatives, network with fellow SHPE members from around the country and also meet some of the national board members. It was an amazing event and describing the



experience to someone would be very difficult. I wish many students were there to just experience it."

Attending the convention is an opportunity that many engineering students should take advantage of. In 2010, SHPE aspires to send 60 active members to the next conference being held in Cincinnati, Ohio to participate in more competitions and represent the university. For students interested in becoming an active member of SHPE here at UIC,

please look out for information on our organization throughout campus or email us directly at shpe.uic@gmail.com.

Written by:

Erika Sandoval SHPE UIC Secretary & Joel Mendoza SHPE Junior Representative

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LARES English Composition Tutor:
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Math

LARES Math Tutor: Terry Mankus
E-mail: tmanku1@uic.edu
Call the LARES program at 312-996-3356 for his office hours and availability.

Developing your leadership skills by getting involved...(continued from pg. 2)

and mock interviews hosted by the Office of Career Services. LABS has also brought in firms to speak with members regarding career opportunities and internships. In addition, LABS' affiliation with the Association of Latino Professionals in Finance and Accounting (ALPFA) has exposed me to networking events, leadership conferences and its annual convention where students, recruiters, and corporate executives attend. In addition, serving on the executive board as Treasurer has been a great experience as

the position has provided immense knowledge that I look forward to applying as an accounting professional. Getting involved with LABS has really prepared me to transition into my career.

Therefore, I urge you to get involved as soon as possible and make sure that you do not fall into the social pressures that distract college students from achieving their goals. My advice to everyone is to have a strong will, stay motivated, and find the right people to help you survive throughout your college

years. In addition, prioritize your academics and get involved with student organizations as they greatly enhance your leadership skills. Good luck to everyone and I encourage you to take advantage of the limitless opportunities around campus!

Cynthia K. Vargas
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SPRING 2010 Calendar

January 11, Mon.	First day of class! Spring semester courses begin.
January 18, Mon.	Martin Luther King, Jr. HOLIDAY. No-classes; offices closed.
January 11-22, Mon. - Fri.	Late registration and drop/add period.
January 22, Fri.	Official census day for the spring semester. Last day to: * Complete spring semester late registration. * Add courses or make section changes. * Drop courses without receiving a "W" (withdrawal) on academic record. * Apply at the college offices for permission to take a course under the "Credit/No Credit" grading option.
February 12, Mon.	Deadline to submit online form to waive coverage, reinstate coverage, or enroll dependents for CampusCare.
March 19, Fri.	Last day for undergraduate students to use optional late drop in college offices and receive a grade of "W". (Total of four allowed to undergraduate students.)
March 22 - 26, Mon. - Fri.	Spring Break; no classes.
April 30, Fri.	Spring Semester instruction ends.
May 3 - 7, Mon. - Fri.	Final Exam Week.
May 8, Sat.	Semester officially ends.