

Profiles of Young SMU Engineers



Junior Gains Experience in Both Research and Industry

Mackenzie Britton says she has loved computers since she was little. The native of Salina, Kansas, is pursuing degrees in computer engineering and mathematics. She decided on computer engineering because she likes the mix that it offers between computer science and electrical engineering. "I like the technical side of hardware as well as the programming and design involved in software," she says.

After completing her undergraduate studies, Britton plans to go to graduate school and pursue a career in either industry or academia. She has already gotten a taste of both.

She spent the summer of 2003 working on a research project at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) outside Washington, D.C., as part of the National Science Foundation's Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship program. In the fall of 2003, she began an internship at EDS after being selected to participate in the school's Industry Scholars Intern Program.

Britton's other activities include leadership in two of the engineering organizations on campus. She serves as president of Tau Beta Pi, the engineering honor society, and vice regent of Theta Tau, the professional engineering fraternity. She also has served as a resident assistant on campus.



Environmental Engineer Follows in Her Father's Footsteps

Patricia Taylor is following in her father's footsteps as an engineer with the Army Corps of Engineers. Her specialty—environmental engineering—is one that changes rapidly and requires continual education.

Taylor earned her master's degree in environmental engineering from SMU in 2002 and is currently working on her Ph.D.

under the direction of Professor Roger Dickey. She says her studies at SMU have not only increased her working knowledge, but also complemented her work experiences.

"The difference at SMU is the one-to-one contact and personal interest of the faculty and staff," she says. "In addition to the experienced and knowledgeable full-time faculty, the adjunct faculty members bring a wealth of real-world experiences to the classes. The information is up-to-date and extremely valuable. The contacts I have made are invaluable, too!"

Taylor says the ease of taking classes via videotape also is a big plus since her job requires a lot of travel. She recently began a new position in which she is assigned to EPA Region 6 as a project engineer in the Water Quality Protection Division, working on the Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Program.

Taylor says her new position at EPA should provide her with a wealth of research opportunities for her thesis, which will probably be in the area of water resources or wetlands.



EE Student Combines Interest in Sports, Technology

Judah Epstein hopes to combine his interests in sports and technology to start his own company that would create new technological advances for sports and outdoors activities. He's already started one such company called Shotgun Solutions, Inc. to sell a specialized ammunition that will allow users to easily shoot sub-gauge shotgun shells in a larger gauge shotgun.

Epstein, who is majoring in electrical engineering, says he became interested in technology during his junior year of high school, when he learned programming to make web pages. In his senior year of high school, he started building robots and joined the Dallas Personal Robotics Group.

Epstein has pursued both these interests at SMU, as well as a variety of sports, including tennis, racquetball, softball, adventure racing and shooting sports. He plays both singles and doubles on SMU's varsity tennis team, which took second

place in the 2003 WAC Conference Championship.

The budding entrepreneur also has gotten involved in numerous other extracurricular activities, including Student Engineers Joint Council, IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) and Hillel-Jewish Students Association. If he becomes successful, Epstein says he wants to give some of his profits to various religious and environmental charities he has been involved with.



EMIS Student Hopes to Pursue Consulting Career

Christopher Davis hopes he can combine the experience he has gained both in and out of the classroom to begin a career in business or technology consulting.

In the classroom, Davis has been pursuing degrees in management science and math with a minor in economics. "I wanted a major that combined business and technology," Davis says. "The management science major has been very stimulating because I feel that it is preparing me for corporate America. I am gaining skills from professors who have actually been in industry and who are willing to provide positive feedback and tips about the workplace."

Outside the classroom, the senior from Dallas is working as a "campus ambassador" for Nortel Networks. This involves assisting Nortel's university relations team to increase Nortel's presence on campus. Davis represents the company at campus events, helps student organizations coordinate Nortel tours and speakers, and addresses questions about how to apply for jobs at Nortel. "It's been a good networking opportunity," Davis says.

Davis also has served as a lab instructor for EMIS 1307 (Information Technology for Business) and is vice president of the SMU chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE). He also is co-vice chair of the National Society of Black Engineers.

