

Brynna Conway

Graduation Year: Senior

College: Engineering

Major(s): Computer Science

Minors(s): N/A

Scholar Group Membership: N/A

Did you received other funding for this project?: Department of Computer Science and Engineering; Women in Engineering

Could you have completed this project without CUSE funding? Yes

More details on CUSE funding assistance? I would have received some funding from the CSE Department and the Women in Engineering Fund, but most likely not enough to cover all of my expenses.

Project Title: Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing Attendance

Project Location: Orlando, FL

ND Faculty Mentor: Patrick Flynn

Project Type: Conference - Attendance

Why did you undertake this project/experience? Deepen your knowledge of a topic or issue, Career discernment and/or preparation

Did your funded experience help you:

[Deepen your understanding of your coursework or field of study]: Yes

[Discern your interests and post-bac goals]: Very Much

[Become confident in your ability to set and achieve your goals]: Yes

[Gain a more nuanced view of local, national, or global communities]: Yes

[Improve your written and verbal communications skills]:A Little

Tell us about your experience.

At the Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing, I attended several keynote addresses, panels, and talks by empowered women in the computing industry. One highlight included seeing Melinda Gates, former Microsoft executive and founder of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, share her insights on being a woman working in tech. The purpose of the conference is to bring together women in computing to discuss issues facing the industry and how to be successful in such a male dominated field. All of the talks, including Gates', focused on the obstacles that the speakers overcame to reach their current level of success. I was able to learn about the different possible paths I can take as a female software engineer and the ways that I can reach my goals. The career expo provided me with the opportunity to talk to industry professionals and learn about companies that I didn't know were options for me as a software engineer. Overall, the Grace Hopper Celebration was several days of being surrounded by inspiring women in my field of study.

Describe the impact this project had, both on you as a student-scholar and on the people you worked with.

Attending this conference taught me a lot about the different career paths that I can take as a female software engineer, and about how to achieve success on whatever path I choose. I heard many women share their stories about their experiences, whether it was working seven days a week on the Hillary Clinton technology team or being an illegal immigrant that managed to receive a degree and start a technology company focused on female self-defense. After attending all of the talks and panels, I gained a stronger understanding of what I may want to do in the future with my computer science degree and how to get there. By the end of the week, I felt empowered to achieve my goals and accepting of the fact that I will experience, and overcome, failures along the way.

Describe how this experience is connected to your plans as a student or future professional.

This experience is strongly connected to my plans as a future professional, because the conference largely focused on career development. As I have mentioned, attending this conference helped me to discern what path I would like to take as a software engineer. I learned about new and upcoming technologies, and was able to bring this knowledge back to my classes to understand the real-life significance of my course material. I now have a stronger understanding of what the path to success looks like in the technology industry, and am better equipped to enter the workforce next year.

What advice would you give other students who are planning to pursue similar projects?

I would highly recommend that any student take advantage of the opportunity to attend conferences like the Grace Hopper Celebration. I would advise other students to find a topic that they are passionate about, so that they enjoy their project and feel connected to the work they are doing. Because I was so interested in the topics highlighted by the conference, I thoroughly enjoyed my experience and felt as if I significantly benefited from every part of the conference that I attended. I went to the conference prepared with a plan of which talks, panels, and workshops I was interested in attending, and this made my experience very smooth and helped me to avoid any unwanted stress navigating the conference.

I acknowledge that this form has been filled out truthfully and to the best of my ability. I understand that this information will be shared with many different CUSE constituencies. As such, I have provided as much useful information as I was able. I understand that CUSE will not complete my award disbursement until this form is successfully completed. If I have any questions or concerns, I will contact CUSE before submitting this form. To illustrate that you understand all of these points, please enter your Notre Dame email in the box below.
bconway3@nd.edu

