Engineer of the month for October

By: Desiré Bennett

**Hometown student experiences vast opportunities.**

Michelle Blomer is the UC College of Engineering and Applied Science Engineer of the Month for October. Michelle maintains a 3.87 GPA in her senior year in the chemical engineering program while working toward a Bachelor of Science degree.

Michelle’s love of AP chemistry, coupled with her hometown pride, led her to study chemical engineering at the University of Cincinnati. “I’m from around here and I’ve always heard nothing but good things about UC,” said Michelle. “Plus UC has a great co-op program and no other university offers it the way UC does.”

Michelle started her co-op experience at Kao USA two years ago, working in the consumer research department. “I’ve worked in skincare, in the lotion area, and then I switched to face care where I worked with face cleansers,” Michelle said. “Working with the face cleansers was really interesting because it was really complex.”

Michelle believes that co-op participation is invaluable. “To gain experience before you graduate and to actually have an idea of where you want to go after you graduate is priceless.”

In December 2011, she switched to process engineering at Kao USA. “Working in this area consists of taking formulas from the bench and preparing them to be made in our big manufacturing plant,” she said. She enthusiastically reflects on the experience. “It’s really cool to see the transition from an idea to it actually being made.”

Michelle’s enthusiasm paid off. “Michelle undertook a self-directed project and saw it to successful completion,” said Brian Hofrichter, Michelle’s supervisor at Kao USA. “And her dye staining methodology is and will be utilized to support procedures for a major product scale-up this fall.”
It is Michelle’s personal self-starter methodology that drives her. “It’s kind of how I’ve always been,” she explained. “I work as efficiently and as quickly as possible and it’s been a consistent theme for me. I’m just a hard worker.”

This blend of self-motivation and work-ethic has helped Michelle to sustain her GPA, which she credits as one of her biggest academic achievements. “For me, maintaining my GPA is important because my major is hard and you really have to work for it.”

Michelle’s time-management skills help her to achieve this. “With chemical engineering we have so many labs and they catch up to you pretty fast,” she said. “So it’s mostly learning how to balance everything. Making sure you make time to study and having time to do your homework.”

And as for a social life? “I’m not sure I even have one,” she laughs. “For me, the secret is making friends with my classmates. So even if you’re working on homework, you’re hanging out with your friends too.”

When Michelle isn’t in the classroom, she is a mentor with the Society of Women Engineers (SWE). “With SWE, I have loved being a mentor because I’ve always been one of those people who’s watching out for my classmates,” she said. “So having a mentee through their mentor program has been awesome.”

She also acts as president of UC’s student chapter of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE) where she recently worked on building and reestablishing the co-op review. “I wanted to help students learn about all of the different companies available for co-op opportunities and not just the big names that they were already used to hearing about.”

Michelle believes that AIChE is a great opportunity to work with her professors and fellow classmates. “It’s just a great chance to be involved in my major,” she said. “And the people around me – they’ve taken the same classes as I have or they are taking the same classes so there’s so much knowledge and experience I can gain from them.”

After graduation, Michelle plans to work fulltime either at Kao USA or another one of the many chemical based firms within the Tri-state area.
ENGINEER OF THE MONTH

As one of the most innovative colleges, the College of Engineering and Applied Science at the University of Cincinnati takes pride in its exceptional students and their successes. “Our vision is to produce outstanding engineers and technologists,” states Interim Dean Teik C. Lim, PhD. “WE ENGINEER BETTER™ starts with our training the next generation and we are proud to introduce a few of our leaders.”

Starting in August and each month this academic year, the college is recognizing one of our upper classmen (junior or senior) as our Engineer of the Month.

Each Engineer of the Month has demonstrated excellence in the classroom, success in their co-op assignments, and leadership through extracurricular activities on campus and/or in the community. These students have found the balance needed to be leaders and exemplary scholars.

The College of Engineering and Applied Science salutes their efforts and recognizes:

Michelle Blomer

Engineer of the Month for October

Senior - 3.87 GPA

Chemical Engineering