

Community colleges sponsor STEM networking workshop

SPRINGFIELD—The four community colleges in Western Massachusetts are spearheading a regional effort to connect female community college students with professional women working in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields.

Registration is now open for the event, which is scheduled for Oct. 24 from 5-8 p.m., at the UMass Center at Springfield. The event is free except for a \$5 parking fee at the Tower Square garage.

The Society of Women Engineers affiliate at Springfield Technical Community College and the STEM Starter Academies at STCC, Berkshire, Greenfield and Holyoke Community Colleges are sponsoring the networking workshop they call #MySTEMStory. Organizers hope the event will help build a network for Pioneer Valley women in STEM.

The Oct. 24 gathering will feature a panel discussion and Question and Answer led by mechanical engineer Prasha Sarwate Dutra, a quality manager in a manufacturing facility in Rhode Island. She hosts a website and podcast called "Her STEM Story" to inspire women to pursue careers in STEM.

According to the United States Department of Commerce's Women in STEM: 2017 Update, women filled 47 percent of all U.S. jobs in 2015 but held only 24 percent of STEM jobs. Undergraduate degrees are evenly divided between men and women, but women only make up about 30 percent of all STEM degrees.

To register, visit tinyurl.com/MySTEMStory. Hors d'oeuvres will be served and a cash bar will be available. For more information, contact Beth McGinnis-Cavanaugh at bmcginnis-cavanaugh@stcc.edu, Melissa Paciulli at mpaciulli@hcc.edu, or Alysha Putnam at PutnamA@qcc.mass.edu.
