

ChemE 3010 - Career Perspectives

A long-standing hallmark of the chemical engineering undergraduate program is ChemE 3010 - Career Perspectives. This course is a forum for weekly presentations to our juniors by chemical engineering alumni. Visitors describe their career - the evolution of their typical daily activities, lessons learned, what they wished they knew as seniors, what they like and do not like about their careers, and what attributes suited them for their careers.

The importance of this seminar series was corroborated by a recent study published in the *Journal of Engineering Education* ("An Engineering Major Does Not (Necessarily) an Engineer Make: Career Decision Making Among Undergraduate Engineering Majors" vol 98, p. 227, July 2009).

"The progression from undergraduate engineering degree into an engineering career is not assured. The technical and problem-solving skills students acquire in their engineering majors equip them for success in a broad range of professions.

"The good news is that students' decision making is malleable. Precisely because students are open to a range of alternatives, engineering as a career can be marketed to engineering students. In fact, research in career decision making suggests that some students can be persuaded into careers based on how the career is described. More substantively, providing students with exposure to a range of engineering responsibilities and jobs could attract them to engineering careers. Encouraging students to pursue careers in engineering would require deliberate planning and programming on the part of engineering departments, possibly working in collaboration with campus career centers."

Although ChemE 3010 requires substantial upkeep, the School has sustained this key career guidance course for over 50 years. We are indebted to the hundreds of alumni that have donated their time to prepare thoughtful presentations, to travel to Ithaca in the winter months, and to host a follow-up luncheon with our juniors.