



University Society of Women Engineers FROM UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN runs summer camp AT WALCHANDNAGAR, India

Walchandnagar, Maharashtra India, May 2013: Walchandnagar Industries limited has always recognized social responsibility as an integral part of its business. Along with its tradition of engineering excellence, it also maintains a long standing tradition of engaging with the communities in which it operates.

Recently, eleven University engineering students, along with alumni, spent two weeks in India with alumni in order to run a science and engineering summer camp for secondary school students at Bharat Children's Academy and Junior College in Walchandnagar, India.

The trip was the first international trip by the Society of Women Engineers. SWE, which has 23,000 members across the nation, is a non-profit educational service organization that supports females in getting an engineering education.

David C. Munson, Jr., dean of the College of Engineering, said the trip to India was part of a larger effort to create long-term connections between the University and India and will be a valuable asset to the education of the participating students.

"SWE is planning to create an ongoing relationship and educational project in a K-12 school in a rural village in India," Munson wrote in an e-mail interview. "This project will provide our U-M students with a fascinating exposure to a different culture and a way to contribute to a very poor community"

Jenna Bertke, 2013 Engineering alum and former SWE president, echoed Munson's comments in an e-mail interview, writing that the program will help enrich the educational experience of female engineering students.

"The program was started as a way to provide our members with an opportunity to encourage STEM education beyond Ann Arbor and to provide our members with a cultural experience that would help contribute to their development as future engineers and leaders," Bertke said.

Bertke added that SWE's hard work in putting together the trip will have lasting benefits for the group.

"I was so excited to see this trip come through — we've been planning it for the past 10 months and to see it actually happen was beyond exciting," Bertke said. "I thought this project was excellent because it showed us that as a student group, we can have an impact globally."



SWE also gave a presentation in Mumbai, encouraging other women to pursue engineering and the sciences. The group discussed SWE, the University's chapter of SWE and the possibility of establishing a SWE chapter in India.

Mechanical Engineering sophomore Juliana Bottenberg said she enjoyed giving the presentation because she enjoys speaking about the importance of the group.

"This was a great experience because we got to share the value of having an organization like SWE to more people," Bottenberg said. "It seemed like a few were interested in joining SWE after our presentation."

In Walchandnagar, SWE worked with hands-on science and engineering activities as part of an educational outreach project with local secondary school students. The students were able to do the project due to the University's close ties with Walchandnagar Industries Limited, an engineering company in Walchandnagar.

A highlight was the "Marshmallow Challenge," in which a team of four to five students used 10 sticks of spaghetti, a yard of string and tape, and a marshmallow to attempt to build the tallest "free-standing" tower in 18 minutes. The group also completed propeller-powered cars, electric quiz boards and wind turbines.

Engineering alum Michelle Pascual said she really enjoyed her experience especially because of its positive impact on students SWE worked with in India.

"It was amazing to get to understand a new culture by working with these students and seeing the impact we got to have on them and the joy they experienced," said Pascual. "I know that the kids were very grateful for the opportunity to work with us."





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