



Students Participate in Chemical Engineering Conference

December 1, 2008

HOLLAND - Three students who participated in research at Hope College this past summer made poster presentations during the recent Annual Meeting and National Student Conference of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE), one receiving a second-place award.

The National Student Conference ran Friday-Monday, Nov. 14-17, and the Annual Meeting ran Sunday-Friday, Nov. 16-21, in Philadelphia, Pa. The undergraduate poster session took place on Monday, Nov. 17, and featured work grouped within a variety of categories within the field of chemical engineering.

The presentations included two by Hope students and one by a student who was among the several from other colleges and universities who participate in the college's research program each summer. In addition to the award received, the students' participation as conference presenters was remarkable, according to Dr. Michael Misovich of the Hope engineering faculty, because of their relative youth: all three are sophomores.

"I consider it quite an honor and an accomplishment to participate in the national AIChE poster session," said Misovich, an associate professor of engineering who had mentored two of the students during their summer research experience. "I believe there were about 200 participants total, and the majority are typically seniors."

Caitlin Kowalsky, a sophomore chemical engineering major at The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in New York City, received second-place in the "General Papers" category for her presentation concerning work that she did with Misovich. Her poster was "Applying a Low Temperature Limit of a Cubic Equation of State to Model Pure Component Phase Equilibrium." In addition to Kowalsky and Misovich, co-authors of the on-going research project have included Hope senior Joshua Lanser of Dorr; 2007 Hope graduate Emily Walsh of Aurora, Ill.; and Kimberly Wadelton, who participated in research at Hope in 2004.

Laura Petrasky, a Hope sophomore engineering major from Marquette, presented a poster titled "Generalized Vapor Pressure Prediction Consistent with Cubic Equations of State." She worked with Misovich this past summer.

Valerie Winton, a Hope sophomore from Lake Bluff, Ill., presented a poster titled "Mechanistic Studies on the Activation of a Carbon-Carbon Single Bond Via Palladium-Catalyzed β -Alkyl Elimination." She worked this past summer with Dr. Jeffrey Johnson, assistant professor of chemistry.

In addition to having mentored two of the student participants, Misovich presented a poster in a session for faculty. He highlighted the development of the college's chemical engineering emphasis option through "Outcomes of a Chemical Engineering Option within a General Engineering Program at a Liberal Arts College." He co-authored the poster with three of the first four students to have graduated from Hope with a B.S. in engineering with a chemical engineering emphasis: Kurt Blohm, a 2006 graduate who is completing an M.S. in chemical engineering at The Ohio State University; Jericho Moll, a 2005 graduate who is a materials engineering Ph.D. student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; and Emily Walsh, a 2007 graduate who is an engineer at Smart Signal Corporation in Lisle, Ill.

AIChE is the world's leading organization for chemical engineering professionals, with more than 40,000 members from 93 countries. More than 5,000 attended the 2008 AIChE Annual Meeting and National Student Conference, which featured more than 750 sessions focused on the latest developments in areas ranging from core chemical engineering fundamentals to emerging technologies in energy, sustainability, pharmaceuticals, bioengineering and nanotechnology.
