

Young, black, gifted engineers from STL

Snapshots of expected attendees from St. Louis at 2011 NSBE conference

Special to The American

The National Society of Black Engineers will attract more than 8,000 members to St. Louis this week as it convenes at America's Center in downtown for its annual conference. Of the 8,000-member delegation, some 500 of the participants will be from St. Louis. Here is a look at six of these talented young African Americans from St. Louis who are pursuing engineering degrees (often, advanced degrees) at world-class universities and are in town for the conference.



Danielle Bowles-Martin

Missouri University of Science and Technology
Chemical and materials engineering

"Even when you fail, keep trying and eventually your persistence will be rewarded."

Danielle Bowles-Martin graduated from Gateway High School in St. Louis, MO. She is currently a junior majoring in chemical and materials engineering from the Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla MO. Her plans include earning a Ph.D. in chemical/bio-medical engineering. She joined NSBE Jr. while in grade school and participated in NSBE's Future City Competition and Try-Math-A-Lon (math competition). As a college student, Danielle continues to mentor other students in the Pre-College Initiative (PCI) program and holds a regional position as the Pre-College Initiative Chair within NSBE.

Currently Danielle is working on research in bio-diesel fuel with an emphasis on maximizing fuel efficiency. Her advice to others is: "Even when you fail, keep trying and eventually your persistence will be rewarded."

Danielle plans to attend the 2011 Convention in St. Louis, MO. President Obama has been invited. Danielle says, "The President's presence at the convention will be an inspiration and will encourage young people to strive for success."



LaKiesha Kurtz

John Hopkins University (Master's program)
Systems Engineering, emphasis in Project Management

She completed five internships at Boeing Company in Manufacturing, Production, Flight Test and Systems Engineering.

LaKiesha joined NSBE in high school while participating in the St. Louis Internship Program as a summer intern. Her initial career path was to pursue drafting, but after her involvement with NSBE Jr. and Sharon Anhalt, a mentor, who helped her align her academic talents with a career path, she set her sights toward engineering.

After graduating from Brentwood High School in Brentwood MO, she received two academic scholarships from the NSBE local chapter and an engineering scholarship from Saint Louis University. She majored in Mechanical Engineering and received a dual minor in Applied Mathematics and Theology.

During that time, she completed five internships at Boeing Company. Her internships involved positions in Manufacturing, Production, Flight Test and Systems Engineering.

John Hopkins University recently accepted her into their Master's degree program where she will pursue an advanced degree in Systems Engineering with an emphasis in Project Management.

LaKiesha enjoyed mathematics, construction, and creative design in her adolescent and college years. As a professional, she is a Flight Test Engineer on the EA-18 Growler test team.



Shannon C. Roberts

University of Wisconsin-Madison (Ph.D program)
Industrial engineering, focus on human factors

"It's in your best interest to explore new things and find friends that positively influence and encourage you."

Shannon C. Roberts graduated from Parkway West High School in Chesterfield MO. She obtained her Mechanical Engineering degree from MIT in June 2009 and is currently working in a Ph. D. in Industrial Engineering with a focus on Human Factors from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Shannon's goal is to teach at the university level. She also aspires to have a positive impact on society and be a positive role model for under-represented members of the community.

Shannon words to the youth are, "It is okay to be different. If you find something you like, go for it; find a mentor that can help you through the process. It's in your best interest to explore new things and find friends that positively influence and encourage you." Shannon plans attend the NSBE 2011 Convention in St. Louis, MO and conduct workshops on academic success.



Sharae Meredith

Pennsylvania State University (Ph. D. program)
Computational aerothermoacoustics

While she is completing her Ph. D. she works full-time as a Senior Research Scientist at Lockheed Martin.

Sharae (McKay) Meredith graduated from University City Senior High School in University City, MO. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Tuskegee University and a Master of Science degree from Georgia Institute of Technology, both in the field of Aerospace Engineering.

While she is completing her Ph. D. in Computational Aerothermoacoustics at Pennsylvania State University, she works full-time as a Senior Research Scientist at Lockheed Martin.

Throughout her career, Sharae has been a motivational speaker to elementary and high school students, a mentor to college students and a volunteer to outreach programs. Her mentors have been Dr. Eric Sheppard, Prof. Leon Trilling and Dr. Gion Bluford - the first black astronaut.

Sharae, along with her husband, plans to attend the 2011 NSBE convention in St. Louis, MO and conduct workshops.



Karilynna Oredugha

Washington University (master's program)
Engineering management

She gives back to NSBE by mentoring NSBE Jr. students in math, chemistry, physics, black history, and many other subjects.

Karilynna graduated from Mary Institute Country Day School in St. Louis County, she earned her Electrical Engineering degree from the University of Missouri- Rolla and is currently working on a master's degree in Engineering Management from Washington University, while working at Burns & McDonnell in

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