

Student Letter

Several faculty members reached out to current students and recent alumni to ask for their impressions of Valparaiso and their experiences in a computing major.

Anne Chapman, who responded to the questions below posed by ECE Professor Mark Budnick, is a recent Electrical and Computer Engineering alumna.

1) How do you see Valparaiso University creating a supportive community for students interested in the computing disciplines? Can you give examples?

- For me personally, I don't necessarily feel as though the sense of community within the computing discipline was something that the university was actively trying to create, but more so a result of the relationships between the students and faculty. The small program size and small classroom size (this applies more to the CS department) was definitely a contributor to this. You really got to know your peers and professors in the smaller, more intimate learning environment. At first, this was something that I was weary of as I was comparing Valpo's small CS program to that of larger universities, but now I am very thankful for this and actually prefer that this is the experience that I got.

- The Hesse center also helped to create a supportive community. This didn't apply to the CS department as much as Engineering since it was geared towards the CoE. As a tutor, I really enjoyed the opportunity to get to know and work with students from different class levels one-on-one. As a student, it was a good feeling to know that you could walk into the Hesse center and there would be people there to help and support you with classwork.

- I'm sure that student organizations also help to create a supportive community, but I never really got involved with them since I spent most of my time outside of the classroom either studying, working, or participating in athletics.

- Group projects, especially senior design, also helped this because you got a chance to bond with your group throughout the process.

2) Can you give examples of the faculty serving as advocates for you in the computing disciplines?

- The entire faculty was extremely supportive throughout everything, and I can say that about every single CoE/CS faculty member that I knew!

- Starting back in my freshman year, I was debating switching my major from CpE to CS, and [Assistant Dean of Engineering] Laura Sanders was extremely helpful and supportive when I was trying to make this decision. When I went to her for advice, she took genuine interest in me and my interests as a student.

- Professor Hume [of Computing and Information Sciences] also comes to mind. I went to talk to him my freshman year when I was thinking about switching majors to talk about the CS department and bypassing a prerequisite to take one of his classes. He also took interest in me as a student and was very

excited about the idea of having me in class. He was very supportive and positive whenever I had him as a professor, and he also asked me to be a TA for one of his courses.

- Professor Budnik, you were also extremely supportive and helpful throughout my time at Valpo. You always had such a positive, uplifting attitude and genuinely cared about us students, and always made it known that you were there to help. Giving students the chance to help you out with the MOOC was a great experience

- Professor Rosasco was also really supportive. He was always hanging out in the senior design area offering advice on projects and getting to know everyone and what we were working on. At the end of my senior year, I went to him for some advice about a project that someone had approached me about working on, and he offered extremely helpful advice and it was clear that he definitely had my best interest in mind.