

April 19, 2012

Lane Technical High School  
2501 West Addison  
Chicago, IL 60618

Center for Research on Women and Gender (MC 980)  
503 Disability, Health, and Social Policy Building  
1640 West Roosevelt Road  
Chicago, Illinois 60608-6900

Dear Local School Council members,

I am writing this letter to voice my appreciation and support for Dr. Christopher Dignam at Lane Technical High School. As a result of the efforts made by Dr. Dignam during the 2011-2012 school year, to establish new links and strengthen prior links with the University of Illinois at Chicago, Dr. Dignam and UIC were able to form a partnership to better support Lane's female students in their pursuit of STEM degrees and careers via Dr. Dignam's GEMS (Girls for Engineering, Math, and Science) program. As director of outreach for the Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) program, I am always seeking strong partners in the Chicago Public School community. With Dr. Dignam's leadership initiative, Lane Technical High School became a key partner in several UIC WISE programs. These programs include the Girls' E-Mentoring in Science, Engineering, and Technology (GEM-SET) program, the American Institute of Chemical Engineers Regional Conference, and the Computer Science Department Google Day for high school students. These programs offered students and faculty at Lane Tech opportunities to:

- Connect to mentors and role models in STEM at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels.
- View the prototype for an Engineers Without Borders community project for safe water in Cerro Alto, Guatemala.
- Experience a research talk from a biotechnology graduate student doing research on Parkinson's Disease and Alzheimer's Disease.
- Listen to astronaut Dr. Albert Sacco speak about his experiences as the first chemical engineer in space.
- Tour the Chicago Google office and learn about high school internship opportunities.

Lane and UIC's mutual goals to support students to achieve excellence in STEM education benefit from the strong leadership provided by Dr. Dignam and the faculty in STEM departments at Lane Tech. In fall of 2011, UIC enrolled 135 students from Lane Tech. As our outreach program continues to grow, I hope to see those numbers expand so that the bridge between Lane Tech and UIC gets stronger. I believe this will be the case provided Dr. Dignam's leadership as principal at Lane Tech College Prep High School.

Sincerely,



Sarah Shirk  
Director, WISE Pre-College Outreach