

PRESS RELEASE

## **Soluzochukwu Nwanze selected as ECE Student of the Semester**

Soluzochukwu Nwanze, a junior computer engineering major at UMass Dartmouth said that “good time management skills,” enable her to juggle academic demands, multiple jobs and outside activities with apparent ease and definite success.

Ms. Nwanze is the Electrical and Computer Engineering department’s Student of the Semester.

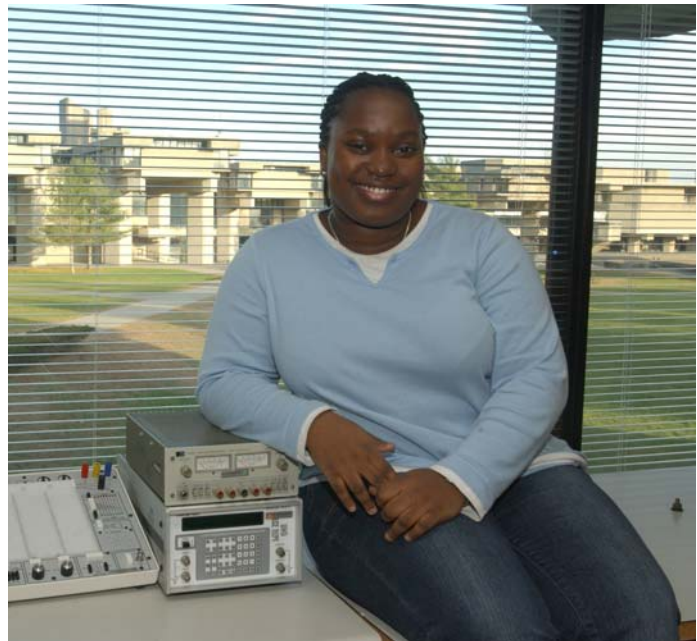
When Ms. Nwanze arrived on campus at age 17 from Nigeria and stepped into her first computer programming class, she never imagined so smooth an outcome following a bumpy start.

“It was the first day I was seeing computer programming code and I had no idea what was going on. I said to myself, ‘oh no, how do I do this? Should I just change my major right now, today?’” she recalled with a laugh. Three years later, ECE Professor Hong Liu reports that Nwanze’s accumulated grade point average in ECE 367 Operating System is the highest. Dr. Liu added that this required course is regarded as the most challenging subject in the program.

“Solu is a dedicated student and her hard work has paid off with her high achievement in this course so far,” Dr. Liu said.

The student returns the compliment about the ECE faculty and UMass Dartmouth as a whole. “My father attended Boston University and wanted me to go to a good school in Massachusetts. We chose UMass Dartmouth because I was so young and wanted a smaller school with more individualized attention and it was affordable,” she explained.

Her expectations have been met, Ms. Nwanze said. “The courses are interesting and challenging. The ECE department has a very good chairperson and helpful professors. It is good to know you can walk into their offices and get the help you need at any time.”



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Another plus, she said, is the amount of teamwork involved in classes where students collaborate with peers on projects and activities. “This (approach) gives you experience because that’s how engineers work in the outside world.”

While carrying a 17.5 credit course load, Ms. Nwanze balances several on-campus jobs. She works as a tutor at the Science and Engineering Center; a student website developer at the Frederick Douglass Unity House; and a teaching assistant for a physics class. She spent one summer as an intern at the Center for Rehabilitation Engineering “troubleshooting,” for disabled clients and now offers instructional support at the Computing and Information Technology Services (CITS) department.

But that’s not all. She is the president of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) student chapter, president of the local honor society chapter of Eta Kappa Nu (HKN) and the Student Senate Representative for the College of Engineering. During her spare time, she enjoys reading, watching television, playing piano and “getting information about programming languages.”

As an international student, Ms. Nwanze is dealing with work VISA issues as she awaits placement at a company for a one-year Cooperative Education Program job assignment. Engineering students typically work one year in the field before returning to campus to complete their five years of study.

Following graduation, Ms. Nwanze points to three interests as possible career fields: software development and design, database systems and artificial intelligence.

She anticipates working as a software developer in the United States to gain experience before returning to Nigeria.

The Student of the Semester will receive a certificate and a small useful gift from the electrical and computer engineering department.