

Student Advisory Board

Mechanical Engineering and Materials Science

SPRING 2023

Hello Pitt MEMS,

Welcome to the first issue of the MEMS Student Advisory Board's newsletter! If you haven't heard of us before, the SAB is an organization of undergraduates, graduates, and faculty working towards inclusion and building a supportive community in our department. The SAB was established in 2020 and has achieved many goals since then. This newsletter is so you know the feedback you provide to the department causes real change to make MEMS a place for all of us to thrive.

MEMS FIRE

Facilitating Inclusive Research Experiences

MEMS FIRE is now in Year 2! The program encourages undergraduate students from underrepresented backgrounds to lead original research projects at Pitt over the summer. Last year, we had 4 students from Pitt and other universities in the area. The program was a great success for the participants. This year, we are now having 7 students! If you'd like to help, email Dr. John Whitefoot.



70% Increase in participants this year!

SAB Highlights

MEMS FIRE - 2nd year of our research program

Winter Volunteering event for students and faculty

Graduate and Undergraduate survey

Townhall for Sophomores and Transfer students





WINTER VOLUNTEERING EVENT

Attempting to bring the MEMS community to do some good together, SAB organized a winter volunteering event for faculty, undergraduate and graduate students. We finished 60 no sew kits provided by PITT Serves. This included folding towels for Days for Girls, making beanies for Ronald McDonald House, and making scarves for Every Child Inc.

BUY A MEMS T-SHIRT

We made a MEMS t-shirt for the MEMS department! The t-shirts are priced at \$20 and for each one sold the profit goes to Youth Enrichment Services. They are a local Pittsburgh organization that provides mentoring and programming for inner-city youth.

We have raised around \$1337.60 so far. If you would like to purchase one, please follow the link below or use the QR code.

<https://forms.office.com/r/gpbagP8AMT>



TOWNHALL FOR SOPHOMORES AND TRANSFERS

SAB organized a townhall with the department chair and program advisors for mechanical engineering, material science and engineering sciences. The aim was to gain a better understanding of whether students feel supported in their first year in the MEMS department and have an informal conversation about concerns.

STUDENT SURVEY

Thank you to everyone who participated in the student survey! We are greatly appreciative of the responses we received and are going to go through data to affect some of the programs SAB creates and department activities. Here are some of the results we found so far:

72 % Agree current world issues affect productivity

49 % Agree with a sense of belonging in the department

24% Struggle with anxiety in their lives

A Message from the Co-Chair

Dear fellow students,

As a graduating co-chair of the Student Advisory Board, I wanted to take a moment to speak directly to all of you. Throughout my time in this role, I have been honored to represent your interests and concerns and to work with the faculty, staff, and alumni to create a positive and inclusive learning environment.

I want to emphasize that the goal of the Student Advisory Board is twofold: first, to build a greater sense of community for the MEMS department, and second, to build opportunities and resources for the student body that cultivate diversity of thought and diversity of innovation. To achieve our first goal, we have organized events and initiatives that bring together students, faculty, and alumni to create a strong and supportive community. From social events to volunteering, we have worked to foster a collaborative and welcoming environment for all members of the MEMS community.

To achieve our second goal, we have worked to provide resources and opportunities that promote diversity of thought and innovation. This includes organizing talks with Faculty during their meeting to address students' concerns to creating a research program targeted toward underrepresented scholars in the department.

I want to emphasize that the success of the Student Advisory Board depends on your involvement and engagement. Your feedback, ideas, and contributions are essential to creating a thriving and inclusive community within the MEMS department. Please continue to fill out our surveys, attend our town halls, and voice any concerns to members of the student advisory board.

As I graduate this spring, I am confident that the Student Advisory Board will continue to work towards these goals and will make even greater strides in the years to come. Thank you for being an active and engaged member of our school community. I wish you all the best in your future endeavors.

Sincerely,

Halima Morafa

Student Co-Chair, Student Advisory Board 2020-2023

