ALUMNI LEADERS MAKING A GLOBAL IMPACT

This issue of Columbia Engineering magazine focuses on engineering and applied science alumni who are making a global impact—alumni whose important work has significant influence in the international arena. Because of space limitations, we are highlighting only a small fraction of our internationally focused graduates.

These men and women and others like them exemplify the career paths possible with a Columbia Engineering education, as each brings to bear his or her leadership, excellence, and impact on a global scale. Their areas of expertise range from finance and banking to music and haute cuisine; from media and biotech to academia and basic education. I hope you enjoy learning more about these amazing alumni.

The Columbia Engineering graduates in this magazine are following in the footsteps of early alumni who were forerunners of the way in which we work today at the global scale. Among the first early global engineers was William Barclay Parsons of the Class of 1882, who built docks in Cuba, was a member of the Panama Canal Commission, and, in 1898, went to China as the chief surveyor for a proposed railroad line from Hankow to Canton, a line that is still in use.

Today, we seek to provide our students with opportunities for a global experience, whether in the form of faculty- or staff-led winter programs at international locations, study abroad, or international internships or volunteer experiences. I believe that an engineering education today has several essential elements—liberal arts and humanities that give context to today’s challenges; a depth of knowledge within a specific, rigorous engineering or applied science discipline that will provide the wherewithal to address those challenges; and research, entrepreneurship, community-based service-learning, and a global perspective and experience.

To provide these global opportunities, we are in the process of offering three options. The first is Global Leaders Exploration during the winter break, a faculty- or staff-led program to develop greater intercultural understanding and leadership through weeklong programs at international locations. The aim of Global Leaders Study Abroad is to put students side by side with their peers at international institutions to foster their leadership abilities. Our third initiative, Global Leaders Experience, to take place during the summer, is a third semester of professional and leadership growth for many of our students. Whether volunteering their engineering skills by participating in Engineers Without Borders, participating in an internship, or working with a professor on an international project, our students will develop relationships and leadership skills at international communities and corporations.

All these programs bring great understanding and appreciation for other points of view. The greater the difference between the student’s culture and that of the country in which he or she is studying, the greater the learning experience. We are creating a new paradigm for engineering education, developing new programs to ensure that we continue to educate socially responsible engineering and applied science leaders whose work results in the betterment of the human condition, locally, nationally, and globally.

Please join me in recognizing the efforts of all of you, our alumni, who are making a global impact.

Feniosky Peña-Mora
Dean and Morris A. and Alma Schapiro Professor