

Abstract Submitted
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Towards a global virtual community of female engineering students and professionals¹ ALINE COTEL, SARA RIMER, SAHITHYA REDDIVARI, Univ of Michigan - Ann Arbor — ct- The need for strategies to empower Liberian women is exemplified in the recent study carried out by ActionAid International, which examined the state of Liberian undergraduate women in urban areas. The results show that these women often face sexual intimidation by faculty and instructors, women are often excluded from student organizations, there exists a lack of institutional support for female organizations at the universities, and that the women do not feel safe in the university due to low security standards. The situation is even direr for the female engineering students with less than 5% of the engineering student population being women, therefore they are quite isolated in their engineering studies with minimal role models and professional support as they persist. We have planned a leadership camp for female Liberian engineering undergraduate women. The ultimate goal is to empower the Liberian women engineers with the skills, support and inspiration necessary to becoming successful engineering professionals. The leadership camp is planned and facilitated collaboratively by the members of the University of Michigan Society of Women Engineers (UM-SWE) student chapter and the Liberia Society of Women Engineers (L-SWE) student organization. The 2 week-long leadership camp has a workshop-based format with two themes: (i) academic and professional skills, and (ii) student organization development.

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