The Women of Project AWESOME would like to welcome you to the beginning of the amazing adventure that you will embark on here at UCSC.
What is Project AWESOME?

Project AWESOME (Advancing Women’s Education in the School of Engineering) was established to promote the growth and excellence of women in computer technology majors. Our goal is to keep you engaged, involved, and excited as you pursue your degree in this blossoming and highly-sought after career.

What Activities Has Project AWESOME Sponsored?

- In April, 20 students were sponsored to attend a Google tour, where we were able to view some cool Google gadgets, see the type of work environment Google employees experience, eat in the cafeteria, and ask a panel of Googlers questions about their work.
- During our weekly meetings, we had great discussions about successes and challenges both in the classroom and outside, as well as provided advice to one another regarding classes and professors.
- For the past 2 years, a Welcome Tea was hosted by Project Awesome where women faculty, graduates, and undergraduates were able to network and meet one another over coffee, tea, and cookies. (The cookies were from Pacific Cookie Company in downtown Santa Cruz, which if you haven’t heard of them yet, you soon will! :)

• Weekly study sessions were hosted for women in Computer Science and Technology courses including CMPS 5J/11, CMPS 12A, CMPS 12B, CMPE 12, and CMPS 80K. At these study sessions, women were able to collaborate with one another and study together for midterms and finals.

• Weekly meetings with invited guest speakers including graduate students discussing research and professors for major Computer Science courses. These meetings were also great opportunities to meet other women and discuss the challenges that women face in Computer and Technology majors.

Members of Project AWESOME playtesting Senior Game Design games.
Some Advice From Some of the Members of Project AWESOME:

"Being on your own is scary, but it's better when you have the support of other people who have been through it. UCSC is a place to grow, meet awesome people and find yourself." ~Delmy Reyes

There are three survival rules for college: ask the professor and TA for things related to school work, ask your college advisor for things related to college life, and the most important of all, make a lot of friends in each class, as they would be the backbone of your studying and will help you out through difficult times, even if it is just cursing the impossible workload for classes. ~ Joanne Chan

It is OK to be confused and lost during college, but what matters most is trying to enjoy every moment it offers. When the right moment shows up, you will know what you want to do. ~Joanne Chan

Image Credit Flickr User Tonx
A UC Santa Cruz STORY:

My experience at UCSC is pretty much like any other college student who didn't really know what they were going to do. I was really exploring my options before deciding that I wanted to major in Computer Science. Before coming to UCSC, I first thought that Mechanical Engineering was interesting, but then I realized there wasn't a major for that here. First bubble burst by reality. Then my mom said that Electrical Engineering's pay is very good, so I tried that out. I enjoyed the programming classes, but disliked most of the other math classes, like physics and linear algebra. I just figured that engineering was not my thing. Second bubble burst by myself. By the time that I decided that I wanted to switch, I was running out of credits and was due to graduate soon. I realized that the only two majors that I could continue on with were either Computer Science or Sociology, which fortunately are majors that I really like. Through this, I found the job that I might want to do in my future: using a technical background as support to help solve social problems. Of course I am still a student and still don't have the needed skills to do something like that. But it is a goal that I hope will come true in the future.

I am hoping that you would be able to try a variety of things out first before deciding on Computer Science because there are just so many options possible at UCSC that you can explore, and the subjects that you think suit you might be absolutely something that you don't want to do after taking a class or two in it. Don't take your parents' word for it. Listen to the wisdom that they offer, but don't decide your major based on it because you are the one who is going to be sticking with this occupation for the rest of your life (at least before you decide you get so sick of it that you switch occupations or go back to school to get a major in something else).

-Joanne Chan
A Personal Note:

Being a women in technology is an exciting experience that is especially rewarding at UCSC. The amount of support that the professors at UC Santa Cruz have at every level, from lower-division to upper-division courses is immense. I have personally talked with many professors, both men and women, and staff members about promoting women in technology; realizing how many people are determined to increase the success of technical women is truly inspiring. I believe that there is no better place to be a women in a technology major than at UCSC. There are so many wonderful opportunities to take part in here from researching with graduate students and professors to working on a Senior Game Design game as an artist or programmer. No matter what your interests are, there is a place here for you at UC Santa Cruz. It is my hope that the Project AWESOME team, including myself, can create the best possible experience for you at UC Santa Cruz and help you achieve success beyond what you thought possible. If you have any questions about any of the Computer Science or Technology related majors or about life at UC Santa Cruz, please do not hesitate to send me an email at projectawesomeucsc@gmail.com. I want your transition to UCSC to be as smooth as possible so that you are comfortable on day one. I hope to see you in the Fall!

Sincerely,

Remington Maxwell

Project AWESOME Student Engagement Coordinator