UMass Amherst ~ 3M

Diversity in STEM Lecture Series

Friday, August 5th, 2022
11:00 AM: Technical Seminar, Conte A110/A111
12:00 PM: Community Lunch in Conte Atrium
3:00 PM Coffee Hour, Conte A110/111

Dr. Erika Saffer
and
Dr. Cristina Urdaneta Thomas
3M Corporation

Rewarding Industrial Paths: From Jumping into Opportunities to Giving Back

This seminar will focus on highlights of two successful industry careers in inventing, developing and commercializing new solutions. It will illustrate how a strong academic education is foundational for a thriving and fulfilling career in industry, where there are ample opportunities to apply fundamental concepts in polymer science and materials to develop new products and manufacturing processes. We will cover multiple examples of importance to commercial and residential, consumer, automotive, worker safety and oral care markets. This seminar will also touch on the transformation from individual contributor, to technical manager, to organizational and community leader.

Meeting ID: 924 0541 4455
Password: 474710
Dr. Erika Saffer is a team leader and problem solver with more than 8 years of experience in new product and technology development. She has a B.Sc. in Chemical Engineering from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and a PhD in Chemical Engineering from UMass – Amherst.

At 3M, she has worked in the Consumer and Healthcare industries and has held two different roles – Product Development Engineer and Technical Supervisor. She has contributed to the invention and development of Post-it® Brand products and is currently leading a team of R&D scientists in new product and technology development within the dental industry.

Outside of work, you can find her outside biking, hiking, or exploring the many different restaurants in the Twin Cities. She currently lives in St Paul, Minn., with her fiancé, Eric, and dog, Zoe.
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Dr. Cristina Urdaneta Thomas has more than 30 years of experience in R&D organizations including in the Venezuelan oil industry, IBM (New York) and 3M (Minnesota). She has degrees in Chemistry and Mathematics and a Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering from UMASS-Amherst. Her 3M assignments have included Global R&D Services Senior Director, R&D Global Process Owner, Strategy Manager, Laboratory Manager, Commercialization Manager, Design for Six Sigma (DFSS) Technical Black Belt and Group Leader of the Materials Modeling Group.

She became an early leader in the molecular and materials modeling community (AIChE’s CoMSEF Forum). She contributed to the invention of 3M window-film products, of microreplicated fasteners, of pavement markings retroreflective solutions and of connected safety platforms, becoming a coinventor in 20+ patents. She received the 2019 AIChE Industry Leadership Award, the 2019 AICHE Management Division Award, and is an ACS fellow and an ACS PMSE fellow.

She has a passion for moving new technologies into markets and for education of underrepresented students and women in science and engineering and co-leads 3M STEM and Skilled Trades initiatives. She is a member of the AIChE Corporate Council & Industry Leader’s and the Government University Industry Research Roundtable (National Academy of Science). She lives in Stillwater, Minn., with her husband Scott, her dog Dulce and is the mother of three accomplished and caring adults.

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