

# The Women of Carnegie Mellon

*Laura Spurduto*

*Stephanie Johnson*

*Amy Matzke*



# There's Something Special About Carnegie Mellon Women.

Of course they are intelligent, as is the entire student body, but what makes them so interesting are the ways in which they apply their talents, expand their own horizons, contribute to the campus community and beyond—and have a great time doing it! Carnegie Mellon provides an atmosphere in which women thrive, amidst the backdrop of the exciting city of Pittsburgh. If you want an education that thinks “outside the box,” then you need a university with students who do too. These three exemplary women are just a sampling of the unique, innovative and intriguing characters that you will run into in the University Center, Skibo Gymnasium, on the Cut, in your residence halls...

## Stephanie Johnson

Stephanie Johnson's wide-scoping interests made her an ideal candidate for Carnegie Mellon's interdisciplinary Science and Humanities Scholars program. Now in her junior year, this Atlanta, Georgia, native has decided to major in ethics, history and public policy, with a minor in computer science, a field that immediately appealed to her during an introductory programming course her first semester: “I chose my minor not even as a career choice, but because I just enjoy it so much,” she explains.

Johnson is highly involved with Agape Christian Ministry, a religious organization that meets regularly on campus. “Becoming part of Agape really provided a total sense of community that I'd never had before. I feel like Carnegie Mellon is exactly where I belong,” says Johnson.

During her sophomore year she was the president of Lambda Sigma honor society, where she organized various community outreach programs including a toy drive benefiting Children's Hospital and a spring carnival to which underprivileged children from all over the Pittsburgh region were invited. “It's great just to spend time with other students that are also community oriented...I've learned leadership skills—how to delegate responsibilities and how to motivate people and to find out their interests,” she says.

These skills will be crucial in the future, which just may entail a return to Carnegie Mellon, not as a student, but as a faculty member. “I'll possibly do graduate work in history or get a Ph.D., and then I can teach at the perfect university for me. Carnegie Mellon is a definite possibility. It all depends on what I decide to specialize in.”

## Laura Sperduto

Between her double major in civil engineering and engineering and public policy and her minor in environmental engineering, Laura Sperduto maintains that her biggest challenge at Carnegie Mellon has been how to limit the number of activities in which she takes part. “My experience here has been defined by my accomplishments and experiences outside the classroom,” she says.

Among those experiences are Kiltie Band, American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), Tau Beta Pi Engineering honor society and Chi Epsilon honor society for civil engineering. However, most of her free time is spent as president, for the second year, of the Society for Women Engineers, or SWE. “In addition to making friends with people I might not have otherwise met on campus, being involved with SWE has given me the opportunity to participate in community service projects and social events, and has fostered leadership growth and professional opportunities,” says Sperduto.

In fact, Sperduto is wasting no time between graduation in May and getting her professional life under way. The Buffalo, New York, native will be staying in Pittsburgh and flexing her engineering and public policy muscles in her position in the environmental affairs department of Bechtel Bettis, an atomic lab that produces nuclear reactors, and which recently acquired a large contract from NASA.

Sperduto first visited Carnegie Mellon as a graduating high school senior during Sleeping Bag Weekend and felt comfortable immediately: “I just knew this was where I wanted to be. I could see myself being happy here.” Now her experience has come full circle: she facilitates the same experience for younger prospective students as the SWE Sleeping Bag Weekend Chair.

## Amy Matzke

Amy Matzke, a sophomore double majoring in computer science and European studies, quenches her varied academic thirsts by making her Carnegie Mellon experience as interdisciplinary as possible. She loves the field of computer science and the logical process of programming. However, after her first year, she found that she missed the creativity of humanities courses and the French language that she studied in high school. Hence, European studies, which combines foreign language classes with the study of history and culture.

To be sure she made plenty of female connections, Matzke joined the Delta Delta Delta (Tri-Delta) sorority, a chapter that has received numerous awards for philanthropic endeavors, such as working to raise money for charity through Greek Sing and hosting spaghetti dinners to benefit children's cancer research. Matzke is also the sophomore representative to the School of Computer Science Alumni Advisory Board. She attends meetings with alumni, communicates the viewpoints of students, and helps facilitate new ways to get alumni and students involved with each other. “It's a great way to understand campus administration. I get more and more interested in learning how running the university actually works and taking part in it,” she says.

With spare time leftover from all of these activities, Matzke likes to pursue “any other thing I get an email about. I really like to take advantage of the various presentations and events on campus. The campus community is so closely knit. I feel completely safe anytime, anywhere on campus. You could almost forget that there's a city right here. But then again, you have the benefits of everything that's going on in Pittsburgh, [including] the museums and the nightlife, which I really like,” she explains.

Having new experiences is what college life is all about. “There are cool opportunities out there,” says Matzke. As a freshman, her computer science advisor suggested she take his new Beginner Fencing class. “It turned out to be so much fun and something really different that I've always wanted to try.” The next semester, when her advisor needed a Teacher's Assistant (TA), she was asked. “I got to be a TA as a second-semester freshman!”

Her one complaint about Carnegie Mellon is most likely an unpopular one. The Plano, Texas, native says “I wish we could get more snow. I look forward to it!”

**Carnegie Mellon Women** are leaders. They are characters. They are talents. They are the innovators and newsmakers of tomorrow. ☀

