Oct. 26, 2018 — Utah State University was turning heads at the Minneapolis Convention Center last week at a large conference and expo for the Society of Women Engineers, known as SWE.

The event, held Oct. 18–20, is the world's largest conference for women engineers. An estimated 15,000 people were in attendance. A total of 16 people from USU took part in the event including seven undergraduate students, three alumnae, two graduate students, one faculty and additional support staff. Students attended guest speaker presentations and workshops on professional development, career advancement and team building. Participants also connected with prospective employers at SWE's massive career fair. Companies including Boeing, 3M, Apple, Uber, BASF, Dow Chemical and other industry giants were on hand to review resumes and interview attendees.

Students said the career fair was one of the most memorable parts of the trip. Environmental engineering student Merissa Nielsen landed an internship with Northrop Grumman, and computer science undergraduate Ligia Frangello interviewed with Apple and Uber. Biological Engineering student Laurel Hendrickson interviewed with Medtronic, and other students said they made meaningful connections with recruiters.

College of Engineering retention specialist and engineer Nina Glaittli and College of Engineering recruiter Danielle Roth helped coordinate the event. Biological engineering assistant professor Elizabeth Vargis and engineering education PhD student Kate Youmans attended a special women in academic leadership seminar. The Academic Leadership for Women in Engineering program addresses the need for more women in positions of academic leadership in engineering. The program gives female academics in engineering tangible skills and knowledge needed to pursue and acquire institutional leadership positions at a university.

Utah State University’s student section of the Society of Women Engineers started in 1976. Today, the student organization offers its nearly 70 members a range of opportunities in community service, outreach, mentorship and industry networking events. Established in 1950, SWE encourages members to achieve their full potential as engineers and engineering leaders, expand the image of the engineering profession and demonstrate the value of diversity on campus and in the workplace.

View the photo gallery

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