

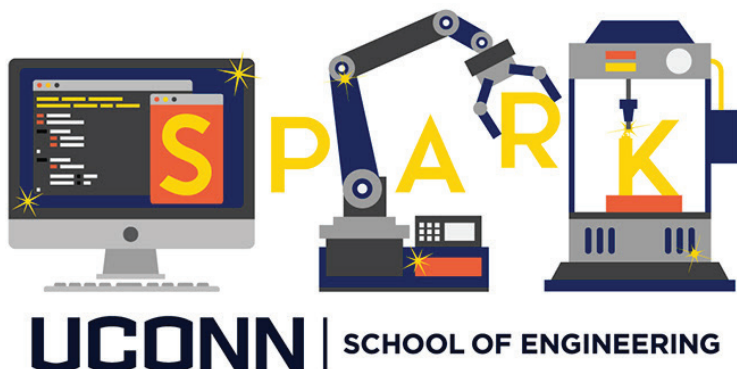
Where Art Meets Engineering: Victoria Acuna's Path to Innovation and Inclusion

Victoria Acuna is a senior, studying Multidisciplinary Engineering with a specialization in Entertainment Engineering Design. Equipped with flair for both the artistic and analytical, Victoria found the intersection in UConn's EED program. "The way engineering transforms ideas into immersive experiences has always fascinated me. Whether found in interactive rides, live concerts, or innovative stage designs, the entertainment industry really showcases the creative impact of engineering." She attributes her success so far to the coursework in entertainment engineering and said "I've had experience working on hands-on projects as well as collaborating with others. UConn played a big role in helping me succeed. Through my coursework and involvement in student organizations, I've learned how to communicate complex technical concepts clearly and work with diverse teams."



Passionate about education and community service, Victoria spent her summer with UConn's Office of Outreach and Engagement developing this year's edition of STEM Participation and Representation, or SPARK, a summer camp for middle school girls who are interested in STEM. She champions

the group because "[SPARK] offers a unique, hands-on experience, led by women in UConn's undergraduate engineering program, providing young girls with a gateway into



the world of science and technology.” She was the chair of one week of the program: “Engineering the Impossible”, which focused on mechanical, civil, robotics, and entertainment engineering. “I created lesson plans to help teach these topics in a fun and hands-on way, making sure the activities were engaging and easy to follow (especially for middle school students).”



Once the girls arrived, Victoria spent three weeks teaching, engaging, and inspiring their creativity. Her favorite lesson was called Robo Sculpt. “It was a fun introduction to robotic engineering where students got to learn about DC motors. They learned how they work and how they’re used in real-world applications... and it showed how imaginative students can be when given the tools to explore.” Always working to learn and grow as an engineer and educator, Victoria shared that SPARK was also a lesson in patience. “It taught me to be flexible, and I learned how to find creative ways to explain things so everyone could feel included.”

More importantly, however, she taught the girls how to succeed as a woman in a largely male-dominated field. Victoria’s message is “just keep going. Even if people doubt you or tell you it’s not for you, don’t let that stop you. You are absolutely capable and the ideas you have matter!”

In the future, Victoria plans to work for a structural design company, bringing imaginative ideas to life. “No matter where I end up, I plan to continue doing outreach for young students passionate about engineering.”