"Women and STEM: opt out or lean in?"

Panel Session at the 29th Mediterranean Conference on Control and Automation (MED 2021) JUNE 24th, h. 18:00-19:30 (CEST)

Link to the access the panel

 Abstract: Evidence worldwide speaks of limited presence of women in STEM sectors. This starts from the early stages of higher education, and gets even worse in both academia and in the job market, with only few examples of women with C-level positions in STEM-related companies. The overall phenomenon that sees the proportion of women progressively shrinking while escalating the professional ladder is known as

"leaky pipeline", and presents itself both in academia and the industry career path. Is this a conscious choice or an unconscious, education-based opt out obligation? For sure, early infancy imprinting plays an important role in the self-perception of girls, and the so-called "role-congruity" models shaping our society still tend to place women outside the scientific and technological arena. The panel will review the current state of different aspects of involvement of women in STEM studies, careers and competencies, analysing the impact they may have on their lives, families and society at large. The panel will also analyse how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting the working environment of both academic and non-academic women, discussing how work/life balance issues affect productivity, and how pandemic and post-pandemic caring duties can have long-term effect on the career development, putting forward proposals for taking these aspects into practical consideration in the career evaluation processes of the post-COVID era.

Organizers

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Panel program

Moderator: Mara Tanelli, Politecnico di Milano, Milano, Italy.

Mara Tanelli is a Full Professor of Automatic Control at the Politecnico di Milano, where she earned the Ph.D. in Information Engineering with honors in 2007. Her research activities focus on active control of ground vehicles, "Smart Mobility", industrial analytics and sliding-mode control. She is co-author of more than 160 scientific publications and more than 15 patents in these research areas. Since 2013, she is part of the Conference Editorial Board of the IEEE Control Systems Society (CSS). She is currently Associate Editor for the IEEE Transactions on Control Systems Technology and the IEEE Transactions on HumanMachine Systems. She was publicity co-chair for the 1st IEEE Conference on Human-Machine Systems, ICHMS 2020, and she is Invited Session Chair for the 2021 Mediterranean Conference on Automation and Control (MED21) and Editor of the 2021 IFAC Workshop on LPV Systems (LPVS 2021). Since 2021, she is Chair of the Technical Committee on Automotive Control of the IEEE CSS and Vice Chair of the IFAC TC 7.1 Automotive Control on publications. At the Politecnico di Milano, since 2020 she has been serving as Students Advocate (Ombudswoman). Further, she is member of the Administrative Board of the
Department of Electronics, Information and Bioengineering, and she is in the steering committee of the "POP: Equal Opportunities at Politecnico di Milano" initiative, also coordinating the working group in charge of the redaction of the "Gender Budget" of the university.

Opening remarks: Mariagrazia Dotoli, Politecnico di Bari, Bari, Italy - General Chair of the MED2021.

Session 1: *"Gender Issues in Computer Science Research, Education, and Society"*
Speaker: **Letizia Jaccheri**, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway.

Letizia Jaccheri (Ph.D. from Politecnico di Torino, Italy) is Professor at the Department of Computer Science of the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. Jaccheri's research is on: software engineering; entertainment computing; computational creativity; social innovation, gender and computer science. Jaccheri is the Norwegian representative and Vice President of IFIP TC14 on Entertainment Computing. She has published more than 200 papers in International conferences and journals. She has been teaching courses in software engineering at various levels since 1994. She has supervised PhD students, Post-doctoral students and acted as opponent for national and international defenses. From 2015 to April 2018 she was independent director of Reply S.p.A, an IT company with 6000 employees worldwide. She leads project IDUN From PhD to Professor, which receives 1 MEuro from the Research Council of Norway and NTNU to address the gender gap in academic position. She is chair of the COST Action CA19122 Eugain https://eugain.eu/
Letizia Jaccheri is passionate about dissemination of computer science and research to the general public and to contribute to recruit female students to computer science and research.
Homepage – https://www.ntnu.edu/employees/letizia.jaccheri
Blog - https://letiziajaccheri.org/

Session 2: *"Women and Enterpreneurship"*
Speaker: **Jinane Abounadi**, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston, USA.

Jinane Abounadi is Executive Director of the MIT Sandbox Innovation Fund Program. She brings a unique combination of experiences, from academic research to senior operational and strategic roles in start-up companies and large businesses. As the founding executive director, she built the program into a leading student entrepreneurship program, funding over 500 student ideas per year and supporting over 1000 aspiring entrepreneurs per year. Since its launch in 2016, MIT Sandbox has supported the launch of very successful and highly innovative start-ups, whose stories are available on the program's website. After completing her graduate work, she worked as a research scientist at BBN, as a postdoctoral lecturer at MIT, and advised undergraduate and graduate students. Jinane held leadership roles in two of the most successful local Boston area start-ups, ITA Software and Kayak, where she gained deep knowledge about the travel technology sector. Most recently, she ran a global portfolio of 3rd party products for Travelport, giving her the opportunity to establish partnerships with companies across the globe and to advise and evaluate a number of start-ups in the travel sector. Abounadi earned her PhD in electrical engineering and computer science at MIT, a BS in electrical engineering from Caltech, and a BA from Bryn Mawr College. She has several publications in the fields of machine learning and communication networks and is passionate about teaching and working with college students. She was recently honored with the 2021 Monosson Award for Entrepreneurial Mentorship. This award recognizes her leadership in supporting entrepreneurship at MIT, and specifically mentoring students on their entrepreneurial journeys.

Session 3: *"Supporting diversity and inclusion: the CSS initiatives"*
Speaker: **Maria Domenica di Benedetto,** Università degli Studi dell'Aquila, L'Aquila, Italy.

Maria Domenica Di Benedetto is a Professor of Automatic Control at University of L'Aquila (Italy). She received her Master degree in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science from University of Roma "La Sapienza" and holds the PhD degree and the degree "Doctorat d'Etat ès Sciences" from Université de ParisSud (Orsay, France). She has been Adjunct Professor from 1995 to 2002, and McKay Professor from 1990 to 1995, at the Department of EECS of the University of California at Berkeley. She held visiting positions at MIT, at the University of Michigan Ann Arbor, and at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Mécanique in Nantes (France). Her research interests are in the areas of nonlinear and hybrid systems control theory, diagnosability and predictability in cyber-physical systems, and applications to traffic control, smart grids and biological systems. Dr. Di Benedetto is a Fellow of the IEEE and IFAC. She has been a member of the
IEEE Control Systems Technical Fields Award Committee, Chair of the Standing Committee on Fellow Nominations of the IEEE CSS, member of the IEEE Fellow Evaluation Committee of the IEEE CSS. She is the IFAC Chair of the Nathaniel B. Nichols Medal Selection Committee for the 2020-2023 triennium. She is currently a Distinguished Lecturer of the IEEE CSS and is serving as the VP for Membership Activities (2020-21) in the Executive Committee of the IEEE CSS. She is Editor of the IEEE Press Book Series in Control Systems Theory and Applications.

Session 4: *"Gender stereotypes in textbooks: no news, bad news"*
Speaker: **Elisabetta Camussi**, Università degli Studi di Milano Bicocca, Milano, Italy.

Elisabetta Camussi, PhD in Psychology is Associate Professor in Social Psychology at the Department of Psychology of the University of Milan-Bicocca, where for over 20 years she has been carrying out research and projects on Gender Issues, Welfare, Equal Opportunities, Vocational Guidance, and Life Design. Professor Camussi is Vice President of the Italian Guidance Society (SIO), and of the Italian Psychology

Federation (FIP). At the Italian Psychology Board, she is coordinator of the Equal Opportunities Committee (EOC) of Lombardy. She has been a member of the Experts Committee in economic and social matters set up by the Italian Government in 2020 pandemic. Actually, she is a member of the Cultural Change Commission of the Women Forum, G20 (https://w20italia.it/w20-events/). **Homepage**: https://www.unimib.it/elisabetta-camussi

Session 5: **"***Gender & Academia: importance of mentorship***"**

Speaker: **Laura Giarré** Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia, Modena, Italy.

Laura Giarré received the Laurea degree in Electronic Engineering from the Università di Firenze, Florence, Italy and the Ph.D. degree in System Engineering from the Università di Bologna, Bologna, Italy, in 1986 and 1992, respectively. She has held visiting positions at the University of California at Santa Barbara (CA) and at the Computer Science Artificial Intelligence Laboratory at MIT, Cambridge, Boston (MA) (1999, 2006, 2015). She was Assistant Professor at Politecnico di Torino, Turin, Italy (1993-1998); Associate Professor at the Università di Palermo, Palermo, Italy (1998-2016) and she is Full Professor at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Modena, Italy since 2016. Since 2020 she is also adjunct professor at NTNU, Alesund, Norway. She served as Associate Editor of Systems and Control Letters, 1999 -2011 and IEEE Transaction on Automatic Control 2012-2015. In 2010 she was vice-chair of SING6 (http://www.unipa.it/sing6/) and in 2014 General Char of MED'14 (http://www1.unipa.it/med1 4/). She is the co-general chair and program chair of MED 2021 (http://med2021.poliba.it/wordpress/) and Co-program chair of LPVs'21 (https://www.lpvs2021.deib.polimi.it/). Her research interests include identification and control of networked systems with applications to wifi networks (http://www.unipa.it/~giarre/paperi/TGN.pdf), sensor networks (http://www.unipa.it/~giarre/paperi/articolosiam.pdf) and, smart grid. She worked also on identification of LPV (http://www.unipa.it/~giarre/paperi/falugi.pdf) and block oriented systems (http://www.unipa.it/~giarre/paperi/zappa.pdf) according to the worst-case paradigm with application to networked systems. More recently she has been interested in the robotic application of assistive technology for visually impaired persons. She was CEO and cofounder of the start-up In.sight srl (http://in.sight.srl/).

Session 6: *"WIE.steer2STEM.chart: The commitment chart of the IEEE WIE Italy"*

Speaker: **Dajana Cassioli**, Università degli Studi dell'Aquila, L'Aquila, Italy - Chair of the IEEE Women in Engineering Italy Section.

Dajana Cassioli is Associate Professor of Telecommun. Engin. at the University of l'Aquila, Italy. Her main research interests are in wireless communications, 5G/B5G and Cybersecurity. She is the Chair of the IEEE WIE AG Italy Section, and Past Chair of the IEEE VT06/COM19 Italy Chapter. She is the Coordinator of the University of l'Aquila Node of the CINI National Lab of Cybersecurity, where she leads the CyberEquality working group to boost inclusivity in cybersecurity. She has been awarded the ERC StG VISION (Video-oriented UWB-based Intelligent Ubiquitous Sensing) - 2010 and the ERC PoC Grant iCARE (MobIle health-Care system for monitoring toxicity and symptoms in cAncer patients Receiving diseasE-oriented therapy) - 2016. She served as PIMRC2018 Industry Co-Chair, RTSI WIE Chair in 2018, 2019 and 2020, MELECON2020 and MetroInd4.0, and TPC member of several International Conferences (ICC, PIMRC, VTC, GLOBECOM, etc). She is Associate Editor of IET Electron. Lett. and IEEE Communicat. Lett., and Executive Editor of Wiley Internet Technol. Lett. and Transact. on Emerging Telecommun. Technol.