

BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE TAKES PRACTICE

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Dr. Marcia Pool

*Teaching Associate Professor and Director of Undergraduate Programs,
Department of Bioengineering, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign*



ABSTRACT: Each day we interact with communities around us: friends, neighbors, colleagues, committees, etc. While all of these are communities, not all are communities of practice. As Wenger described, communities of practice include these key elements: (1) domain (shared interest), (2) community (creating and building relationships to facilitate learning) and (3) practice (developing shared resources, best practices and shared stories from which others learn). In this talk, I will review several communities of practice we developed at multiple levels from students to faculty, explain my experience with these communities of practice, discuss best practices and invite conversation to develop connections and share experiences.

Dr. Marcia Pool is a teaching associate professor and director of undergraduate programs in the Department of Bioengineering at University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign (UIUC). Pool has a Ph.D. in biomedical engineering, and in her career, she has been active in improving undergraduate education including developing laboratories to enhance experimental design skills and mentoring and guiding student teams through the capstone design and a translational course following capstone design. In her Teaching Associate Professor role, she teaches/co-teaches freshman-junior courses and supervises course support personnel. In her director role, she works closely with the department head, associate head for undergraduate programs, and the undergraduate programs coordinator (for which she is a functional supervisor) to manage the undergraduate program including: developing course offering plan, developing teaching assignments, chairing the undergraduate curriculum committee, reviewing and approving course articulations for study abroad, and serving as chief advisor, representing the department at the college-level meetings. In addition to these duties, Pool chairs the admissions committee for bioengineering and guides the team in review of freshman applications. Pool is also engaged with college recruiting and outreach; she coordinates three summer experiences for high school students visiting bioengineering and co-coordinates a week-long bioengineering summer camp. Pool has worked with the Cancer Scholars Program since its inception and has supported events for researchHStart. She has served on numerous hiring committees, the College of Engineering Safety Committee and the department's Teaching Evaluation and Improvement Committee. Most recently, Pool was selected to be an Education Innovation Fellow (EIF) for the Academy for Excellence in Engineering Education (AE3) at UIUC. At the national level, she served as the executive director of the biomedical engineering honor society, Alpha Eta Mu Beta, from 2011-17, and is an ABET evaluator (2018-present).