Chemical Engineering Colloquium

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12:00 – 12:50 PM / Goddard Hall 227

Understanding Barriers to Mental Health Related Help-Seeking in Undergraduate Engineers

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The prevalence of mental health disorders on college campuses is of increasing concern. Within engineering, there has been an increase in the amount of research conducted on characterizing student mental health and understanding the influence of engineering culture on mental wellness. Research has shown that engineering students in mental health distress are less likely to have received professional help compared to their peers. This identifies a treatment gap for engineering students, meaning that only a portion of those in mental health distress are seeking professional treatment. Addressing the treatment gap can improve the prognosis of mental health problems and reduce progression to more chronic or severe disorders. Through this talk, I will present results of both qualitative and quantitative research studies aimed at better understanding the beliefs that engineering students have about seeking help for a mental health concern. In particular, I will discuss barriers and facilitators to help-seeking including challenges in navigating the mental healthcare system, the perception that help-seeking is a sacrifice of time and academics, and the importance of mental health culture in engineering. Results of this work will help provide guidance for intervention development to improve mental health related help-seeking in undergraduate engineering students.