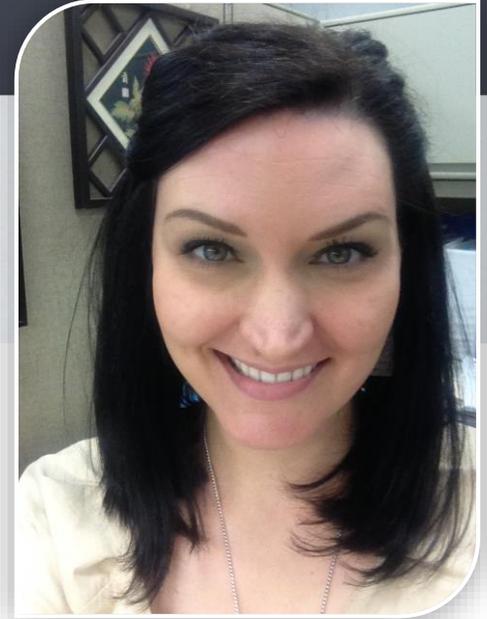


STEM SPOTLIGHT

Leila M. Craig
Engineer
FedEx Express

Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering
Christian Brothers University



Q How did you select your college major?

A This is a hard question. Before I finally decided on Mechanical Engineering as my major, I had already taken classes pursuing the following majors: Accounting, Business, Mathematics, Photography, and Natural Science. I ended up with an Associate's degree in Natural Science then transferred to CBU for Mechanical Engineering. Honestly, I always planned to go to college but I did not have any specific guidance and did not know where to find it. Finally, I got online and *googled*: Jobs using Mathematics. All of the engineering jobs listed in that search looked very interesting, so then I looked up which engineering field required the most math classes and voila I chose Mechanical Engineering.

Q What was the biggest influence in your selection of major/ career?

A I may not have known what "I wanted to be when I grew up", but I did know I wanted to go to college. I am the first to graduate from college in my family, and the only one of my sisters to graduate thus far. Also, the ability to be financially independent was very important. I started working after school and on weekends when I was 15 to help my mother pay household bills. Though I am very thankful for the early exposure to the work force, I prefer to not require help financially.

Q If you could go back to high school and select any elective course to take that would have better prepared you for college, what would it be?

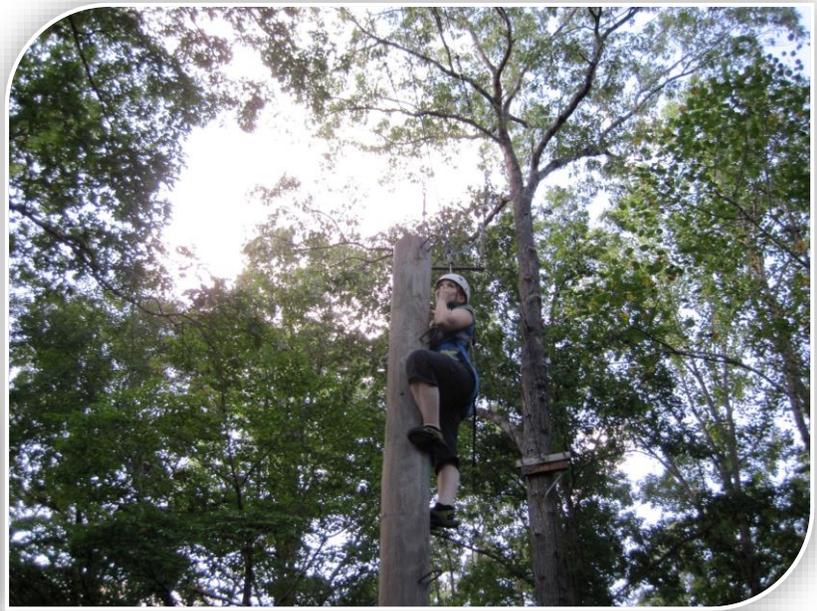
A Physics – I had no idea what I wanted to study in college. I was very good at math so I figured I would do something using that but I did not know what. So, I did what everyone else did, I took biology rather than physics. I do not regret taking biology because it is very interesting, but physics would have better prepared me for all of the engineering courses in college.

Calculus – Math has always been very easy for me so when I took my first calculus class my first semester in college I expected an easy A. I could have not been more wrong! Calculus takes you from the 2D world of algebra, trigonometry, and geometry into a brand new 3D way of thinking. Calculus became just as easy only after I stopped long enough to understand the theory.



Q What is your favorite aspect of your job?

A My calculator! I still get to do math! A lot of Math! I also enjoy training; FedEx provides any and all continuous training needed to perform your job effectively and efficiently. So, a large part of my job is learning, which I love.



Q How do you/your company make a positive impact on society/our community?

A In addition to the services FedEx provides, our company is very involved in charity organizations as well as community sponsorships all over the world. Just a few of the local sponsorships are: United Way, March of Dimes, Toys for Tots, Heart to Heart, Habitat for Humanity, FedExFamilyHouse for Le Bonheur's Children's Hospital, The Memphis Zoo, Junior Achievement, and numerous others.

Q What is the most interesting thing you have been able to do in your career?

A My day-to-day job is very interesting, but what is great about FedEx is the cross-functionality they offer. I have had the opportunity to work on projects that have nothing to do with my daily responsibilities. One such project was working with the training development department to write and assist in producing a series of online training videos to be offered to the Aircraft Maintenance Technicians.

Q What makes you get up each morning excited about your profession?

A Engineering is a wonderful field because every day we are tasked with a different puzzle to solve. The job is always different and therefore always interesting, challenging, exciting, and rewarding.



Q What advice would you like to share with K-12 students who are considering your profession?

A Research, research, research! Find a mentor in the field you are interested in. Try to make a solid decision on your future career before going to school for it. Also, there are many opportunities for young students to join clubs, attend summer camps, take company tours, etc. for almost all fields of study. Use those resources to help make that important decision.

Most of all look for the joy your career selection will bring you. "Choose a job you love and you will never have to work a day in your life." – Confucius. "Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work." – Aristotle.