

# Asian American Most Promising Engineer of the Year Award

## Katherine Pendergraph

**Project Engineer**  
***Northrop Grumman Corporation***



Katherine recalls the experienced engineers who mentored her through her career. For example, they inspired her to get her advanced degree for depth and credibility. In turn, Katherine has mentored several engineers, including minority men and women, coaching some of these young engineers to follow her own path in the Northrop Grumman Systems Engineering Associates (SEA) program, or to accept increased responsibility as a project engineer.

Within months after joining Northrop Grumman, Katherine began building skills: SE certification, Masters in Aerospace Engineering, enhanced communications abilities in Toastmasters and, always, OJT experiences as a lead engineer. This was gratifying, but hard-earned.

For example, to gain the MS degree at UCLA: “up at 4am, take the train to school, attend two daily classes, go to work at Northrop Grumman until 9pm, then home, and, next day, start all over again – for 2 years!” Katherine was then a member of the local Society of Women Engineers (SWE), and was gratified to see increased enrollment of women in engineering from 10% to 25% between her initial BS and later MS school days.

Katherine is expanding her skills and knowledge along themes present throughout her career: the “big picture” and business development. She completed UCSD Strategic Leadership Certification (2014): “Strong leadership is another mechanism to help a team toward their goal and a feeling of accomplishment. That is why I want to be a leader at Northrop Grumman; to inspire and lead people to success. I want them to come to work every day, exactly like I do, with a sense of purpose and pride in the work we do.”

Katherine’s responsibilities in BACN have advanced from Product Manager with complete systems responsibilities, including environmental testing, packaging and components, for the Airborne Executive Processor (AEP); to SE Lead for the Gateway Manager (GM) , another major BACN subsystem; to her current role as responsible engineer (Project Engineer) for all BACN software, including verification and validation, and including four baseline software versions ranging from operationally fielded software to new baselines in development.