Department of Chemical Engineering

University of Washington

**LEADERSHIP SEMINAR SERIES**

2:30-3:20 p.m., Wednesday, October 31, 2012

Physics Astronomy Building (PAA) Room A110

*Refreshments to follow in Benson Hall lobby.*

**“I’m about to get this ChemE degree, what am I going to do now?**”

 Karl Schmidt BS ’96

CEO, Mirador Biomedical

**Abstract:**

The last four years (maybe longer) have been a blur of organic compounds, lab experiments, differential equations, distillation columns, programming, packing materials and desperate attempts to determine how heat transfers through a mystical container that would require most of NASA’s resources to design and build. The end is now in sight, time for the “real world” and you wonder what has been the purpose of all the sweat and tears, what have you learned and how will you apply these skills in the world beyond the walls of the UW?

Its not luck that has kept the discipline of Chem E alive and well as technology has advanced. Navigation of the program hones skills that are essential for success in the workplace. My presentation will focus on the skills I developed during my tenure at the UW and how I’ve continued to use and develop these skills over the past two decades to succeed in a broad range of positions both professional and personal.

**Brief Bio:**

Karl is currently a Founder and CEO of Mirador Biomedical, a Seattle based medical device company that designed, developed and is commercializing an electromechanical pressure measurement device that is incorporated into common procedures to make them safer for patients and easier for physicians.

Karl received his Chem E degree in 1995 and in 1996 finally left the UW with an additional degree in German Literature and Linguistics. In Fall of 96 Karl got his first “real job” as an Chemical Engineer Technician and could be seen climbing the ladders of distillation columns in the frigid -30 winters of Calgary and the 100+ summers of California. After a year of unrelenting travel to seemingly every remote refinery and chemical plant in the western US, Karl made the transition into a more urban, cleaner environment after accepting a positions as a manufacturing engineer for a medical device company (Boston Scientific) based in Redmond. Karl worked his way up through the ranks to Senior R&D Engineer while concurrently working toward an MBA paid for courtesy of Boston Scientific.

After receiving an MBA in 2002, Karl applied for and was awarded the Bosch Fellowship which took him abroad to Germany for a year to research how international collaboration could help bring medical devices to market cheaper and faster.

Following the Fellowship, Karl again landed at Boston Scientific (this time in the Electrophysiology division located a stones through from Apple and Google in the heart of Silicon Valley) and transitioned into a product management (marketing) position. He continued along this career path and after three years took another marketing position at the much smaller Northstar Neuroscience, a neuromodulation company based in Seattle. Following the failure of a clinical trial Northstar fell on hard times. Hostile investors set their sights on the company, the layoff rounds began, finally as the company shut its doors Karl found himself out of a job. In response, and in the heart of the 2009 recession, Karl teamed up with Northstar colleagues to found Mirador.