Wafa Elmannai, a doctorate student of computer science and engineering at the University of Bridgeport who is designing an intelligence framework to assist visually impaired people, has been selected by the Connecticut Technology Council (CTC) for its 2015 Women of Innovation awards program.

The annual award recognizes women throughout Connecticut, in the workforce and school, who are innovators, role models, and community leaders in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math.

Elmannai is among 56 honorees who will be recognized during the Women of Innovation awards program at the Aqua Turf Club in Plantsville on April 1.

The Women of Innovation were nominated by their peers and selected based on their professional experience, history of innovation, ability to think creatively and solve problems, and demonstration of leadership. Students were judged on inventiveness, accomplishment in science and technology, independent research, and academic achievement.

“Each year the Women of Innovation awards ceremony honors outstanding women who have made contributions in their professions, studies, and in many cases, their communities,” said Beth Alquist, planning committee chair for the Women of Innovation awards program. “The 2015 Women of Innovation awards dinner is an inspirational time to celebrate these women and their accomplishments.”
Professor Khaled M. Elleithy, Associate Vice President for Graduate Studies and Research and Associate Dean of the School of Engineering at UB, said “Wafa exemplifies a role model of Women in Innovation.

“She began working on a system to help the visually impaired after she noticed that many existing devices are limited in their capabilities or cost prohibitive.”

Her system, which incorporates cameras, infra-red sensor, ultrasonic GPS system, is designed to support people at home and outside, work day and night, is cost accessible, and accurate, said Elleithy, who is her academic and dissertation adviser, Elleithy added. Elmannai, an international student from Libya, has already distinguished herself.

The American Society for Engineering Education awarded her its Big Data Analytic Award in 2014 for her research in computer science. She also won the National Honor Society of Upsilon Pi Epsilon award based on her academic achievement and publication of more than 10 research papers in national and international peer-reviewed conferences and journals.

Elmannai holds a 4.0 GPA in her course work at UB, where in May 2014 she won the Engineering Academic Achievement Award. As a leader, she serves as president of the UB chapter of the Honor Society of Upsilon Pi Epsilon. She is a member of the Women Society of Engineering, Honor Society Phi Kappa Phi, Institute of
Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), the IEEE Communications society, and Global and Health Help (GH2), which is dedicated to helping the poor.

About the CTC and Women in Innovation program: This year’s list of Women in Innovation includes researchers, educators, engineers, managers, students and entrepreneurs who work in biotech, pharmaceuticals, software, computer hardware, advanced materials, medical devices, and information technology.

High school, undergraduate and graduate students who have demonstrated extraordinary and unique achievements in their technology disciplines are also among the finalists.

The Women of Innovation awards presenting sponsors are the pharmaceutical company, Boehringer Ingelheim USA Corporation, medical device manufacturer Covidien, the law firm of Day Pitney LLP and United Technologies Corporation. Supporting Sponsors include AT&T, Frontier Communications, General Electric, and Pfizer Inc.

The Connecticut Technology Council is a statewide association of technology-oriented companies and institutions, providing leadership in areas of policy advocacy, community building and assistance for growing companies. Speaking for over 2,000 companies that employ some 200,000 residents, the Connecticut Technology Council seeks to provide a strong and urgent voice in support of the creation of a culture of innovation. This includes working to position Connecticut as a leader in idea creation, workforce preparation, entrepreneurial aptitude, early stage risk capital availability and providing on-going support and mentoring to high potential firms.