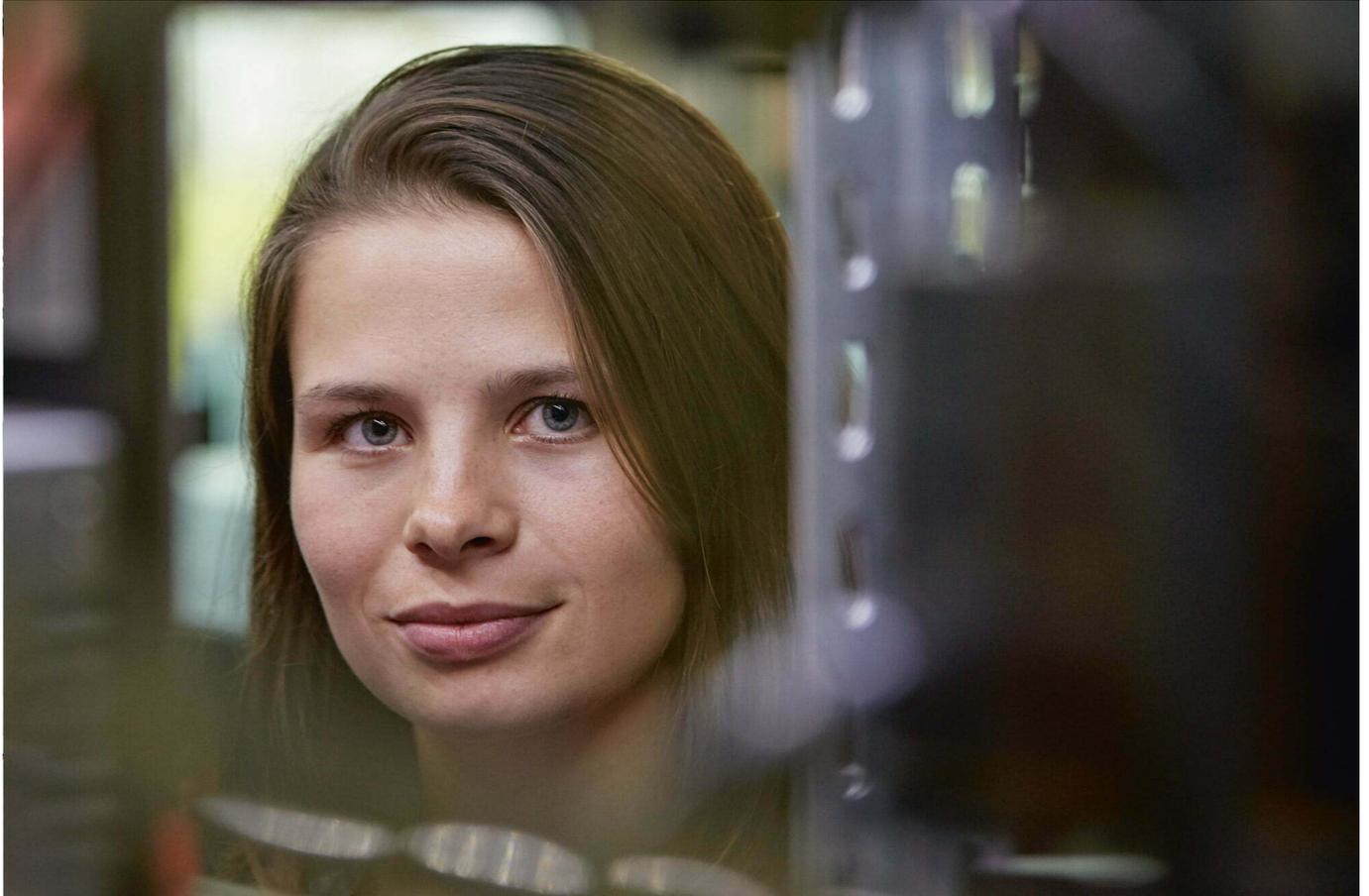


# Boosting my self-confidence



She likes people at least as much as machinery; for this reason, biomedical engineering is just the right thing for Michelle Rüegg.  
© ETH Foundation / Das Bild 9 December 2018

Michelle Rüegg studies mechanical engineering at ETH and relates why the recognition of her performance with a scholarship was one of the decisive events in her life.

I grew up in the town of Wallisellen North of Zurich. In school, I was pretty good in mathematics and the scientific disciplines. For my high-school certificate, I wrote an essay on the statics of bridges. I liked civil engineering but I really wanted to study mechanical engineering. Fully automatic production in factories and related items had always fascinated me. My parents did not have a university education, but father actively encouraged my interest in technology. When I started high school, I bought myself a motorized bike; father and I fooled around with it for hours, taking the small gasoline engine apart and reassembling it. I was the only girl in town with this kind of bike.

## Developing a healing membrane

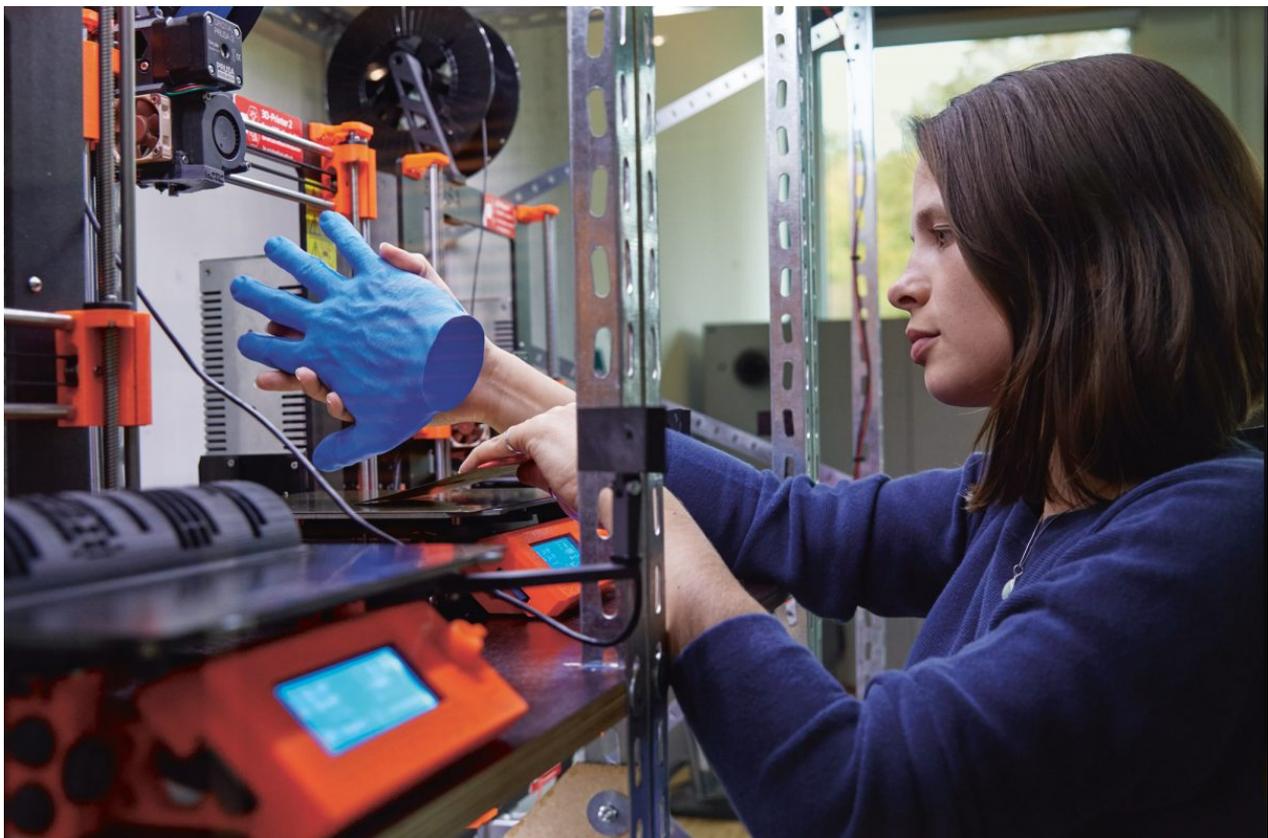
Aside from my love for technology and mathematics, the human species fascinates me. Basically simple processes in our body determine our existence. Through them, we are the way we are with the amazing skills of talking and thinking. In the course of studying mechanical engineering, my interest in biological processes led me to specialize in biomedical engineering. My objective is to develop new medical products and technologies that may help people. I cannot imagine anything more satisfying than to improve the life of others. For example, diabetics often have open wounds on their feet, as their healing power is impaired. For my bachelor thesis, I was involved in the development of a special membrane that may help wound healing in diabetes patients.

## An important accolade for the professional future

Two of my three brothers and sisters are involved in part-time studies, which make them financially independent. This raised my interest in obtaining a scholarship. I read the criteria for applying – and found out that in order to qualify for an Excellence Scholarship, you have to be among the best in your class. For this reason I hesitated to apply. But my boyfriend encouraged me to get more information from the office. Lo and behold, I was among the best. Of course I knew that I was getting pretty good grades. But it was a surprise to learn that I had such a top qualification.

I did get the scholarship and this recognition of my performance really boosted my self-confidence. Having this recognition in black and white is very important for my professional future. One of the reasons is that I am not among those that brag about themselves. I could not possibly ever say „I am among the best“. It is so much easier to say „My performance earned me a scholarship“.

[learn more about ETH Excellence Scholarships](#)



The 3-D printer is a very useful tool for engineering development. Michelle Rüegg in the Student Project House.

© ETH Foundation / Das Bild



Thanks to the Excellence Scholarships, we can attract the best students to ETH Zurich. Those scholarships are financed by donors, foundations and companies.

**Sarah M. Springman**  
Former Rector ETH Zurich, ESOP patron

<https://ethz-foundation.ch/en/spotlight/boosting-my-self-confidence/>

PDF exported on 04/29/2026 11:38

© 2026 ETH Zurich Foundation