



College of Engineering and The Order of the Engineer *Awards* Induction Ceremony

2025 COLLEGE AWARDS CEREMONY
Thursday, May 8, 2025

GRAND CHALLENGE SCHOLARS GRADUATES

Lydia Beardsley

ENGINEERING AMBASSADORS

Rookie of the Year

Ethan Buonarati

Most Outstanding Ambassador

Sydney Arellano

Bobby Provost

Brave and Bold Ambassadors

Cooper Piatt

Legacy Award

Christina Mai

Amber Graves

Lydia Beardsley

Dedicated Influencers

Boedy Palmquist

Jake Gendreau

Future Inspiration

Tori Albritton

OUTSTANDING GRADUATE STUDENTS



OUTSTANDING MASTER'S STUDENT

James Adams

James graduated from U of I in 2024 with a Bachelor's in Mechanical Engineering. Now, he is working on a Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering under Dr. Kamal Kumar. His thesis involves rocket propulsion research, and he intends to start a career in the commercial spaceflight industry after graduation.



OUTSTANDING PH.D. STUDENT

Shoukun Sun

Shoukun Sun is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Computer Science at the University of Idaho. His research centers on computer vision and text-to-image models, including large-content image generation, instance and interactive image segmentation, and diffusion models, with applications in natural images, medical imaging, materials science, and remote sensing. He is dedicated to advancing computer science through innovative deep learning methods, especially for critical applications with sparse labeling. He received the 2022 Outstanding Graduate Student Award and the 2024 MIDA Star

Award. His future work will focus on multimodal LLMs for cross-modal understanding and intelligent data analysis.

BHANOJI RAO-MYNAM OUTSTANDING GRADUATE STUDENT AWARD IN ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

Rowdy Sanford

Rowdy Sandford earned an Associate's Degree from Wenatchee Valley College in 2016 through the Running Start program. Then attended Central Washington University, earning a B.S. in Electronics Engineering Technology and a minor in robotics and automation. His undergraduate advisors suggested he would like grad school, and they were right. Rowdy earned his M.S. in Electrical Engineering in 2023, studying the effects of inter-turn faults in air-core reactors (inductors). Now he is a Ph.D. candidate working on design optimization methods for air-core reactors.

2025 COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING OUTSTANDING SENIORS



OUTSTANDING GRADUATE STUDENT IN IDAHO FALLS

Kyle Lucke

Kyle Lucke is a PhD student in the Computer Science Department at the University of Idaho, working in the Machine Intelligence and Data Analytics lab. He received his Bachelor of Science in Computer Science with a minor in Mathematics at the University of Montana in 2019. He graduated Summa Cum Laude and received the President's Outstanding Senior award. He then obtained his Master of Science in Computer Science at the University of Montana in 2021, where he developed novel statistical methods for protein inference. His current research focuses on developing novel uncertainty quantification approaches for high-stakes deep learning-based applications. In the past, he has also worked on novel approaches for semantic image segmentation for biomedical images. His other research interests include robust AI, adversarial machine learning, and

deep learning-based approaches for biomedical image processing.

INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY

Cody Hidalgo



BIOLOGICAL ENGINEERING

Hunter Holbrook

Hunter Holbrook was born and raised in Boise, Idaho, where he attended Treasure Valley Mathematics and Science Center before college. Because of his passion for all aspects of science and math, he chose a degree in biological engineering. Now he is graduating Summa Cum Laude at 19 years old with minors in math and physics. For the last year he has worked as a part-time associate engineer at Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories, pivoting to electrical and hardware engineering. After graduation he plans to continue as a full-time employee, assisting with the creation of SEL's first medical device.

He is grateful for all that he has learned at the University of Idaho, and the peers/mentors he met along the way. In his spare time, he enjoys winning at chess and losing at pickleball against Ian Yang.



CHEMICAL ENGINEERING

Katelyn Shadley

Katelyn grew up in Idaho Falls, ID. With her father working at the Department of Energy, she developed aspirations to become an engineer working in sustainability. With the help and support from friends, family, mentors, and professors, Katelyn excelled in her classes and was inducted into Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society as Vice President as well as Phi Kappa Phi. Throughout college, she was a part of SWE and AIChE while being the Mentorship Chair and Vice President, respectively. She also conducted research for 4 years in lead-acid batteries under the supervision of Dr. David Drown, Dr. John Canning, and Dr. Dean Edwards. She had many internship opportunities including Walsh

Engineering, Center for Advanced Energy Studies, Chobani, and Micron. Upon graduating, Katelyn will be a Manufacturing Engineer at Chobani in their Twin Falls, ID location.



CIVIL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING

Daniel Champlin

I grew up in Spokane, Washington where I became an avid runner and quickly garnered an interest in engineering. I initially began my college journey at OSU before transferring to the University of Idaho in the Fall of 2023. Throughout my time at U of I, I started a spikeball club and worked on undergraduate research with Dr. Lowry. The research focused on a traffic camera computer vision object identification program. I have enjoyed the wide variety of coursework within the college and found an interest in transportation and traffic engineering.

I am very grateful for the opportunities and learning provided at U of I. The CEE faculty have been a great resource throughout my time here, and I am very appreciative of all their support. I look forward to working a transportation internship with KPFF in Spokane this summer and continuing my civil engineering career into the future.

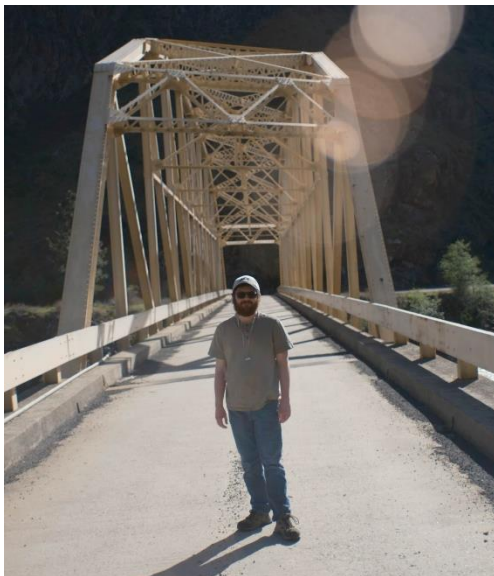


CIVIL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING

Ryland Hoit

I grew up in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho and moved to Moscow to become a Vandal and pursue a degree in Civil Engineering. Aside from my studies at the University of Idaho, I have had the privilege of working as a tutor and spending my free time playing piano, board games, and pickleball. Through the latter two I met my future wife who has been patiently waiting for me to graduate. With that day finally approaching, I look forward to applying the skills I have learned to serve communities as a Civil Engineer at

Welch Comer in my hometown of Coeur d'Alene.



COMPUTER ENGINEERING

Brandon Vetter

Brandon started his computer engineering major in 2021. Throughout his time at University of Idaho, he got involved with the IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers) club. For the last 2 years, he has been the president of the IEEE student branch. Some of the things he did while president is organize attendance a national conference in Vegas, and organize technical and social events for the club every month. Past graduate he plans to intern at Marvell Technology then return here for a masters degree in electrical engineering under Dr. Sullivan helping him his research in quantum simulation. Brandon would like to thank Dr. Johnson for his help

with advising the IEEE club, and think the other officers that supported the club!



COMPUTER SCIENCE

Lacey Hunt

Lacey is a senior, graduating with her Bachelors degree in Computer Science and a minor in Mathematics this Spring. She is a Coeur d'Alene local, and is heavily involved in her local community, church, and family. She has engaged in undergraduate research through a majority of her undergraduate career. She has completed projects including a Recovery Mechanism for Real-Time Precision Agriculture Sensor Networks, Integration of Control for Diverse Multi-Robot Systems, and Precision Agriculture Adoption and Integration Case Study; presenting results at various regional, national, and international conferences. She is currently working on an Artificial Intelligence genetic algorithm to optimize training datasets for machine vision systems. This summer, she plans to present the results of

this project at the European Conference on Precision Agriculture and further research on communication protocols for wireless sensing systems. She considers herself blessed to be surrounded by an incredible support system and mentor network.



COMPUTER SCIENCE

Ian King

A graduating senior from Pasco, WA with dual B.S. degrees in Computer Science and Cybersecurity, I am interested in the intersection of software engineering and secure design. Professionally, I have worked on projects ranging from ransomware testbed analysis to web app development at the Idaho National Laboratory and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory. At the University of Idaho, I have been closely involved with and held leadership positions in the Cyber Defense Club, Climbing Club, and Association for Computing Machinery chapter. After graduating I plan to continue my education and pursue a position in the federal workforce to

increase the stability of critical infrastructure at all scales.



ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

Ian Yang

Ian was born and raised in Monmouth, Oregon. He is pursuing a degree in electrical engineering with minors in mathematics and computer science. He currently works as an intern at Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories.



MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

Shay Albrecht

Shay is a ME student who transferred from Spokane Falls Community College. He achieved a Certificate in Aerospace along with his bachelor's and associate's degrees and plans to pursue engineering small commuter aircraft in the future. After graduation, Shay will move to Sandpoint with his wife Sydney and work at an aircraft fatigue-testing company, Z-AERO.



MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

Lydia Beardsley

Lydia is from Caldwell, Idaho and is graduating in Mechanical Engineering. She discovered engineering through a competitive robotics class in high school and has been hooked ever since! While at the U of I, she's been President of the Society of Women Engineers and the Tau Beta Pi Honor Society, served as an Engineering Ambassador and Tutor, completed a Co-op Educational Internship, contributed to multiple research projects, and studied Sustainability in The Netherlands. She plans to pursue graduate studies in Sustainable Engineering related to design, transportation, and instrumentation and envisions herself working in a climate research institute one day. In her free time, she enjoys time with friends, attempting new recipes, exercising through yoga, lifting, and running, learning new languages, being out in nature, and engaging in the Moscow community. Her life goals

include international living, becoming a polyglot, cultivating a food garden, running a 5K, painting more landscapes, and sampling every cuisine she can.



MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

Jacob Flick

I grew up on a small ranch in Gooding, Idaho working with my dad. I spent a lot of time working with agricultural equipment and had always been interested in math, physics, and agricultural/environmental sciences. Especially through high school my involvement in FFA and other organizations pointed me towards my mechanical engineering major and minor in agricultural systems management. I was involved in many extracurriculars at the University of Idaho including the trap shooting club, soil judging, Greek life, and intramurals. I plan to continue my pursuit of a career in agricultural machine design by pursuing a masters degree in Biological Systems Engineering at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



DRS. EDWIN & SUSAN ODOM OUTSTANDING STUDENT IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING AWARD

Cole Bailey

I grew up in Nampa, Idaho, in a family of University of Idaho graduates. From a young age, I raced dirt bikes, rode mountain bikes, and disassembled everything I owned to see its inner-workings. That curiosity led me to mechanical engineering. In my studies, ME464 and ME290 were my favorite courses. I have had the privilege to mentor ME290 for two years, helping younger students with the fundamentals of SolidWorks.

In the fall of 2025, I will begin graduate studies at the University of Idaho and continue working in Dr. Perry's Assistive Robotics Lab. During my time as an undergraduate, I've contributed to the redesign of lightweight wearable exoskeletons for stroke rehabilitation. This research has been extremely rewarding, especially seeing the direct impact of our work through subject testing.

I am deeply grateful to the faculty, friends, and family who have helped me get to this point in my academic journey. I wouldn't be here without them. Go Vandals!



DRS. EDWIN & SUSAN ODOM OUTSTANDING STUDENT IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING AWARD

Cade Christensen

I have lived in Idaho for my entire life. Most of my time before college was spent racing motocross which I have been doing for 14 years now. The sport allowed me to travel and race across the country and instilled in me a love for everything racing and engines. My love of math and physics plus these experiences drove me to pursue a degree in Mechanical Engineering here at U of I. When I came to the university I joined the fraternity of Phi Delta Theta, which I am still proud member of today, and have spent the last four years getting the best college experience I could have hoped for. My time at U of I has been filled with challenging experiences, meeting new people, and exploring who I want to become, and I am excited to move on and see what new challenges await me.

2025
COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING EXPO AWARD WINNERS

BEST OF SHOW

Zink Dam Recreational Whitewater Feature

Amber Graves - Civil Engineering
Calvin Connelly - Civil Engineering
Matt Montrose - Civil Engineering

Maximizing Value Captured from Produced Water

Kate Bouse - Chemical Engineering
Maren Mackey - Chemical Engineering
Sarah Pecha - Chemical Engineering
Leiden Huber - Chemical Engineering

Purpleframe: Vulnerability and Security Testing Framework

Claire Westby - Cybersecurity
Rebecca Smith - Cybersecurity
Nathan Hampton - Computer Science
Meghan Nulf - Computer Science

BEST TECHNICAL PRESENTATIONS

Lever Drag Single Action Offshore Fishing Reel

Cade Christensen - Mechanical Engineering
Logan McCallie - Mechanical Engineering

Virtual Professor

Ankit Paudel - Computer Science
Sohan Lama - Computer Science
Shubham Gupta - Computer Science

High Efficiency Solar Cells

Connor Denson - Electrical Engineering
Junhua Gu - Electrical Engineering
Julienne Sophia Pacquing - Computer Engineering
Jennie Tafoya - Computer Science

Automated Ring/Mount Crossbolt Press

Cole Bailey - Mechanical Engineering
Preston Bielenberg - Mechanical Engineering
Jacob Flick - Mechanical Engineering
Mason DeCola - Mechanical Engineering
John Dorr - Electrical Engineering

BEST BOOTH PRESENTATIONS

Bull Run Filtration - Active Treatment System Design

McKinley Fulk - Civil Engineering
Isabel Huggins - Civil Engineering
Sterling Beasley - Civil Engineering

Microchip Clean Room Virtual Reality Simulation

Tryston Jimenez - Computer Science
Ibrahim Mansour - Computer Science
Tracy Rountree - Computer Science

Portable Chair Life Assist

Joshua Planting - Mechanical Engineering
Gavin Wickens - Electrical Engineering
Samuel Mbah - Mechanical Engineering
Jonathan Stark - Electrical Engineering

Incoming Radio Signal Direction Finding using an Antenna Array

Emery Baker - Electrical Engineering
Jayden Sherman - Electrical Engineering
Victor Vargas - Computer Science
Shreeya Pradhan - Computer Science
Zaiden Espe - Computer Science

Reusable Mold for Nuclear Fuel Rod Casting

Trenton Flansburg - Mechanical Engineering
Ashton Herrick - Mechanical Engineering
Joshua McKenna - Mechanical Engineering
Alexander Pare - Mechanical Engineering

Forklift Overhead Guard Vibration Reduction

Ryder Fleming - Mechanical Engineering
Koji Becker - Mechanical Engineering
Cruz Flores - Mechanical Engineering
Hylton Reber - Mechanical Engineering

PEOPLE'S CHOICE

Silent & Smooth Single-Use Speculum

Isabelle Dingel - Biological Engineering
Christina Mai - Biological Engineering
Oaklee Woolstenhulme - Mechanical Engineering
Natalie Zender - Mechanical Engineering

SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPIONS



Kapil Poudel

I am Kapil Poudel, a junior year Mechanical Engineering student at the University of Idaho and Vice President of the Nepali Student Association. My passion for sustainability began in Nepal, where I managed a multi-agricultural farm and reduced waste through eco-friendly practices. At the university, I have continued that mission by leading projects like a closed-loop water system that improved filtration efficiency and a UAV design that reduces agricultural emissions. I believe innovation and environmental responsibility go hand in hand. As a Grand Challenge Scholar and recipient of multiple scholarships, I have used every opportunity to grow as a sustainability advocate. My leadership roles-mentoring international students and organizing cultural programs-have helped me amplify diverse voices in sustainability. I aim to apply engineering solutions to real-world challenges and bring clean energy to remote communities. Sustainability is not just a goal for me; it is a responsibility I carry with pride and purpose.

Shariar Talukder

Hello, I am Shariar Talukder, an international undergraduate student at the University of Idaho majoring in Mechanical Engineering and Virtual Technology & Design. I've been building robots since I was a kid in Bangladesh, tinkering with scraps and learning electronics from early YouTube videos. Over the years, I've designed everything from DIY 3D printers to autonomous agricultural robots. My team and I earned second place at the ASABE 2024 Robotics Competition, and I was a nominee for NASA Space Apps in 2019 and 2020. Right now, I'm working on Krishi-Bot, a precision agriculture robot that combines hyperspectral, thermal, RGB, LiDAR, and depth cameras with smart sampling arms and AI-based analytics. I thrive on hands-on, interdisciplinary challenges and love solving problems through mechatronics, PCB design, IoT networks, and computer vision. When I need a break from tech, I unwind with art music. I'm passionate about reimagining education to include more project-based learning.

2025
COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING OUTSTANDING FACULTY & STAFF



OUTSTANDING TECHNICAL STAFF AWARD

Mary Everett

Mary Everett is a Research Scientist in the Department of Computer Science on the Coeur d'Alene campus, and also serves as the Associate Director of the Center for Intelligent Industrial Robotics. Her research focuses on automation, wireless sensor networks, and artificial intelligence for precision agriculture and manufacturing. She helps run the undergraduate research laboratory on the Coeur d'Alene campus and oversees a variety of projects, including sensorizing parts of Sandpoint Organic Agriculture Center, developing explainable AI models, and building solar power setups. She also runs the summer Robotics, Automation, and AI series of workshops to help students and industry members gain hands-on

skills.



OUTSTANDING ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF AWARD

Kathryn Schiffelbein

Katie works as the Director of Strategic Programs and Student Success in the Micron Student Center. She focuses her work around building programs for students to find a sense of belonging, create connection, and develop personal/professional skills. When away from the office, you'll find Katie walking the arboretum with her little kiddo and learning to grow a flower garden.



OUTSTANDING TEACHING AWARD

JJ Petersen

JJ Petersen is a Senior Instructor for the College of Engineering, where he teaches courses general engineering courses such as Statics, Dynamics, and Mechanics of Materials. He earned both his undergrad and graduate degrees in Civil Engineering from the University of Idaho. He is passionate about making engineering concepts clear, practical, and engaging for students. JJ's favorite part of his job is when he gets the chance to travel with students both nationally and internationally. Outside the classroom, JJ enjoys life on the Palouse with his wife Emily, their three-year-old son DJ, and their eight-month-old daughter Corrie.



DEAN LARRY & NICOLE STAUFFER EARLY CAREER FACULTY AWARD

Jagdish Patel

Dr. Jagdish Patel joined the Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering as a tenure-track Assistant Professor in January 2023. He holds a bachelor's degree in Pharmacy and a master's degree in Drug Discovery. Dr. Patel earned his Ph.D. in Computational Chemistry from the Italian Institute of Technology in Genoa, Italy.

In 2015, he began his postdoctoral training at the Institute for Modeling Collaboration and Innovation (IMCI) at the University of Idaho. He was promoted to Research Assistant Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences in 2018.

Dr. Patel leads an interdisciplinary and collaborative research program at the intersection of molecular modeling and artificial intelligence. His lab focuses on developing and applying computational tools to design proteins and therapeutic drugs, predict protein function and reveal underlying mechanisms, with particular emphasis on opsin proteins involved in vision.



MID-CAREER FACULTY AWARD

Michael Maughan

Michael Maughan is an Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering. A proud Vandal, he holds B.S. and M.S. degrees from the UI, and a Ph.D. in Materials Engineering from Purdue University. Prior to joining the academic ranks, Mike worked in industry as a mechanical engineer and manager. His research expertise is in material behavior and microstructure-properties relationships for advanced manufacturing processes. Among other projects, he continues to work as PI of a \$4M grant from the National Science Foundation focused on developing new

technology for affordable housing using additive construction and bio-based materials. This four-year grant has engaged 13 faculty and over 35 graduate students and post-docs in two states. He developed a popular new course on manufacturing and has been active in reimagining several existing courses for the digital learning era. From 2015-2022, he was the faculty advisor for the UI ASME student section and has led numerous infrastructure projects within the Mechanical Engineering Department.



OUTSTANDING FACULTY AWARD

Ata Zadehghol

Dr. Ata Zadehghol is a nationally recognized scholar and educator in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) at the University of Idaho. He joined the university in 2014 as an Assistant Professor, bringing over a decade of industry experience in advanced microelectronics--including positions at Intel and AMD--and a Ph.D. in ECE from the U. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. At U of I, he leads innovative research in signal/power integrity for micro- and opto-electronic systems, as well as AI-driven modeling of stochastic electromagnetic phenomena. As founder and director of the Applied/Computational Electromagnetics and Signal/Power

Integrity Lab, he has secured over \$1 million in research funding from NSF, Micron, SEL, and NASA. A dedicated teacher and mentor, he has developed a broad range of graduate and undergraduate courses and guided numerous students. His service includes leadership in curriculum, promotion and tenure, faculty hiring, and bylaws committees. He will be promoted to Full Professor in Fall 2025.