



University of Idaho
College of Engineering

University of Idaho College of Engineering
DEAN'S NEWSLETTER



Many of you have heard about the [University of Idaho's historic freshman class](#). The number of first-time Vandals enrolled this fall is impressive, and, as you might expect, the College of Engineering led the way in new students!

Interest and engagement in degree programs in the College of Engineering is strong, with our college **enrollment growing overall more than 8.8% in fall 2024**, including an **11% increase in first-year students** and **21.9% increase in women** pursuing engineering and computer science degrees. These students hail from across the U.S., and for many, they are the first generation in their families to attend college.

Strong persistence rates in the college are made possible thanks to our industry-sponsored and supported [College of Engineering Mentorship Program](#), our [EXPO VIP](#) program for high school students, and

community-building organizations like our [Society of Women Engineers student chapter](#). These efforts recently set us apart as [Idaho Business Review's only higher education institution to be recognized as an Empowering Women honoree](#).

College of Engineering programs have risen 53 spots in U.S. News and World Report overall engineering graduate rankings over the past two years, thanks in large part to our strategic focus around high-performing faculty research, elevating our graduation rates, graduate performance and peer assessment scores. Simply put, the work we do is more noticed, celebrated and recognized for producing quality graduates and research impacting Idaho and beyond.

Our engineering and computer science programs make up the third [most sought after degree programs at the University of Idaho](#), and [more Vandals graduate in STEM fields at U of I](#) than at any other public university in Idaho.

Our unstoppable growth these past years is impacted greatly by our deep alumni connection, robust advisory board engagement, and more than 100 years of industry partnership. Our college works closely with industry partners and alumni leadership to stay on the cutting-edge of rapidly evolving technology advancements and industry standards. Influenced heavily by industry needs, our college is leading the state in integrating topics like [robotics and artificial intelligence](#), [semiconductor design and fabrication](#), [cybersecurity](#), [aerospace](#) and [biomedical engineering](#) into our available courses, degree programs, certificates and research focus areas.

Our students graduate career-ready and professionally trained to meet current workforce needs. **Ninety-three percent of engineering students graduate with a job** or continue their education, and our university boasts the state's [highest overall graduation rate of any public 4-year institution](#).

Please join us in celebrating the University of Idaho College of Engineering's remarkable achievements on social media! Please share and engage:

Share on LinkedIn

Share on Facebook

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Suzie Long

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U of I earns computer-aided design world record in SolidWorks expertise



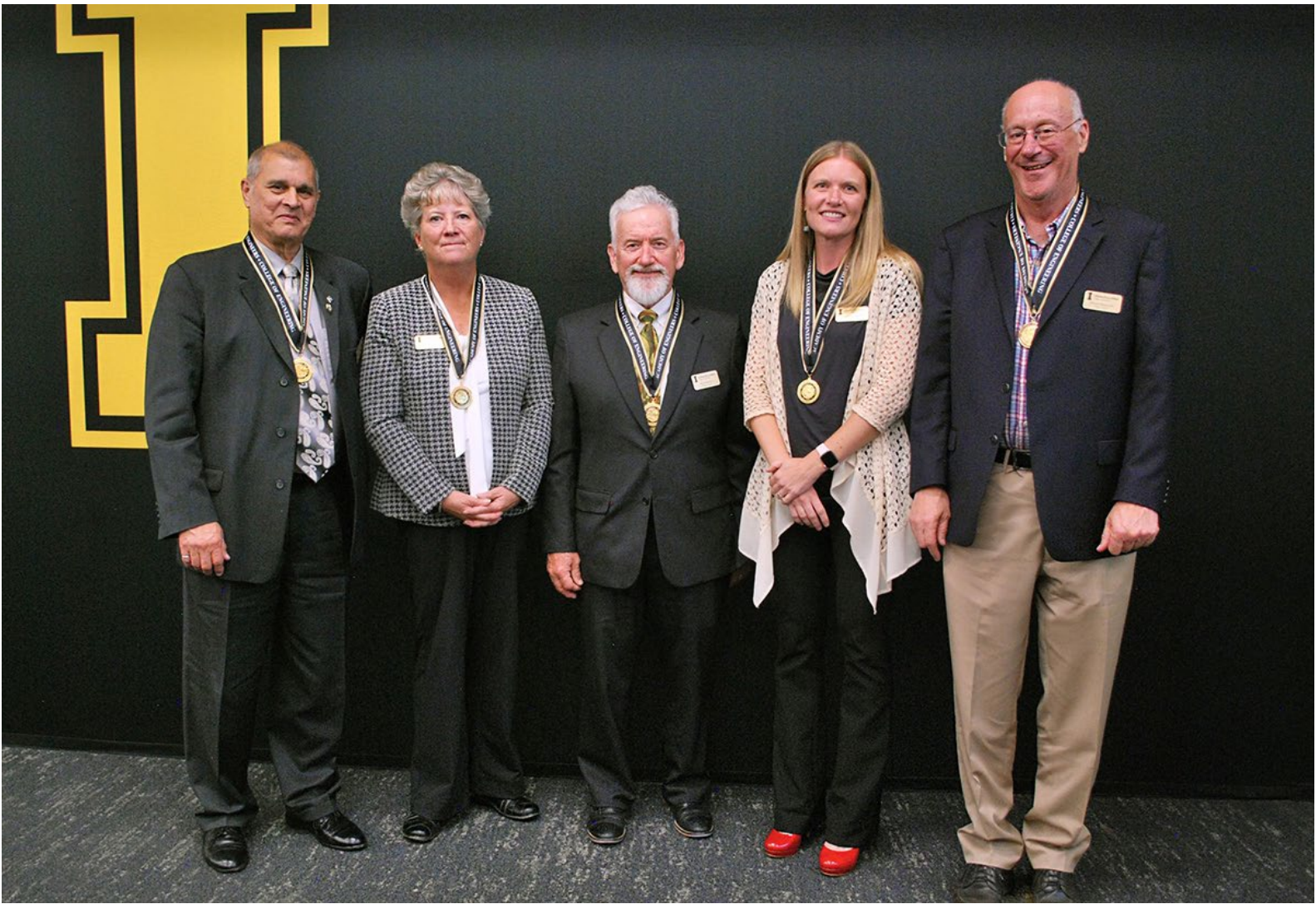
The University of Idaho College of Engineering was recently recognized by multinational software corporation Dassault Systèmes for its world record in producing Certified SolidWorks Experts (CSWEs), computer-aided design (CAD) professionals able to solve practically any modeling problem.

Of the 7,800 CSWEs worldwide, U of I has produced 84 graduates with the certification currently working in industry and academia, more than any educational institution or commercial company.

U of I students can start building CAD skill sets using SolidWorks their first year on campus and throughout their academic careers. Courses based in mechanical engineering use design and problem-solving methodology to model requirements, develop concepts and realize prototypes.

[**Learn More About the Mechanical Engineering Department**](#)

U of I Academy of Engineers Welcomes 2024 Class



The University of Idaho College of Engineering inducted six members into its Academy of Engineers, U of I alumni and others recognized for their personal contributions to engineering achievement, leadership, education, service to the profession and advancement of society.

The academy celebrates engineering leaders for their lifetime commitment to advancing the quality of life through achievement, high ethical standards, innovation and commitment. Inductees were recognized at a ceremony on the U of I Moscow campus earlier this month.

The 2024 Academy of Engineers inductees are:

Steven Beyerlein

Steven Beyerlein joined the University of Idaho in 1987 and worked as a mechanical engineering faculty member for 35 years, facilitating the creation and growth of the University of Idaho's nationally recognized multi-disciplinary capstone design program.

Kenneth Mays

Kenneth Mays paved the way for then TriQuint Semiconductor, now Qorvo, to enter the cell phone market with his early MESFET Power Amplifier. He is now a senior radio frequency integrated circuit design engineer for The Boeing Company's Solid State Electronics Development Organization in Tukwila, Washington. He is a Senior Member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers.

Michael Patterson

Michael Patterson led the effort to characterize hazardous chemical and radioactive constituents in the Idaho National Laboratory's high-level waste tank farm, including demonstration and deployment of a large robotic arm and sample chamber.

Steve Renfro

Steve Renfro's professional journey at Micron Technology lasted 34 years, where he progressed through various leadership roles in product engineering, test engineering and ultimately serving as senior director of Micron's Global Assembly Operations.

Sara VanTassel

After graduating from U of I, Sara's first job was leading the R&D team that invented the tooling for the one-piece fuselage technology that enabled enable the 787 composite airplane. She was appointed president of Sedron Technologies when it was founded in 2014. She holds multiple U.S. patents related to water and wastewater treatment technologies.

Jan Welch

Jan Welch was integral in the structural design of Boise's 350,000-square-foot, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design-certified Ada County Courthouse. Over the last 40 years, she has been responsible for the structural design of buildings across Idaho, including schools, commercial buildings for offices and retail services, heavy industrial buildings for military use and institutional facilities such as jails and prisons.

Vandals Attend SWE National Conference



Our Society of Women Engineers U of I Chapter recently attended the world's largest conference for women in engineering and technology, the SWE National Conference in Chicago.

Vandal engineers met industry leaders and connected with fellow SWEsters across the country. The trip was made possible thanks to

support from Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories (SEL), POWER Engineers, Integra Resources Corp., and U of I engineering departments.

Our U of I SWE chapter empowers women to succeed and be recognized for their achievements as engineers and leaders.

[Learn More about SWE](#)

University of Idaho students work to improve irrigation access in Bolivia



University of Idaho students are working to improve irrigation water access, retrieval and storage methods in the rural community of Potrerros, Bolivia.

Representing the U of I College of Engineering's Humanitarian Engineering Corps (HEC), students work directly with farmers and community members

to identify infrastructure improvements that meet community needs.

Potreros receives no rainfall during the dry season, which lasts some years from July to January. The community relies completely on nearby springs for irrigation and drinking water. Pipes from the stream currently in use are often clogged, which impacts access.

[Read the News Release](#)

[View Photos on Facebook](#)

Student-Designed Automated Machine to Save Local Company \$300K



Photo Credit: CDA Press

University of Idaho Coeur d'Alene students collaborated with North Idaho College to design an automated machine that will help a local company save \$300,000 annually!

The Smart Plank Inspection for Navigation for Timber Evaluation and Recognition, known as Project S.P.L.I.N.T.E.R., uses machine vision to find flaws in cedar grilling planks and choose acceptable planks to pass through for grilling plank production at Wildwood Grilling in Ponderay, Idaho.

[Watch the Video on LinkedIn](#)

Vandal Engineers Watch Europa Clipper Launch



Engineering seniors JJ Graves and Aayushi Gupta witnessed the launch of NASA's largest spacecraft, the Europa Clipper, this month aboard a SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket at Kennedy Space Center in Florida this month.

"Seeing the rocket lift off into space felt like witnessing a pinnacle of human achievement, a reminder of the limitless potential of engineering to push the boundaries of what's possible," said Gupta. "It wasn't just about sending a spacecraft to Europa — it was about the teamwork, precision, and advanced technology that made it happen, elements that I'm drawn to in both aerospace and robotics."

The Europa Clipper will travel 1.8 billion miles to reach Jupiter in April 2030, making close to 50 flybys of the planet's moon Europa. Europa is known for its enormous subsurface ocean that may have conditions to support life.

[Learn More About U of I Aerospace Training Programs](#)

Encourage New Vandals to Attend Engineer Like a Vandal Virtual Events



Our college's series of Engineer Like a Vandal virtual events will be held Dec. 4 and Feb. 4. Future Vandals can zoom chat with current College of Engineering students and recent graduates, and discover our hands-on, technical degrees and nationally recognized programs.

Registration is free, and events are open to all high school seniors

interested in undergraduate engineering and computer science degrees at U of I.

[Learn More About the Series](#)

College of Engineering Social Media



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