Student and Faculty Achievements 2014

Our extraordinary engineering students have achieved tremendous accomplishments both in- and outside of the classroom.

- Three College of Engineering students earned Board of Trustees awards for their high academic achievements in 2014 – each graduating with a 4.0 GPA. Maytham Alzayer, (chemical engineering) and Nathan Langolf (computer science and a member of the Honors College) were honored in April. Justin Fila (computer science and a member of the Honors College) was honored in December.
- John Suddard-Bangsund (an Honors College senior majoring in materials science and engineering and interdisciplinary humanities) and David Zoltowski (an Honors College senior majoring in electrical engineering) have been awarded the prestigious Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship. Zoltowski was also one of MSU’s two Rhodes Scholar nominees (together with Mario Gutierrez, a chemical engineering senior, who was also nominated for the Marshall Scholarship).
- Matt Nizol and Emily Dolson, both current graduate students in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, were among the prestigious National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship winners for 2014. Several other College of Engineering graduates will be pursuing NSF fellowships at other institutions.
- Claudio Calderon, a graduate student in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering received the 2013 Exemplary Summer Research Citation from the National Center for Institutional Diversity (NCID) and Institute for Social Research.
- Computer science senior David Kircos, together with his fellow intern (Hunter Rosenblume from Georgia Tech) won the $5,000 grand prize at #hackDPL, a 24-hour hackathon competition to benefit the Detroit Public Library (DPL). The pair developed a mobile application for easier access to library’s expansive operation.
- Markus Downey, a PhD student in chemical engineering, was one of three students recognized during the Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE) Automotive Composites Conference & Exhibition in September. His research on advancing fiber-reinforced polymer composites earned him a scholarship award and an opportunity.
to present his research at the 2015 international conference.

- **Darwin Warga Kane**, a junior majoring in materials science and engineering was named vice president for communications of the National Association of Engineering Student Councils
- **Eric Vasko**, a senior in chemical engineering, received an honorable mention award in the American Institute of Chemical Engineers Individual Student Design Competition.
- A bicycle-powered thresher built by four mechanical engineering seniors (Joe Alajawi, Tyler Jezowski, Adam Kluz, and Adam Lyman), won the People’s Choice Award at the Broad College of Business 2014 MBA & Undergraduate Pitch competition. The hand-built thresher, designed as part of Brian Thompson’s Humanitarian Engineering class, headed to Guatemala in November.
- Alumnus **Mike Sadler** (AES ’13), became the first Spartan in MSU history to earn Academic All-American honors four consecutive years. He was also a national finalist for the Campbell Trophy—the nation’s top scholar-athlete in college football.

In addition, 20 College of Engineering students earned Academic All-Big Ten honors as student-athletes with a GPA of 3.0 or higher. For Spring Semester they included: Men’s Baseball team member **Josh Buchalski** (Sop., EE); Men’s Tennis team members **Paul Heeder** (Jr., ME) and **Drew Lied** (Sr., AES); Men’s Track & Field team members **Eric Buday** (Jr., ME), **Ben Carruthers** (Sr., ME), **Vinny Gjokaj** (So, CSE) **Jacob McCadden** (So., BAE), **Drake Veitenheimer** (Sr., CE), and **Austin Wissler** (Jr., BA); Women’s Rowing team member **Lori Comer** (So., AES); Women’s Track & Field team members **Lindsay Clark** (Jr., ME), **Emma Drenth** (Sr., ME), **Kathleen Landwehr** (Jr., ME), and **Julia Otwell** (Sr., BAE). For Fall Semester they included: Men’s Cross Country team members **Eric Buday** (Sr., ME), **Benjamin Carruthers** (Sr., ME), **Drake Veitenheimer** (Sr., CE), and **Austin Wissler** (Sr., BAE); Women’s Cross Country team members **Lindsay Clark** (Sr., ME), **Emma Drenth** (Sr., ME), **Katie Landwehr** (Sr., ME), and **Julia Otwell** (Sr., BAE); football team member **Michael Geiger** (So., Engineering no-preference); Men’s Soccer team member **Ryan Scott** (So., BAE); and Women’s Soccer team member **Lisa Vogel** (Sr., AES).

The ingenuity and talents of two teams from the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering helped bring home top honors from this year’s Regional Steel Bridge and Concrete Canoe Competition. The Spartan Spanners Steel Bridge team placed first and the Concrete Canoe team finished in second place overall.

The robust racer created by this year’s MSU Baja Racing team successfully completed the harsh terrain racecourse at the 2014 Baja SAE Collegiate Design Series competition – the first MSU car to do so since 2010 – placing 36th out of 100 teams.

The Spartan Formula SAE team placed sixth at the 2014 International Formula SAE competition in Lincoln, Neb. in June. At Michigan International Speedway in May, they took a second place in business presentation, 15th in design and 43rd overall.

The MSU Unmanned Systems Team landed in the Top 20 in its first-ever SAE Aero Design East competition. The team finished 10th internationally in design (micro class); 11th in design report, and 17th overall.

Mechanical engineering sophomore **Alex Von Mach** and his business partner, economics senior Everet Bommarito, created a new type of hockey neck guard that took third place honors at the highly competitive Accelerate Michigan Innovation Competition in Detroit in November.

Our faculty and staff have been recognized by countless national organizations and agencies, as well as by the University community, for their significant academic, research and career accomplishments. The following are just a handful of the many successes achieved this year:

- **Peter Lillehoj**, assistant professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, received a National Science Foundation (NSF) CAREER Award in January for his work to develop wearable biosensors.
- **Linos J. Jacovides**, professor of electrical and computer engineering, was the first recipient of the IEEE Transportation Technologies Award.
- Former Dean **Satish Udpa**, MSU executive vice president for administrative services and professor of electrical and computer engineering, was named a National Academy of Inventors Fellow in recognition of his work and patents that span the fields of manufacturing and medicine.
- **Volodymyr Tarabara**, associate professor of civil and environmental engineering, has been named a Fulbright Scholar and will conduct research on water quality control in the Republic of Georgia.
- **Richard Lunt**, assistant professor of chemical engineering and materials science, has been awarded the prestigious Camille and Henry Dreyfus Award in Environmental Chemistry. The highly competitive $120,000...
grant adds a postdoctoral researcher to Lunt’s research team for two years.

- **Bruce Dale**, professor of chemical engineering and materials science, was once again the top-ranked academic (ranked 14th) on *Biofuels Digest’s* list of the Top 100 People in the Bioeconomy. This marks his fourth year on the list, as voted by the readers of Biofuels Digest and the Digest editorial board.

- **Ranjan Mukherjee**, professor of mechanical engineering and electrical and computer engineering, was recognized by the American Society for Mechanical Engineering (ASME) with the 2014 Charles Stark Draper Innovative Practice Award.

- **Arun Ross**, an associate professor of computer science and engineering, received the 2014 J.K. Aggarwal Prize from the International Association for Pattern Recognition (IAPR) in August.

- University Distinguished Professor of Computer Science and Engineering **Anil Jain** was named 2014 MSU Innovator of the Year for his work in biometrics.

- **Shanker Balasubramaniam**, a professor of electrical and computer engineering and **Christina Chan**, the George W. Bissell Professor in Chemical Engineering & Materials Science and Computer Science & Engineering, were among 10 MSU faculty members named as 2014 Beal Outstanding Faculty (formerly Distinguished Faculty Award) at the MSU All-University Awards ceremony in February.

- **John Foss**, professor of mechanical engineering, was recognized with the 2014 MSU Award for Outstanding Service to Study Abroad.

- **Laura Dillon**, professor of Computer Science and Engineering, and **Drew Kim**, assistant to the dean for the Office of Recruitment and K-12 Outreach, received the MSU Service-Learning and Civic Engagement Award for their exemplary work in the areas of curricular, academic and co-curricular civic engagement.

- Professors of mechanical engineering **Tom Pence** and **John Foss** co-chaired the 17th U.S. National Congress of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics, hosting more than 900 of their peers from around the world in June.

- **Yue Qi**, associate professor of chemical engineering and materials science, served as symposium chair for the 40th Annual American Vacuum Society Symposium in August. Organizing committee members were Qi, **Richard Lunt**, **Thomas Schuelke**, and **Pilar Herrera-Fierro**.

- **Anil Jain**, University Distinguished Professor of computer science and engineering, has been tapped to strengthen forensic science at the national level. He was among the first 17 appointments to the new Forensic Science Standards Board developed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice.

- **Percy Pierre** was included in the Library of Congress "HistoryMakers" video archives in 2014.

- **Robert Hubbard**, professor emeritus of mechanical engineering, was inducted into the Sports Car Club of America Hall of Fame in March. He was honored for his development of the HANS safety device that is credited with saving the lives of countless racecar drivers since the mid-1980s.

- Academic specialist **Laura Genik** and associate professor of chemical engineering and materials science **Carl Lira** were among 77 of the nation's most innovative, engineering educators invited to the National Academy of Engineering (NAE) Frontiers of Engineering Education (FOEE) symposium in October.

- Faculty honored by the 2014 Withrow Teaching Excellence Awards for their teaching, advising and mentoring skills included: **Christopher M. Saffron**, **Dennis Miller**, **Neeraj Buch**, **Anil Jain**, **Donnie Reinhard**, and **Tamara Reid Bush**. The Distinguished Scholar Senior Award was presented to **Christina Chan**, and the Distinguished Scholar Junior Award was presented to **Guoliang Xing**. The Exceptional Service Award recognized **Thomas Wolff**, and the Student Service Award went to **Timothy Hinds**.

Of course, many of our alumni attain notable achievements each year, as well. Two that stand out for recognition of their career contributions to society are:

- **Charles Bachman** (ME ’48), who received the National Medal of Technology and Innovation from President Obama at a White House ceremony in November. The honor is one of the country’s highest for achievement and leadership in science and technology.

- In September, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) dedicated a conference room in Washington, D.C., to remember the leadership and career contributions of **Philip Akers** (ME ’65). Akers, who died in May, was recognized for his 35 years with the Department of Transportation in Aircraft Certification Services.
Related Website: [Year-end Message 2014](https://www.egr.msu.edu/news/2014/12/22/student-and-faculty-achievements-2014)