The Center for Spartan Engineering within the College of Engineering opened in 2007 to support student success. Since its inception, The Center has become a hub of activity, offering a comprehensive portfolio of student services.

Whether it’s a young person learning about an engineering career through a k–12 activity, a Spartan Engineer seeking out-of-classroom opportunities, or an alum seeking career networking, The Center is their resource of choice.

Services for students are readily accessible with one stop at The Center. “Students know that if they are seeking information on a program, looking to make contact with industry, wanting information regarding an event, needing to identify a source or connection, or requesting support in other areas, they merely need to come into The Center,” says Garth Motschenbacher, College of Engineering director of employer relations. “This one-stop resource is not only for students, but for employers, faculty/staff, and alumni.”

One of the unique characteristics of this premier facility is the invaluable Career Peer team. This knowledgeable, experienced cadre of students is representative of every class level and engineering major. The Career Peers are dedicated, trained students providing helpful assistance in many matters.

Engineering Expo 2008 was held on February 21 in the Engineering Building. Described as a “laid-back career fair,” the annual event provides a venue for students to explore career options, network, and gain advice about career preparation. It’s also an opportunity to secure co-op, internship, or full-time positions. More than 120 organizations registered for the event, and about 1,000 students attended. Bradley Graca (right), electrical engineering senior, met with Peter Strom to discuss full-time employment opportunities with GE. Graca will graduate in May 2008.
The Center for Spartan Engineering is the center of student life for the college. K–12 outreach, recruitment, career advisement, career exploration, employer connections, alumni networking, faculty links — The Center has it all.”

GARTH MOTSCHENBACHER, DIRECTOR OF EMPLOYER RELATIONS

They provide information regarding co-op, internship, and undergraduate research opportunities; serve as liaisons between employers and current and prospective students; write the Spartan Engineering News; and support electronic communications for the college.

The Career Peer team is just one of the powerful resources available to Spartan Engineers. “Helping students tailor their educational experience to achieve their future career goals is one of the core values of The Center,” states Bernadette Friedrich, College of Engineering director of student advancement. “In particular, we assist them with out-of-classroom opportunities such as co-ops, internships, alternative spring break experiences, and other formal and informal connections with employers.”

Engineering Career Expo is one of these opportunities. Held during National Engineers Week in February, the event gives students a chance to meet with employers from the manufacturing and technology sectors. It’s an ideal venue for exploring career options while networking with potential future employers. Other Center-sponsored events include career and professional development seminars held each semester, regularly scheduled workshops to sharpen interview skills and job search strategies, “five-minute résumé critiques” that provide quick and easily accessible résumé advice, and many experiential education opportunities.

According to Friedrich, students gain invaluable information when they participate in out-of-classroom experiences like “alternative spring break.” Instead of taking a break, Spartan engineering students in their freshman and sophomore years apply for the opportunity to visit multiple companies during the week. This year, students will travel to meet engineers and other company representatives from corporations such as GE, Norfolk Southern, and Alcoa. A commitment to robust career development resources and opportunities creates a forward-looking educational environment for Spartan engineering students.

This is what The Center is all about — facilitating connections between students, faculty and staff, employers, and alumni. Hence the name “The Center for Spartan Engineering,” says Motschenbacher.

To learn more about The Center and its activities, listen to the podcast at http://spartanpodcast.com/?p=390.

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