I always knew I wanted to be an engineer because I just like building things and have always been a tinkerer,” said Rich Cairns, 2005 graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. “UW-Platteville was appealing to me because of the small class sizes. I wanted to get to know my professors and have that hands-on experience.”

In addition to earning a bachelor’s in engineering physics and a minor in music, Cairns was involved in several extra-curricular activities. “I was the treasurer of the Society of Physics Students, and was also involved in ASME and IEEE.” As a percussionist, he was also involved in marching band, jazz ensemble, and jazz combo during his time at UW-Platteville. Cairns added that being involved in those clubs helped him develop valuable social skills and learn how to work with people in different majors.

While reflecting on those college experiences, Cairns recalled several UW-Platteville faculty members who were an inspiration to him. “I would tip my hat to Jerome Wilson. He got me into engineering physics and helped put me on a path. Sharon Pink helped me to stay on that path. Joe Caploe, my percussion instructor, opened my eyes to new concepts in art, and Doyle St. John, Hal Evenson, and Phil Young pushed me to do my best and helped me develop as an individual,” said Cairns. “I owe each of them a great deal of gratitude.”

After graduation, Cairns toured the United States and Canada with a national band and was also a self-employed project engineer. He is currently a Chief Research Engineer for the Office of Naval Research in the Plasma Physics Branch of the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington D.C. Conducting research on classified projects for the Department of Defense and NASA, Cairns has recently been involved with hypervelocity projectile launch and the electromagnetic railgun.

Married and the father of four, he continues to follow his passions playing live music in the D.C. and Baltimore area.
Greg A. Jewell is the President of Jewell Associates Engineers. Jewell came to UW-Platteville as a non-traditional student and said that, "UW-Platteville changed my outlook on our profession. The skills learned and connections made here have provided me with the confidence and opportunities to start Jewell Associates and work on some great projects which is something I am very proud of. By serving on the board, I can give back to the institution that provided me the education and, therefore, the opportunities that have served me so well over the years."

Special skills that Jewell brings to the board are leadership, strategic planning, and involvement.

Adam Kaiser is a 2013 industrial engineer from Kieler, Wisconsin, works as a Manufacturing Engineer with the John Deere Construction & Forestry Division. During his time at UW-Platteville, Kaiser was active in a number of organizations, including the Institute of Industrial Engineers, Alpha Pi Mu, and Tau Beta Pi National Honor Society. As a student, Kaiser led a team of students that facilitated the publication of the 2013 edition of the GEODE.

"I was able to witness and be a part of many changes on campus and want to be a part of future improvements." Kaiser will be able to provide valuable input on what employers like John Deere expect and need from graduates.

Skills that Kaiser will bring to the board are leadership, ownership, and creative thinking.

Brad Samz is a 2006 mechanical engineer from Greenville, Wisconsin. Upon graduation, Samz worked for General Electric and then in 2010 started working for Kimberly-Clark in Neenah, Wisconsin.

As a student, Samz was on the board for Tau Beta Phi Engineering Honor Society and served as president of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air Conditioning Engineers. Samz wanted to give back to the EMS department and thought this would be a great opportunity.

The purpose of the EMS Alumni Chapter, a subsidiary of the UW-Platteville Alumni Association, is to cultivate friendships and foster mutual aid among its members; advance the interests and standards of the engineering, mathematics, and science departments of the College of EMS; promote a mutually beneficial relationship between the university and its alumni; and receive, invest, and use gifts and contributions for the benefit of the College of Engineering, Mathematics and Science of UW-Platteville.

Alumni Events

FRIDAY, DEC. 5
UW-Platteville Night at the Dubuque Fighting Saints, Dubuque, Iowa

SATURDAY, DEC. 6
Athletic Hall of Fame, UW-Platteville campus

SATURDAY, DEC. 13
Commencement, UW-Platteville campus

FRIDAY–SUNDAY, JAN. 9–11
Kalahari Weekend Getaway, Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin
The Society of Automotive Engineers chapter at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville is a group of aspiring engineers who come together to design, build, and compete as a team in four collegiate design competitions.

One of those competitions, the Formula SAE, gets students out of the classroom and challenges them to apply textbook theories to design, build, test, and race a mini Formula 1 style race car for a specific target market. Teams then compete in design, cost, and business presentation competitions.

The UW-Platteville Formula Team recently placed 25th out of 80 teams overall at the weeklong international Formula Competition in Lincoln, Nebraska. The competition featured teams from across North America, as well as Mexico, Japan, India, and Brazil.

Brandyn Stapel, Vice President of SAE and senior mechanical engineering major from Nichols, Wisconsin, has been involved in the SAE for nearly three years and is the brake system captain of the Formula SAE team. "I was attracted to Formula because it’s the most like what I did at home,” said Stapel. “I grew up racing go-carts and have always been around motor sports.”

The Formula team meets weekly throughout the school year and several times during the summer to design and manufacture the project in the machine shop on campus. “Our designs are done before school even starts,” said Stapel.

While participation is time consuming, it’s a great opportunity to learn from experienced members. “In classes, you learn theory about engineering. Joining SAE, you actually get hands-on experience.” said Stapel, who also noted that employers in job interviews have brought up his experience in SAE. “A lot of it is directly applicable to the job you’ll have,” he said.

However, students who are not engineering majors can also benefit from involvement. “SAE prepares you not only for the automotive industry, but for any industry.” said Stapel.

The Formula SAE Team has already started working on their vehicles for next year. “It’s cool to see something that you’ve worked on all year go on the track,” said Stapel.

For more information about SAE, contact club advisor David Kunz at kunzsd@uwplatt.edu.
Changes in EE Department

This fall, the electrical engineering program offered a new course, Engineering Computation. The course will be a graduation requirement starting with incoming electrical engineering students enrolled in the fall 2014 semester.

“We designed EE 3210 Engineering Computation to fulfill two needs that were identified by our industrial constituents and our accreditation organization,” said Dr. Philip Sealy, Department Chair and Professor of electrical engineering. “Industry wanted our graduates to have more experience with MATLAB, and ABET wanted more real-life experience with applications of probability and statistics to electrical engineering problems.”

The course also includes an element of linear algebra. “We added a little linear algebra to the mix because it’s important for the students who work in the electronic controls area and the power systems area to see how linear algebra fits into the EE mix,” said Sealy.

In addition to the new course, the electrical engineering department also welcomes three new faculty members on board: Dr. Gholamreza Dehnavi, Dr. Mohammed Habibi, and Dr. William Hudson.

Student Spotlight
Joyce King

Joyce King, a senior software engineering major with a digital emphasis and a minor in math from Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, has found her passion in the College of Engineering, Mathematics and Science. “I’ve always excelled in math and science, so I looked into software engineering,” said King. “It combines both math and science with my longstanding interest in computers, so it’s the perfect fit.”

King is pleased with the route she has taken. “I chose UW-Platteville because it is a great engineering school, plus it’s about the same size as my hometown,” she said. “Also, all of the staff in the College of EMS have been really great throughout my education.”

King says she is especially grateful to the computer science and software engineering staff. “I feel like I’ve gotten to know the professors in my department really well over the years and they’re always willing to help me out if I have questions,” she said.

Aside from her studies at UW-Platteville, King is involved in Society of Women Engineers; Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Scholars; Tau Beta Pi; and the Platteville Gaming Association.
Dr. Dwight Klaassen arrived on campus in the fall of 1964 and he worked diligently in a variety of roles through his retirement in the spring of 2000. Initially, Klaassen was hired as the university’s first biochemist.

In addition to biochemistry, he taught a number of chemistry courses including General Chemistry, Chemistry for Engineers, and Organic Chemistry. Klaassen worked concurrently as the director of the Medical Technology Program at the time.

His subsequent roles included university director of experiential learning (cooperative education and internships), associate dean of Student Affairs, executive director of the UW-Platteville Foundation, director of development, director of University Advancement, and assistant chancellor for University Relations. "I’ve had a multitude of careers at UW-Platteville," said Klaassen. "I liked everything I did. It was an exciting time to be here. I had the opportunity to work for and with some wonderful people.”

During his tenure, the assets of the Foundation grew by 300 percent. Klaassen developed a number of programs that continue today, including the Phonathon, annual emeriti and retirees luncheon, and the Distinguished Service Award program.

Klaassen was also involved in faculty governance. His first opportunity was as chairman of the University Budget Commission and then the Academic Planning Council.

As part of his assistant dean of Student Affairs and director of experiential education responsibilities, Klaassen traveled throughout the region, visiting companies and obtaining cooperative education and internship positions for engineering students. "People didn’t realize we had industrial and mechanical engineering at the time and we were starting an electrical engineering program," he said.

When Klaassen and his wife arrived in Platteville in 1964, housing for faculty was in high demand. "They were bringing in 75 new faculty members and 500 new students every year," he said.

Since his retirement in 2000, Klaassen has been active, particularly in two areas. He writes family history books and also manages the Platteville Chorale and Platteville Children's Choir. He has been the President of the chorale since 1994.

"The chorale was established in 1975 and it initiated the Platteville Children’s Choir in 1989," he said. "The chorale includes approximately 50 adult singers from southwestern Wisconsin and the children’s choir is a program with about 120 children, grades 1–8, in four choirs.”
he said. “My students energize me and that’s why I love to teach.”

Civil engineering was Parker’s first choice as an undergraduate; however, a research project involving the treatment of wastewater swayed him to switch to environmental engineering. “I could see how that could make a difference,” he said.

Like many of his colleagues, Parker involves students in research projects. During the last few summers he has mentored students working with water runoff monitoring at Pioneer Farm.

With a few years of experience under his belt, Parker keeps in touch with some of his former students, and is able to see how far they have progressed. “That’s really what makes us special at UW-Platteville and certainly in our department,” he said. “We are always in contact with former students.”

Dr. Philip Parker

After more than 15 years at UW-Platteville, Dr. Philip Parker remains energized when he is able to teach. Parker was recently appointed the Assistant Dean for Outreach and New Ventures for the College of Engineering, Mathematics and Science. He is also a Professor of civil and environmental engineering and Program Coordinator for environmental engineering.

Parker began teaching at UW-Platteville in 1998. “I leave my classroom more invigorated than when I entered,” he said.

Deis, who joined the UW-Platteville faculty in 1999, earned his Bachelor of Science at Minnesota State University-Mankato and his master’s and doctorate degrees from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Besides teaching a variety of mathematics classes, Deis also helps prepare future math teachers.

He also serves as one of two faculty athletic representatives for the campus.

“‘I really enjoy working with the students, getting to know them, and helping those who are dedicated to learning. I am fortunate that I work with both the math department and the School of Education,’” he said. “I love that part, having students in the math method class and again as a student teacher. That is a lot of fun.”

Dr. Tim Deis, a Professor in the department of mathematics, is the 2014 recipient of the UW System Underkofler Award for Teaching Excellence.

The Underkofler Award, given since 1991, awards $2,500 to four winners in the UW System schools in the Alliant Energy coverage area. Winning nominees must display an uncommon commitment to teaching, employ especially effective teaching techniques, and enable particularly notable achievements by former students.

“My first reaction was surprise,” said Deis of his award. “There are so many dedicated and innovative instructors in our department. I am really embarrassed that I was singled out.”

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SAVE THE DATE!

WINTER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY AT UW-PLATTEVILLE

Friday, Jan. 9  Six professional development hours for Professional Engineers

Starting in 2014, Professional Engineers seeking to renew their license must complete at least 30 hours of approved PDHs in two years; two PDHs must be in the area of professional conduct and ethics, and at least 13 PDHs are to be obtained in real-time courses.

The Winter Professional Development Day at UW-Platteville will offer two PDHs in ethics, and all six hours of instruction will meet the real-time requirement. Participants will be able to choose between three tracks at any time. One track will focus on professional skills, including ethics, the second will be a general technical track. The third track will focus on power transmission and generator protection.

THE PROFESSIONAL SKILLS TRACK WILL BE STREAMED LIVE TO REMOTE PARTICIPANTS.

To find out more or to register visit www.uwplatt.edu/ems/initiatives or contact Philip Parker at parkerp@uwplatt.edu.