



INDUSTRIAL AND SYSTEMS ENGINEERING NEWSLETTER

Fall 2025



Dear Friends of Auburn ISE,

The fall semester has been an exciting and busy time in the Auburn University Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering (ISE). While we are all hoping for more in our fall sport, our department continues to thrive - growing in enrollment, expanding our programs, and celebrating faculty and student achievements.

This fall, we welcomed Adam Ficken as a new lecturer. A four-time Auburn graduate, Adam recently completed his Ph.D. in industrial and systems engineering after a career with Mercedes-Benz, Baxter International, and NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center. He has been active in promoting innovation and entrepreneurship through the Thomas Walter Center and now teaches courses in innovation, product development, senior design, and Lean Manufacturing.

We're also proud to recognize Christian Zamiela, who transitioned from research professor to assistant professor, and Casey Eaton, who joined the department this fall as an assistant professor. Both bring expertise that strengthens our model-based systems engineering curriculum and research efforts.

We also celebrate the careers of two longtime members of the ISE staff who are retiring this year. LuAnn Carpenter, director of student program assessment and administration, and Denise Cooper, student services coordinator, have each served the department for more than 20 years. We thank them for their dedication and wish them the very best in retirement.

Our department continues to grow, now home to 205 graduate students and 501 undergraduates. To support our growth and department changes, we're currently hiring three new faculty members, two student services coordinators, and a director of student program assessment and administration to enhance our teaching and advising capacity.

Over the summer, ISE achieved a major milestone with official recognition by the International Council on Systems Engineering (INCOSE) through its Associate Systems Engineering Professional (ASEP) Academic Equivalency program. This distinction places Auburn among a select group of universities worldwide whose curriculum meets INCOSE's rigorous academic standards.

We also launched new undergraduate and graduate certificates in healthcare systems engineering this fall to meet growing industry demand. These programs equip students to improve healthcare delivery through systems thinking, operations analysis, and human factors engineering.

This year also marks 25 years of excellence for the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering. The \$25 million gift from Samuel Ginn in 2001 transformed Auburn Engineering, and the Ginn Family Foundation's recent \$30 million commitment to engineering scholarships will continue that legacy of opportunity and innovation.

This year's College of Engineering Research Awards banquet was an especially proud moment for Industrial and Systems Engineering. Our department was recognized across all levels of research excellence, with the Interdisciplinary Center for Advanced Manufacturing Systems (ICAMS) named the 2025 Center of Excellence, Dr. Rongxuan Wang receiving the Junior Faculty Research Award for Excellence, and I was honored to receive the Senior Faculty Research Award for Excellence. These distinctions highlight the depth of talent within our department and the collaborative environment that drives innovation, mentorship, and impact in our research community.

Looking ahead, I will transition out of my role as department chair in August 2026. After careful consideration and a department-wide vote, we have initiated an internal search to identify the next chair who will continue building on the success we are experiencing in the Auburn ISE department.

As we move into the second half of the semester, I'm proud of our department's continued progress and the dedication of our faculty, staff, and students. Please read more about our achievements below. Thank you for your ongoing support of Auburn ISE.

War Eagle!

Greg Harris

Professor & Chair, Industrial and Systems Engineering

Joe W. Forehand/Accenture Distinguished Professor



Industrial and systems engineering senior named Miss Homecoming

Mallory Holland, a senior in industrial and systems engineering, was elected Auburn University's Miss Homecoming last week.

Originally from Huntsville, Holland grew up visiting and tailgating at Auburn with her family, which imparted the Auburn spirit at a young age. She said her Miss Homecoming nomination was a dream come true.

"Choosing Auburn was an easy decision for me," Holland said. "Both my parents are Auburn alumni, so the campus felt like home before I started my college career. Representing Auburn in this capacity is truly an honor, and I'm incredibly grateful to be part of this student body."

Holland is passionate about the impact engineering can make on people, something that stems from her childhood love of Disney World.

"I was always captivated by the magic of Disney, but as I grew older, I realized the magic was made possible by the hard work of engineers," Holland said. "Industrial and systems engineering has allowed me to combine my love for people with my love for math and problem-solving. I've discovered a passion for making systems work better, more efficiently and with purpose."



Auburn engineering seniors win nationwide summer internship competition

Anna Kate Boles, Gavin Lewis and Will Reynolds thought their summer internship with Booz Allen Hamilton in Huntsville would give them valuable experience in a real-world engineering environment. By summer's end, they had a job offer, a pending patent and nationwide recognition as some of the brightest young engineers in the country.

Boles (industrial and systems engineering), Lewis (mechanical engineering) and Reynolds (aerospace engineering) are each expected to graduate in May and have the option to return to Booz Allen with a full-time job.

Booz Allen Hamilton is an advanced technology company that partners with major firms such as Google and Amazon Web Services to work with the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI and the Department of Defense.



ISE professor awarded Toyota grant for vehicle interface study

Missie Smith, assistant professor in Auburn University's Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering and the Center for Occupational Safety, Ergonomics, and Injury Prevention (OSEIP), has been awarded a nearly \$100K research grant from Toyota's Collaborative Safety Research Center (CSRC) to study the attentional demands of in-vehicle

interfaces.

The research aims to develop a conceptual framework to guide in-vehicle interface design and enable a structured allocation of functions across different input types.

“We are seeing more and more touchscreens in cars,” Smith said. “We have capabilities for screens and different buttons, but we also know there are downsides to both. So, this research is about balancing how many buttons we should have to optimize for human capabilities and also deciding which functions should be accessible by button versus touchscreen.”



Thomas Walter Center launches international BET program

This summer, the Thomas Walter Center for Technology Management (TWC) added a new option to its already thriving study abroad program. Students enrolled in the Business-Engineering-Technology (BET) minor now have the opportunity to participate in a new international BET program (IBET). Over the course of an 8-week trip, students completed their second year of the BET minor, starting in Pamplona, Spain and concluding in Würzburg, Germany.

John L. Evans, Charles D. Miller Chair Professor and director of TWC, said the center was looking for opportunities to increase enrollment and do something unique.

“Additionally, some students were having a problem finishing the BET minor due to course requirements within their own major,” Evans said. “So, the IBET gives students an opportunity to finish the minor during the summer after their first year, eliminating the need to accommodate the minor in their course schedule.”

Navy veteran finds success through



Master of Engineering Management program

When Michael Taylor traded his Navy uniform for a project manager role in the private sector, he needed more than operational experience; he needed the skills to lead engineering teams in a complex environment.

That's what led him to Auburn's Master of Engineering Management program, where systems thinking met real-world leadership. Taylor earned a Master of Engineering Management with a focus on systems from Auburn University's Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering and the Thomas Walter Center for Technology Management in 2024.

He is currently a project manager at ThayerMahan, leading offshore acoustic programs that integrate sensors, equipment, data and maritime operations to support defense, energy and environmental missions.

Taylor received an undergraduate degree in physics from Auburn in 2018 and was already familiar with the university's highly ranked engineering program. He discovered the MEM program while serving as an instructor in the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps.

"I learned about the MEM program through my fellow instructors who were also in the program and highly recommended it," he said.



Auburn's ICAMS featured at NASCAR's Talladega Superspeedway

The Interdisciplinary Center for Advanced Manufacturing Systems (ICAMS) at Auburn University recently made an appearance at one of NASCAR's most iconic venues — Talladega Superspeedway. The center's logo was featured on the BuildSubmarines.com race car, highlighting a partnership that connects cutting-edge manufacturing innovation with America's industrial base.

As part of the Maritime Industrial Base's engagement with NASCAR's RFK Racing team,

featuring BuildSubmarines.com, ICAMS was honored to be showcased during the NASCAR Cup Series Race on Sunday, Oct. 19, in Talladega, Alabama. The collaboration highlighted a shared commitment between academia and industry to strengthen the nation's manufacturing capabilities and workforce.

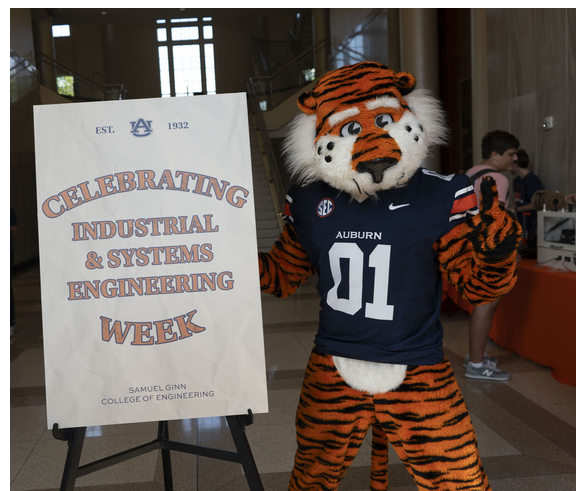
Student Services Update

To help raise awareness of what industrial and systems engineering is all about, the Council of Industrial Engineering Academic Department Heads (CIEADH) launched the first-ever ISE Day on Sept. 15. Auburn ISE took the idea a step further — turning it into a week-long celebration held Sept. 15–18.

Throughout the week, we featured students, alumni, research, and global experiences across social media and wrapped up with an on-campus ISE Showcase highlighting student organizations, study abroad opportunities, and research initiatives.

Students who joined a student organization during the event had their membership fees covered, and more than 65 students took advantage of the opportunity. Even Aubie stopped by to join the fun!

Our efforts were recognized by CIEADH at their recent meeting, as Auburn was the only university to expand ISE Day into an ISE Week celebration.





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