

University of Idaho

A LEGACY OF LEADING

A LETTER FROM THE DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

Biological and Agricultural Engineering
Chemical Engineering
Civil Engineering
Computer Science
Electrical and Computer Engineering
Materials Science and Engineering
Mechanical Engineering

March 3, 2009

Dear Idaho Engineering and Computer Science Alumni and Friends,

The impact of the Federal stimulus plan for Idaho will become clearer in the next few weeks. One area that the College of Engineering has been working on, should more funding become available through state or federal channels, is the submittal of our capital project. The College is in the midst of the pre-design phase of a \$10 million, innovative, high-profile, nationally recognized building, the **Idaho Engineering Energy Innovations Laboratory**. This Lab will foster a partnership between students, leading researchers, industry, and government agencies to develop energy solutions for this country. It will be the University of Idaho's first LEED certified building in Moscow and the seventh net zero energy and carbon neutral building in the United States. The mission of this state-of-the-art research facility will be to conduct comprehensive, interdisciplinary research, education, and outreach programs that will result in new and innovative alternative energy and battery technology for energy efficient transportation. The Lab will investigate bioenergy, biofuels, clean combustion, hydrogen production, electric/hybrid demonstration, battery research and efficient transportation systems.



Donald Blacketter, Dean
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I am pleased to announce the appointment of **Dr. Richard Nielsen** as chair of civil engineering. His position became effective as of February 2 and he will lead a department of 277 students and 20 faculty members. My thanks are sent to Dr. Edwin Schmeckpeper for his service as acting chair as well as search committee chair. Richard is currently helping the Idaho Transportation Department examine its bridge rating procedures. He has also been involved in a study of the effects of changing the vehicle tax structure used by the Idaho Transportation Department. His interests are in structural dynamics and random vibrations, as well as investigation of particle interactions in granular materials. He is a member of ASCE's Fatigue and Fracture Reliability Subcommittee. Richard is honored to announce that ASCE Section leaders will present the national **LeFevre Award** to the department on **Saturday, March 28**, in Moscow.

Last month we had several opportunities to show hundreds of students how exciting their future could be if they choose to pursue a career in engineering. On February 13, over one hundred middle and high school students visited campus to learn about some of the exciting projects that we have ongoing at the College of Engineering:

- **Nick Harker** and **Dylan Dixon** from the **Clean Snowmobile Team** wowed the students with pictures of the team testing their snowmobile and explained the **Mechanical Engineering** processes that go into preparing for their competitions.
- **Dr. Schmeckpeper** and several students introduced **Civil Engineering** by presenting their designs for the real life projects they will be showcasing at the **Engineering Design EXPO on May 1**.

- **Dr. Choi** demonstrated the impressive scale of his projects in **Materials Science**, and intrigued the students with his research on a groundbreaking treatment for cancer.
- **Alex Edstrom** from **Biological and Agricultural Engineering** presented the Idaho International Irrigators project that his senior design team is working on for a farmer in El Salvador. His presentation included the exciting news that his team will travel to El Salvador over spring break to implement innovative farming and irrigation solutions.
- Team V-Bot members **Kevin Waring, Nicole Hochstrasser, Ben Johnson, and Tyler George** presented research for an educational robot, and invited students to participate in the **Vandal Robotics Challenge on May 2 at the University of Idaho's Memorial Gym.**

In honor of National Engineers Week, our students, faculty and staff shared their enthusiasm for engineering by volunteering at several recruitment events: the INL Scholastic Tournament, TEAM+S Competition, and FIRST Tech Challenge.

For over 10 years we have had the opportunity to collaborate with the **Idaho National Laboratory (INL)** through the **NASA Idaho Space Grant Consortium** to help reach young people with accessible opportunities to discover the excitement and rewards of science, technology, and engineering. My sincerest thanks and appreciation is sent to **INL** and **INL Director of Education Programs Dr. Roger Mayes** for their recent \$50,000 gift that not only helps build the K-20 engineering pipeline, but also helps to build young students' teamwork skills, self-esteem and confidence.

My thanks go to **Bob Smith, associate vice president of the University of Idaho in Idaho Falls** and the **associate director for research, Center for Advance Energy Studies** for hosting a "Meet the Dean" reception last month at University Place. Great appreciation is sent to **Jim Coleman, president/ CEO of Coleman Engineering**, for hosting a reception at the Coeur d'Alene Resort last Tuesday. It was a real treat to visit with friends, alumni and faculty at all locations this past month including **Jasper and Louise Avery, Ed Whitehead and George Russell** at the reception in Moscow.

The **National Society of Black Engineers** will be hosting speaker **Wayne A. Scales, Ph.D., Professor of Electromagnetics** from **Virginia Tech** at their **Dynamic Engineer Lecture Series** on **Friday, March 6 at 5:00 pm** at the Best Western University Inn, Moscow. No RSVP is required.

For alumni and friends located in the Washington D.C. area, please join us for a **University of Idaho Alumni Social** on Capitol Hill on Thursday, March 12, 5:30 to 7:00 p.m., at **Sonoma Restaurant & Wine Bar at 223 Pennsylvania Avenue SE in Washington, DC** – no RSVP is required. Hope to see you there!

Sincerely,



Donald M. Blacketter
Dean, College of Engineering