

For Immediate Release

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**UPLAND, Ind. (September 25, 2023)** – Taylor University announced plans today to expand its growing ABET-accredited engineering program to include a focus on innovation and entrepreneurship. This exciting expansion is made possible by a nearly $2 million grant awarded by the Don Wood Foundation earlier this month. The Don Wood Foundation is a private foundation dedicated to the advancement of manufacturing, entrepreneurship, and related education focused on strengthening the manufacturing sector in the Midwest. The grant is the largest ever awarded by the foundation to an institution of higher learning.

A Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering with a Certificate in Innovation and Entrepreneurship (MEIE) will be offered starting in Spring 2024. The expanded degree offering will embody Taylor’s long-standing commitment to academic rigor, servant-leadership, and the integration of faith and learning. The program’s focus on innovation and entrepreneurship will equip future graduates to make a positive difference in the manufacturing sector and engineering business ventures, which are growing economic needs in Indiana and beyond.

“The Don Wood Foundation is pleased to support the purchase of Industry 4.0 equipment and related lab development for Taylor University’s innovative approach to delivering high-caliber engineering education to students in Northeast Indiana,” said Laura Macknick, President & CEO of the Don Wood Foundation.  “The program is unique in embedding entrepreneurship into the curriculum and also begins to fill the need voiced by regional employers that wish to hire local engineering graduates.”

“We are so very grateful for this strategic investment,” said President Dr. Michael Lindsay, whose leadership was identified as one of the reasons the university was chosen for the grant. “This investment will strengthen and magnify Taylor’s Mechanical Engineering program, but most importantly, support our goal to move from excellence to eminence in developing servant-leaders in this particular field.”

The generous investment will provide state-of-the-art, industry-forward machines and prototyping equipment, like 5-axis CNC mills and metal, composite, and flexible material 3D printers, to name a few, along with new collaboration and innovation spaces designed for solving real-world problems. Together, with the support of the Don Wood Foundation, Taylor University will graduate highly skilled, innovative, business-minded engineering leaders ready to transform the engineering and manufacturing industries in Indiana and around the world.

“We are incredibly honored to begin this partnership with the Don Wood Foundation, which, upholding Don Wood’s legacy, shares Taylor’s commitment to servant-leadership and ethical, honorable work,” said Danielle Nobles-Lookingbill, Ph.D., Physics and Engineering Department Chair. “This partnership will position Taylor engineering graduates for careers that demand a higher understanding of innovation, leadership, and entrepreneurial thinking.”

Underscoring Taylor’s commitment to innovation, the University is proud that Dr. Danielle Nobles-Lookingbill is one of less than 100 women chairing engineering departments nationwide.

Renovations to the engineering spaces on campus will begin immediately and are expected to be completed this academic year.More information on Taylor’s MEIE program can be found [here.](https://www.taylor.edu/majors/mechanical-engineering)

***About Taylor University***

*For 177 years, Taylor University has combined rigorous academics with the Christian faith and remains the oldest nondenominational school in the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU). For nearly three decades, Taylor has been ranked a top Midwest College by U.S. News & World Report. The University’s graduation rate is the fourth highest nationally among peer institutions, and 98 percent of Taylor’s graduates were employed or in graduate school within six months of graduation. With a strong legacy of service and global opportunities, Taylor also ranks sixth nationally for study abroad internships and travel opportunities.*

***About Don Wood Foundation***

*The Don Wood Foundation is a private foundation, established in 2018 by Don Wood, founder of 80/20, Inc., that serves and supports innovators, leaders, collaborators, and skilled workers with the potential to create and sustain opportunities in manufacturing. The Foundation partners with non-profits and educational institutions to provide sustained investment that supports the development of a diverse workforce through exposure, education, and training to create strong communities rooted in the advancement of manufacturing. Visit* [*www.donwoodfoundation.org*](https://www.donwoodfoundation.org) *and follow Don Wood Foundation on* [*LinkedIn*](https://www.linkedin.com/company/don-wood-foundation/) *and* [*Facebook*](https://www.facebook.com/donwoodfoundation)*.*