RAISING AWARENESS AND MONEY

The 1st Grand Challenge Scholars Program has developed a fall “pitch” event in conjunction with the acceptance of a new class of Grand Challenge Scholars.

Together We Make a Difference
Beginning in the fall of 2016 the college focused its annual giving campaign around the topic of the Grand Challenge Scholars Program. Over 5,000 U of I engineering alumni learned about the program, students and the challenges they are undertaking.

The Engineering a Future campaign continued through spring 2017 with Grand Challenge students and the program were highlighted as part of the college’s annual signature event Engineering Design EXPO.

FALL STUDENT PITCH EVENT

The event gives students the opportunity to explain how their projects will address program components to an assembly of judges with the purpose of securing funding for their ideas.

5 MIN PITCH TO AUDIENCE

The inaugural pitch in 2016 featured 10 students who were allocated 5 minutes to give a formal pitch to an audience of judges. Students used PowerPoint slides to discuss project components, funds on research tasks and provide an estimate of outcomes that couldn’t be accomplished with the funding.

4 students were awarded funding totaling approximately $16,000.

1 HR MEET AND GREET PITCH

In the fall of 2017 the college rebranded the pitch event. Instead of a formal audience presentation, 14 students who were chosen through a pitch process pitched their original ideas to engage with judges directly in conversation.

All 14 students received funding. Winners were divided into three categories: platinum, gold and silver. Approximate, $50,000 total awarded.

PLATINUM PITCH WINNERS

2017 Platinum pitch winners (left to right): Allison Ellingson (EE), Gabriel Conley (BE), Nicole Yu (EE), and Jackie Martinez (CHEM).

MAKING CONNECTIONS

A central component of the U of I Grand Challenge Scholars Program and Pitch Event has been the involvement of the U of I Academy of Engineers. The Academy of Engineers are eminent engineers who are U of I alumni or those engineers deeply connected to Idaho’s strong legacy of global engineering impact.

ACADEMY OF ENGINEERS

GRAND CHALLENGE ENDOVENT

U of I Academy of Engineers President Jim Ritter has made a goal to support the Grand Challenge Scholars Program and student projects by establishing an endowment funded by Academy members.

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ACADEMY MEMBERS & STUDENTS

Tapping into Neurology
Engineering student uses mapping and imaging to reveal unknown geometries.

.reverse engineering the brain
Synergizing Computer Engineering and Grand Challenge Scholars: forging new paths, from brain imaging to learning biomarkers of Lou Gehrig’s Disease.

FEATURE STORIES

Story distributed across many channels including, print, the web, social and earned media. Featuring U of I students invested in the Grand Challenge of reverse engineering the brain.

2016 pitch event winner Tavara Freeman web feature.

Freeman is a junior and second year Grand Challenge Scholar majoring in computer engineering from Mountain Home, Idaho. She is Freeman is studying the MRI images of ALS patients recreating the various cerebral fluid pressures.

2016 & 2017 pitch event winner Jackie Martinez web feature and hometown paper newspaper article.

Martinez a sophomore chemical engineering major from Milton-Freewater, Oregon is a second year Grand Challenge Scholar. She is involved in research studying the development of materials that can break through the blood-brain barrier and deliver drugs with potentially life-saving effects.

2016 & 2017 pitch event winner Gabryel Conley research print and web feature.

Conley is a second year Grand Challenge Scholar from Moscow, Idaho double majoring in biological engineering and computer engineering. Conley is working on research that focuses on the characteristics of the human Cerebral Spinal Fluid (CSF) system by developing a physical or scaled 3D model of the system as well as the associated pressures necessary to mimic the functions of the system.

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