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# Innovation Governed by Godly Wisdom

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## Innovation Governed by Godly Wisdom

We will admit the 28th freshman class of engineering students this fall at Cedarville University. Each year, we have pushed the edges of knowledge, challenging our students to think beyond the books, to exert themselves to problem-solve and come up with creative solutions to engineering problems. It all started in 1990 under the leadership of University President Paul Dixon and Academic Vice President Duane Wood. They hired Chuck Allport, who provided direction for the first class of electrical engineering (EE) and mechanical engineering (ME) students. I was hired a year later to teach sophomore-level engineering courses to that first class of students.

From the beginning, our department saw itself as a place where innovation and creativity would thrive. This shows up in the fact our department was named in honor of Elmer W. Engstrom, a pioneer in the development of the electronics for radio, television, and radar. Dr. Engstrom's family was a major donor for the startup of engineering at Cedarville, providing funding that purchased much of our electronic laboratory equipment.

To be an engineering program that could set the edge in our field, we would need the rigor that came from accreditation. Both the EE and ME degree programs achieved Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) accreditation in 1995, retroactive to the first graduating class of 1994. Because many of the EE majors were choosing the "digital track," the computer engineering (CpE) degree program started in the fall of 2002. This also was a response

to the times: Computers were driving change in society and technology and Cedarville was positioned to prepare a new generation of engineers to lead the way. Because ABET also accredited computer science (CS) degree programs, that degree program and its faculty moved from the Department of Science and Mathematics to our department in 2005. In 2006, we renamed ourselves the Elmer W. Engstrom Department of Engineering and Computer Science. Our continued growth made our department the largest on campus starting in fall 2010.

When our president, Thomas White, restructured the academic division in 2014, we became the School of Engineering and Computer Science, and I became its inaugural dean. And we're continuing to grow and meet the needs of a changing world. This fall, we will enroll students in civil engineering (CE), a degree whose roots can be traced to the experience of engineering students on short-term missions trips.

Throughout the years, as our department, and now school, has met the demand of our field for engineers who can actively engage and lead change, our core values as a Christian institution have remained. Dr. White preached his chapel series this year from the book of Proverbs. I pray with him that we will continue to follow, not just the way of innovation, but also the way of wisdom, as we serve our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, in our field of endeavor.



**Robert Chasnov** is Dean of the School of Engineering and Computer Science and Senior Professor of Engineering.