

State News for NSPE Members

University of Florida Launches Semiconductor Institute

The University of Florida's (UF) Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering has announced its creation of the Florida Semiconductor Institute (FSI), aimed at providing coordination within Florida's burgeoning semiconductor industry, [The Capitolist reports](#). According to the university, FSI will serve as a hub for coordinating activities related to the development and manufacturing of microchips in Florida. It will also advise the state and promote public-private partnerships to support the industry in the state. The FSI's founding comes following a series of federal investments to revitalize the state's semiconductor manufacturing industry in the United States and advance chip technology research.

"Microchips are an integral part of our society. The Florida Semiconductor Institute will serve as a hub to coordinate activities that will support the development and manufacturing of these vital chips here in Florida," UF President Ben Sasse said. "In addition to advancing research and development and educational opportunities, the FSI will advise the state and foster public-private partnerships to enhance what is already a vibrant microchip industry in Florida."

The FSI will serve as a central hub for more than 60 faculty members from various departments in UF's College of Engineering, along with academic partners from other Florida universities and private entities. [Read more](#).

Jacksonville Uses Green Infrastructure to Combat Flooding

A recent report from Florida TaxWatch proposes new measures to help combat storm water runoff and reduce flooding through the use of green infrastructure, [according to The Center Square](#). Over the past few years, the Sunshine State has had its fair share of severe storms, as recently as August, when Hurricane Idalia made landfall in the Big Bend region of the state, causing widespread flooding to

coastal towns.

The report states that as of 2023, Florida has invested over \$300 million to build coastal resiliency, reduce stormwater runoff, and reduce flooding through the Resilient Florida Program. This comes with an increasing maintenance cost which could reach upwards of \$7.7 million over the next five years, and does not include any new projects.

Jacksonville, located on the Atlantic Coast, was affected severely by flooding caused by Hurricanes Irma and Matthew. Stormwater runoff into bodies of water near the city impacted water quality and infrastructure.

To prevent or reduce future disasters, the city invested into green infrastructure alongside man-made infrastructure, reducing the stress on drainage systems and significantly lowering the risk of severe flooding — even during higher-than-average rainfalls. [Read more.](#)

Florida Poly Advances Growth with \$15 Million Engineering Building

[Florida Polytechnic University recently revealed](#) the modern design and functionality of the new Gary C. Wendt Engineering Building, a 40,000-square-foot academic facility that will begin construction next spring.

The \$15-million, two-story building will house research and development labs for a variety of engineering disciplines, staff and faculty offices, collaboration spaces, and a conference room. The facility will also feature an open courtyard on the exterior, which will connect to the Barnett Applied Research Center, providing additional recreation space.

“We’re experiencing great campus growth due to our rising reputation as a premier STEM university, and the coming construction of this engineering building is a reflection of that success,” said Dr. Randy K. Avent, Florida Poly’s president. “The new Gary C. Wendt Engineering Building will play a pivotal role in fulfilling our academic mission, as we educate the top engineers Florida needs to keep growing industry throughout the state.”

The Gary C. Wendt Engineering Building will be the third academic facility on campus, joining the iconic Innovation, Science, and Technology building, and the Barnett Applied Research Center, a 90,000-square-foot facility that opened its doors in 2022. [Read more.](#)

Stay up to date on legislative issues through the [NSPE Advocacy Center](#).

Looking Toward a Promising Future

By Bill Atkinson, P.E., F.NSPE, President 2023–24



As I continue on my professional journey as the NSPE president, I often reflect on what our organization has done since its founding in 1934 and what NSPE needs to do going forward. The next stage of NSPE's future begins with our vision to ensure that the public lives in a world where engineering decisions are made by qualified and ethically accountable professionals. This will require that a unified engineering community step up to protect licensure laws across the nation and maintain high standards for professional practice. It will require that we embrace innovation and emerging technologies. This future will be bolstered by a new generation of engineers that we must encourage to understand that they can truly make a difference in the world. I look forward to playing my part and supporting others in these efforts.

Licensure and Emerging Technologies

Protection of the public health, safety, and welfare is at our core as professional engineers. Licensure is key to ensuring consistent standards of practice and professional competencies. We must make sure that these standards and competencies remain relevant to how we do things today, while looking toward the future.

We must continually question ourselves and the regulations that are in place. Are state licensing laws adequately regulating the profession of engineering without precluding otherwise qualified individuals from practicing? Is our current licensure model adequately serving its purpose? Are engineering licensure exemptions creating gaps where the public could be harmed? The answers to these questions can help drive us to better ways of safeguarding the public.

I believe that most individuals that become engineers do so because they are good at making things better. They are not tied to the world they are in today and are always pursuing excellence and improvement. I believe that by pooling our experiences as engineers, we can bring the best and brightest together to tackle any challenge that we may face as we seek to evolve. This evolution will involve

the development and use of emerging technologies to spur innovative solutions. NSPE is supporting members by providing professional development that showcases the use of these technologies in a manner that is ethical and will benefit the public. [Read more](#).

NSPECon24 – Call for Presentation Proposals

Prepare to share your expertise during NSPECon24 in Raleigh, North Carolina, August 7-9, 2024. [Review the topics](#) NSPE seeks in the areas of career development, leadership, and issues and trends, and think about how you can contribute. The submission site will open on November 1 and the proposal deadline is **January 10, 2024**.

The [NSPECon23 program](#) is still available online and may give potential presenters some ideas about the caliber of sessions needed for next year.

Volunteers are the Heart of NSPE: Get Involved and Share Your Voice



Volunteers are essential to advancing NSPE's vision to ensure a world where the public can be confident that engineering decisions affecting their lives are made by qualified and ethically accountable professionals. Volunteering is also a great opportunity for members to grow their professional network and connect with other leaders in the field.

There are [several ways to get involved](#)...here a few opportunities to consider

Serve as a mentor for an engineering student. If interested, send an email to education@nspe.org.

NSPE online community champion. Virtual opportunity to promote community and sharing of ideas through NSPE's online channels. If interested, send an email to membership@nspe.org.

Write an article for *PE* magazine. Share your expertise and insights on professional practice, education, ethics, leadership, licensure, public policy, DEI, emerging technologies, and sustainability and resilience by serving as a guest writer for *PE* magazine. If interested, email pemagazine@nspe.org for submission guidelines.

Collaborate with staff to draft/supply input on federal legislation, regulations or public comments to federal Congressional staff and committees (Identify your area(s) of vocational expertise.) If interested, send an email to governmentrelations@nspe.org.

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