

# University of Idaho

## College of Engineering

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March 23, 2015

President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President Obama:

The University of Idaho's Grand Challenge Scholars (UIGCS) program will have a defined set of requirements that describe how a student should develop themselves with the skills and knowledge to be most useful for contributing to these Grand Challenges; but it will be up to the student to chart their own course on how to meet these requirements. This in and of itself will help students develop leadership skills and reflect on their own professional development needs. In order to graduate as a UIGCS students will be required to complete a program of study and activities that provide them with expertise in at least one of the five key elements, and exposure or experience in the others. This program will be documented in a portfolio that the student will build over the years they are in the program. The UIGCS Program is being launched as a decade long initiative through 2025. The goal is to graduate over 200 "Grand Challenge Engineers" from the UI who are prepared with the unique combination of skills, motivation, and leadership to address the NAE Grand Challenges of the 21st century.

There are a number of existing activities on campus that are in line with helping students become experts in the five key elements. The college will catalog these activities and look to develop new opportunities to enable students to be successful in their pursuit. Existing courses such as ME 452 TechVentures and existing programs such as Vandal Innovation and Entrepreneurship Works (VIEW) will be promoted as existing activities that are available to help students develop these broader skills. We are also collaborating with Washington State University in this effort as they will also be hosting a GCS program. A strong relationship already exists between our institutions and students are experienced with taking classes on each other's campus and attending events at both (the main campuses are only 8 miles apart across the state line). In combination, both of our student groups will have significant opportunities for classes and activities that will enable them to develop significant expertise and experience needed to be a GCS.

Any undergraduate students from the UI's College of Engineering will be admitted into the program provided they are at least a sophomore and have above a 3.0 GPA. They must submit a plan that reveals what classes and activities they intend to pursue in order to complete the program by the time they graduate. These plans will be evaluated by the UIGCS Committee, comprised of members from the Academy of Idaho Engineers and college faculty. Students will be provided with feedback and mentoring to help them improve their plans before being admitted into the program.

Students need support to pursue some of the activities of this program. To aid in this process, a banquet will be hosted each fall for those in the program and those interested in applying. Stipends of \$1,000 - \$3,000 will be awarded to the top 20 students in recognition of their accomplishments and to support their plans. This banquet will also facilitate relationship building, the exchange of ideas, and an opportunity for mentoring and leadership.

Sincerely,



Larry A. Stauffer, Dean