

## Engineering Admissions Partnership Program Now a Learning Community

The [Engineering Admissions Partnership Program \(E-APP\)](#) has been approved as a formal Iowa State learning community. Pre-engineering community college students who sign up for [Iowa State's Admissions Partnership Program \(APP\)](#) are invited to join the E-APP Learning Community. This virtual learning community connects students to Iowa State's College of Engineering faculty, staff, and students through multiple points of engagement.

One of these points is the E-APP online professional network. This site is moderated by transfer peer mentors—former community college students who transferred into engineering at Iowa State. Here transfer students connect with each other prior to transfer as well as meet Iowa State students and engineering faculty and staff. Peer mentors offer advice based on experience, answer questions, post information about events, and guide discussions. Students are also apprised of on-campus speakers and other general engineering events through the online professional network.

The E-APP also hosts events throughout the year to bring transfer students to campus. Each spring and fall E-APP students have the opportunity to attend a Transfer Students Career Fair event. And each spring they are invited to attend a Transfer Student Veishea Event. Engineering peer mentors, faculty, and staff are on hand at these and other events to meet with transfer students and answer their questions. In the coming year, incoming E-APP students will be invited to transition lunches to help them increase their connections on campus and in their departments.

E-APP students are assigned an Iowa State engineering adviser who can help them choose the courses they will need for their transfer. As one student stated, "E-APP was a really good experience. I was especially pleased that the program guided me to take only classes that would transfer to Iowa State."

The goal of E-APP is to increase community college student engagement prior to coming to Iowa State and thus increase student retention and graduation rates of community college transfer students. In the 2009–2010 academic year, 142 students participated in the program. All of these students were assigned an academic adviser and transfer peer mentor. Eighty of these students participated in the E-APP online professional network in order to connect with Iowa State transfer peer mentors and learn more about engineering and the transfer process. Eighty-five of these students attended at least one event at Iowa State during the academic year. Forty-two of these students registered as full-time students in the fall 2009, spring 2010, or summer 2010 semesters.

"The SEEC project has allowed us to experiment with new strategies for increasing community college engagement," Mary Darrow, SEEC project manager and coordinator of the E-APP Program, states. "The online professional network pilot has been a learning experience for our E-APP students, and for the College of Engineering. We hope that our students will not only get connected to Iowa State through this network but will also gain valuable online networking skills that will advance their careers in the future. We will continue to experiment with and evaluate social and professional networking media through this program in order to increase transfer student engagement."