

New Endorsements Offered

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NEW ENDORSEMENTS OFFERED

Dordt's engineering endorsement for education majors is unique in Iowa

K-12 schools in Iowa are continuing to invest in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education as a way to prepare students for future jobs and to teach valuable problem-solving and critical thinking skills, says Dr. Abby De Groot, assistant professor of education and director of Dordt's Teacher Preparation Program.



A. De Groot

"Engineering is a difficult piece of the STEM puzzle to complete, as there are few qualified engineering teachers at the K-12 level," she says. "As the only college or university in Iowa currently offering an engineering endorsement, Dordt is uniquely positioned to prepare future teachers to serve K-12 schools in this emerging field."

One Dordt student, Joseph Wanninger, chose to pursue a double major in both engineering and education.

"One of my favorite subjects in school was physics, and I'd like to teach at the high school level," says Wanninger. "I want to bring real-world experience into my classroom so that I can share with the students where each of the different topics and concepts that we cover in class are used in the real world. Engineering education also allows me to teach engineering courses at the high school level, and I can do so with a certain expertise because of my background."

Dordt students can now choose to pursue new joint education majors: biology-engineering, chemistry-engineering, physics-engineering, or earth science-engineering. These are offered in addition to the existing offerings in math-physics and math-engineering. These new pathways are joint majors because there is an overlap in credits between the two programs as opposed to full credits from two separate programs. Students will graduate with two separate teaching endorsement areas; they will be endorsed (licensed by the state to teach at accredited schools in grades 5-12) for biology and engineering, chemistry and engineering, physics and engineering, or earth

science and engineering. This allows students to complete their degree within a four-year time period, rather than needing to pursue a full engineering degree and a full education degree like Wanninger did—resulting in up to five years of school.

Wanninger was also able to gain experience in his specific area of education at a local school in Le Mars, Iowa, where he had the opportunity to teach the Engineer Your World curriculum. The goal of the class was to get the students to walk through the engineering design process and ultimately end up with a finished product that they present to others in the class.

"My favorite unit was the pinhole camera unit. The students were tasked with designing a pinhole camera that could be operated by a person with limited hand dexterity. The students got to work solving this real-world problem and crafting their solutions. It is the only class that I have experienced that naturally included the class, school, and community all in on the unit without forcing any of it. The students jumped right in, and it was an absolute joy seeing the ways that each group went about solving the problem and hearing the different questions that they asked," says Wanninger.

The new endorsements capitalize on Dordt's strengths, allowing strong programs such as engineering, mathematics, biology, and chemistry to partner with education—which is Dordt's second largest major.

And a benefit for students pursuing one of these new joint majors is that they are eligible to apply for the Noyce Scholarship program, funded by the National Science Foundation, which awards Dordt students \$15,000 scholarships in

their junior and senior year to support their progress toward teaching licensure in STEM field.

Wanninger received this scholarship during his time at Dordt. This summer, he will move to Austin, Texas to teach physics and assist with the robotics program at Cedar Park High School, allowing him to fulfill his Noyce scholarship requirement of being at a high need school district.

"It is a place that will push me to be the best educator that I can be, and I will have the support of staff and administration to make that possible," he says. "I am very excited to continue my journey in education and cannot wait to see where the Lord leads me on this journey."

BETHANY VAN VOORST

"Both of my advisers worked diligently to get me into classes that I needed to be in for my endorsement," says Joseph Wanninger.

