

DIVERSITY IN ACTION

Vol. 11,
FALL 2025

DEAN'S NOTE



Welcome back! It's wonderful to see familiar and new faces on campus. I am so glad you're here. This year, we're thrilled to have new leadership in the Engineering School: Dean Andrew Houck, Vice Dean Gabriele Villarini, and Undergraduate Dean Cecily Swanson.

Higher education is in a period of great change, but our commitment to your well-being and success is unwavering. We are a strong community. If we support one another, we can thrive. Here's to a fantastic year filled with discoveries and achievements! Don't forget to check the newsletter for upcoming events and announcements.

Julie Yun

Associate Dean for Diversity
and Inclusion

FALL CELEBRATIONS

A Warm Welcome to the School of Engineering!

We celebrated the start of the new academic year with our undergraduate student BBQ and our graduate student welcome reception. It was a fantastic time for returning students to reconnect and for new students to forge their first friendships in the school. Speaking to first-year undergraduates, Dean Andrew Houck urged students to embrace uncertainty and “wrestle with ideas out in the wilderness and away from the well-trodden paths of easy problems.” To new graduate students, he emphasized their role in expanding the sphere of human knowledge and invention. “You will know something at some point that no one else in the world knows.” We're thrilled to have so many new faces in our community!



Appreciating our Postdocs

We celebrated our postdoctoral researchers at the annual Postdoc Appreciation Lunch. This event was dedicated to expressing our gratitude for their invaluable contributions, from groundbreaking research to mentoring our students. Dean Houck and Vice Dean Villarini joined the celebration to thank the postdocs for their vital role in our teaching and research mission.

COMMUNITY AND SELF-CARE EVENTS

We are a community that supports one another and encourages self-care. We celebrated the launch of the University's Community Care Day by hosting an engineering school event featuring fall favorites – apple cider and cider donuts – providing an opportunity to connect and recharge. Additionally, we hosted the **Princeton Distress Awareness and Response** training led by Calvin Chin. This interactive session equipped our community with the tools needed to recognize the signs of distress in students and colleagues and to respond effectively, reinforcing our commitment to being a strong, supportive community for all.

Taking care of yourself is key to performing your best. As we start another academic year, we hosted a workshop on **Mindful Management of Stress, Anxiety, and Burnout** where University counselors Steph Vituccio and Olivia McDonald James provided evidence-based tools to help attendees manage the pressures of research and prevent burnout.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVENTS

We offered two opportunities to support professional development and long-term success in our community.

- **Crafting Your Industry Resume:** Professor Jean Tom led a popular workshop focused on translating complex research and lab experiences into effective resumes. Participants learned how to highlight transferable skills and to showcase the impact of their projects to stand out to hiring managers.
- **Thriving in Grad School:** The Graduate Engineering Council hosted a panel discussion to support graduate students in effectively navigating their academic and research journeys.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Coffee Chats are Back

Connect with colleagues and fellow students! We are excited to announce Coffee Chats now feature a gaming element to spark conversation and fun. We saw this in action at our first event on September 18, where staff Raphael Aryeetey and Ryan O'Donnell enjoyed a friendly chess match.

Don't miss the next opportunities to connect:

- **December 17 (9:00-10:00) at the EQuad Cafe**

Mindful Fridays: Join Our Weekly Meditation

Start your day with peace and presence. We invite all staff, faculty, and students to our weekly Friday meditation sessions in **MAEDER 103 at 8:30 a.m.**

Coaching Table 12/17/2025 9:00-10:00

Do you need help to boost productivity, prepare for generals, or navigate relationships with your advisors or peers? Stop by the Coaching Table at the next Coffee Chat. A peer coach from the McGraw Center will be on hand to guide you.

PEOPLE OF PRINCETON

Excerpted from our social media series #PrincetonEngineers

Kamaula Rowe, “When I first came to Princeton, I entered as a chemical and biological engineering major. I was interested in biomedical engineering in high school, so it felt like the natural path. However, once I started meeting professors from different departments, especially those in Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE), my curiosity began to shift.

Initially, I thought I’d pursue AI and machine learning, but after taking courses in low-level programming, logic design, and computer architecture, I found myself increasingly drawn to hardware design. This semester, I’ve been working in ECE Professor Sneha Goenka’s lab, where I’ve been focusing on developing hardware accelerators for genome assembly, an essential process in studying different organisms.

Kamaula has served as vice president of the National Society of Black Engineers, community living advisor of the Black Student Union and head fellow of the Scholars Institute Fellows Program

Alexander Michalek, “Coming out of high school, I knew I enjoyed math and science and wanted to pursue engineering, especially something with a public facing impact, like roadway projects or infrastructure. Then, in 2019, severe flooding swept across the region, with river levels exceeding anything we had experienced before. I was struck by the sheer scale and unpredictability of these events... my work focuses on the intersection of climate change and engineering, understanding how a warming world impacts our built and natural environments.”

Alexander has served as co-president of the Graduate Student Government



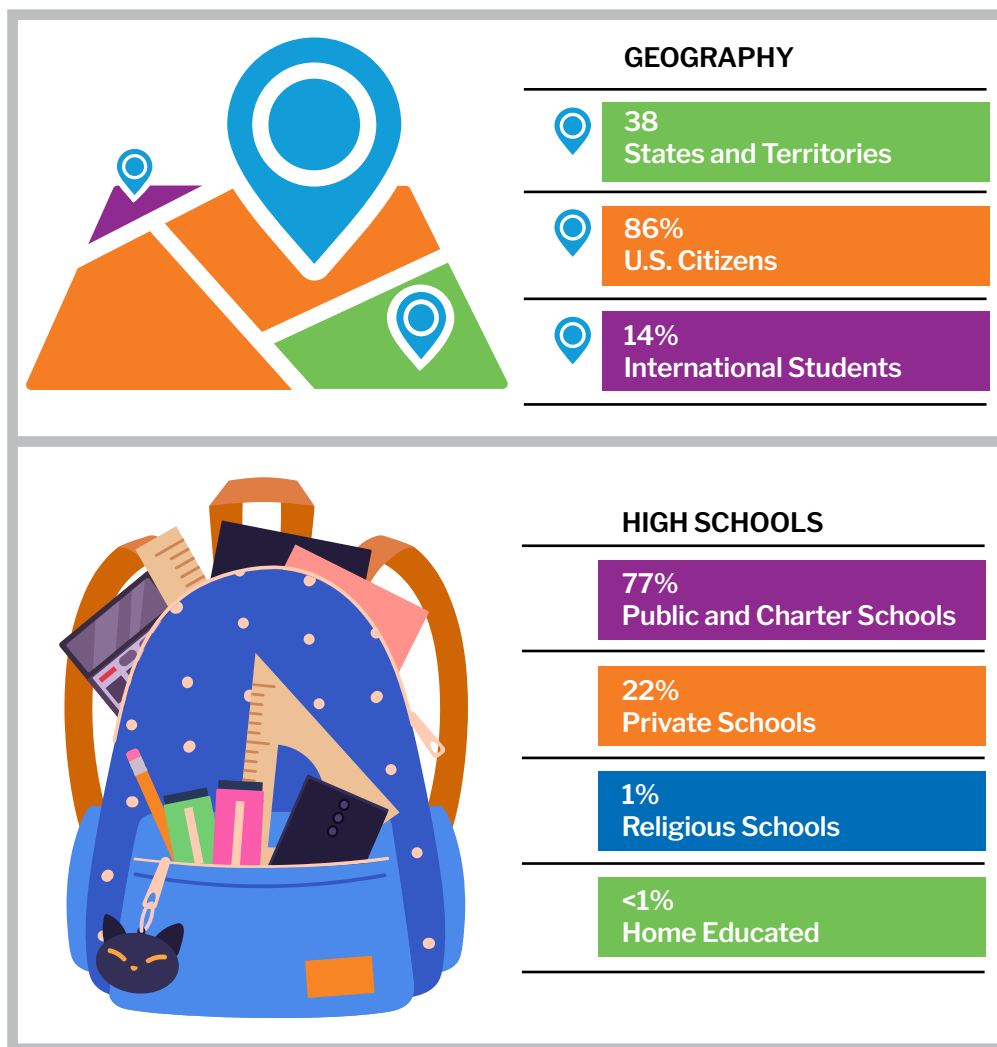
SPOTLIGHT

A Legacy of Care

As the undergraduate administrator in the Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering, Julie Sefa is a cornerstone of the student experience. Each year, Julie creates a display of photos for the graduating seniors, a tradition that fills the walls of the undergraduate lounge. These boards have become a beloved stop for families and returning alumni. At graduation, the Class of 2025 inducted Julie as an honorary member in recognition of the care and dedication she brings to her role every day. On behalf of the entire School of Engineering community, we extend a huge thank you to Julie Sefa!

POPULATION DATA

Where are our first-year BSE students from?



For further data about our community, see:
<https://engineering.princeton.edu/diversity-and-inclusion/dashboard>

WELCOMING OUR NEW DEANS

Please join us in welcoming new leadership at Princeton Engineering. Professor **Andrew Houck** of electrical and computer engineering took became dean Aug. 1. Dean Houck is a pioneer in quantum science and engineering and played a leading role in rethinking the first-year curriculum for engineering. **Gabriele Villarini**, professor of civil and environmental engineering, became vice dean effective Sept. 1. **Cecily Swanson** joined us from the Office of the Dean of the College on July 21 to take on the role of associate dean for undergraduate affairs. All three new deans would welcome hearing from you about your concerns and passions!