

Hello Engineering Studies students and welcome to the 2021-2022 school year,

I'm writing as Chair of EGRS with an introduction, a welcome back, and an overview for everyone. Just so you know who the "everyone" is, there are 50 of you in the major, as of today. We have 23 graduating seniors this year (a few in December, most next May). There are 15 juniors in the class of 2023, 7 sophomores, and 5 students incoming as first years in the program. This is pretty typical. (Well, though maybe that sophomore class is lighter than normal.) The major tends to grow in size between the end of the first year and end of sophomore year.

I've got loads of things to share, so let me do that in categories as follows:

Teaching

If you didn't know this, three faculty members regularly teach in the program. That's me, Prof. Nicodemus, and Prof. Sanford. This year, we are fortunate to have Prof. Deborah Stine as a Visiting Assistant Professor while Prof. Nicodemus is on sabbatical. Prof. Stine comes to us with a career of leadership in science, engineering, and technology policy at several levels of government, including stints in the Obama Administration and past positions at places like Carnegie Mellon. Many of you will meet her in class this Fall and likely take some of her electives in the Spring. We are likewise fortunate to have Prof. Mary Wilford-Hunt and Prof. Sandy Clavijo offering classes this Fall in architecture and building high tech start-ups (EGRS 271 and EGRS 365, respectively). Not only that, but programs like ours run because we have administrators that help make things work and, for us, Serena Ashmore, Colt Houser, and Susan Boerchers are the ones.

Courses

But back to classes, this means there are four EGRS courses on the books this Fall (EGRS 251, 271, 365, and 451). You can expect that we'll have seven or eight in the Spring – EGRS 261, 274, 281, 352, 373, 480, a special topics course in engineering and climate policy, and a new course EGRS/AFS 220, on race and technology. That's a lot, you're not going to remember all of this, even if you made it this far in the letter. But save this note for future reference, and for looking up what those courses are, since I can't imagine you can identify them just by their number.

Website

By the way, you can find all of this information at [our newly revamped website](#). We've added new pages, edited others, and organized the place a bit. I encourage you all to surf around to familiarize yourself with things like [opportunities](#), [curriculum](#), and the [EGRS Community](#). As one example, thinking of a thesis in your senior year? Try the [guidelines available here](#). As another example, we put together sample course schedules for three of our most common double major combos. [Check them out here](#).

Alumni/what do EGRS grads do?

Let me point to alumni news as its own talking point. One reason we usually start with a half dozen first year majors before growing to an average of 19 seniors is the lack of clarity for incoming students about what EGRS is and what students do with it. The communications

division wrote a series of profiles this year about some of our many outstanding graduates. Each of their stories sheds light on how they saw the major and how they've brought it into their careers. There's [Megan Schmidt '17](#), for example, and [Emma Fortier '18](#), [Jack Kleinert '18](#), and [Keon West '06](#). There's also an [article about the 50th anniversary](#) of the program which you may have read last year (because I sent it around last year). Or, you know what? Just go here, to the "[career opportunities](#)" page to find boatloads of examples.

Best Society

I hope as well the Best Society—named for the program's co-founder Charles Best—can reconvene now that we are back on campus. If you're not familiar with the society, this is the EGRS student group. Before the pandemic sidelined things, they were doing great work to help develop community, to connect juniors and seniors with sophomores and first years, and to provide a space for students to share experiences and opportunities. Last I heard, the incomparable Ian Grayson '22 was President.

In closing, I want to restate and emphasize [our Community page](#), which I only nodded to above, but which deserves a bigger spotlight. We say there—having borrowed and adapted a similar statement from Mechanical Engineering—that our commitment to the virtues of a diverse community leads us to think of and teach about the ways technologies can help or hinder such virtues. We thus envision engineering as a way to build a future that is inclusive, respectful, and diverse, while promoting equity and striving for democratic collaboration. Achieving that future requires that all members work together to uphold the honesty and integrity needed to support one another. Thus, we're writing to everyone in our community at the start of the Fall semester to ask that the principles summarized on our homepage provide a baseline for the work we'll do together this year and beyond. EGRS students should be leaders on these matters. We have much to do.

Benjamin R. Cohen
Associate Professor and Chair of Engineering Studies