

Did You Know?

- Nobel Prize recipients from Purdue include two alumni, six former faculty members, one professor emeritus, and three current faculty members. In fall 2010, Ei-ichi Negishi, the Herbert C. Brown Distinguished Professor of Chemistry, became the University's most recent recipient winning the Nobel Prize in chemistry.
- Many Purdue graduates have traveled in darkness while viewing a sunrise every 90 minutes — as NASA astronauts. Our University and its alumni, especially its 23 astronauts, play a pivotal role in the U.S. space program. In 2012, we mourned the death of one of Purdue's most famous alumni, Neil Armstrong, BS '55, who stepped foot on the moon for the first time July 20, 1969. Three Purdue University alumni and a professor are part of NASA's Mars Science Laboratory mission, which in 2012 landed the Curiosity rover on the planet's surface.
- In 2007 and 2009, Purdue faculty members won the World Food prize, considered the Nobel Prize of agriculture. Agronomy Professor Gebisa Ejeta's research on sorghum seed genetics has vastly improved the food supply for the people of 12 countries in Africa and resulted in his naming as the 2009 recipient. In 2007, Philip Nelson, the Scholle Chair Professor in Food Processing, won the award for developing aseptic bulk storage and distribution, a technology to transport processed fruits and vegetables without spoilage.
- Alumnus and noted computer programmer Howard G. "Ward" Cunningham wrote the first Wiki application. A pioneer in both design patterns and Extreme Programming, he started programming the software WikiWikiWeb in 1994.
- Purdue's Online Writing Lab, known as OWL, went live in 1994 as one of the world's first online writing labs. Today, its visitors come from more than 125 countries, and the site receives more than 231 million page views a year.
- Purdue's West Lafayette campus was named a Tree Campus by the Arbor Day Foundation. The campus features 356 varieties of trees, including "Shuttle Gums." In 1984, Purdue alumnus and astronaut Charles Walker took 200 sweet gum tree seeds to space, which germinated before returning to earth. These tiny plants, dubbed the "Shuttle Gums," were later planted northwest of Grissom Hall, in Pickett Park, near the Mechanical Engineering Building and south of the Forestry Building.
- Mackey Arena, Purdue's basketball facility since 1967, underwent a transformation and reopened with a men's basketball game against Northern Illinois on November 11, 2011. The new Mackey Complex includes improved arena seating, ticket offices, and other amenities for fans, as well as the opportunity to bring academic, athletic, and training needs into one complex to benefit all student-athletes. The \$100 million project was funded by private contributions, concession sales, and premium seating programs.
- In 2009, Purdue built what was then the Big Ten's largest supercomputer in one day. It contains 10,000 computer processors and is named Coates, in honor of Prof. Emeritus Clarence L. "Ben" Coates who was a driving force behind high performance computing and networking at Purdue prior to his retirement in 1988. The largest now is our latest machine, Carter.
- Purdue alumnus Elwood Mead oversaw the construction of the Hoover Dam, which upon its completion in 1936, was the world's largest concrete structure containing 3.25 million cubic yards of concrete. Also, Purdue Civil Engineering faculty member Charles Ellis conceived and drew up specifications for the Golden Gate Bridge, which was built in San Francisco in 1937. Both structures were at one time among the "Seven Wonders of the Modern World."
- The Purdue men's and women's basketball programs have combined to win 29 Big Ten regular-season championships, the second-most among conference schools. They also have a Big Ten-leading nine conference tournament titles.
- Purdue's student newspaper, The Exponent, started circulation on December 15, 1889. The Exponent now prints 15,000 copies per day, making it one of the largest collegiate dailies in the country. Princeton Review's "Best Colleges Quality of Life" report ranked The Exponent 17th in the nation in 2009.
- Purdue's All-American Marching Band, which celebrated its 126th anniversary in fall 2012, may be best known for having the "World's Largest Drum" and the "Golden Girl," but it also claims several famous alumni, including a baritone player named Neil Armstrong, who went on to walk on the moon; a tuba player named Orville Redenbacher, known best for his popcorn products; and another tuba player named R. Games Slayer, inventor of fiberglass and the alumnus responsible for Slayer Hill Performing Arts Center on the north side of campus.
- Aviation has a long-standing history at Purdue. Alumnus Cliff Turpin helped Orville and Wilbur Wright build and test their first flying machine in 1903. Turpin later set a world altitude record of 9,400 feet in 1911 in an airplane made out of wood and canvas and with no seatbelt. Purdue was the only college or university to have its own airport when it opened in 1930. Renowned aviatrix Amelia Earhart served as a women's career consultant at Purdue from 1935 to 1937. More than 800 students annually have enjoyed the modern amenities of the Niswonger Aviation Technology Building, which opened in 2009.
- The Purdue Musical Organizations often serve as international ambassadors for the University. In 2002, the Men's Glee Club visited China; in 2005, it visited Scotland and, in May of 2008, it journeyed to South Africa. Founded in 1893, the Glee Club is recognized as one of the premier all-male choral ensembles in the world.
- Purdue was a Co-Founder of WEPAN (Women in Engineering Programs & Advocates Network) in 1990. This non-profit organization is a catalyst for change to enhance the success of women in the engineering professions. Today, there are 700 members from engineering schools, small businesses, Fortune 500 corporations, and non-profit organizations. Purdue also created the first Women in Engineering Program in 1969.
- Purdue has the second highest enrollment of international students among public U.S. universities with 6,761 in fall 2012.
- Thanks to a \$105 million award from the National Science Foundation, the University's largest award thus far, Purdue established an operations headquarters in fall 2009 that is serving as a global epicenter for advancing research and education related to earthquakes and tsunamis. The George E. Brown Jr. Network for Earthquake Engineering Simulation (NEES) management team and hub cyber infrastructure connects 14 NEES research equipment sites and the earthquake engineering community around the world through groundbreaking cyber infrastructure, education and outreach efforts.
- "Purdue Pete" originated in 1940 and took human form in 1956. Even in the late 1980s, Pete donned a costume head, which weighed about 13 pounds. Thanks to Purdue students and faculty in an advanced composite technology class (AT 472), Pete's head now weighs just five pounds, and students in the class continue to make replacements as needed.
- In 1971, Purdue students Arthur Bond, Edward Barrette, and Fred Cooper founded the National Society of Black Engineers, which now includes 394 chapters and 29,900 members worldwide.
- The Purdue Alumni Student Experience (PASE) organization is the largest student-led campus group with 3,445 members.
- A new Journal of Purdue Undergraduate Research (JPUR) debuted in spring 2011. Each edition highlights a handful of research projects from among more than 2,000 undergraduate research projects. The journal is available online at www.jpur.org and in print copies distributed around campus.
- Purdue students shattered the Guinness World Record in spring 2011 for the largest Rube Goldberg machine ever with a 244-step juggernaut that destroys the planet several times over before restoring hope by watering and growing a flower.
- The Sofres Nanofabrication Laboratory, located in the Birk Nanotechnology Center, houses the nation's cleanest university (clean room) facility, which allows for extremely small-scale research to be conducted without environmental contamination.
- Purdue is dubbed the "Cradle of Quarterbacks" for its tradition of standout players at the position, including 15 who have gone on to play in the National Football League and who have accumulated more starts, completed more passes, and thrown for more yards and touchdown passes than quarterbacks from any other school. With Drew Brees, Len Dawson and Bob Griese as Super Bowl-winning quarterbacks, Purdue is one of just two universities that can claim three different Super Bowl champs at the position.