Mission:
The IDEAL Center promotes Innovation, Design, Entrepreneurship, and Leadership and seeks to inspire the Lafayette Community to explore collaborative opportunities connecting liberal arts and engineering. The IDEAL Center for Innovation serves a platform for engaging external partnerships, facilitating experiential learning, and showcasing impact beyond the academy.

INNOVATION

Cultural Conservation and Nanotechnology

The Lafayette Community learns to apply innovative technologies to physical conservation art and cultural heritage and are introduced to the natural sciences and global multi-cultural issues. Student leaders participate in an immersion experience in Florence, Italy featuring an internship at the internationally-renowned Center for Colloids and Nanoscience (CSGI). Campus and public-facing programming for 2016 include seminars, public engagement, and workshops, including Nanotechnologies for Cultural Conservation: Current Trends and Practices at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in December. Find out more at nanoforart.org.

Advanced Digital Heritage

The movement of digital humanities seeks to leverage computing and the liberal arts. Through the use of advanced technologies, such as photogrammetry and LIDAR, the Lafayette team facilitates the creation of digital records of monuments and architectural structures of societal, cultural, and geopolitical importance. In partnership with organizations, agencies, and corporations with the shared mission of Collect, Archive, Share, the team creates free, 3D online tools of important cultural heritage sites before they are lost to natural disaster, destroyed by human aggression, or ravaged by the passage of time.

Intuitive Modular Music Synthesis

In this collaboration between Engineering and Music, the objective is to create an interface for modular analog synthesizers that transparently melds engineering design with the musical creative process. The team includes faculty and students in collaboration with a musician/composer/producer based in Los Angeles. Current development focuses on an interface that allows the user to directly translate sound without knobs and dials.

Flux Theater Ensemble Residency

This is a collaboration of artistry and entrepreneurship. Members of the Ensemble will teach an interdisciplinary course, “Making Theater: Tartuffe and Beyond,” offer master classes, and share their innovative approach to redefining the role of audience through social media in developing a marketing strategy for the downtown arts campus. Moliere’s Tartuffe will be designed, directed, and performed by Flux members in collaboration with Lafayette faculty, staff, and students. The Ensemble will facilitate a series of theater-driven dialogues with Lafayette Community studying such subjects as biology, economics, engineering, and government and law, as well as story-circles with local faith-based communities on the role of faith in a scientific age.
DESIGN

Additive Manufacturing Institute (AMI)

The AMI is a resource for digital part materialization for the community, the region, and the nation. In cooperation with the ExOne Company, the AMI promotes widespread adoption of additive manufacturing and provides hands-on demonstrations with student teams and faculty to foster familiarity with, and commercial application of, innovative additive manufacturing technologies to new potential adopters.

3dP Studio

The 3dP studio provides a space for ideation, imagination, and creation and is home to a large-format M-Flex metal printer, as well as extrusion based plastic prototyping 3d printers, providing a space for students, faculty, and external partners to explore and engage in state of the art additive manufacturing technologies.

Programming

Workshops, seminars, Maker Meet-ups, and design challenges are hosted by the AMI to prepare students for innovative work environments while growing the entrepreneurial ecosystem at the College.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

IPrize Challenge

The IPrize challenge seeks to inspire the Lafayette Community to explore collaborative opportunities connecting liberal arts and engineering. The 2016 IPrize focuses on sustainability; each entry must address Economic Growth and one other United Nations Sustainable Development Goal. IPrize entries can be based on an original idea or from a list of sponsored challenges. Find out more at ideal.lafayette.edu/iprize.

Entrepreneurship Workshop Series

These co-curricular workshops in the focus on applied topics and skills building. First-year students with guest lectures amplifying different sub-topics through personal perspective. This spring, the focus is on capstone students and solved examples (e.g. filing a provisional patent, writing a business pro-forma, and preparing an A3). This summer, EXCEL Scholars and others will learn through case studies of student start-ups.

The President’s Entrepreneurship Lecture Series

This series hosts high-impact speakers; the spring 2016 offering features extremely successful individuals with inspirational, personal perspectives.

LEADERSHIP

Professional Development Workshops

These seminars focus on soft skills that prepare students for transitioning to life after the academy. Topics in the spring 2016 include personal budgeting and saving, analysis of major purchases, and non-salary compensation, as well as an introduction to engaging presentations.

IDEAL also collaborates on co-sponsored events, workshops, and programming with inter-Divisional partnership.