I would like to introduce to you the 2014-15 cohort of new faculty for the College of Engineering at the University of Idaho. We have added six new faculty to strengthen our teaching, research, and outreach missions. While we have had a few faculty retirements and departures, half of our new faculty are joining the Department of Electrical Engineering, where we are making a concerted effort to develop expertise to support a world-class microelectronics research and education program. Our college has a tradition of providing students strong fundamentals, hands-on learning, and exceptional design and research opportunities. These faculty will carry on this tradition.
Sara EFTEKHARNEJAD
Assistant Professor | Electrical and Computer Engineering

Dr. Sara Eftekharnejad joins the Electrical & Computer Engineering Department as an assistant professor. She received electrical engineering degrees from University of Tehran (B.S.) and West Virginia University (M.S.). Dr. Eftekharnejad received her Ph.D. in electrical engineering with a concentration in power systems from Arizona State University in 2012. Dr. Eftekharnejad comes to the UI after working for the Tucson Electric Power Company where her expertise was utilized in power system engineering and transmission planning.

Feng Li
Clinical Assistant Professor | Electrical and Computer Engineering

Dr. Feng Li joins the Electrical & Computer Engineering Department as a clinical assistant professor. He received his Ph.D. degree in electrical engineering from the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee in 2012. His research involves design and fabrication of compound semiconductor devices. Past affiliations include Duke University and University of Texas at Arlington. He has taught electrical engineering at University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee and Electronic Computer Programming Institute (ECPI) University. Between 1999-2001 Dr. Li worked as an engineer and project manager for China Telecom.
Dr. Joel C. Perry is a new member of the Mechanical Engineering Department as an assistant professor with a focus on robotics and engineering design. He received a B.Sc. degree in mechanical engineering from Gonzaga University in 2000, and M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees in mechanical engineering from the University of Washington, in 2002 and 2006 respectively. Dr. Perry spent the past 6 years working abroad in the Department of Rehabilitation Technologies at Tecnalia Research & Innovation in San Sebastian, Spain, where he managed R&D activities in the development of low-cost solutions for upper extremity rehabilitation. Before joining Tecnalia, Dr. Perry was involved in the development of a 7 degree-of-freedom (dof) arm exoskeleton, a 5-dof high precision positioning robot, a 5-dof surgical simulator, a novel 2-dof surgical grasper, and a 1-dof powered prosthesis for early-stance gait improvements in transtibial amputees. His research interests include enabling technologies for upper and lower limb disability, rehabilitation robotics, and surgical robotics.
Dr. Aleksandar Vakanski joins the Idaho Falls campus as a clinical assistant professor in Industrial Technology. He received a Ph.D. from the Department of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering at Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada in 2013. The scope of his research interests encompasses the fields of robotics, mechatronics, computer vision and artificial intelligence, with a primary focus on the sub-fields of robotic learning and visual control of robots. Dr. Vakanski’s main scientific contributions revolve around the topic of robot programming by demonstration, which provides a framework for transferring new skills to robots from visual observation of human-performed demonstrations. His research has been presented in several articles published in journals and conference proceedings, and a pending patent application.
Dr. Ata Zadehgol is an assistant professor of electrical and computer engineering at the University of Idaho. He received his B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees in electrical and computer engineering from the University of Washington (Seattle, 1996), the University of California (Davis, 2006), and the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign, 2011), respectively. Prior to joining the University of Idaho, he was a senior member of technical staff at Advanced Micro Devices. Since 1996, he has held various research and development positions in industry and academia, in areas related to numerical and computational electromagnetics, signal and power integrity of high performance and dense SoP/SoC, and electromagnetic compatibility. His research interests and activities include computational techniques in electromagnetic modeling, simulation, analysis, and design of high performance and dense microelectronic systems, as well as scattering and remote sensing, thermal sensing, control and optimization, and multi-physics phenomena.
Dr. Haiyan Zhao joins the Chemical and Material Science Engineering department as Assistant Professor with expertise in catalysis and kinetics and materials characterization applicable to clean fuel and renewable energy. She earned her Ph.D in Chemical Engineering at Virginia Tech. Prior to joining the University of Idaho, Dr. Zhao worked at Argonne National Laboratory as assistant chemist focusing on using advanced synchrotron x-rays to probe the atomic resolution structure of nanocatalytic materials and build a correlation between structure and catalytic performance.
Welcome
New Engineering Faculty 2014

For more than 100 years, the College of Engineering at the University of Idaho has been providing exceptional learning and research opportunities for students from Idaho and around the world.

We are dedicated to our students’ success, and we know that one-on-one interaction with faculty is important. At the College of Engineering, the average student to faculty ratio is 15 to 1. Our faculty are also advisers of our student organizations and groups, as well as being available for office hours and individual appointments.

Sara EFTEKHARNEJAD
Assistant Professor | Electrical and Computer Engineering

Feng LI
Clinical Assistant Professor | Electrical and Computer Engineering

Joel PERRY
Assistant Professor | Mechanical Engineering

Aleksandr VAKANSKI
Clinical Assistant Professor | Industrial Technology | Idaho Falls

Ata ZADEHGOLO
Assistant Professor | Electrical and Computer Engineering

Haiyan ZHAO
Assistant Professor | Chemical and Materials Engineering | Idaho Falls

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