

SWE Festival of Trees Entry Celebrates Creativity and Beauty in Engineering | College of Engineering

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News Release — December 2, 2021 — Making STEM fun was the focus as students in the Society of Women Engineers, or SWE, at Utah State University planned their entry for the school's annual Festival of Trees event.

Krissy Peterson is the SWE vice president of student affairs and said she has noticed art and creative expression are sometimes excluded from engineering which was why it was important to her and other club members to create a tree that celebrated beauty in STEM.



Members of the USU Society of Women Engineers stand with their contribution to the Utah State Festival of Trees. The club created decorations that focused on celebrating beauty and fun in engineering (Courtesy of SWE).

"One of the big focuses of SWE is outreach specifically to younger generations because a lot of the stigmas that are in STEM, we can really end those with the new generations of kids," Peterson said.

In addition to more typical Christmas tree decorations, like blue baubles and a sparkly white garland, club members used the College of Engineering's Idea Factory to make their own STEM-themed ornaments with the 3D printer and laser engraver. They even featured a science experiment on the tree by growing crystals made from a supersaturated borax solution.

As a biological engineering student, Peterson said she hasn't had many opportunities to apply 3D printing to her course work. The tree decorations were the first time she

used the Idea Factory which opened her mind to future possibilities.



One of the ornaments members of SWE created for their tree was a laser cut piece that featured their club logo (Courtesy of SWE).

"It was a really key opportunity for me to see this is super doable," she said. "It's not actually that intimidating."

Peterson said while they don't know if this is the first time the club has participated in USU's festival of trees, it's the first time they've participated in recent memory. She hopes it will become a tradition for the SWE moving forward.

One of the laser engraved ornaments club members made featured the SWE logo. Peterson said they enjoyed making the ornaments so much, they made more than they needed for the tree. They plan on selling the extra ornaments to promote their work. More information can be found on the [SWE website](#).

The USU Festival of Trees is an annual event organized by the Traditions committee where student organizations decorate trees that are given to families in financial need in Cache County.

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Writer: Matilyn Mortensen, matilyn.mortensen@usu.edu, 435-797-7512

Contact: Krissy Peterson, activities.sweusu@gmail.com