

USU Engineering Professor to Receive 2026 Pioneers of Progress Award for Days of '47 Celebration

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Mechanical and aerospace engineering associate professor Juhyeong Lee has been selected to receive the 2026 Pioneers of Progress Award for his contributions and innovation in the field of aerospace.



Utah State University associate professor Juhyeong Lee has been selected as a recipient of the 2026 Pioneers of Progress Award.

The Days of '47 Board of Trustees selected Lee as a recipient for the science and technology category, one of several areas outlined to honor the achievements and contributions of individuals whose work will have an enduring impact.

"Receiving the prestigious Pioneer of Progress Award is a great honor and a reflection of years of hard work from my research group," said Lee. "I sincerely appreciate this statewide recognition."

Throughout his career, Lee has actively collaborated with government agencies, industry and international research institutes. His research focuses on studying the mechanics of structures and materials engineered for durability under extreme conditions, using experimental mechanics, computer modeling and machine learning.

"I hope our work will have a lasting impact by advancing research in extreme composite applications and inspiring future engineers to develop innovative solutions," Lee said.

Lee earned his bachelor's degree in material science and engineering from Chonnam National University. He then went on to earn his master's and Ph.D. in aerospace engineering from Mississippi State University.

The award will be presented to Lee at the Gala Banquet on Thursday, July 16 at The Grand America in Salt Lake City.

The Pioneers of Progress Awards are hosted by the Days of '47 organization, one of several events to celebrate and honor the arrival of pioneers in Salt Lake City on July 24, 1847. Lee is the second Utah State faculty member to receive this award. Mechanical and aerospace engineering assistant professor Nadia Kouraytem was a 2024 recipient.

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Writer: Libbie Anderson, libbie.anderson@usu.edu, 435-797-8361

Contact: Juhyeong Lee, juhyeong.lee@usu.edu, 435-797-0287