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### **UWL adds two high-impact majors**

### **Programs will meet growing need in engineering physics, data science**

Written by UW-La Crosse University Marketing & Communications

UW-La Crosse is launching new majors in two high-impact fields, bolstering the university’s longstanding reputation for excellence in science and workforce development.

The UW System Board of Regents approved UWL to establish majors in engineering physics and data science. Both majors will be implemented in the coming months and will be open for student enrollment beginning in fall 2025.

The engineering physics major, housed in the [Physics Department](https://www.uwlax.edu/academics/physics/), will help satisfy the growing need for engineers and scientists particularly in Wisconsin, but also across the country. It is designed to produce career-ready graduates with a wide base of technical, scientific and mathematical knowledge, allowing them to adapt to shifting needs in industry, government labs and academia.

“In today’s high-tech world, the boundaries between the traditional engineering disciplines are blurring, producing the need for engineers who are adaptable and have a broad knowledge base,” says [Eric Gansen](https://www.uwlax.edu/profile/egansen/), professor of physics, who helped spearhead the development of the major.  “The new engineering physics program will be a true hybrid of science, mathematics and engineering, and will provide graduates with a unique skillset to tackle cross-disciplinary design challenges.”

Engineering physics will focus on the physical and mathematical fundamentals of mechanical, civil, optical and materials engineering, and will include a solid foundation in physics, mathematics, chemistry and electronics.

Gansen says the program will complement UWL’s existing four-year degree offering in computer engineering, as well as the Physics Department’s five-year dual degree tracks in physics and engineering.

UWL’s new major in data science will help address the increasing demand for skilled professionals in Wisconsin and beyond, with the number of data science jobs projected to grow by 36% nationally over the next decade.

“By integrating mathematics, statistics, programming and communication, the program provides students with a comprehensive skill set to solve real-world problems,” explains [Jeff Baggett](https://www.uwlax.edu/profile/jbaggett/), a professor in the [Mathematics & Statistics Department](https://www.uwlax.edu/academics/mathematics/), which will administer the program. “Faculty and students will benefit from hands-on projects and research opportunities supported by strong partnerships with local industry leaders, healthcare systems and government agencies, ensuring a direct connection between academic work and real-world applications.”

The major will emphasize transferable skills such as technical expertise, ethical data practices and strong communication, preparing graduates for an array of roles and careers, including data analyst, business intelligence analyst and data visualization specialist.

Partnerships with organizations like Trane, Kwik Trip, Emplify Health, Mayo Clinic Health System and the U.S. Geological Survey will create internship opportunities and employment pathways for students in the program, strengthening ties to local industries and contributing to regional economic growth.

The addition of these majors illustrates UWL’s innovative, forward-looking approach to educating students and meeting the needs of the state.

Notably, 87% of graduates from UWL’s [College of Science & Health](https://www.uwlax.edu/csh/) continue to live and work in Wisconsin after earning their degree.

“With these new programs, our students will have more choices, allowing them to find majors that closely match their interest and future career,” says [Ju Kim](https://www.uwlax.edu/profile/jkim/), dean of the College of Science & Health. “The quality of the programs offered at UWL will better prepare students with the necessary skills and experiences to meet the workforce demand for general engineering and data science in this region and the state.”