BIOSYSTEMS AND AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING

The Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering is administered jointly by the Ferguson College of Agriculture and the College of Engineering, Architecture and Technology. Students interested in a degree in Biosystems Engineering may initially enroll through either college, at which time they will be assigned a Biosystems Engineering advisor. The degree is accredited by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET (see www.abet.org) under criteria for biological engineering and similarly named programs.

Biosystems engineers are professionals who create and adapt engineering knowledge and technologies for the efficient and effective production, processing, storage, handling and distribution of food, feed, fiber and other biological products, while at the same time providing for a quality environment and preserving and protecting natural resources. Biosystems engineers directly address problems and opportunities related to food, water, energy and the environment—all of which are critical to the quality of life in our society. Subject-matter specialization is provided through the following five undergraduate option areas: general, bioprocessing and food processing, environment and natural resources, machine systems and pre-medical.

The Biosystems Engineering program is a comprehensive engineering program that includes math, physical and biological sciences, basic engineering science and specialty areas. The first two years focus on the underlying biological, physical, chemical and mathematical principles of engineering, supplemented by appropriate general education courses in English, social sciences and humanities. The next two years build systematically upon the scientific knowledge acquired in the early courses and students have the opportunity to focus on the option areas listed above.

Biosystems engineering courses integrate engineering sciences, physical sciences, and biological sciences, and teach students to address real-world challenges. With the guidance of experienced faculty, students work both as individuals and in teams to design creative solutions to complex problems. The coursework is specifically sequenced and interrelated to provide design experience at each level, leading to progressively more complex, open-ended problems. The coursework incorporates the social and economic aspects of technical problems, and stresses the responsibilities of engineering professionals to behave ethically and promote occupational and public safety. The program culminates in senior year design courses in which students integrate the analysis, synthesis and other abilities they have developed throughout the earlier portions of their study into a capstone experience. At this point, students are able to design components, systems and processes that meet specific requirements, including such pertinent societal considerations as ethics, safety, environmental impact and aesthetics. The students have also developed and displayed the ability to conduct experiments essential to specific studies and to analyze the experimental results that lead to meaningful conclusions.

An integral part of this education continuum—from basic science through comprehensive engineering design—is learning experiences that facilitate the students’ abilities to function effectively in both individual and team environments. Moreover, the program provides every graduate with adequate learning experiences to develop effective written and oral communication skills. State-of-the-art computational tools are introduced and used as a part of their problem-solving experiences. Finally, the students’ experience in solving ever-more-challenging problems enables them to continue to learn independently throughout their professional careers.

The Biosystems Engineering program verifies that our students possess core engineering knowledge and capability by requiring students to take the Fundamentals of Engineering exam, which is an important step toward becoming a professional engineer. All candidates for the BS degree in Biosystems Engineering must take the Fundamentals of Engineering exam prior to receiving their degree.

The overall objective of the undergraduate Biosystems Engineering degree program is to provide the comprehensive education necessary to prepare students for successful, productive and rewarding careers in engineering for agricultural, food and biological systems.

Within a few years of graduation, Biosystems Engineering program graduates will become top professionals, managers or leaders in a wide variety of industries and organizations involved with biosystems engineering where they apply discovery, problem solving, and leadership skills for the benefit of their organization and the society at large.

A wide variety of employment opportunities are available for biosystems engineers in industry, public service and education. Some of these opportunities include positions in governmental agencies, consulting engineering firms, and agricultural and food equipment industries. Biosystems engineers are employed throughout the U.S. as well as internationally.

Students interested in a degree in Biosystems Engineering may initially enroll in the College of Engineering, Architecture and Technology or the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. Through either college, they will be assigned a Biosystems Engineering advisor. The Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering offers programs leading to the Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Biosystems Engineering. These degrees emphasize research and development.

Excellent laboratory and computer facilities are available for students to explore research and design in such areas as bioprocessing and food engineering, machine vision, sensor and control technology, waste management and utilization, hydrology, water quality, porous media flow, and intelligent systems for agricultural machine design and production.

Research projects are supported by the Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station and by state, federal and private grants and contracts. Well-trained faculty members, many of whom are registered professional engineers with research, consulting and design experience, guide the graduate students’ activities and plan programs to meet students’ needs. Graduate students design experiments and special equipment to conduct their work. They are expected to demonstrate, by supporting research or by designs, the ability to identify a problem, define alternatives, propose a solution, organize a design or an experimental investigation, manage the project to completion and report the results through peer-reviewed papers and professional presentations.

Admission Requirements

Admission to either the Master of Science or Doctor of Philosophy degree program requires graduation from an engineering curriculum accredited by the ABET Engineering Accreditation Commission, http://www.abet.org. Students without accredited degrees may be admitted provisionally and may be required to take additional courses. A student must be accepted
by an advisor in the department prior to official admission to the graduate program.

**Degree Requirements**

A candidate for the graduate degrees listed above follows an approved plan of study which must satisfy at least the minimum University requirements for that particular degree.