

Sweet Briar College and Regional Leaders Celebrate Innovation at Engineers Week Banquet

Sweet Briar College brought together students, industry leaders, and the community to celebrate innovation, problem-solving, and engineering excellence.

AMHERST, VA, UNITED STATES, February 28, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In partnership with the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance, Sweet Briar College hosted its annual [National Engineers Week Banquet](#) on Feb. 20 to celebrate regional engineering.

Over 150 students, faculty, staff, and guests attended the event held in the Upchurch Field House. It included an evening of networking, discussion, and a keynote address by Jordan P. Evans, an aerospace engineer and project manager for NASA's Europa Clipper mission.

Evans's presentation included anecdotes from his career with NASA, a brief history of space travel, and a description of what it takes to lead a team at NASA, including how to assemble a team, take risks, and recover from failures or setbacks. He also shared what he considers the traits of a highly successful engineering team, including intellectual curiosity, exceptional two-way communication, leadership, diverse technical skills, and more.

"Humans are the core of engineering itself," Evans said during his remarks. "We all stand on the shoulders of those that came before us to accomplish these things."

The Europa project, launched on Oct. 14, 2024, is the largest planetary spacecraft in NASA's history. It will explore Jupiter's ocean world, which is of the same name. Evans shared many details about this complex project, which will be active for several years. One challenge his team faced on the Europa project was a devastating hurricane around the launch date.



Annual National Engineers Week Banquet welcomes regional community members and companies to campus.

"It's an honor to be an explorer on behalf of the U.S. space agency. I hope my talk gives you a sense of the challenges this team had to overcome," said Evans. "And also provides a glimpse into how engineers make the impossible possible daily"

For first-year student Ayla Finnegan '28, Evans's thorough discussion of the various projects gave her insight into his career and motivated her to major in engineering.

"I loved how much detail he provided instead of just skimming over the difficulty of pulling a project like Europa together. I also thought it was amazing to see the issues he addressed that I wouldn't have imagined worrying about. They asked the right questions and figured it out, which is what engineering is," she said. "His presentation shows me that I'm allowed to ask questions and that I can find the answers. It's like, what questions can I come up with in the future that I might be able to answer?"



Jordan Evans speaks about his career with NASA during the 2025 National Engineers Week Banquet.

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Dr. Jon Bender, director of the Margaret Jones Wyllie '45 Engineering

Local engineers, representatives from regional companies, students, faculty, and area residents were also in attendance. Students had the unique opportunity to connect with local employers, experts, and industry leaders. Local industry, government, and academia were invited to share engineering achievements from the past year and a half, showcasing projects such as a computer-programmed robotic arm. Support for this event also came from BWXT, Framatome, Innovate Lynchburg, and Randolph College.

“We are again pleased to host the Engineering Banquet at

Sweet Briar College! This event brings together engineering students and faculty, practicing engineers, and the greater central Virginia community to learn about engineering challenges and solutions for the future that benefit everyone,” said Dr. Jon Bender, director of the [Margaret Jones Wyllie '45 Engineering Program](#). “Our students benefit through service by assisting in the

preparation and during the event, through engagement with the broader engineering community in which they will enter, and through an inspirational talk featuring today's engineering challenges.”

Sweet Briar College is one of only two women's colleges in the U.S. that offer an [ABET-accredited engineering degree program](#). For more information, visit sbc.edu/engineering.

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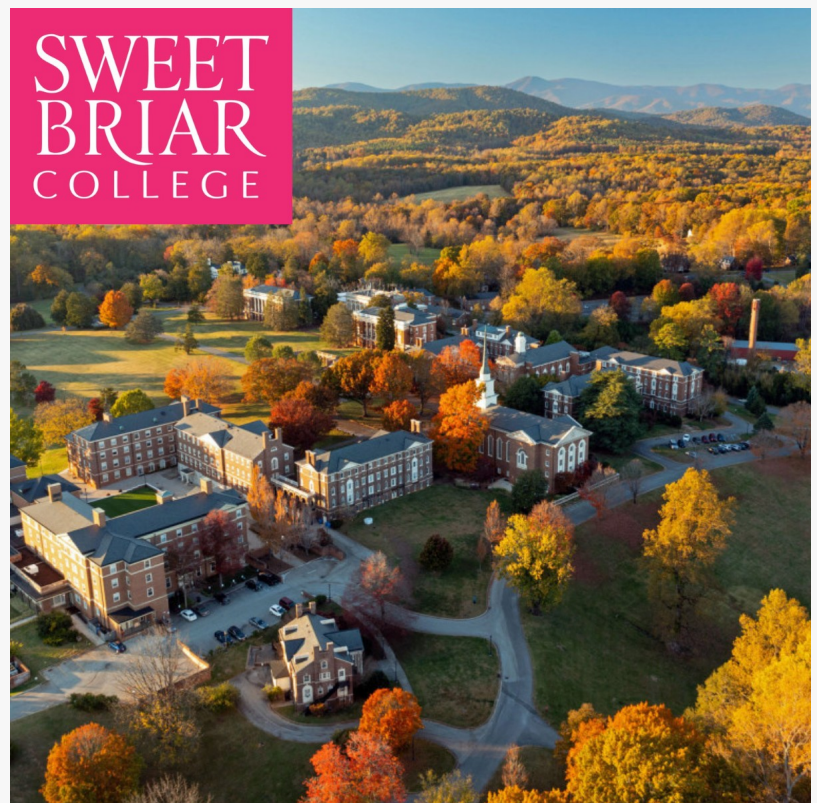
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Regional companies such as BWXT network with students.



Sweet Briar College: Where Bold Women Thrive, nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, is more than just a campus—it's a launchpad for fearless leaders, innovators, and changemakers.

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