

# New Purdue Daniels School prepares leaders for today's challenges and tomorrow's unknowns

No one knows what the next Google, Apple or Microsoft will be. But one thing is for certain. Whatever it is, graduates of Purdue University's transformative Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr. School of Business will be ready to lead it.

Officially launched in February, the Daniels School opens frontiers by creating students who are ready to found new companies that will transform society. Through innovative curriculum design, industry-partner research, and STEM-based learning, the school prepares students to succeed in an ever-changing global marketplace.

In order to master the intersection of business and technology, the school has created two flagship degree programs at the undergraduate level. The first, Integrated Business and Engineering, gives students core courses in both business and engineering, and combines that classroom education with hands-on learning. Students are challenged in case competitions, research projects and consulting assignments. Students collaborate with faculty and corporate partners to tackle real-world problems in interdisciplinary teams, an existing process that will expand in scope with active-learning innovation labs in a new state-of-the-art facility in 2027.

The second new offering, Business Analytics and Information Management (BAIM), mirrors the school's top-ranked master's program and teaches students to master the skills of gathering big data and making informed decisions with it, a trait in high demand from recruiters.

The school's prominence in the area of business analytics was recognized earlier this year by INFORMS, the largest association for the decision and data sciences. The BAIM programs were awarded the 2023 UPS George D. Smith Prize for excellence in preparing students to become practitioners of operations research and analytics.

Mohit Tawarmalani, the Allison & Nancy Schleicher Chair of Management and academic director of the Krenicki Center for Business Analytics and Machine Learning, says the award recognizes the unique and personalized educational approach of the BAIM degrees.

"We believe this recognition will help us in attracting an even more talented pool of



*Daniels School students learn to harness the power of big data in business decision-making.*

students, faculty and corporate partners, leading to new and successful collaborative engagements that are mutually beneficial and will play a pivotal role in redefining the data revolution and enabling digitization," Tawarmalani says.

The Daniels School is committed to switch the academic experience from passive to active. When students can apply their classroom learning to lessons outside the classroom, they become agile, critical thinkers capable of both seeing and tackling the world's biggest problems.

Case competitions provide one such experiential opportunity. They allow students to hone their public speaking skills, enhance their professionalism and learn to make decisions under pressure.

A team of four undergraduates from the Daniels School won the 2023 National Women's Case Competition in Austin, Texas. The event, sponsored by Apple, challenged teams to identify the root cause for a hypothetical increase in in-person shopping in Apple stores, and to develop a marketing strategy and global supply chain plan to allow the company to capitalize on the phenomenon. The Purdue team beat 17 other teams, including the University of Michigan, University of Wisconsin, and Indiana University for the title.

Team member Katarina Nikolovski says the group was well-prepared for the challenge.

"Leveraging our strong analytical and research abilities as Purdue students, we were able to create a solution that not only aligned with the company's objectives, but was also projected to be more sustainable and meet the rising demands of customers," says Nikolovski, who has accepted a marketing position with Eli Lilly. "Our team had exceptional communication skills and was able to tell a story that concisely conveyed our ideas."

Those comments are music to the ears of the school's namesake, the former Indiana governor and Purdue president.

"Students in the business school will receive a well-rounded education, including the history, philosophy, and economic theory of free market systems, and a firm grounding in the liberal arts and communication skills that come with it," Daniels says. "They will enter the world proud of the careers they have chosen and thoroughly prepared for leadership and managerial excellence in the most technologically complex fields."

It's true for today's fields...and those we don't yet know exist. •