

The Gear

Serving the 425 Members of the SWE-WI Section

Jan - 2026

SWE-WI Holiday Festivities

SWE-WI members near and far enjoyed the holiday season through crafting and connections! Thanks to Andrea Falasco for coordinating the 2025 handmade ornament exchange!

SWE-WI met at The Ruby Tap in Wauwatosa on December 10th for some snacks, wine, and good company. Thanks to those who braved the cold and tight parking to meet new faces and catch up with SWE-WI friends. Everyone had a great time!

Are you interested in setting up a SWE-WI meet and greet in your area? Send out a publicity request <https://forms.gle/CztqytTXYQB2hK6JA> or reach out to SWE-WI officers at our website contact us form [here](#).



2025 Ornament Exchange

Inside this Issue

- SWE-WI Holiday Festivities 1
- 2026 WE Local Conferences 2
- 2026 SWE Wisconsin Scholarship 3
- Outreach News 4
- SWE-WI Outreach Opportunities 5
- FIRST Volunteering FY26 6
- SWE Resource Spotlight 7

Key Upcoming Events

- 2026 WE Locals – Various Cities – Feb-April '26
- Spring Forward with SWE-WI – Stevens Point – 4/11/26

Stay up to date on all SWE-WI events at our [Google Calendar \(link\)](#)



2026 WE Local Conferences

2026 WE Local registration is now **open!** Early bird registration prices close 4 weeks before the conference, so don't delay and save by signing up today!



WE Local conferences are a great way to experience the inspiration, networking, and professional development of SWE conferences in a smaller, more manageable environment. WE Local registration includes two full days of conference admission including keynotes, sessions, special events, and workshops. Check out keynotes from the three US WE Locals below. SWE-WI hopes to see you at a WE Local this spring!



Rita Munarwi

Queen Without Crown: The Silent Politics of Quiet Leadership

Austin Closing Keynote



Carolina Caro

Leveling Up Communication: Unlearning the Golden Rule at Work

Portland Opening Keynote



Dr. Lisa Hinkelman

Beyond the Pipeline: Understanding the Psychology Behind Girls' STEM Decisions

Columbus Closing Keynote

Austin, Texas, U.S.
February 20 - 21, 2026

Portland, Oregon, U.S.
February 27 - 28, 2026

Columbus, Ohio, U.S.
March 13 - 14, 2026

Bengaluru, India
April 9 - 10, 2026

Dublin, Ireland
April 23 - 24, 2026



WE Local heads to Austin, Texas

WE Local in Austin, Texas, will bring together women and allies in engineering and technology for professional development and networking in a city known for its innovation, tech community, and vibrant engineering scene. [Learn more about WE Local Austin](#)

2026 SWE Wisconsin Scholarship

Scholarship Judges Needed

Seeking any professional SWE members willing to assist in reviewing collegiate scholarship applicants. This activity will be conducted virtually via conference calls & email and is a great opportunity to help our future engineers in a short-term activity, regardless of geography.

Overall time commitment should take no more than about 5 hours in total. Judging period to complete the review will be 2/7 through 2/16 with optional online training offered live (2/5 6 pm CT) or via recording.

If interested, please contact Gretchen Borden, Scholarship Chair, by **January 31st**, at swewisconsin.scholarships@gmail.com

Scholarship Application Deadline Jan-31st

Applications found online: <https://forms.gle/yQvpRWEdeqJwJi1u8>

To be eligible, applicants must be:

- full-time undergraduate college student, sophomore (second year of college) standing or higher, graduating after December 31, 2026,
- pursuing an engineering degree in an ABET-accredited program at one of the following universities:
 - Carthage College
 - Lake Superior State University
 - Marquette University
 - Michigan Technological University
 - Milwaukee School of Engineering
 - Northern Michigan University
 - University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire (materials science & engineering)
 - University of Wisconsin - Green Bay
 - University of Wisconsin - Madison
 - University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee
 - University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh
 - University of Wisconsin - Platteville
 - University of Wisconsin - River Falls (agricultural & environmental engineering)
 - University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point
 - University of Wisconsin - Stout
 - Viterbo University

Awarded scholarship funds will be paid directly to the college and must be applied to college tuition, fees, and books or equivalent.

Previous SWE-WI scholarship recipients are not eligible. Learn more about [SWE-WI scholarships online](#).



SWE-WI has been recognized in two categories for the 2025 SWE Recognition Program! Membership Retention Recognition (Professional – Large Section) and Mission Recognition (Silver – Professional Section).

Congratulations to all SWE-WI members on being recognized! To learn more about the recognition program, see the [SWE All Together blog post](#).

Outreach News

Glen Hills Middle School – 12/13/25

Thanks to Michelle and Heidi for volunteering at Glen Hills to share STEM stories about electronics. CNH's test bench was a highlight as kids (and adults) watched how farmers use programs engineers create to be more efficient. Thanks to CNH and Glen Hills!



**Save the Date
Spring Forward
with SWE-WI!**

Spring Forward with SWE-WI will return in 2026 in Stevens Point on **April 11th**! Save the date, you will not want to miss this great opportunity to network with professional and collegiate SWE members from around the area, get a chance to present and build your confidence to submit a proposal at a larger SWE conference, and overall be inspired by the talented women throughout our region.

SWE-WI Outreach Opportunities

Outreach Volunteer Notice

SWE has implemented a Youth Protection Policy. This year to be a volunteer at a SWE-WI sponsored event you must have completed the Youth Protection course and provide a SWE Certificate to the organizer.

Please consider taking the youth protection course early and sending SWE-WI a digital copy of your certificate. This course will need to be taken every three years. To access the course, or for more information please visit <https://swe.org/youthprotection/>

Outreach Involvement

If you have been involved in an outreach event and are a SWE member, send information about the event to Heidi Balestrieri at swewioutreach@swe.org so we can report the information in the SWE outreach tool.

Information needed for the report: event name, date, all SWE sections that were involved, description of event, breakdown of girls and boys who participated, age of students, number of adult guests, number of SWE member volunteers, number of other volunteers, any partner organizations involved, or any other information to share.

Have you heard about a STEM event or have an idea for a SWE-WI Outreach activity? Send information to swewioutreach@swe.org.

Girl Scout STEM Badges

Would you be interested in working with a Girl Scout Troop and introducing a girl to engineering? The Girl Scouts have introduced new engineering and STEM badges and troops are looking for engineers who would be willing to help them earn these badges. For information on how to be involved, project ideas, and how to find a troop contact swewioutreach@swe.org

SWE-WI OUTREACH SAVE THE DATE

Future City (Milwaukee) – January 17th

Galentine's Day Robotics Event (Hartland) – February 10th

STEM Fair (Milwaukee) – February 22nd

Discovery World Girls+STEM (Milwaukee) – March 1st

EMDC (Milwaukee) – March 13th

Sea Perch (Milwaukee) – March 15th

SWENext Membership



SWENext is a way to become part of SWE as a student through the age of 18. Joining is free, any student 13 or older can become a SWENext on their own, for those younger than 13, a parent will need to be the primary contact. When registering for SWENext use event code: **Wisconsin**
Learn more about SWENext visit: <https://swe.org/k-12-outreach/swenext-2/>
For any SWENext questions, contact: outreach@swe.org

FIRST Volunteering FY26

Did you know that SWE has been a **Strategic Alliance Partner** of **FIRST** since 2008? This partnership has helped both organizations promote STEM to young people and promote diversity and inclusion in STEM fields.

There are many FIRST event volunteer opportunities throughout the state! To volunteer at any of these events, follow the **FIRST Volunteer Registration Guide**.

FIRST Tech Challenge

- 1/31/26 – Madison, WI
- 2/7 – 2/8/26 – Brookfield, WI

FIRST Robotics Competition

- 3/6 – 3/8/26 – Plymouth, WI
- 3/20 – 3/22/26 – Appleton, WI
- 3/27 – 3/29/26 – Mukwonago, WI
- 4/2 – 4/4/26 – La Crosse, WI
- 4/17 – 4/19/26 – Brookfield, WI



For more information about FIRST opportunities in the state, check out the **FIRST Wisconsin website**. Volunteer at a FIRST event? Let swewioutreach@swe.org know!

SWE-WI Newsletter Entries

Send us your stories! We want to see what our professional SWE-WI and affiliated collegiate SWE members are up to! We are looking for events that SWE has hosted, member milestones, interesting articles/books to share, and more! If you have something you want to see in the newsletter, please fill out the following Publicity Request Form and check 'The Gear Newsletter'. SWE-WI Publicity Request Form: <https://forms.gle/CztqytTXYQB2hK6JA>

SWE Resource Spotlight

Did you know that SWE has their very own podcast focused on empowering women engineers called Diverse?

Episode 349 – In *How to Make the Boss-Employee Relationship Work for Everyone*, Sabina Nawaz discussed ways that managers and employees can build stronger working relationships, breaking down what causes leaders to struggle, and how to avoid becoming “that boss”. Take advantage of this SWE curated content by adding this or other episodes from the Diverse podcast to your listening feed.

You can learn more about Diverse: a SWE Podcast Pioneering Inclusive Change in STEM on the SWE [website](#).



SWE's Advance Learning Center

Did you know that your SWE membership gets you premier access to SWE's Advance Learning Center? This includes free and discounted content on a wide variety of topics including DEIB, technical innovations, career management & development, CEU/PDH courses, and more!

Check out [SWE's Advance Learning Center](#) today with your SWE login.