

Through a strategic marketing and communications campaign, Live Wire transformed the University of Illinois' Grainger College of Engineering's image, positioned its faculty as influential innovators, and expanded its voice within the fields of science, engineering, and technology education.

Company Overview

The Grainger College of Engineering at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign is the center of innovative, forward-thinking, and cutting-edge research. Grainger Engineering produces brilliant and forward-thinking individuals who are driven by a desire to design a brighter future through innovation. The college's faculty and students focus on causes that will better the world in new, progressive, and radical ways.

Campaign Overview

As the higher education landscape continues to evolve, colleges and universities recognize media coverage is growing increasingly competitive. Constantly seeking an increase in rankings and reputation, an engineering school must leverage every asset in its toolkit to strengthen its brand, protect its prestige, and position the school for success now and into the future. It takes experience and a powerhouse of talent to navigate today's challenging and evolving media environment. Top-tier institutions like Grainger Engineering understand the value of working with a public relations firm like Live Wire Strategic Communications, LLC, whose talent and expertise delivered a comprehensive communications strategy to accomplish its objectives.

Campaign Objectives

Serving as the agency of record for the University of Illinois' Grainger College of Engineering over the past two years, Live Wire has developed an integrated marketing and communications campaign that strategically aligns with the school's science, engineering, and technology goals and objectives. From the school's brand and key messages to its market position and communications activities, Live Wire worked with Grainger Engineering's internal communications team to identify and implement the following PR objectives:

- /// Position Grainger Engineering as a premier engineering school in science, engineering, and technology and proactively position faculty and staff as thought leaders in tier-one media outlets and industry trade press.
- /// Increase awareness of Grainger Engineering's successes and stories of impact including in research, innovation, ingenuity, entrepreneurship, and advancement.
- /// Leverage the University of Illinois' proximity to Chicago to elevate Grainger Engineering as the go to regional authority on all science, engineering, and technology-related matters by securing earned media placements in Chicago-area media outlets.

Campaign Strategies

Based on a comprehensive analysis of Grainger Engineering and its competitors, Live Wire recommended the following strategies to accomplish the defined PR objectives:

- /// Proactively pursue the news cycle and engage journalists and producers at top-tier and local Chicago media outlets to secure high-level online, print, and broadcast media coverage.
- /// Pitch and secure placements in influential publications that strategically align to priority initiatives.
- /// Vet and prep faculty success stories and research for placements in local and national media.
- /// Aggressively pursue the science and technology media market to position Grainger Engineering's professors as the nation's top engineering experts.

Campaign Tactics

Live Wire developed and implemented the following comprehensive strategic public relations campaign on behalf of Grainger Engineering:

- /// **Elevating Innovation:** The diverse educational expertise and career opportunities that Grainger Engineering faculty have brought to Illinois has set the stage for scientific breakthroughs and research advancements across various disciplines. Live Wire worked closely with faculty members to promote the imperative research projects they're participating in, including research in fields such as quantum physics, cancer research, and aerospace engineering.
- /// **Influencing Policy:** Grainger Engineering faculty members are driving important conversations that will shape the world for future generations. Through targeted pitching efforts on trending topics such as technology/AI regulation, sustainable climate technologies and initiatives, semiconductor manufacturing, and global competition, Live Wire has utilized faculty expertise to drive change and shape opinions around state and national policies.
- /// **Proactive Pitching Surrounding the News Cycle:** Proactively pitching and chasing the news cycle is Live Wire's most aggressive program. We strategically monitored breaking news or news on the verge of breaking on behalf of Grainger Engineering and pitched faculty members as industry thought leaders and experts to targeted outlets. From prepared quotes to deadline interviews with faculty, Live Wire has earned the trust and respect of reporters to provide instant, accurate, and unique sources for stories.

Campaign Results

Since January 2024, Live Wire has delivered the following for the Grainger College of Engineering:

- /// Researched, drafted, and distributed 210 pitches to over 500 top tier outlets.
- /// Contacted an average of 620 reporters per month with targeted pitches, resulting in an average of two interviews per week with top tier media outlets.
- /// Completed 197 interviews with diverse faculty, resulting in 151 total earned media placements in outlets strategically selected to reach Grainger Engineering's target audiences.
- /// Secured regular thought leadership contributions from more than 86 Grainger Engineering faculty.
- /// Secured 50 high profile feature stories highlighting faculty, directors, and students of Grainger Engineering centers and initiatives in key local, trade, and national outlets.
- /// Secured media placements in local Chicago media outlets such as the Chicago Business Journal, Chicago Sun-Times, Fox Illinois, WCIA, and WBEZ to highlight Grainger Engineering's quantum initiatives.