



University of Pittsburgh

Swanson School of Engineering
Pitt Engineering Career Access Program (PECAP)
Pre-College Component
INVESTING NOW

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INVESTING NOW Overview

The Pitt Engineering Career Access Program (PECAP) is designed to develop and implement programs that promote and support the academic excellence of high achieving pre-college and undergraduate students from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. PECAP programming includes advising, tutoring, mentoring, workshops, summer enrichment programs and parental involvement. PECAP includes a pre-college component - **INVESTING NOW** and a college component – the Pitt EXCEL Program. These two initiatives provide a continuous pipeline for students from groups traditionally underrepresented to prepare for, enter and graduate from the University of Pittsburgh as STEM majors.

INVESTING NOW, created in 1988, is a college preparatory program created to stimulate, support, and recognize the high academic performance of pre-college students from groups that are underrepresented in science, technology, engineering and mathematics majors and careers. The purpose of the program is to ensure that participants are well prepared for matriculation at the University of Pittsburgh. The primary goals are to: 1) create a pipeline for well-prepared students to enter college and pursue science, technology, engineering and mathematics majors; 2) encourage and support students’ enrollment and achievement in advanced mathematics and science courses; 3) ensure that the participants make informed college choices; 4) support and encourage parents in their role as advocates for their children; and 5) coordinate partnerships between the University of Pittsburgh’s Swanson School of Engineering and local and regional schools.

Annually, approximately 200 students participate in **INVESTING NOW** activities. Membership in **INVESTING NOW** involves a student commitment to attend year-round programming from ninth through twelfth grade. Programming focuses on six areas:

Student Support	Academic advising, tutoring, workshops on strategies for academic success
Academic Enrichment	Summer enrichment classes, SAT Preparation, hands-on science and engineering experiences
College Planning	College preparation and financial aid workshops, college student shadowing
Career Awareness	Career awareness seminars, career shadowing
Cultural Awareness	Cultural awareness classes and seminars
Parent Involvement	College planning and financial aid workshops, academic success and transition to high school workshops, program volunteers

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All students are involved in hands-on science experiences, career awareness and college planning seminars, academic advising sessions, and cultural activities. Students who have less than a B in mathematics or science classes are required to attend an hour per subject of individual or small group tutoring each week. These sessions are conducted by successful University of Pittsburgh engineering, math, biology, chemistry or physics students. Optional tutoring is also available.

During the month of July, **INVESTING NOW** ninth, tenth and eleventh grade students attend classes on the University of Pittsburgh's campus. Students take non-credit classes in mathematics, science and writing in the morning. In addition to the required academic classes, students participate in an engineering project class in the afternoon. The summer session concludes with a program at which classes display and demonstrate their work, and students receive awards for their accomplishments.

INVESTING NOW recruitment, which focuses on eighth grade students, takes place in the spring of each academic year. However, older students can be admitted to the program if space is available. In order to be considered for participation, students must have:

- An academic grade point average of 3.0 or better
- A math/science grade point average of 3.0 or better;
- An interest in a STEM major/career and/or a high proficiency in math and science

The Class of 2009 is the sixteenth student cohort to participate in **INVESTING NOW** from ninth through twelfth grade. Significant statistics for this group include:

- 97% enrolled in college
- 41% chose an engineering, mathematics or science major
- 7% enrolled at the University of Pittsburgh

Statistics for the previous five classes are listed below:

Participants	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Enrolled in College	98%	99%	100%	100%	100%
Engineering, math or science major	56%	65%	45%	53%	45%
Enrolled in the University of Pittsburgh	24%	29%	18%	20%	11%