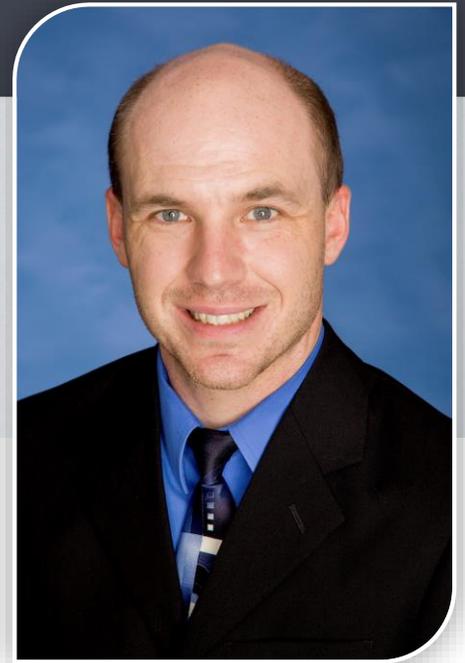


# STEM SPOTLIGHT

## Jared Teague

Engineering Professor  
University of Tennessee at Martin

Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, minor in Mathematics  
Arkansas Tech University in Russellville, AR  
Ph.D. in Metallurgical Engineering  
Missouri S & T in Rolla, MO



### **Q**How did you select your college major?

**A** I originally did not know if I wanted to go to college for theatre or engineering. My high school teachers adamantly encouraged engineering. I decided to major in Electrical Engineering with the intent of working on robots for the movie industry. This was somewhat of a compromise for me. Somewhere along the way, I had a slight change of heart and changed major to Mechanical Engineering and decided that I wanted to teach. My friends in college were very encouraging and said I should teach at the collegiate level. That is basically why I went for the PhD and am now teaching at UT Martin. After over four years of teaching, I still don't have any regrets about my decision to be an engineer and to teach engineering.

### **Q**What was the biggest influence in your selection of major/ career?

**A** My family was supportive of me regardless of what my choice was going to be. However, I was the first in my family to go to college so I relied heavily on the advice of my high school teachers. In particular, my math and JROTC teachers influenced my decision and I have made sure to go back and tell them thanks. I did not realize the importance of the advice from these teachers until after I was at college and saw the advantage that their support had given me.

### **Q**If you could go back to high school and select any elective course to take that would have better prepared you for college, what would it be?

**A** This question is really hard because I do not think there were other electives I could have taken that would have helped. My high school offered Calculus, but I was only able to complete Trigonometry. The problem was, that going into high school, I did not take math seriously and this put me behind. If I could go back, I would study harder and make it to Calculus before college.

**Q** What is your favorite aspect of your job?

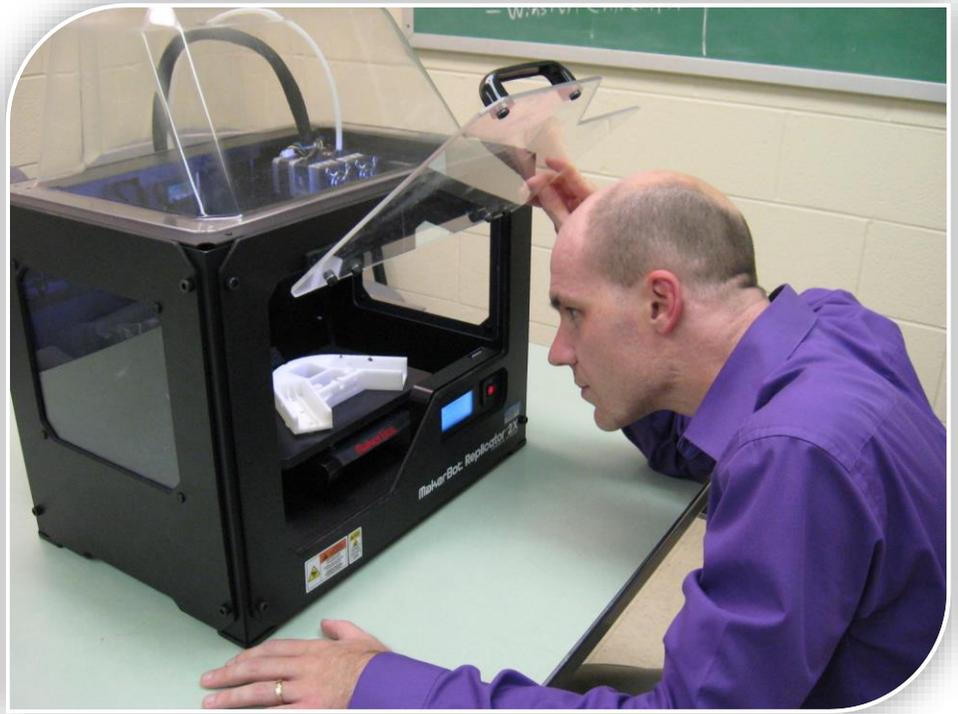
**A** Answering as a teacher more than as an engineer, I appreciate having the opportunity to have a positive impact on people's lives. I also never know what I am going to learn. My job gives me opportunities to learn about subjects as different as the different types of lumber used in construction to how a college library decides when to remove old books and buy new books.

**Q** How do you/your company make a positive impact on society/our community?

**A** Scientists are great because they study the world around us and there is still so much to learn. However, engineers design the world around us. Every day some engineers work to improve the safety of our cars. Some engineers work to increase food production. Other engineers are developing new treatments for cancer. There are even engineers working on artificial organs such as eyes and hearts. When the government decides that cars have to burn less gas per mile or that a certain amount of electricity will come from renewable sources it is engineers that find ways to improve the technology.

**Q** What's the most interesting thing you have been able to do in your professional career?

**A** I led in the purchase of a 3D printer and have been using it to make parts for our design teams. For example, I've made some parts for the robotics team over the past two weeks that will help the robot solve a Rubik's cube and draw on an Etch-A-Sketch. Seeing a machine build something out of plastic on your desk is pretty interesting. This is especially true if the plastic glows in the dark. I really like making parts with glow in the dark plastic.



**Q** What makes you get up each morning excited about your profession?

**A** I try to learn something new as often as I can, and I try to leave some sort of positive impact on the world around me. Each day I feel like God tells me to try and make the world a little bit better place than it was in the morning. Many days I don't know if I make the world any better at all, but it is worth getting up and at least trying.

**Q** What advice would you share with K-12 students who are considering your profession?

**A** Math! If you like math, great, work harder at it. If you don't like math, that's okay, just work harder at it. Math. Math. Math. Work at it hour after hour until it starts to make sense. Along the way, don't lose sight of why you are doing the math. The end goal is to apply math and science to improve the quality of human life on Earth. Other than that, my advice is to not over-watch the news and to not stay glued to social media. Overall, too much social media and news can make people distracted and depressed.