

ALUMNI PROFILE

Laura Small Whitsitt

Vice President of Research & Innovation,
Smith & Nephew

Herff College of Engineering Experience

"It was at the Herff College of Engineering that I learned engineering principles that have allowed me to contribute to the advancement of orthopaedics. It was through leadership roles at the University of Memphis, such as President of Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society, that I began developing leadership skills that prepared me for management roles at Smith & Nephew.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time at the Herff College of Engineering. Not only did my education provide me with the skills needed for my career, but I made life-long friends with many professors and students during my five years in the program."



Professional History

Laura Whitsitt has held various roles in Product Development and Research, starting as a Product Development Engineer then moving into Product Development Management. Later, she moved into a Technology Assessment/Licensing role and then into various research management roles.

Whitsitt is now the Vice President of Research and Innovation for Smith & Nephew's orthopaedic division. She is responsible for strategy and implementation of research programs to ensure the long-term success of the company, including safety and efficiency evaluations of new products, publication strategies that support key products and the innovation process for the company's global business units.

Significant Accomplishments

- Designed two successful orthopaedic implant systems
- Invented five patented products
- Contributed to initial development of national testing standards for spinal devices
- Led acquisition team to obtain distribution rights to joint fluid therapy product
- Established Research Internship Program
- Developed Employee Mentoring Program

Education

- Bachelor of science in mechanical engineering, 1987, University of Memphis
- Master's of science in mechanical engineering, 1988, University of Memphis



Dreamers. Thinkers. Doers.