

## Helping iGen Engineering Students Prepare for the Real World

**Kenneth W. Van Treuren**  
Mechanical Engineering Department  
Baylor University

### Abstract

A recent suicide of an engineering student at Baylor has caused the engineering faculty to ask questions about students entering higher education today, the iGeneration (iGen) or GenZ. “Legacy” professors (such as the author) who did not grow up under the same circumstances find it hard to relate to the pressures that have shaped iGen lives. Dr Jean Twenge, author of *iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy--and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood--and What That Means for the Rest of Us*, discusses 10 topics that show disturbing trends with this generation: 1) Growing Up More Slowly, 2) Social Media/Internet Dependence, 3)Virtual Relationships, 4)Mental Health/Insecurity, 5)Being Irreligious, 6) Isolation/Safety and Community, 7) Income Insecurity/Work and Work Ethic, 8) Sex, Marriage, and Children, 8) Diversity/Inclusivity, and 9) Politics. Who are iGen students? Are iGen engineering students different? What can be done to prepare iGen students to enter the workforce? Feedback from industrial advisory boards is that the current generation lacks skills such as work experience and face-to-face social interaction, basic skills needed for success in the workplace. This paper will examine the trends seen in the literature, reflect on the iGen students entering the university, and attempt to understand their circumstances and culture. This paper will then offer some suggestions on how engineering programs can add value to the students, helping them mature. By helping iGen students mature, the students will become productive members of society, able to function in today’s changing world and find joy in their work.

### Introduction

Make no mistake, there is a mental health crisis facing the university. The American College Health Association in their Spring 2018 report states that 63 % of college students have had anxiety attacks the past year, 42% have felt so depressed they can’t function, and 12% seriously considered suicide.<sup>1</sup> The Center for Collegiate Mental Health 2018 Annual Report examines data contributed by 152 college and university counseling centers, describing 179,964 unique college students seeking mental health treatment, 3,723 clinicians, and over 1,384,712 appointments.<sup>2</sup> These numbers are disturbing. Campus counseling centers and mental health services are being stretched to the limit. Dr Jim Marsh is the Executive Director of the Baylor University Counseling Center. Anticipating a rise in student visits, Baylor University authorized an increase in the number of counseling center professional staff to 22 in the 2016 – 2017 academic year. On a recent radio interview, Dr Marsh stated that the increase in student visits in the 2017-2018 academic year was 70% and the following year saw a 50% increase as well.<sup>3</sup> The average nationwide increase in student counseling visits last year seems to be approximately 40%.<sup>2</sup> With a student population of approximately 17,000, Baylor

now sees almost 3,000 students a year in their counseling center or 17% of Baylor's enrollment. Baylor has a student mental health professional ratio of approximately 775 to 1 and, while a good ratio by university standards, it is not enough. California State University reports there is an increase in hopelessness, loneliness, sadness, depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts over the past two years and that 16% of their students received some sort of psychological counseling or treatment over the past year.<sup>4</sup> The University of California reports that in the last 10 years students seeking mental health services has increased 78%, nearly three times the enrollment growth over the same time period.<sup>4</sup> These statistics should alarm faculty because these are the students entering the classroom. A quick google search of "mental health crisis in the university" yielded 158,000,000 results. While much is being written about the looming mental health crisis, there seems to be no coordinated effort to stem this rising epidemic. More studies are needed as to determine the severity of the mental health crisis. A more coordinated effort to address mental health issues is needed on the part of the university. Faculty in the classroom, who interact directly with students, must be more involved and ready to face these issues. From what is known and seen today, this is only the tip of the iceberg.

## **Suicide**

Today, suicide rates among teens and young adults have reached their highest point in nearly two decades. Approximately 1100 college students commit suicide each year, making it the second-leading cause of death among college students.<sup>5</sup> Roughly 12% of college students report the occurrence of suicide ideation during their four years in school, with 2.6% percent reporting persistent suicide ideation.<sup>5</sup> Burnell reports that a recent study published in *Depression and Anxiety* surveyed more than 67,000 college students from more than 100 institutions. The results showed that one in five students have had thoughts of suicide, with 9% making an attempt and nearly 20% reporting self-injury.<sup>6</sup> Suicide rates from teenage girls ages 15-19 doubled from 2007 to 2015 while for boys in the same age group the rate rose 30%.<sup>6</sup> These are shocking numbers which leaves no doubt why suicide is the second leading cause of death in for people ages 15-24.<sup>6</sup>

Last spring one of Baylor's much-loved engineering students committed suicide. He was a top student with what seemed like so many friends. After this occurred, questions were being raised by the faculty but there did not seem to be any answers. While feelings of inadequacy about what happened were prevalent in the School of Engineering and Computer Science, many faculty were facing the same questions but were afraid to voice their concerns. The faculty, especially the "Legacy" faculty who were near retirement and did not grow up under the same circumstances as iGens, did not fully understand the new generation entering the university and their challenges. The statistics stated above were overwhelming and prompted the School of Engineering and Computer Science to begin the journey to learn more about this generation and its pressures.

## **Internet Generation**

This current generation is part of what is called the internet Generation or iGen, sometimes also referred to as GenZ. They have grown up in a different environment than the current faculty at most universities. Dr Jean Twenge is the author of the book *iGen: Why today's Super-Connected Kids*

*are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy-and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood.*<sup>7</sup> She defines iGen as people born between 1995 and 2012. This accounts for 74 million young Americans, one in every five, who then become the most important generation in the nation's history.<sup>8</sup> Twenge states that one in four is Hispanic and nearly one of 20 is multiracial. Non-Hispanic whites had occupied a slim 53 percent majority of that group in its earlier years; however, that percentage falls to under 50 percent beginning with iGens born as of late 2009.<sup>7</sup> Thus, no one ethnic group is in the majority. What distinguishes iGens is they have always had access to the internet, smartphones, and social media. Mediakix characterizes iGens (GenZ) in this way<sup>9</sup>:

- Gen Z will be a 2.56 billion global population by 2020. By 2025, 29% of the American population.
- 98% of Generation Z members own a smartphone.
- 85% of Gen Z learns about new products via social media.
- 10 hours of screen time: the amount of time nearly *half* of Gen Z spends on devices each day.
- 71% this generation watches more than three hours of online video daily.
- 67% of Generation Z prefers seeing “real people” in ads.
- When Gen Z grows up, they’ll make up 40% of U.S. consumers.
- 50% of children are expected to be part of a minority ethnicity by 2020.
- 8 seconds = Gen Z’s attention span.
- 51% of this population uses ad-blocking software.
- A mere 9% of teens prefer Facebook over other social media platforms.

iGens are the most connected, technologically capable generation but with this designation comes the pressures of growing up in such a world. Having constant access to the internet can be overwhelming, leading to anxiety and stress. iGens are growing up not prepared to face the challenges of college, let alone life. Most have had anxiety attacks or depression, labeling this generation the most prone to mental health issues. Without a strong foundation, they are thrust into the university to be on their own. Familiar college life experiences, like having a college roommate, are traumatic because most iGens had their own room growing up. Now they must wake themselves up to go to class and schedule their time, things that Mom may have done for them at home. As a group iGens are less likely to have a driver’s license, many never held a part time job, and they have less life experiences like dating. If these overwhelming circumstances are coupled with feelings of loneliness and insecurity, this is a recipe for disaster.

iGens do have their smartphones to fall back on. It is their friend and on it they have virtual relationships. The phone also keeps them connected to Mom and Dad instead of broadening their experiences, making decisions, and growing as a person. Couple this with overprotective parents and iGens are set up for failure. Failure and adversity have not been in the iGen vocabulary. The term “Helicopter Parents” is very well known. Many iGens grew up with “Lawnmower Parents,” also called “Snowplow or Steam Roller Parents,” who are willing to mow down anything that might get in the way of their sons and daughters. Having never “failed”, the iGens are now facing perhaps the biggest failures of their life when they enter college. Again, many students entering the university

are unprepared for what they will experience which puts them at risk. The reality is, ready or not, here comes iGen and the faculty must be prepared to face them.

## **Industry Perspective**

iGens do not seem prepared for what they will face in industry. Industry tells us new hire engineering students lack the social and soft skills to be successful.<sup>10</sup> Technology has become an impediment to developing interpersonal relationships and people skills. iGens would rather communicate through technology than in person, a frustration to industry managers, especially when the communication concerns conflict. A KRONOS Workforce Institute study discovered that 40% of iGens say their high school or college prepared them for the work place however, they admit that they were never taught how to negotiate, public speak, network, or resolve conflicts.<sup>11</sup> The term “fragility” is used to describe new hires, when we should be describing our graduates as resilient, having “grit”.<sup>12-14</sup> Dr Peter Gray states the decline in student resilience among college students is a serious problem.<sup>13</sup> A sample of employers identified the following trends concerning iGens at work:

*The employers in the sample nearly all claimed, usually emphatically, that they had witnessed reduced resilience and an increased sense of entitlement in young employees. They talked about new employees’ inability to accept or respond appropriately to constructive criticism, and their beliefs that they should almost immediately get promotions and higher pay, even if they were doing the bare minimum of what the job required. If they got poor evaluations, according to the employers, they complained that the employers had not made the expectations sufficiently clear.*<sup>14</sup>

Also seen is a lack of work ethic on the part of iGens. You do not get a trophy for completing college and showing up at work. Beginning to understand iGens and recognize the challenges they bring with them to the university is a start. Faculty must take action and make a difference in their lives. This means taking the time to learn about the disturbing trends seen in this generation and help iGens become resilient.

## **Disturbing Trends**

Dr Jean Twenge discusses 10 topics that show disturbing trends with this generation. Her research relates longitudinal studies that have been conducted for decades. When something is observed in the data that is very different, they investigate the circumstances that were occurring during that time frame of reference. Twenge’s observations from the chapters in her book are summarized below<sup>7</sup>:

- 1) Growing Up More Slowly – Fewer iGens go out on dates (beginning with 2008). Fewer iGens have sex (beginning in 2013). Many do not have a driver’s license. Fewer iGens have part-time jobs. Alcohol consumption has also dropped. This generation is doing fewer “bad” things and are happy to be under the care of their parents. They are growing up more slowly.

- 2) Social Media/Internet Dependence - On average, seniors spend 2 1/4 hours per day texting, 2 hours on the internet, 1 1/2 hours playing games, 1/2 hour on video chat, and these figures are the same for wealthy or poor teens. Social media use (or video gaming for boys) has exploded. They do not go out (to movies or other events) or watch TV. They typically do not read books or newspapers.
- 3) Virtual Relationships – iGens socialize less in person, preferring to do this virtually. 44% of high school seniors report spending 10 hours or more per week online. The research shows that teens who spend more time on screen activities are more likely to be unhappy.
- 4) Mental Health/Insecurity - iGens are less happy. They feel more anxiety and depression which can lead to suicide.
- 5) Being Irreligious – Less students identify with a religious group. Only 28% of high school seniors attend church. If religion conflicts with science, iGens must choose sides, with science usually being the default.
- 6) Isolation/Safety and Community – There is a strong desire for safety in all areas of life. They smoke less, drink less, and drive less. iGens want emotional safety as well, especially on campus. They think it is a good idea to help others but are less likely to do it.
- 7) Income Insecurity/Work and Work Ethic – iGens just want to get a good job and earn money. They are less receptive to starting their own business. iGens are not as concerned about fashion trends but would rather wear safe clothes.
- 8) Sex, Marriage, and Children – They have less sex and less partners. They are concerned about safety (sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy). Pornography and “hook up” sex are also part of this culture. They seem afraid of having relationships.
- 9) Diversity/Inclusivity – LGBTQ is fine. Accepting transgender is fine. As for gender roles, they reject the stay-at-home-mom concept. Race is generally not an issue as well.
- 10) Politics – iGens see themselves as independents. They are more likely to have libertarian views. They are less likely to trust the government, get involved, or even follow the news.

Another list of characteristics gives additional insight into the life of iGens<sup>8</sup> :

- 1) much more tolerant of others, different races and cultures, sexual orientations;
- 2) more cautious and averse to taking risks;
- 3) growing up more slowly, not wanting to stay home alone, manage their own money, etc.;
- 4) aware and concerned about an economy shaped by income inequality;
- 5) less likely to drink alcohol or take drugs in high school;
- 6) less likely to attend church;
- 7) more likely to think for themselves and not believe authority figures in church or government;
- 8) delaying having serious romantic relationships;
- 9) experiencing fewer teen pregnancies;
- 10) spending less time in shopping malls;
- 11) less likely to go see a movie;
- 12) not inclined as much to run away
- 13) not all that interested in getting a driver’s license right away (one of four iGen’ers

- do not have a license by the time they graduate from high school);
- 14) less interested in face-to-face contact with others, preferring instead to connect via smartphones;
  - 15) less interested in reading books, magazines or newspapers;
  - 16) spending more time playing computer games
  - 17) less experienced in having an after-school or summer job and earning money while in high school;
  - 18) feeling more depressed than those in prior generations;
  - 19) feeling lonely and not needed;
  - 20) susceptible to higher suicide rates;
  - 21) more supervised and protected while growing up;
  - 22) spending enormous amounts of time using social media and smart phones; sometimes well into the early hours of the morning; and,
  - 23) more conservative politically and less interested in identifying with a political party. (18- to 29-year-old voters are now a larger percentage of all voters than those over 65.)

## **Engineering and iGens**

While there is a growing body of literature dealing with iGens or Gen Z, there is a lack of information specifically addressing STEM iGens and their impact on the classroom or in industry. What is certain is that iGen are who they are and both the university and industry seem to be adapting to their presence. Industry has accepted the fact that the current generation of new hires will be iGens and industry is preparing for the challenges that these new hires bring to the workplace. They recognize that in the workplace iGens<sup>15</sup>:

- are independent.
- like to know what is going on.
- like to be challenged.
- want to move quickly.
- are under lots of pressure to succeed.

Industry is investing heavily in training opportunities to help iGen transition to the workplace.

The university is also changing to accommodate this incoming class of students. Felder and Brent, in their book *Teaching and Learning STEM*, offer many suggestions on how to teach STEM topics. Moore et al. in their article *Engineering Education for Generation Z* trace the history of engineering education and then discuss the changes that must occur in education to accommodate this new generation of students. More research is needed to determine if STEM university students are typical iGens or not. The observations thus far suggest that many STEM university students reflect the iGen trends and are no different than non-STEM students.

## Can the University Help Prepare iGens for the Workplace and Life?

As students enter the university, there is an implied requirement to help students mature from where they are to where they need to be upon graduation. Van Treuren and Jordan addressed the role of the university in the formation of student maturity.<sup>18</sup> The university is a community where personal development occurs. A function of the university is embodied in the phrase “in loco parentis.” Legally, it means “in place of a parent” and refers to the obligation of a person or organization to take on some of the functions and responsibilities of a parent. At any university, students should receive a quality education while, at the same time, achieve an acceptable level of maturity. Each student enters the university at a different level of maturity and it is hoped that in four years they will leave prepared for the challenges ahead. However, as the students entered the university with different maturity levels, they will also leave with different levels of maturity. Universities must prepare students for graduation and to be able to adapt to the changes they will face.

What can the university do to help them reduce stress and anxiety in their lives? There are many ideas as to how to help iGens become more functional. What this paper proposes are three areas that are increasingly important in the lives of iGens and can help them prepare for the future. What can matter in their lives are soft skills, real life experiences, and being able to unplug from technology. Other topics to consider are faculty development and proposed changes to educational pedagogy.

### Soft Skills

The Association of American Colleges and Universities reported that employers think soft skills, like oral and written communication, and working with others in teams, need improvement.<sup>19</sup> Companies have developed lists of soft skills that are important to the workplace. These include topics such as communication, creativity, adaptability, collaboration (teamwork), and leadership, with the communication and collaboration high on the list.<sup>20</sup> As an engineer, to be successful in today’s workplace requires more than just knowledge about a technical, engineering topic. If you graduate from an ABET accredited program technical competency is assumed. Today’s engineer must have an arsenal of soft skills to be successful in the workplace. Industry feedback indicates students are not prepared in these areas.

On the list of needed soft skills is the ability to communicate. Having excellent communication skills will positively impact a person’s life. Written communication is important and, for engineers, technical writing is especially important. It must be clear and concise. Most students today write like the talk or text. Student e-mail is another good example showing where these skills are deficient. How can we help iGens develop soft skills in writing? Give opportunities in your classes to write and revise. Practice does make perfect.

Oral communication is also important. It isn’t just giving a PowerPoint presentation. To give students experience in oral communication, place iGens in situations where they need to talk to their classmates. Use techniques like think-pair-share. Knowing how to talk to others leads to satisfying relationships. Working on teams is also important in industry. On a team is where oral communication is so important. Team projects are something we all have in our curriculums. At Baylor, a survey showed most students approach team projects by dividing the tasks and then

putting the project together just in time, involving little interaction. In the real world you must work with other people, usually in person, to get something done. You never know who might be on the team but, no matter who is on the team, at some point you must communicate with them in person. Developing personal relationships in the work environment makes work more enjoyable and the chances for success in the team project more likely.

iGens must learn how to be a good team player, encouraging and empowering others to help them improve their skills. Use techniques in team projects such, as the Jigsaw, requiring team interaction to hold each other accountable. Knowing how to initiate conversations in the team context and to make “small talk” will lead to more gratifying relationships than can be achieved with a phone or the internet. This skill can be helpful in initiating conversations and relationships outside the work environment.

Many other soft skills follow from what might be called character formation. Being trustworthy means people can depend on you, especially in team environment. Having honesty and integrity means telling the truth even when it might not put you in a favorable light. Being openminded makes you approachable and people will want to have conversations without you because you are not criticizing but are accepting. Above all, take responsibility for your actions, don't blame your past environment or social media for your problems.

As faculty, university programs and courses must have opportunities for iGens to practice these skills. Understanding and practicing good soft skill development will led to others respecting you and wanting to be around you. This will lead to success in the workplace and in life. Failure to develop soft skills will lead to anxiety and possibly depression. Developing soft skills leads to success in the workplace and in life. Being able to communicate, especially on teams, will build real relationships and address feelings of loneliness and isolation. Without these relationships, it is difficult to experience real life.

### **Real Life Experiences**

Every day brings new challenges. Who you are can be summed up in the word “Worldview” which is defined as a set of beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality that ground and influence all one's perceiving, thinking, knowing, and doing. It is a particular philosophy of life or conception of the world. Life experiences form an individual's worldview and this worldview provides the foundation upon which we react to the world around us. Life experiences do matter in this formation. Life brings devastating experiences such as in 2004 when the author's house burned down. How does one face adversity? The reality is having faced adversity before and, for some, relying on faith leads to a resilience from those previous experiences which can make a difference facing current life challenges. iGens as a group do not have many life experiences upon which to draw. Seemiller and Grace, in their book *Generation Z Goes to College*, confirm iGens have fewer life experiences. iGens would rather be home with their parents, would rather be on the internet, rather connect with people on social media than in person, do not have part time jobs, don't have drivers' licenses, and don't date. In general, they are growing up more slowly, in part because they do not have life experiences. Without this foundation, when they get to college they are experiencing some of these things for the first time. This leads to pressure and anxiety. Dr Twenge says this current generation



of students is entering college with the emotional maturity of a 15-year-old.<sup>7</sup> iGens are experiencing many things for the first time at college which leads to anxiety.

So, what university life experiences can help iGens prepare for the workplace and life? iGens need to be encouraged to develop life experiences but in a safe, controlled environment. One such opportunity at the university might be student organizations. At the university there are many student organizations to join. These organizations often have outreach activities off campus. Just helping coordinate these activities, and the subsequent participation, can help a person mature. Baylor has a group, Engineers with a Mission, which helps bring electricity and water to rural areas in Haiti and Central America. Baylor's Basic Utility Vehicle (BUV) group builds functional utility vehicles for rural people in Uganda. These are life changing experiences which help our students focus, not on themselves, but on others. One can find these types of outreach activities on any campus. However, it is not necessary to a developing world country to participate in these types of activities. At Baylor, being a religiously affiliated university, students are encouraged to be involved in a local church where there are also many opportunities for life experiences serving others. These are life experiences which build life skills and will provide the worldview which will influence students for the rest of their life.

Becoming involved in these outreach opportunities ties back into character formation. An individual who is generous and hospitable will be thinking of others before themselves. A life of service will provide life experiences for many years to come. With a life of service comes joy and the satisfaction with helping others. Helping others will also help iGen fill the loneliness which seems to be present with this current generation. Without real life experiences students will not have the courage or confidence to consider unplugging from their technology.

### **Unplugging from Technology**

Being able to unplug from technology matters. iGen students are some of the smartest and most connected people on the planet. They have never known life without the internet and the smartphone. iGen has grown up the phones and immediate access to sites such as YouTube and Netflix. Instantly one can watch whatever they want. The average teenager spends 7 hours and 22 minutes a day on screens for entertainment, a significant portion of their waking hours.<sup>22</sup> This does not include screen time for school. A study in Europe had 153 business students agree to go without their phones for one day.<sup>23</sup> These students reported that they did not know what to do with the "extra" time at breakfast and riding public transportation. They felt anxiety. Cell phones had become an "addiction." While there is some debate among medical and mental health professionals about whether excessive cell phone use is truly an addiction, research is showing that your brain receives a shot of a feel-good chemical called dopamine when you have an enjoyable experience with your cell phone.<sup>24</sup> This brings you back for more and before you know it you are addicted.

Unplugging from technology might be what ultimately matters in the life of iGens. Technology (smartphones/internet/social media) can be invasive in a person's life and society in general. iGen students spend too much time on smartphones and social media. Their life revolves around likes and what others think. They also draw idealistic opinions from viewing other people's lives. This leads to comparison and feelings of inadequacy, which will eventually lead to mental illness, such as

depression. While unplugging totally from technology would be unrealistic, how do you break the technology addiction? At the university, one should create technology free “safe zones”. Technology has its place however, there are definite times when it is not appropriate to have a smartphone presence. Classrooms generally are not the place for smart phones. Eating meals with family, friends, or faculty should be technology free. Perhaps we arrange field trips or have social activities that are designated technology free, thereby requiring people to interact. What other safe spaces could we offer to our students? Whatever these safe spaces are, if we ask iGens to occasionally surrender their technology, we must give them alternatives that are equally as attractive, like a face-to-face conversation, cooking a gourmet meal, playing a board game, going outside, doodling, or just doing nothing. Perhaps a reward system might be in order to help them develop healthy behaviors. iGens could accomplish so much more by unplugging and reducing their dependence on their phones. Students need to unplug from their technology and plug into real life.

### **Faculty Development**

The need for faculty training concerning the mental health crisis is beginning on university campuses.<sup>25, 26</sup> Faculty should build skills through training programs like Question, Persuade, Refer.<sup>27</sup> Any new faculty orientation should include some information on the mental health crisis facing students. Some faculty are not interested in participating as they do not feel that they are qualified to become involved with students who have mental health problems. They say to leave this to the professionals. This is closed-minded. Professors are in the best position to support students and to evaluate their performance in the classroom. Abrupt changes in behavior can signal deeper issues which would then require assistance. Just recognizing these behaviors could help save a life.

At Baylor School of Engineering and Computer Science, there are monthly faculty seminars/workshops which can fill a number of requirements. This past fall these seminars/workshops were used to help educate the faculty on issues facing iGens. They were held during the lunch to provide an opportunity for higher attendance. Typically, between 40% and 50% of the engineering faculty attend. The two topics addressed this semester were Inclusion and Insecurity. For the first gathering on Inclusion, the Dean for Student Development at Baylor as well as the Baylor University Chaplain attended. There was a lively discussion on the university climate for LGBTQ, gender, and racial issues. The discussion touched on the focus of each of these student groups and how the faculty should handle situations regarding these students in their classes. The second gathering looked at Insecurity and featured the Executive Director of Baylor Counseling and the Senior Case Manager for Student Life. Both guests were informative about the caseloads facing the counseling center and how faculty can help by recognizing students at risk, referring them to the counseling center.

### **Educational Recommendations for Improvement**

Moore et al. suggest that, for iGens, integrate more active and problem-based learning in the classroom.<sup>17</sup> This seems to be a trend nationwide. Faculty should help students extract answers from an ocean of information. iGens can be overwhelmed with what they find on the internet. Assess them often and provide feedback. This is what iGens expect at the university and in the workplace. Also, increasingly important in the academic curriculum are opportunities to be creative,

another soft skill. Open ended problems help with this requirement. The university setting should provide opportunities for student to make connections of the information using a framework or scaffold. Concept maps are an excellent way to achieve this objective.

## Summary and Conclusions

In conclusion, there is a mental health crisis facing the university. Campus counseling centers and mental health services are being stretched to the limit. Dr. Ben Locke, Executive Director of the Center for Collegiate Mental Health, states “the data suggests that the demand (for counseling) created by anxiety and depression dramatically exceeds all other concerns – and is continuing to grow.” We tend to think engineering students are more competent, more rational, and not the typical iGen. It seems, engineering students are no different. Baylor experienced this last semester. While students may be entering the university unprepared for what they will face, faculty must help iGens be ready for what is next. If one takes the time to build soft skills into their lives, give opportunities for real life experiences, and if one can help students develop new habits, putting technology into its proper perspective, then the current students, the internet Generation, will be better prepared to face the world and to make good decisions in life.

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#### KENNETH W. VAN TREUREN

Ken Van Treuren is a Professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Baylor University and serves as the Associate Dean in the School of Engineering and Computer Science. He received his B. S. in Aeronautical Engineering from the USAF Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado and his M. S. in Engineering from Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey. After serving as USAF pilot in KC-135 and KC-10 aircraft, he completed his DPhil in Engineering Sciences at the University of Oxford, United Kingdom and returned to the USAF Academy to teach heat transfer and propulsion systems. At Baylor University, he teaches courses in laboratory techniques, fluid mechanics, energy systems, and propulsion systems, as well as freshman engineering. Research interests include renewable energy to include small wind turbine aerodynamics, small propeller design, and experimental convective heat transfer as applied to HVAC and gas turbine systems.