“My initial plan was to finish at the College with a major in business and then pursue engineering in grad school,” she says. Now, she’s taking courses such as engineering graphics and management and loving them.

“One of the things I really like about this major,” she says, “is that you’re required to take several business courses such as organizational behavior and supply chain planning and analysis. Add those to the physics, computer science and math courses you have to take, and you end up with with a broader spectrum of knowledge and additional skill sets. I think that will really set me apart from engineering majors at other universities when I go out into the job world.”

Charbonnet says she’s also grateful for the many additional learning opportunities that the systems engineering program has created with local industry partners such as Boeing, Mercedes-Benz Vans and Bosch.

“I’m looking forward to interning in the field,” she says. “Charleston has so many great resources when it comes to internships and other hands-on learning opportunities. And I can’t tell you what an advantage it is that our class sizes are purposely small in this program. That leads to so much more one-on-one attention from professors. That’s key because they’re not only amazing teachers, but many of them are a strong source of professional connections as well, and that can be a huge advantage.”

CHRISTY CHARBONNET ALWAYS WANTED to become an engineer. When she first enrolled at the College, that wasn’t an option. But then, the new systems engineering program was announced. Right away, she switched majors and immersed herself in the field so that she could follow her dream.

“Systems engineers are able to plug into a variety of technical roles on teams working to design, implement, and maintain complex systems of hardware and software. They take an interdisciplinary approach to problem-solving. This major – the first of its kind offered in South Carolina – provides students the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in diverse careers.

In this program, they learn to:

- Understand the computing, electrical, mechanical, industrial and business aspects of systems.
- Develop solutions that meet consumers and customers needs.
- Constantly monitor and manage all stages of operations.