

Alexa Haenel

PRODUCT DESIGNER

Hi! I'm a product designer focused on solving real human problems through empathy-driven, research-informed design. I believe design is empathy made visible, as an act of understanding that transforms human needs into thoughtful, inclusive products and experiences. My work centers on adaptive design, material exploration, and user-engaged research that considers the full spectrum of human ability and lived experience.

EXPERIENCE

ACADEMIC & TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Oregon: Teaching Assistant 23'-25'

- TA'd for two sections of a first year product design course (UGST 109)
- Led critiques and one-on-one feedback sessions to guide students through new design thinking and process

University of Oregon: First Year Advisor 23'-25'

- Advised and mentored first-year students through academic, personal, and transitional challenges, supporting retention and student success
- Helped students build confidence, self-advocacy skills, and a sense of belonging within the university community

Illinois Board of Education: Certified Substitute Teacher 22'-Current

- Delivered instruction across multiple subjects and grade levels, adapting lesson plans to meet classroom needs.
- Maintained a structured, supportive learning environment while quickly building rapport with students.

DESIGN RESEARCH & INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

American Needle: Product R&D Intern- Summer 25'

- Conducted product and market research to support the launch of a new licensed product line for the Kentucky Bourbon Trail, synthesizing brand heritage and consumer insights into cohesive design and merchandising direction.

Dylan Wood Lab: Research Assistant 26'-Current

- Assisted faculty-led design research through prototyping, testing, and documentation.

Oregon Innovation Challenge: Executive 23'-Current


- The Oregon Innovation Challenge (OIC) is the University of Oregon's 12-week startup incubation program, culminating in a competitive pitch event that awards over \$100,000 annually to student entrepreneurs
- Provided design leadership for student ventures, translating early concepts into cohesive visual identities and pitch-ready presentation materials.
- Held a leadership role within the Oregon Innovation Challenge, supporting program execution, team coordination, and strategic decision-making for the programs entirety.

FABRICATION & TECHNICAL EXPERIENCE

Millrace Woodshop: Technician 23'-Current

- Trained and assisted students in safe tool operation, material selection, and fabrication best practices
- Operated and maintained woodshop equipment including table saws, band saws, drill presses, sanders, and CNC tools
- Read and interpreted technical drawings and CAD files to support accurate fabrication and material usage

CONTACT INFO

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TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Rhino
- Certified SolidWorks Associate
- Keyshot
- Blender
- Photoshop
- Indesign
- Procreate
- Figma
- Illustrator

EDUCATION

University of Oregon 22'-26'

- BFA, Product Design
- 4.07 GPA

PUBLISHED RESEARCH

Second Skin: Adaptive Adhesives for Wheelchair Athletes

IDSA Innovation Magazine, May 2026

Original research and design work exploring localized adhesive systems to reduce hand abrasion and improve performance for wheelchair basketball athletes