

College of Engineering News

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Georgia Southern University

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Project Lead The Way (PLTW) 2016

July 5, 2016

PLTW is a national, non-profit organization promoting STEM education in K-12 classrooms (www.pltw.org) through teacher training and course module development. Once trained, the school teachers are able to offer the PLTW programs and modules to students at their own schools.

Currently, about 8,500 schools representing all 50 states have adopted PLTW programs and modules, which introduce pre-college students to concepts of engineering and other STEM fields. PLTW will influence more than one million students this year alone. PLTW partners with institutions of higher education in each state – these affiliate colleges and universities train the teachers who will implement the course materials and modules in their elementary and secondary classes. There are currently 61 affiliate members across the nation; Georgia Southern is the affiliate institution in Georgia.

Elementary and secondary school teachers from rural counties throughout Georgia and the region participate in PLTW training thanks to Governor Nathan Deal's initiative in joining PLTW. Due to the growth of the project, Georgia Southern was able to provide PLTW training at two different locations this year: one in the Atlanta area (Fayetteville) and the other on Georgia Southern's Statesboro campus. The intensive two-week training sessions ran back-to-back, starting June 6 in Atlanta and ending July 1 in Statesboro, with nearly 100 elementary and secondary school teachers participating in eight different training classes. While most of the participants hail from Georgia, some came from neighboring states and even further afield, including Indiana, Colorado, Wyoming and California. Visitors to the classes included administrators from the participants' schools, PLTW officials, and representatives from regional industry and from Governor Deal's office.

Georgia's PLTW director, Aniruddha Mitra, professor of Mechanical Engineering, thanked the Georgia Southern community for their support in organizing and hosting the event. He added, "Project Lead The Way training classes conducted by Georgia Southern have experienced unprecedented growth over the past four years in terms of number of attendees – from fewer than ten, to 70 last year, to over 100 this year. This will significantly enhance STEM education, and Georgia Southern's impact, throughout the region. I hope that as a result of these PLTW programs, many more students will consider careers in STEM fields, and will decide to launch those careers with degrees from Georgia Southern."