Real STEM: Scientific Research for Rural Georgia Students

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Real STEM
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Real STEM Grant
A Race to the Top Grant funded through the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) awarded to Georgia Southern University.

Through partnerships, develop and implement high school courses that focus on interdisciplinary STEM scientific research, leading to a three course sequence that constitutes an academic pathway and supports a STEM school designation.

This grant proposes that when teachers are trained in the tenets of the grant, they will use these strategies in designing course work for students that will result in increased STEM achievement, increased interest in STEM and STEM careers, and STEM literate citizens better prepared to make informed decisions about grand challenge issues which will impact their lives.

Tenets of the Grant
I. Place-based Education
   A. Learning takes students “out” of the classroom and into the community and natural environment
   B. Students learn how local systems relate to regional and/or global systems
   C. Students collaborate with research scientists, local citizens, organizations, agencies, businesses, and/or government

II. Problem-based Learning
   A. Engages students as participants immersed in real-world, ill-structured, problematic situations
   B. Organizes curriculum around a holistic problem, enabling student learning in relevant and connected ways
   C. Coaches student thinking and guides student inquiry, facilitating learning toward deeper levels of understanding

III. Teaching for Understanding (UbD)
   A. Identify Desired Results
   B. Determine Acceptable Evidence
   C. Planning Learning Experiences and Instruction

IV. Modes of Reasoning
   A. Engages student in multiple approaches of investigation (i.e. model-based reasoning, computational reasoning, Engineering Design, and Quantitative Reasoning)
   B. Students create, test, and refine models of real-world situations
   C. Recognize and accurately interpret data

V. Interdisciplinary STEM (interdisciplinary vs. multidisciplinary)
   A. Emphasizes connections between traditionally discrete disciplines
   B. Works with a range of sources of information and perspectives
   C. Integrates multiple disciplines to solve problems

Collaborative Partnerships

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<th>Team 1 – Research Institutes</th>
<th>Team 2 – GSU Faculty</th>
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<td>Georgia Southern University</td>
<td>Engineering – Dr. Mtra</td>
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<td>Gray’s Reef – NOAA</td>
<td>Biology – Dr. Lege &amp; Dr. Govnos &amp; Dr. Colon-Gaud</td>
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<td>Southern Natural Sciences Academy</td>
<td>Chemistry – Dr. Lohse</td>
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<td>Physics – Dr. Gatch &amp; Dr. Baldwin</td>
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<td>Camden County Cooperative Extension</td>
<td>Education – Dr. Mayes</td>
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Participant Reflections

On Wednesday, November 20th, 2013 approximately 65 high school grant participants arrived on the campus of Georgia Southern University to share with each other in a research roundtable discussion and to participate in informative sessions in each of the GSU STEM departments. Students were exposed to the many STEM career opportunities available to them through a college experience. The students were challenged to think about life after high school.

In being exposed to all of the hands-on research and our experiences with the scientists, we gained a lot of knowledge that can be brought into the classroom.

We learn things that aren’t normally taught at school. We take real world problems and try to solve them through STEM. That is something that we aren’t able to do in other classes.

It was fun researching and building our very own project. I never thought I would take interest in that.

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-Student

Real STEM
Institute for Interdisciplinary STEM
The Institute for Interdisciplinary STEM Education (i2STEM@) will establish collaborative interdisciplinary programs committed to excellence in K-20 STEM teaching and learning, with a focus on rural, diverse, low SES, and under-represented populations.

The Institute will address problems indigenous to the rural environments of the region, including issues of cultural diversity and cultural relevance within our diverse population, matters of equitable access to STEM for low SES students, and concerns about the relevance of STEM for rural students. Long-term goals of the Institute are to establish partnerships across Georgia, the southeastern region of the United States, nationally, and even internationally to address issues of STEM education in rural areas.