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NSF Awards \$2.5 Million to Georgia Southern Researchers to Build Future IT Workforce

July 13, 2023

The [National Science Foundation](#) (NSF) [Division of Undergraduate Education](#) (DUE) recently announced a \$2.5 million award to support four researchers at Georgia Southern University to address long-term workforce needs in the computer and information technology fields.

The funded project, "[Enabling Lifelong Success in the Information Technology Workforce](#)," will adapt, implement, and evaluate a set of evidence-based curricular and co-curricular student support activities in Georgia Southern's [Department of Information Technology](#). The project will recruit a pool of high-quality students and provide a total of 161 scholarships over six years to support retention and graduation of students with financial need. In addition, the project will study mechanisms for students to improve their personal self-efficacy and academic performance, and thus how better to create career-ready graduates in the computing and IT fields.

Led by Dr. Yiming Ji, professor and chair of the Department of IT, the project team will also include [Dr. Lei Chen](#), professor of IT, [Dr. Hayden Wimmer](#), associate professor of IT, and [Dr. Elise Cain](#), assistant professor of Leadership, Technology, and Human Development ([College of Education](#)). In addition, [Dr. Kania Greer](#), Program Coordinator of the [Center for STEM Education \(i²STEM^{ed}\)](#), will perform the project evaluation activities to ensure the success of the project.

National and regional demand for professionals in computing and IT remains very strong. "This project will directly benefit our local, regional, and national economies," stated PCEC [Dean Craig M. Harvey](#). "High-tech industries are already in and being attracted to the Savannah area, and the locations of Georgia Southern University's campuses on the [I-16 Tech Corridor](#) provide unique opportunities to train high-quality computing and IT professionals who are in high demand." Dean Harvey further commented: "This is great news for the IT program, and the PCEC honors Dr. Ji's leadership in getting this grant. This project will encourage all department faculty and students to become further involved in the success of the department and its graduates, and I know it will propel the department to another level. The success of this project will have a positive impact on the growing technology-based economy in southeastern Georgia."

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