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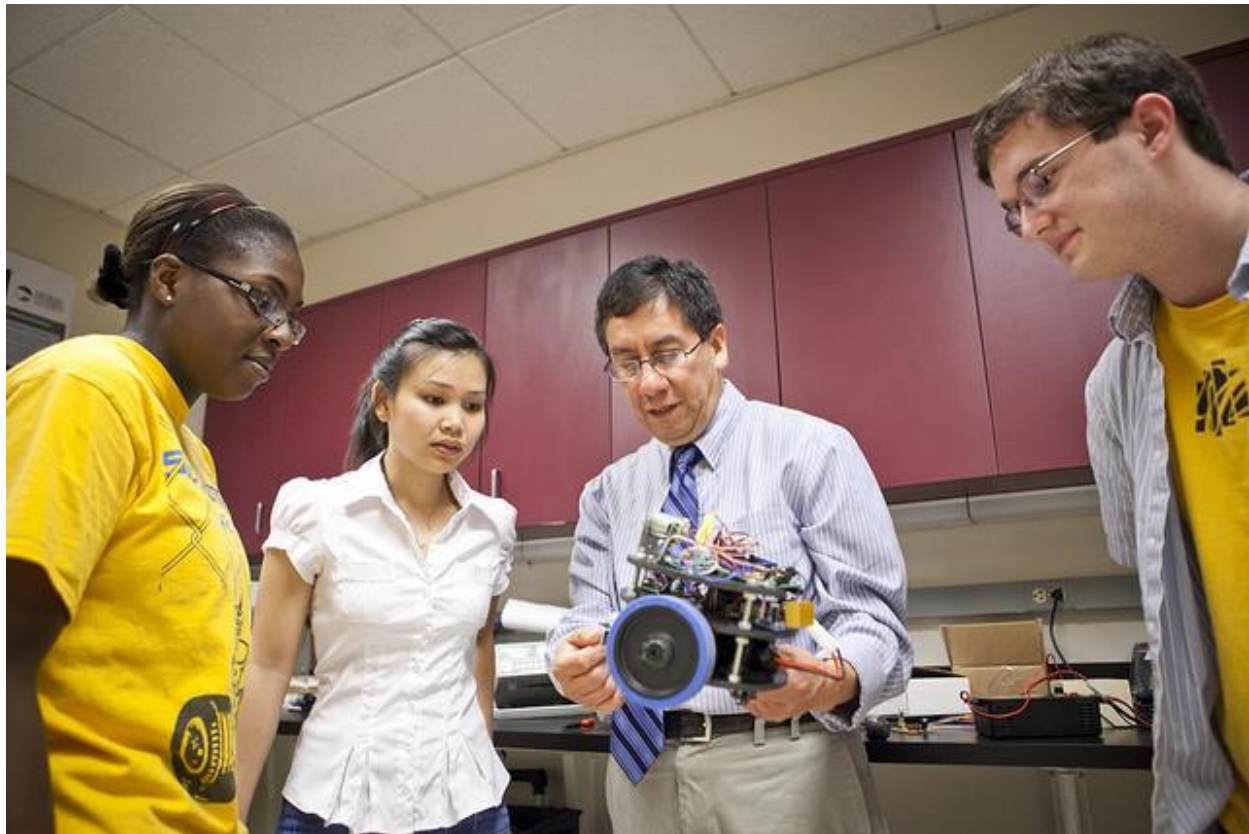
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University Gears Up for 2nd Annual STEM Fest

SEPTEMBER 16, 2014



[Georgia Southern University](#) is gearing up for its 2nd annual science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) festival this Saturday, Sept. 20 from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. at the Nessmith-Lane Conference Center, 847 Plant Drive. The festival will feature presentations by the [Institute for Interdisciplinary STEM Education](#) at Georgia Southern, NASA and the U.S. Army.

Director of the Institute for Interdisciplinary STEM Education Robert Mayes says the purpose of STEM Fest is to get students excited about what STEM has to offer.

"The Institute's mission is to encourage the teaching and learning of STEM by thinking of authentic real-world uses for science, technology, engineering and math," said Mayes. "One of the largest growing fields or areas with 18 to 20 percent of the growth in the job market is expected to be in STEM areas."

Mayes says STEM Fest is a result of the increased interest from the [National Science Foundation](#) and the [Department of Education](#) to fund educational efforts to improve the number of students who are going into STEM fields.

"STEM Fest is really a free community event designed to get K-12 students, their parents and teachers hands-on and involved with STEM education," said Kania Greer, Ed.D, grants coordinator at the Institute for Interdisciplinary STEM Education. "They get to come to campus for a day and see what Georgia Southern is all about as well as engage in fun learning activities."

Guests will have an opportunity to participate in activities such as designing a tabletop hovercraft, learning about solar cell robotics, creating liquid nitrogen Dippin Dots ice cream, learning how video games are created and more. There will be more than 50 exploration stations at the event.

"This year we're expanding a bit and we're bringing a few businesses in...we've got some big names coming," said Greer. "NASA is going to come and set up, we've got a portable planetarium from Oatland Island [Wildlife Center] and The Society for Georgia Archeology ArcheoBus is coming. So, we've got a lot of opportunities for students to engage."

NASA plans to bring an interactive exhibit that allows visitors to virtually build the new Space Launch System (SLS) rocket and have their photo taken as an astronaut at a SLS launch. A large inflatable SLS rocket will tower over the Nessmith-Lane Conference Center and exhibit-goers will be encouraged to take their photos and post them on social media using handles [@GeorgiaSouthern@NASA_SLS](#) and [@NASA_Kennedy](#) with the hashtag #JourneyToMars.

The Georgia Southern STEM Institute brings a workforce development and more STEM literate citizenship to the community to assist in making more informed decisions about issues that are going to affect the next generation.

Last year more than 1,500 guests attended the inaugural STEM Fest and this year the University expects more.

For more information about STEM Fest visit research.georgiasouthern.edu/stemfest.