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Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "Newsroom" (2012). *Newsroom*. 1013.
<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/newsroom/1013>

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Georgia Southern University Establishes New Interdisciplinary STEM Education Institute

AUGUST 16, 2012

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Georgia Southern University has established a new institute for interdisciplinary STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Education (I²STEM^e) (*pronounced "I two STEM e"*) that will support thematic grant writing, research and outreach. The Institute is committed to excellence in primary, secondary and higher education STEM teaching and learning with a focus on rural and diverse populations under-represented in STEM areas.

"Georgia Southern University is not only committed to increasing the numbers of those entering STEM fields, but also to creating an environment where our citizens are more STEM literate and can make informed decisions about complex issues," said Georgia Southern President Brooks Keel, Ph.D.,. The announcement comes on the heels of a White House initiative to create a new national [STEM Master Teacher Corps](#) and a focus on increased funding that allows school districts to identify, develop and leverage highly effective STEM teachers.

"This new institute will not only support a strategic and important national initiative, but it will position Georgia Southern to play an important role as we work to inspire Georgia's best and brightest K-12 students to pursue STEM careers," Keel said.

The Institute will create a broad range of partnerships across academia, business, education and research centers in southeast Georgia, support professional development, outreach, curricular development, the creation of innovative courses and research in STEM education through grant funded projects. The Institute, one of the first of its kind, will be distinctive in that it will focus on serving rural southeastern Georgia.

"Georgia Southern has a track record in developing programs that serve the special needs of our region, a largely rural and ethnically diverse area," said Charles Patterson, Ph.D., vice president of research and dean of the Jack N. Averitt College of Graduate Studies. "Our goal is to provide greater access for rural and underserved populations to science, technology, engineering and math by helping these students to pursue degrees and careers in those areas."

The STEM institute is being established through a unique collaboration of core partners: Georgia Southern's new Allen E. Paulson College of Engineering and Information Technology, the College of Science and Mathematics, the College of Education and the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. This interdisciplinary collaboration addresses and integrates all four facets of STEM curriculum; utilizing cutting-edge research and educational practice in teaching from kindergarten through college.

"I²STEM^e is the only institute within the University System of Georgia to address all four components of STEM disciplines within the framework of educational practice," says Keel. "It is unique, but more importantly it addresses a specific need in our state."

Georgia Southern research professor Robert Mayes, Ph.D., who teaches in the College of Education, will serve as the first I²STEM^e Director alongside Institute Fellows Joy Darley, Ph.D. and Jim LoBue, Ph.D., both from the College of Science and Mathematics; and Shonda Bernadin, Ph.D., from the Allen E. Paulson College of Engineering and Information Technology.

For further information about the Institute, please contact Dr. Robert Mayes, rmayes@georgiasouthern.edu or visit the Institute’s website at www.georgiasouthern.edu/stem.

Georgia Southern University, a Carnegie Doctoral/Research University founded in 1906, offers more than 120 degree programs serving more than 20,000 students. Through eight colleges, the University offers bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement. In 2012, the University was named one of the Top 10 most popular universities in the country by *U.S. News & World Report* and is a top choice of Georgia’s HOPE scholars. Georgia Southern is recognized for its student-centered approach to education. Visit: www.georgiasouthern.edu.

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Congratulations to #GeorgiaSouthern @GSCOSM alumnus Nick Wiley ('83) who was recently named the chief conservation officer of @DucksUnlimited ! ow.ly/BhVW30hkDJR



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