

NEWS SERVICE

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Dept. of Education grants \$1.5 million to Stevens *Pathways Project*

Unique consortium to improve teacher preparation at community colleges through technology

HOBOKEN, N.J. — Stevens Institute of Technology is the lead agency in a \$1.5 million grant from the US Department of Education, in a national consortium initiative to improve teacher preparation through the use of the Internet and other innovative technologies.

Stevens' Center for Improved Engineering and Science Education (CIESE) will work with a broad spectrum of partners in the project. These include the Bank Street Graduate School of Education, New York City; Cuyahoga Community College, Cleveland, Ohio; Maricopa Community College, Phoenix, Ariz.; and Miami-Dade College, Fla.

The funding is provided through the Federal PT3 Grant Program (Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology), which encourages the discovery and implementation of "alternative teacher development paths" and improved teaching through use of technology.

Since 1988 CIESE has worked with more than 20,000 educators in K-12 schools and with institutions of higher learning around the country to bring about curriculum reform and improved science and mathematics learning through technology-based approaches.

"While E-Rate funding and other programs have provided K-12 schools with a substantial technology infrastructure," said CIESE Deputy Director Beth McGrath, "only 66 percent of teachers in a recent study used computers or the Internet for instruction to a moderate or large extent, and only 33 percent felt well or very well prepared to do so. This project will address that gap by providing support for faculty who teach preservice teachers to model effective uses of technology—those that promote science inquiry, quantitative analysis, and problem-solving."

Teachers in elementary schools and in schools with large percentages of students eligible

for federal lunch programs were also less likely to feel well or very well prepared, the study showed. However, professional development in uses of computers and the Internet appears to be a major factor in classroom use of that technology and in building teacher confidence.

CIESE's alliance with several community colleges in the Pathways Project is an acknowledgement of the important role that these institutions will play in preparing the teachers of tomorrow. Currently, about 600,000, or 20 percent, of today's teachers started their education at community colleges.

"As researchers have pointed out," said McGrath, "since many elementary teachers take their only science courses at a community college, how they are taught there has a strong influence on they way they understand and think about content and the way they teach it."

The Pathways Project will build on a highly successful \$9.3 million Technology Innovation Challenge Grant project in which CIESE and community college staff have trained more than 8,000 K-12 teachers in the use of unique and compelling Internet-based curricular materials in their classes. The project proposes to provide similar, college-level training to community college faculty who play a significant role in the undergraduate education of tomorrow's teachers. For more information about CIESE, please visit:

<http://www.k12science.org>

Overall, through outreach and dissemination efforts with partners including Education Commission of the States and the League for Innovation in the Community College, 200 faculty from 33 community colleges will participate in Pathways training programs. These initiatives are expected to impact nearly 7,000 preservice teachers over the three-years of the grant.

Established in 1870, Stevens offers baccalaureate, master's and doctoral degrees in engineering, science, computer science, management and technology management, as well as a baccalaureate in the humanities and liberal arts, and in business and technology. The university, located directly across the Hudson River from Manhattan, has a total enrollment of about 1,740 undergraduates and 2,600 graduate students. Additional information may be obtained from its web page at **www.stevens.edu**.

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