

School of Mines News

South Dakota School of Mines & Technology
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NASA awards \$500,000 space grant to SD Mines for partnerships

RAPID CITY, S.D. (Aug. 27, 2014) – NASA has awarded \$500,000 to the South Dakota Space Grant Consortium headquartered at the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology to work toward increasing student and faculty engagement in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) at the Lake Area Technical Institute (LATI) in Watertown.

The SD Space Grant Consortium will work in partnership with LATI, South Dakota State University (SDSU) and NASA Johnson Space Center on the project entitled “A Sustainable Food Chain: Growing the Right Stuff!”

NASA’s Office of Education awarded 35 such grants to increase NASA-related STEM engagement at community colleges and technical schools across the U.S. The state of South Dakota has no community college system, but there are four technical institutes, including LATI, a long-time affiliate of the SD Space Grant Consortium.

LATI will lead a two-year effort to advance interaction between technical institutes and NASA and to elevate the role of technical institutes within the SD Space Grant Consortium, potentially leading to additional technical institute partnerships in the state. Emphasis will be directed toward attracting more female and Native American students into STEM programs at technical institutes.

The principle fields of study to benefit from the project are Aviation, Agri-Aviation, Environmental Technology and Robotics. These four fields have clear relevance within NASA Mission Directorates, and they align well with South Dakota research and development priorities. Growth in these four fields of study will also open new pathways for technical school graduates to transfer into related STEM programs at the state’s four-year research universities.

Major NASA funding under this grant will be directed to LATI student scholarships, student internships at Johnson Space Center and student research opportunities on campus. LATI and SDSU have a successful record of collaboration in aviation. They will expand that partnership into development of unmanned aerial vehicle-based remote sensing systems that will benefit long-standing NASA research programs at SDSU as well as the state’s agricultural industry.

The SD School of Mines is headquarters for the 19-member SD Space Grant Consortium, which is directed by Ed Duke, Ph.D., who is also a professor in the Department of Geology and Geological Engineering and manager of analytical services of Mines’ Engineering and Mining Experiment Station (EMES).

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About SDSM&T

Founded in 1885, the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology is a science and engineering research university located in Rapid City, S.D., offering bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees. The university enrolls 2,640 students from 45 states and 37 countries, with a student-to-faculty ratio of 14:1. The average starting salary for graduates is \$62,020 with a 98 percent placement rate. Find us online at www.sdsmt.edu, on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/sdsmt> and on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/sdsmt>.